



YMCA Future of America Leadership Development Program

Many young people exhibit the potential to be successful in school and in their communities, but they lack adequate support and positive opportunities to develop the confidence, the skills and the positive values that will guide their choices. The **Future of America Leadership Development Program** will reach out to these middle school youth who have limited opportunities, and will teach value-centered leadership skills, focusing on the building blocks of healthy adolescent development:

- **a commitment to learning**
- **positive values**
- **social competencies**
- **a positive identity***

The YMCA Future of America staff will work with local school districts and social service agencies each year to identify fifty (50) 7th and 8th grade youth who will benefit from the Future of America Leadership Development

Program and who would embrace the opportunity for additional support and program involvement.

Through group work and team building initiatives, adventure challenges, community service experiences, weekend retreats, panel discussions and workshops, and adult and peer mentorships, youth will explore the YMCA Core Values of **Caring, Honesty, Respect** and **Responsibility** as they develop individual and interpersonal skills.

Enhancing the work of YMCA staff, adult mentors and volunteers, recruited from the public and private sectors, will interact with groups of youth in program activities. Peer mentors will serve as listeners, motivators, role models and friends. These peer mentors are prior participants in the Leadership

Development Program who are selected by staff based upon their willingness to help others, maturity level, leadership skills and positive peer influence.

Under the leadership of enthusiastic, caring YMCA pro-fessionals and these adult and peer mentors, program participants will engage in opportunities to:

- **set and achieve personal and group goals, while increasing self-awareness and an understanding of teamwork**
- **develop problem-solving, decision-making and communication skills**
- **develop an increased understanding of and comfort with persons of diverse backgrounds**
- **explore relationship skills such as empathy, sensitivity, trust and peaceful conflict resolution**
- **explore leadership styles and effective leadership skills**
- **learn that their actions have an impact, that they are valued and that they can and will affect their future**
- **build meaningful friendships and have fun participating in new, exciting and challenging experiences**

Program Evaluation

YMCA program effectiveness will be evaluated by:

- *Administration of the Search Institute's Asset Survey designed to assess positive youth development*
- *Written evaluations from adult mentors and parents*
- *Participant and peer mentor evaluations after each program event*

Ongoing Youth Development Opportunities

The YMCA of Central Ohio offers a number of fun and exciting teen programs in which youth may continue their personal and social development. These programs include: Leaders Clubs, YMCA of the USA Leaders Training School, summer teen camp and Leaders-in-Training programs, teen adventure trips, and YMCA teen nights, as well as continued involvement in the Future of America Program as peer mentors. Future of America program participants will be encouraged to continue their skill development and learning through participation in these programs.

**"40 Developmental Assets" based on the Search Institute's study of over 250,000 youth across the nation. 1997



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YMCA Future of America Awards

As the culminating event of the program, the Future of America Graduation will celebrate the gifts, accomplishments and the energy of these young people. Twelve Future of America Character Awards will be given to honor youth in the following categories based on their successful participation in the program as well as their community involvement. *Nominations for participant awards can be made by a peer, peer mentor, adult mentor or staff of the program.*

Integrity

Exhibits honor; keeps one's promises and commitments; is honest, sincere and trustworthy.

Caring

Shows kindness, empathy, generosity and concern for others.

Respect

Lives by the Golden Rule of "do unto others as you would have them do unto you"; values the dignity of others; has a social consciousness and promotes equality and fairness.

Responsibility

Shows accountability, commitment and reliability.

Courage

Willing to do what one thinks is right even when it is difficult or not the "popular" thing to do.

Determination

Shows personal resolve, perseverance, and is goal-directed.

Spirituality

Holds true to his/her faith while respecting the beliefs of others.

Initiative

Demonstrates drive, ambition, enterprise and self-reliance.

Creativity/Ingenuity

Demonstrates resourcefulness, originality, and imagination.

Commitment to Learning

Demonstrates an eagerness and puts forth the effort to learn; is open to exploring ideas and different perspectives.

Citizenship

Gets involved in community and civic endeavors, volunteers to help others; and leads others to become engaged in service.

Leadership

Guides, encourages, and directs others through positive influence.

The Spirit Mind & Body Award

Each year, one youth from the Leadership Development Class will be presented with the prestigious **Spirit, Mind & Body Award**. This youth will be selected by his/her peers and the Future of America Staff based upon his/her demonstration throughout the year of the following characteristics:

- **An uncompromising commitment to the core values of Caring, Honesty, Respect and Responsibility.**
- **Perseverance in building a healthy spirit, mind, and body**
- **Strong leadership skills**





2009 Program Calendar



March 2009

FOA Class of 2008 Graduation

April 3-4

Retreat #1/Class of 2009 Induction

Orientation for Youth, Families, and Mentors—Hoover Y-Park

May 16

High Ropes and Zip Wire Adventures—
Hoover Y-Park

June TBA

Community Service Project—
OSU *Special Olympics Summer Games*

July 6-10

Summer Enrichment Week

Additional opportunities for the summer months include the Teen Extreme program and summer sports leagues

August 22-23

Retreat #2— Skills Application Weekend

September 25-27

Retreat #3, YMCA Camp Willson.

