

Youth Leadership Academy Parent's Handbook

Welcome to the Youth Leadership Academy! Over the next several weeks of this exciting program your children will explore the skills needed to become leaders in the 21st century. They will learn how to use computers and the Internet, as well as how to be a team player, developing their leadership potentials. We believe that this will be a fun and educational learning experience for everyone in the program.

This handbook provides you with important information about the Youth Leadership Academy. Please spend some time reading through it to become familiar with the overall program. It includes details about the topics listed below.

ABOUT THE YOUTH LEADERSHIP ACADEMY	2
PROGRAM COMPONENTS	3
PROGRAM LOGISTICS	7
STAFF SUPPORT	8
POLICY AND PROCEDURES	9
HOME COMPUTERS	11

Sponsored by:

(Organization's name)

(Organization's address)

In partnership with

The National Urban Technology Center

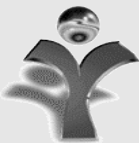
80 Maiden Lane, Suite 606

New York, NY 10038

Telephone (212) 528-7350

(800) 998-3212

<http://www.urbantech.org>



ABOUT THE YOUTH LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

The Youth Leadership Academy was developed by the National Urban Technology Center to equip youth, ages 12 to 17, with the practical skills needed to become productive, self-fulfilled and achievement-oriented adults and community leaders. It was designed to address issues such as school dropout and teen pregnancy. The program empowers young people by opening the doors to career options and new opportunities.

YLA has been implemented successfully for the past seven years and has received national recognition in the International Journal of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation (Volume 8, Number 2 – 1997), the Department of Commerce and PBS as a “model for bringing technology and training to people in inner-cities and remote rural areas”.

It Takes a Village

Urban Tech believes in the adage “it takes an entire village to raise a child” and that is reflected in the design of our curriculum. Parents, the schools, church groups, local business people and other community organizations mount a team effort. Each of these groups or “stakeholders” is tapped to play a role in the child’s development. Guest speakers from the community are invited to give presentations. Field trips are regularly scheduled throughout the program to expose the participants to the rich resources in their community. The graduation ceremony is attended by local community leaders and by all the community members who contributed to the development of the youth. The participants thus sense that the community recognizes their value in community development and their potential as community leaders.

The program involves the whole-child, extended family and the community. It incorporates a school-to-work focus, academic skill development, vocational training, cultural activities, mentoring, and leadership development.

Integrated Curriculum

The curriculum is unique in its comprehensive approach. The Academy integrates computer technology and telecommunications training with the life skills and job skills necessary to qualify for 21st century jobs. It encourages participants to become self-sufficient and instills behaviors such as punctuality, the spirit of teamwork and cooperation, and the ability to utilize constructive criticism.

Several components are integrated in the Youth Leadership Academy to accomplish the objectives: goal setting, rigorous training in technology and telecommunications, on-line applications in the curriculum, computers in the home for continual mastery of skills, mentoring, school-to-career internships and strong life skills training.

PROGRAM COMPONENTS

This section describes the major components of the program: Life Skills training, Computer Technology training, Workplace Simulation, mentors, internships, and field trips.

Class Size

Participants will work in teams of 10 to 12. The small class size offers the opportunity for individualized attention in the context of a team environment. Each participant will have a computer to use during class.

Life Skills Training

Life skills are the tools needed to effectively present oneself in the workplace, to manage one's income resourcefully, and to make healthy lifestyle choices. While computer literacy provides the necessary skills to compete in the highly technological 21st Century economy, Life Skills are essential to achieving success in the workplace. The goal of this program is to provide training in Life Skills concurrent with the acquisition of technology skills.

The Life Skills training aims to:

- develop awareness of personal potential through Life Skills topics such as Personal Appearance and Self Discovery,
- provide the skills to actualize personal potential through Life Skills topics such as Educational Planning, College Preparation, and Job Seeking,
- develop leadership skills through Life Skills topics such as Teamwork, Conflict Resolution, and Community Involvement,
- provide practical skills through Life Skills topics such as Budgets and Banking and Sexuality and Family Planning, and
- enable healthy lifestyle choices through Life Skills topics such as STI Awareness and Prevention, Substance Abuse, and Healthy Living.

