

THE IMPACT OF LEADERSHIP TRAINING  
ON HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS  
WITH DISABILITIES

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for  
The Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the  
Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

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2003

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## ABSTRACT

Leadership development programs for high school students with disabilities are few and far between. This mixed-method, qualitative-quantitative study was to determine the impact of a leadership development program in Ohio called the Youth Leadership Forum (YLF). Modeled after a similar program in California, this program brings approximately 35-40 high school students to Ohio's capital to learn how to become an effective leader.

Small and large group sessions also covered topics such as disability history and culture, transition from high school to employment and/or post-secondary opportunities, advocacy skills, rights and responsibilities, American with Disabilities and § 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and its amendments and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Students were invited to the 4-day free-of-charge forum after completing an application form, submitting an essay and sitting through an interview process. Delegates were then notified via phone call and letter upon admission into the program.

Ohio has operated four forums beginning in the year of 1999. Data was collected retrospectively (from the delegates) for years 1999-2001. The year 2002 forum researcher immersed himself in the forum to become an active participant to gain



a qualitative understanding of the forum's happenings. Quantitative data was also used to back up the general findings of the forum with use of surveys and questionnaires.

Longitudinal surveys were also completed by the 2002 delegates six months later to see if the forum had any long term impact.

The quantitative results of this study indicated that youth delegates who attended the leadership program improved skills in leadership, potential to be a leader, agent of change potential, knowledge of laws and regulations and self-advocacy.

The qualitative results of the study indicated that youth delegates who participated in the forum established peer relationships, mentor relationships, improved self-esteem, motivation, provided commitment to long term leadership, and development planning. Additional observation and text provided research that solidified the views of non-disabled peers and the importance of email/internet usage.

In conclusion, this study indicated the importance of leadership development programs for students with disabilities. Opportunities such as YLF will provide a whole new generation of leaders with disabilities who can "carry the torch" to a new generation.



Dedicated to the memory of my mother, Maxine Eleanor Bauer, who has given me the “fabric” needed to believe in myself when others wouldn’t. Also dedicated to Mary Ella, Grant and Maddie who constantly remind me what a family really is. To my loving sisters, Sherry and Bonnie, who always give me the encouragement to “go to the next level.”



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As a person with a disability I have been blessed with meeting many people in my life who have encouraged me and assisted my aspirations to “go for my dreams”. It is not possible to thank all of the people who have touched my life in ways that I cannot thank them enough. However, I want to acknowledge my committee for their tireless efforts and encouragement they have given me throughout the years of my Ph.D. program. All of them have outstanding strengths in the repertoire of talents, and all share a commitment to excellence in education at The Ohio State University.

I would like to thank, above all, my advisor, Dr. Bruce S. Growick, who has provided me the opportunity to become the educator I have always wanted to become. His tireless support has been heartfelt. His encouragement and direction has lifted my abilities to a higher ground by stretching my imagination and reminding me to be the best I can be.

To Frances James-Brown, I say thank you for exposing me to the world of qualitative research in a way that has had a profound impact on my personal and professional life. If not for Frances’s encouragement and ability to allow me to think “outside the box”, I don’t think I would have gotten the drive to stretch my way of thinking of research.



To Michael Klein, the father of Rehabilitation Services at OSU, I am privileged to have you as a part of my committee. I thank you for your constant words of encouragement and advice throughout my doctoral program. I feel very fortunate to have Dr. Klein as a part of my doctoral committee.

To the staff of the Ohio Governor's Council on People with Disabilities, Karla, Maureen and Marcella, I would like to thank them for allowing me to do this evaluation and do it with their expertise. Thank you for your patience as I collected the data and analyzed it. And to the Ohio Governor's Council on People with Disabilities Youth Leadership Forum Committee staff and volunteers, you are the heart of this forum, it's hope and it's dreams. Thank you for your assistance and patience during the data collection procedures.

I would be remiss if I did not thank a friend who has been a constant source of support throughout my doctoral years. Her constant "lending ear" has been utilized throughout my program and her spirit is much appreciated. Dollie, thanks. To my good friend Jim Piazza, thank you for always being there to listen to my trials and hardships during the program and seeing me through to the finish.



