

FOSTER CARE
AWARENESS
MONTH

2020 Webinar Series



Topic: Youth Empowerment and Voice; "Ask A Coach"



family**tapestry**

Youth Encouraging Advocacy and Hope Collaboration

Kane Jaggers: Independent Living and Adoption supervisor

Laura Garza-Martinez: Independent Living Specialist A-L

Josh Garcia: Independent Living Specialist M-Z

PAL@familytapestry.org

History of Youth Advisory Committees

Benefits

- Asking the expert
- Bridging the gaps of service delivery
- Encourage emotional, social and cognitive development
- Seeing 20/20 in the parallel vision

Barriers

- Membership sustainability
- Transportation
- Resources

Success

- Youth “buy in”
- Community leadership
- Lifelong connections

“By involving youth in the development of the foster care system we can transform a system that will work with them not against them”



YEAH Program Overview

- ▶ What is YEAH?
 - ▶ Promoted positive transformations within the foster care system
 - ▶ Development of skills to ensure future success of youth
- ▶ YEAH Structure
 - ▶ Monthly meetings and activities
 - ▶ Youth-led advocacy
- ▶ Membership Eligibility
 - ▶ Legal case out of Region 8A
 - ▶ In care for at least 6 months
 - ▶ Between 14 and 22 years old
 - ▶ Actively attending school (if applicable)
 - ▶ Be in good standing at current placement
- ▶ Application Process
 - ▶ Send application and 1 letter of reference to PAL@familytapestry.org

Recruitment and Benefits



15 to 20 active members



Members will have a mentor assigned



Build lifelong relationships with peers and supportive adults



Leadership opportunities

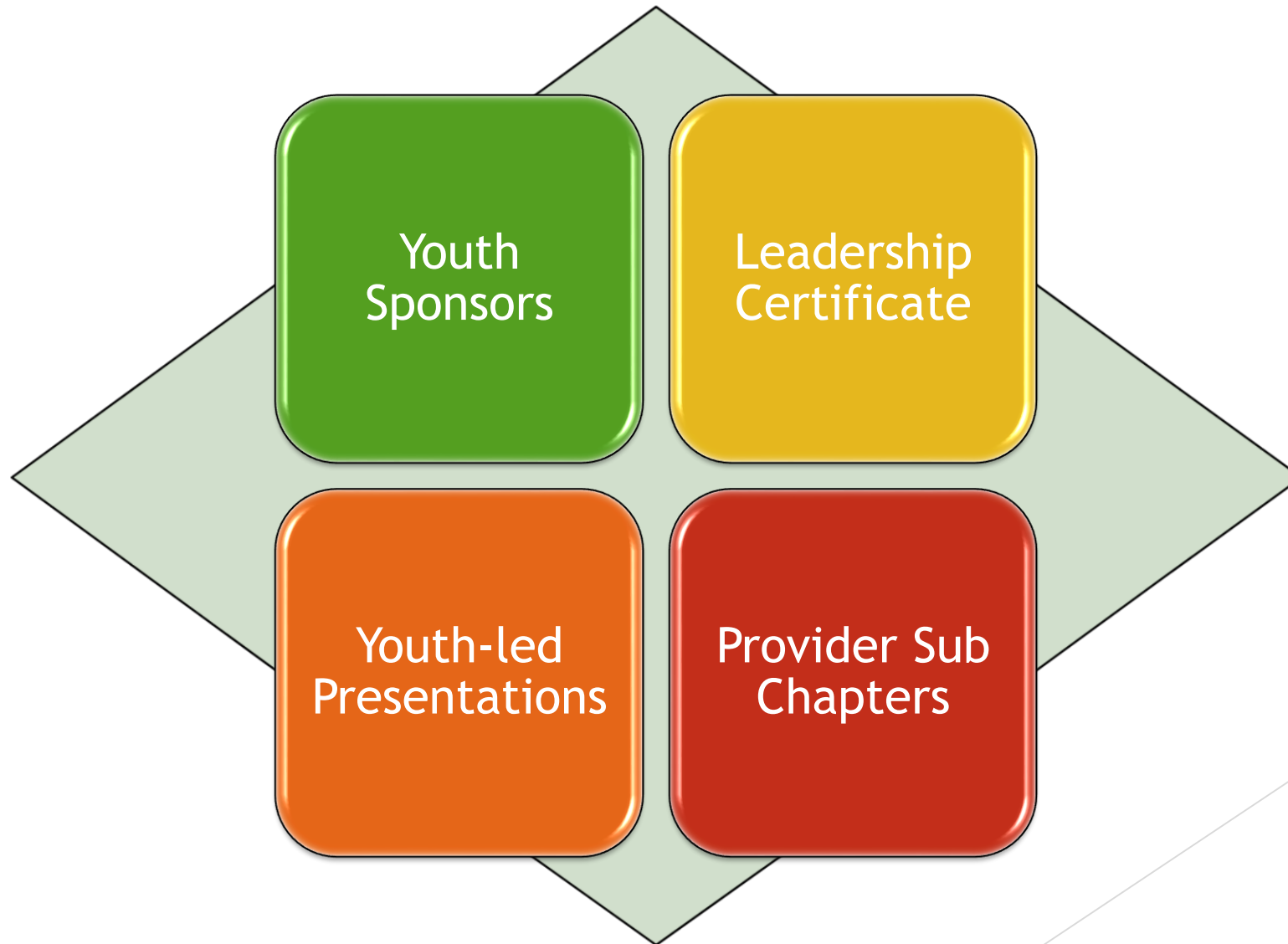


Exposure and skills to be used on job/college applications and resumes



Day at the Capitol

Strategic Planning for YEAH





**YOUTH ENGAGEMENT,
VOICE & ADVOCACY,
VIRTUAL
RECRUITMENT**

**MARCOS CARMONA
SAN ANTONIO YOUTH ACTION BOARD
SARAH**



WHAT IS THE YAB?