Learning is facilitated through experiential and participatory learning exercises such as discussion groups, listening and debate exercises, problem solving, critical reasoning exercises and role-playing. Many of the Life Skills activities also reinforce the technology training. For example, participants use a spreadsheet to determine and graph their learning styles and they create shared documents for brainstorming sessions.

Most of the Life Skills modules are preceded by a guest speaker who introduces the topic. As a result, the participants sense that the community recognizes their involvement and their potential as community leaders.

Computer/Technology Training

Program participants receive training on a broad range of technology and telecommunication topics. They learn to apply specific computer skills in Internet, word processing and spreadsheets in combination with critical thinking, reading, and writing

skills. Participants compile a portfolio of projects for use in documenting and assessing their newly acquired skills.

Each computer training session is taught with the aid of a set of slides with an accompanying script. Each session also includes a test that is used to assess the level of understanding of the materials and stimulate questions.

Each participant uses a set of guided exercises. The exercises are detailed enough so that the participants can complete the exercises with minimal assistance from the instructor. The exercises are tested at a reading level that is accessible to most youth.

The following is a summary of the computer skills acquired in the program.

Computer Fundamentals

Participants acquire the skills necessary to operate comfortably in the Windows environment using the mouse and the keyboard. They create, copy, move, and delete files on the different storage devices. They learn to import text and to integrate images and pictures.

Internet

Participants learn to access the World Wide Web, to search for and retrieve information from the Internet, and to send and receive electronic mail. Each participant creates a personal Web Page that is published to the Internet. Participants learn to use text and color effectively, to create a page for viewing on multiple platforms, and to include photo images and animations to create visually appealing pages. Participants hone their Internet search skills using the Hot Link Library links and activity in the Interface.

Word Processing

Participants learn to use word processing software to create reports, letters, flyers, cards and mailing labels. They learn to create visually appealing documents using techniques such as clip art and drawings, bullets, shading, lines and boxes, multiple fonts, and tables.

Worksheets and Charts

Participants learn to create a worksheet for analyzing and displaying numerical data. They learn to add formulas, edit the worksheet, and format titles and headings for additional categories. They also learn to create and use a pie chart for analyzing their budget.

Web Design

Participants acquire the skills necessary to design and develop Web Pages for publication to the Internet. They are able to use text and color effectively. They are able to use tables to layout pages. They learn how to test pages on multiple platforms. They learn how to add graphics to enhance the appearance of a Web page. When completed, program staff create a team Web Site that links to all participant Web Pages and publish them to the Internet.

Computer Assembly/ Home PC

In the Computer Assembly course, called *Nuts and Bolts*, participants study the fundamentals of computer assembly and maintenance; and install a PC system with applications for use at home. They also learn the procedures for PC preventive maintenance.

Digital Audio

Participants learn to use software that allows them to create, record and share digital sound. Students can compose and share music files over the Internet using the skills acquired in these activities.

Checking Your Skills

Checking Your Skills are short, objective quizzes that test participants' knowledge of the computer curriculum. Participants take the 5-question CYS quiz at the end of each module of the Computer Essentials, Computer Proficiency, Nuts & Bolts and Digital Audio curricula. The quizzes are located online under Tests & Quizzes in the Apollo Administration System, and are scored automatically by the system.

Mavis Beacon Typing Tutor

Included with the YLA package, the *Mavis Beacon* keyboarding tutorial software is installed on all participant workstations as well as on the Home PCs to encourage participants to develop correct keyboarding techniques.

Workplace Simulation

A key component of the Academy is the use of a computer-based workplace simulation offered in partnership with Classroom, Inc. These simulations engage participants in activities that help them experience the world of work and develop the skills necessary to be productive members of society.

Participants must work together to gather and analyze information, identify problems, evaluate solutions, make decisions, and discover the consequences of their actions. Through the workplace simulations, participants strengthen the technology and Life Skills components of the program. Key goals include the acquisition of entrepreneurial attitudes and the broadening of career horizons.

Mentors

Mentors are trusted people who take a special interest in your child's development. Community leaders from schools, churches, business and other local organizations are recruited to act as mentors to program participants. The main goal of the mentoring component is to enable participants to develop relationships with other caring adults who will serve as role models and provide participants with additional information about careers which use technology.

