2014
OLDER YOUTH RETREAT
AUGUST 11-15, 2014
UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH, JOHNSTOWN CAMPUS
Thank you for your interest in the 2014 Pennsylvania Older Youth Retreat. This retreat was planned by a steering committee comprised of youth who were or who are in substitute care, representatives from county and provider Independent Living programs, the Office of Children, Youth and Families, and staff from the University of Pittsburgh, School of Social Work’s Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center. We are excited to present this week-long opportunity for you to meet new friends, work together, experience new things, and demonstrate our theme, We Are Infinite!

Please read over the information in this brochure carefully. Our hope is to provide you as many options as possible. Whether it’s participating in the sports experience, stained glass or in the talent show, there’s something at the Older Youth Retreat for everybody!

We look forward to seeing you at UPJ in August!

Sincerely,

Austin Ely
Northeast Region
Older Youth Co-Chair

Christy Marks
Southwest Region
Older Youth Co-Chair

Meghan O’Hare
Program Development Specialist
PA Child Welfare Resource Center
Co-Chair
What is the Older Youth Retreat?
The Older Youth Retreat is a week-long experience where youth from Independent Living Programs from all over Pennsylvania live on a college campus and participate in group discussions, structured activities, sports/games, and hear from special guest speakers. Youth along with IL staff from around the state plan the Older Youth Retreat. That means everything about the retreat was designed for youth by youth.

Where is the Older Youth Retreat?
The Older Youth Retreat is held at the University of Pittsburgh, Johnstown (UPJ.) UPJ has great facilities including indoor gymnasiums, a pool, and dorm suites. Youth will live with a roommate for the week and have a private bathroom shared by another pair of roommates in the dorm suite.

What should I expect?
Youth should expect a fun and extremely busy week. This is not a vacation or camp. Youth will be pushed to learn new things, participate in activities, and meet new people. Check out the rest of this brochure for more information.

Why should I come to the Youth Retreat?
Why not? If you’re looking to have fun, learn new things, meet new people, and work hard, then this is the event for you! Check out the retreat page on the Youth Advisory Board website to see videos of past Youth Retreats: www.independentlivingpa.org.
Small Groups:
Each youth and alumni participant at the retreat will be paired with a small group. Small groups will meet in classrooms throughout the week. All classroom sessions are attended by youth only, with the exception of the staff co-facilitator. Throughout the week, youth will be encouraged to discuss personal goals and experiences as well as engage with their peers.

Youth and Alumni Facilitators:
The classroom sessions are facilitated by a young adult retreat participant and an IL staff retreat participant. All co-facilitators are recruited, screened, and trained by the youth in the Retreat Steering Committee. Classroom Facilitators will serve as group leaders and support each session, which follows a curriculum.

Youth-Developed Curriculum:
The Retreat Steering Committee youth and alumni developed the classroom curriculum. The classroom sessions will focus on this year’s theme, “We are Infinite!” Youth and alumni will be challenged to work together, recognizing their unique contribution and infinite potential. Youth and alumni will also draw inspiration and experience from their peers.

Large Group Sessions:
Keeping with the theme, “We are Infinite”, there will be two large group sessions at the 2014 retreat, where all youth and alumni will gather together as one to learn about relevant issues such as diversity, LGBTQ, and advocacy.

The classroom sessions promise to be an experience filled with learning, discovery, challenge, and fun!
Would you like to create stained glass, learn the art of DJ’ing, or make jewelry? Then the Youth Retreat is the place for you! Below you will find the different activity sessions that are available:

- Canvas Creations: Painting 101
- Fun Furniture: It’s a DIY (do it yourself) Thing!
- Hip Hop Dance
- Jewelry Making: A Rolling Stone
- Reverse Painting: Creativity from the Inside Out
- Stained Glass
- Expression through Music
- Snapshots and Scrapbooks
- Banners of Expression
- Decorate Your World: Funky Arts & Crafts
- Developing the Leader Within
- All Star Sports Experience
A once tough-talking Latino gangster, now a college-educated, nationally recognized speaker, Richard Santana’s journey provides a powerful and graphic illustration of cultural relevance in schools. His moving accounts of his gang-life experiences and how they shaped his beliefs, attitudes and self-expectations are inspiring, unsettling and thought-provoking. He challenges his audience to critically assess their own perceptions and helps them to recognize how these perceptions influence work relationships, effectiveness and productivity.