Communication, Diversity, and Cultural Awareness

October 25

Make a Difference Day Ohio, partnering with the National Guard

November TBA

Holiday Philanthropy

December TBA

Holiday Philanthropy

January 23-24, 2010

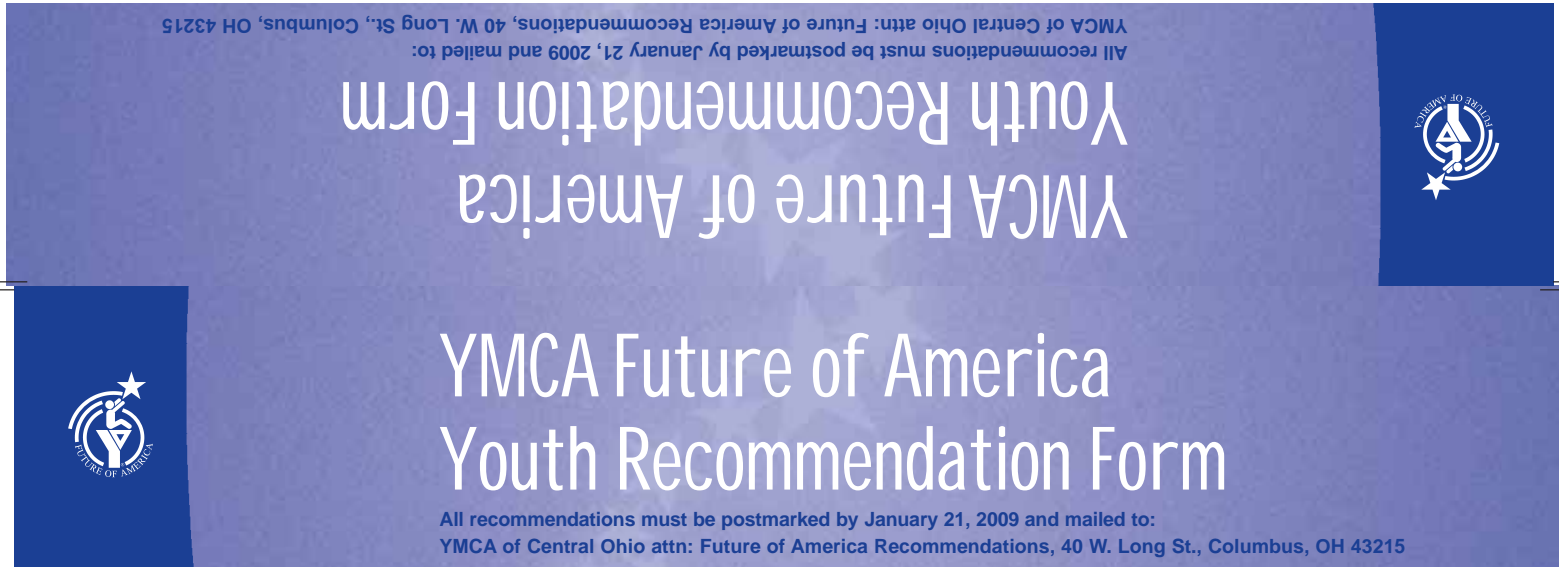
Planning of graduation ceremony


March 2010

FOA Class of 2009 Graduation

YOUTH INFORMATION
 Name _____ Birthdate _____ Grade Level in 2009-10 _____
 Address _____ City, State, ZIP _____
 Phone _____ Email _____
YOUTH SCHOOL INFORMATION
 School Name _____ Name of Guidance Counselor _____
 Phone _____ Email _____
PERSON RECOMMENDING YOUTH
 Name _____ Relationship to Youth _____
 Phone _____ Email _____
 Signature _____ Date _____

Fifty (50) seventh and eighth grade youth will be selected to participate in the year-long Future of America Leadership Development Program based on 1) their need for this type of program, and 2) their desire to participate in this positive learning experience. Please use one recommendation form per youth and describe in the space provided below, using the back if necessary, by answering this question: **How would this young person benefit from his/her participation in the Future of America Program.** All youth must be in the 7th or 8th grade in the 2009-10 school year. This form is to be completed by school, clergy, or youth service organization personnel.




YMCA Future of America
Youth Recommendation Form
 All recommendations must be postmarked by January 21, 2009 and mailed to:
 YMCA of Central Ohio attn: Future of America Recommendations, 40 W. Long St., Columbus, OH 43215

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