Mentors agree to e-mail participants once each day to share information about their jobs and technology and to respond to participant's questions and concerns. To balance respect for privacy with protection for the participants, copies of all of the e-mail that mentors send to the participants are forwarded to the Class Coordinator and to the participant's parents or guardians. Participant's e-mail to their mentors will be kept confidential.

Mentors also meet face-to-face with the participants twice a month at their workplace or at some other site where the participants can be exposed to technological careers. Mentors are encouraged to join with other mentors for these meetings. Participants are matched with the mentors according to their particular interests and needs.

Internships

Internships provide opportunities for participants to explore the applications of information technology in various careers such as multimedia production, retailing, engineering, healthcare, entertainment, education, sports, accounting, law, and computer assembly. Internships take place after the in-class training is complete.

Participants are assigned to work in local businesses where they learn the day-to-day operations and use computers to assist employers with planned projects. These internships give participants an opportunity to practice life skills in an actual work setting.

There may be a limited number of internships available in the sponsoring organization. Youth could assist with the community training programs or work with the Technical Support Coordinator to upgrade home PCs.

Field Trips

The goal of the program is to broaden the horizons of the participants and open their minds to the endless possibilities available to them. Field trips play a key part in this goal. Field trips will be scheduled each week if possible and will relate to the curriculum topics taught during the week. After the field trip, each participant will write a short paragraph describing what she/he learned from the trip.

PROGRAM LOGISTICS

Location

[Replace with location, use the paragraph as a sample]

The Youth Leadership Academy will be held at Concord Family Services. The Concord Family Services building is on 1221 Bedford Avenue, Bedford-Stuyvesant in Brooklyn, between Halsey and Hancock Streets.

By subway: Take the A line and get off at the Nostrand Avenue stop. Walk down Fulton Street, past Arlington, take a right onto Bedford Avenue and go one block.

By bus: Take the #44 Limited bus along Bedford Avenue and get off at the Concord Family Services building. The building is white and green with large windows and Computer Training signs in front. The telephone number is (999) 000-0000.

Schedule

[Replace with schedule, use the paragraph as a sample]

The Youth Leadership Academy is a six-week summer program. It begins on Tuesday, July 5 and ends on Friday, August 19. The program runs from 9:30 to 2:00, Monday through Friday. You will receive a copy of the daily schedule at the Family Meeting.

Family Meetings

Extended family participation is crucial to the success of this program and the development of our youth. There will be [#] scheduled family meetings. Discussions will include program outlines, home computers, participant progress, mentorship and internship opportunities. The family meetings are a time for you and your child to give feedback and to ask questions about the program. You will receive a detailed schedule of the family meetings and the graduation ceremony at the first parents' meeting.

Graduation and Certificate of Completion

Graduation is a joyous event! Family members, mentors, guest speakers, everyday heroes, employers, staff, and community leaders will be invited to celebrate participants' successful completion of the Youth Leadership Academy. Participants' accomplishments will be displayed at this time.

A keynote speaker will be invited to acknowledge your child's achievements and encourage their hopes for a bright and rewarding future. Your child will receive a certificate of completion.

STAFF SUPPORT

The Youth Leadership Academy provides an extended team and support network to aid the participants. This section describes the roles of each of the team members.

Instructor

- be the primary trainer in Life Skills and Computer Skills
- be part of the coaching team to give participants constant feedback on their progress
- provide linkage to the internship program
- be a mentor and friend committed to helping participants achieve their goals

Class Coordinator

- assist the instructor in managing behavior
- listen to the participants' needs and help them find whatever support they need
- be a part of the coaching and evaluation team
- arrange family meetings and call home in case of emergencies

Program Administrator

- be an ambassador to program families
- work with community leaders to link participants with internships
- advocate for the program among community-based organizations and businesses

Mentor

- introduce the professional world to the participant
- show the participant what it takes to achieve a successful career
- share with the participant their dreams, goals, and challenges
- assist the participant in achieving objectives

Job Coach

- facilitate mentor-participant relationships
- recruit local businesses to sponsor the youth
- observe job performance of interns daily
- introduce participants to a professional environment
- assist participants in job placement

Technical Support Coordinator

- configure , install, and maintain computers and databases
- provide daily checks and troubleshoot problems
- cooperate with instructors to increase use of available resources for participants
- publish participants' web pages, teach computer installation, participate in meetings

POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Daily Attendance

Being a leader in the professional world requires consistency and promptness. Attendance at all sessions is a requirement. Lateness is not acceptable. If for some reason the participant must be late or absent, prior notice is necessary. Please let the class coordinator know by calling or by sending a written note. Participants with more than three unexcused absences must meet with the program administrator to reaffirm their commitment to the program.