- Youth Homeless Demonstration Project (YHDP)
- Mission: *“The San Antonio YAB is dedicated to promoting youth voice through community collaboration, equity, and empowerment. We also strive to inspire all communities to end youth homelessness through education, resourcefulness, and support.”*
- Vision: *“The San Antonio YAB envisions an altruistic world without youth homelessness.”*

HOW THE YAB OPERATES

- Meetings
 - Advising the YHDP process
 - Developing organizational structure
 - Planning for community events
- Development of Bylaws
 - Executive council and voting members
 - Establishing payment
 - Eligibility Requirements

WHERE THE YAB WANTS TO BE

- S.M.A.R.T Goals

1. YAB can visit/meet with 3 representatives/community leaders to discuss the change we need to see.
2. Participate in (determine number)events to promote us being more well known in 2020.
3. Compose a more diverse group of YAB members and recruit 8 more dedicated members.
4. Have YAB members have 80% attendance for all YAB meetings.
5. 100 followers on Instagram and 50 on Twitter.

THANK YOU

- Follow us on social media!
- Twitter: @yabsanantonio
- Instagram: @yabsanantonio

YOUTH ACTION COUNCIL

BCFES WEBINAR SERIES



HEY, MY NAME IS MJ!

- **BCFES Lead Youth Specialist and College Bound Docket Advocate**
- **Former foster youth**
- **Undergrad student at UTSA**



WHAT IS THE YOUTH ACTION COUNCIL (YAC)?

The purpose of the YAC is to offer a space where the “youth voice” can be heard. It is easy for adults to gather around and talk about new programs and ways to help former and current foster youth- but if you haven’t been through the system, then how can you fully understand how to help?



With the YAC, we are able to engage and be included in decision-making that affects our lives.

(Capacity Building, Center for States, 2016)

WHAT DOES YOUTH INVOLVEMENT LOOK LIKE?

- Access to ways to participate in leadership and decision making
- Hold meetings regularly
- Create advocacy campaigns
- Create an official group name
- Elect officer
- Organize and provide training
- Plan social and educational events
- Influence university and state policy
- Build essential life skills
- Form healthy supportive relationships and community connection
- Receive incentives for participation

WHAT DO I MEAN BY THE “YOUTH VOICE”?

Often times, the greatest impact an individual can make on influencing a population or group is that the person has walked and lived through that path.

Throughout time within the foster care system, whether it's only a few weeks or your entire childhood- there has never been a time a caseworker sat down with me and asked, “What matters to you?”

Unfortunately, most of the tough decisions that have to be made are for good reasons and intentions.

As the youth grow older and into young adults, there is a time a place for us to speak up on behalf of our experiences and where we want to see change and positive impact being made. The YOUTH VOICE is empowering and will make the greatest difference and influence.

THE 5 DIMENSIONS FOR YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

1. Resources

2. Infrastructure

3. Knowledge and skills

4. Engagement and partnership

5. Culture and climate

WHAT ARE THE YOUTH REQUIREMENTS?

- **Current or past-history in foster care**
- **Age 16-25**
- **Currently enrolled or interested in enrolling at UTSA, Texas A& M or Alamo Colleges**
 - **Actively participates in a campus support program**
- **A desire to lead and advocate for change**
- **Interest in developing or strengthen leadership skills**
- **2.0 or higher GPA**
- **Must attend meetings (duration will be determined by youth)**
- **Must be willing to mentor other FCA, if needed.**
- **Enroll in SARA H or Family Tapestry Youth Board**

WHAT ELSE IS INVOLVED FOR THE YOUTH?



- Youth must work collaboratively
- Regular Council Meetings-
 - weekly (summer)
 - bi-monthly meetings (Fall & Spring):
- Members agree on the duration of meetings
- Must discuss issues relative to foster and adopted use access to and barrier from obtaining higher education
- Attend monthly project meeting
 - Provide updates to larger steering committee (all or at least one rep)
 - brings issues/concerns/goals/update to meeting-
 - prepared ahead of time to be discussed in the committee meetings
- Incentives for involvement/engagement
 - Stipend match (SARAH/Family Tapestry)
 - Increased incentives for every meeting/event
 - Provide an avenue for other student input and involvement for youth not active in the youth board

SO, WHAT'S IN IT FOR THE YOUTH?

- TEACHES YOUTH HOW TO TAKE INITIATIVE AND BUILD ACCOUNTABILITY
- EMPOWER YOUTH TO ADVOCATE FOR THEMSELVES
- BUILD NETWORKS, ENCOURAGE MENTORSHIP, AND EXPLORE CAREER PATHS
- YOUTH WILL BUILD PROFESSIONAL SKILLS IN A PROFESSIONAL ENVIRONMENT
- SUPPORTS RESILIENCY, AUTONOMY AND WELL-BEING
- PROVIDES OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEADERSHIP, CRITICAL THINKING, DECISION-MAKING AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Youth Engagement Blueprint Series

AS WELL AS...

Financial incentives

Stipend for attendance to meeting*

Micro-scholarship to Pilot institutions

Leadership opportunities

President

Vice President

Secretary

Chairs:

-training/workshops

-outreach

-social events

-campus involvement

-campus support program:

Processes

Learning communities

Special events, etc.

Graduation Cord

Opportunity to be a part of a community Advocacy (campus, community, state and federal policy)



Contact Airika Buford at Airika.buford@utsa.edu or
210-458-5753

Lead youth specialist: MJ
college.bound.advocate@gmail.com



CONTACT INFORMATION FOR
YOUTH INTERESTED IN YAC!