His message is one of making choices: between hope and hopelessness, between evaluating young people based upon our own standards or accepting them in the context of their own, between giving up on our most challenged youth or truly becoming their advocates.

Founder of Homeboy Goes To Harvard Productions, Richard shares his story as a third generation gang member who went on to earn a Master’s degree from Harvard University. He demonstrates to students and educators how he accomplished the change that occurred in his life — the change that can occur in anyone’s life.

For more information, please visit: http://homeboygoestoharvard.com/speakers/richard-santana/
Guest Presenters

June Fisher

LGBTQ and Diversity

June Fisher will present a youth only session on Wednesday, August 13, 2014 on LGBTQ and diversity issues. June Fisher, M.S.W., L.S.W., is the founder of Dynamic Training Solutions. She has been involved in the child welfare field since 1986 and is from the Southeast Region. Ms. Fisher’s knowledge and skills include working with the following populations and systems: intellectual disabilities, child welfare, trauma, mental health, and drug and alcohol. She has written and delivered curriculum on numerous topics. June has been named “Trainer of the Year” by the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center and has been an adjunct faculty member in the social work departments of West Chester, Widener and Temple University.

Office of Children, Youth, and Families

National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) Training

Staff from the Office of Children, Youth, and Families will present a NYTD (National Youth in Transition Database) training for staff only on Wednesday, August 13, 2014 from 2:45-3:45pm. The NYTD training will include topic guided, peer sharing opportunities about lessons learned, making Accurint work for NYTD staff, getting ready for the Follow Up 21 data collection period, and explore what the data may be telling us at the state and national levels.
Monday, August 11, 2014
Volleyball tournament

Tuesday, August 12, 2014
Tournaments, Open Gym and Pool Party

Wednesday, August 13, 2014
Dance and Movie Night

Thursday, August 14, 2014
Banquet and Talent Show

Special Thanks to the following Steering Committee Members!

Retreat Chairs:
Christy Marks, Austin Ely, and Meghan O’Hare

Steering Committee Members

Jill Bruce
Lori Chafers
Janice Coplin
Jon Douglas
Adriane Edney
Jessica Eller
Austin Ely
Daniel Fry
Cindy Gore
James Grimes
Maranda Hailey
Melvin Harr
Barbara Huggins
Amanda Knaub
Jadea Lee
Christy Marks
Debbie McHugh
Pamela Meterko
Al Milliner
Mariah Moore
Tracy Murphy
Chris Nobles
Meghan O’Hare
Stephanie Oliver
Katie Pomeroy
Sharliyah Rabb
Jennifer Rose
Natasha Slade
Alaysia Thompson
Jayme Toczylousky
Samantha Walker
Greta Weiss
College Experience

Youth will experience life on a college campus for a week including the excitement of living in a dorm, managing roommate issues, and utilizing campus facilities independently. This experience has motivated other youth to pursue college and reach their full potential.

Rules and Expectations

1. Attend the retreat with a positive attitude and a willingness to participate in assigned activities.
2. Carefully read registration materials and ask questions if you don’t understand.
3. Show respect for others and their property and privacy.
4. Attend all classroom sessions, activities and special events.
5. Be attentive to speakers and listen politely. Please turn off cell phones during presentations.
6. Follow your retreat schedule at all times; get to classroom sessions, activities and events early if possible.
7. Remember that we are guests of the University of Pittsburgh – please respect others on campus.
8. When in doubt, direct questions to your staff or the Retreat Steering Committee members (always located in the Student Union outside of the Cambria Room).
The **Youth Retreat Steering Committee** is made up of youth who were or who are in substitute care, representatives from county and provider Independent Living programs, the Office of Children, Youth and Families at the Department of Public Welfare, and staff at the University of Pittsburgh, School of Social Work’s Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center.