Appropriate Attire

We ask that the participants begin “practicing” to be leaders from day one by wearing appropriate attire. They should dress comfortably and wear clothing that does not expose body parts or promote or make reference to sex, drugs, alcohol, profanity, or violence.

The following clothing is considered inappropriate:

- loose, baggy jeans below the waist
- tight or cut-off shorts, short-shorts, mini-skirts
- hats/caps and sun glasses worn indoors
- midriffs, T-shirts, or tank tops exposing the upper body

Parental Agreement Forms

You will be asked to sign several forms to indicate your consent to the program activities. The following is a list of the forms and their purpose.

- Parent Consent Form
 - Consent to Collection of Information
 - Consent to Field Trips
 - Consent to Sex Education
 - Consent to Participation in Mentor and Internship Programs
- Home Computer Parental Agreement
- Parental Program Evaluation

Participant Evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation process is to help participant growth.

Participants’ progress is evaluated daily. Each participant maintains a portfolio consisting of projects completed during the course of the program. Evaluations are based on this portfolio and a variety of other things such as acquired skills and conduct.

Each participant signs a behavior contract in which she/he agrees to the following daily goals:

1. **ATTENDANCE:** I will be on time to class every day.
2. **APPEARANCE:** I will wear clean, neat, appropriate attire and practice good personal hygiene.
3. **RESPECT:** I will treat others with respect and common courtesy.

4. **LEADERSHIP/TEAMWORK:** I will get involved, cooperate and communicate effectively with my teammates, my instructor and other program members.
5. **ON-TASK:** I will complete each day's work as instructed and on time.
6. **MOTIVATION:** I will have a positive attitude about learning new things and do my very best each day.

HOME COMPUTERS

Each participant will receive a refurbished computer for use at home. It will serve as a link between the participant and mentors, schools, job banks, and health and human services.

This can also benefit you because you can acquire or reinforce computer skills while participating in your child's development.

Learning a new procedure or process to accomplish an activity requires practice on a regular basis. Having a computer at home will enable the participant to refine and eventually master technology skills. The Internet provides a world of information that home computers enable participants to access.

Computer Configuration

The participant will receive a refurbished PC that meets current standards and minimum requirements.

[insert here specifications for the machine configuration]

Home Requirements

Computers should be installed on a sturdy desk or table that is at least 25 inches deep by 26 inches wide with access to a normal 115-volt house electric outlet within 6 feet. A 6-foot power strip will be supplied. You must have an existing telephone service account and the room must have a telephone jack in order to connect to the Internet.

Applications and Exercises for Home

The participant will have two basic types of home assignments. The first type is to develop keyboarding skills by using the supplied typing tutor program. This is a self-paced training program that allows the participants to develop the necessary keyboard skills at their own pace. We recommend that the participants spend at least 30 minutes a day using the program.

The second type of home assignment is given at the workshops during the program. This can range from writing a short e-journal entry to searching the Internet for information on a subject for the next day's class. These assignments are informative and fun and will demonstrate the value of using the Internet for homework.

Internet Access

[insert here a description of the Internet access to be provided]

Technical Support

As part of the program, participants will learn how to install and maintain a home computer during the *Nuts & Bolts* training and hands-on exercises. This will help solve many of the basic problems. There will be a telephone number to call for problems that

the participant cannot resolve. If the problem cannot be fixed over the phone, there will be support on a carry-in basis.

Before the home computers are distributed, you will be invited to attend a family meeting where computer use and maintenance will be discussed.

Parental permission is required to receive the home computer system. Technical support will be provided for 90 days from the original date of receipt. Support will include labor and parts. Any personal computer requiring repair after the 90-day warranty is the responsibility of the parent.

[insert here a list of local resources that can provide technical support past the warranty period]