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### Research Publication

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2. Bauer, W.M. (1997, June -present). Disability issues. *Marietta Times (monthly)*.
3. Bauer, W.M. (1986). *Aquatics and exceptional needs: Teacher handbook*.
4. Bauer, W.M. (1986, January 5). Handicapped rights. *Marietta AM*.
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## FIELD OF STUDY

Major Field: Education  
Rehabilitation Services



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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

In the year 2000, the United States celebrated the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Also in that same year, the Education for All Handicapped Act (P.L. 94-142), later known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. These landmark events shifted how the United States viewed the experience of disability in school, home and in the community. The ADA called for society to open the doors to people with disabilities by taking responsibility for removing physical, informational, programmatic, and attitudinal barriers. ADA also guaranteed the civil rights of Americans with disabilities, in addition, it also opened opportunities for Americans with disabilities to take up their civic and community responsibilities.

At the same time, IDEA continued in the spirit of the Education for All Handicapped Act (P.L. 94-142) and provided education in schools across America in the “least restrictive environment”.

For the last three years, the Ohio Governor’s Council on People with Disabilities implemented a Youth Leadership Forum for high school juniors and seniors with disabilities who have been impacted in one way or another by IDEA and/or ADA. This successful program, going on its fifth year, brings together approximately 35 students



with students to Columbus to enhance their leadership qualities. Modeled after a California project, the Ohio Youth Leadership Forum for people with disabilities is unique to Ohio and provides a multitude of experiences as described further in this dissertation paper. With broad support from major state disability service organizations in this program, both financially and in-kind, the Ohio YLF brings together staff and delegates to a 4-day forum to explore disability history, culture, identity and leadership. To judge the effectiveness of this program, a major component of the Forum has been missing, a comprehensive evaluation of the impact the forum has had on its participants/delegates.

### Statement of the Problem

Not much has been done in Ohio, or even across the nation, as far as developing a new generation of leaders to meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Developing leadership and self-determination skills of students with disabilities is especially important given the current trends in education. Despite legislation providing full access to education in schools and community inclusion for individuals with disabilities, few efforts have been made to prepare youth and young adults with disabilities to function effectively in leadership roles. As with other minority groups, including persons of color and women, representation of disabled leaders in mainstream leadership positions is low. Although students with disabilities represent approximately 10% of the student population in public schools (National Center for Education Statistics, 1999), few efforts have been made to address the specific interests and needs with disability leadership initiatives.



Why has nothing been done to promote leadership development among students with disabilities? The answer, in part, lies on our traditional perceptions of disability. The traditional medical model of disability views disability as a deficit that resides within the individual. The solution to disability related problems in this model is to “fix” the disabled individual. Students with disabilities have generally been thought of as passive recipients of services, not active change agents. Therefore, they are not thought of when we think of leaders (Hahn, 1985, 1988).

The interactional model of disability, representing a new way of thinking, view disability as a difference. Disability-related problems in this model do not reside within the individual, but occur when the person with the disability interacts with a society designed for its non-disabled peers. In this view, society needs “fixing”, not the individual (Hahn 1985, 1988). This societal environment needs to be adapted to welcome a wide range of human differences. In this model, it is natural to think of individuals with disabilities as potential leaders, ideally suited to guide the way in making our environment accessible to all individuals.

According to the Eisenhower Leadership Group (Sorenson et al., 1996), leadership education allows students to become full participants in the democratic enterprise. New models of collaborative and participatory leadership empower those with little power and few resources. “The new model of leadership enables students to discover they are worthy and competent, and because they are both, they can make a difference (p.8). Full integration and the capability of students with disabilities to achieve autonomy will not



occur until quality opportunities for leadership training, designed by and tailored to the needs of students with disabilities, are available to them.

Because of the training this researcher had in 1998 by immersing himself into the California Model, the Ohio Governor's Council on People with Disabilities was uniquely postured to fill a gap in leadership education, which to this date (1999) had not been developed for high school students with disabilities. Its theoretical model of leadership was fully informed by competing theories of leadership, with the important additional level of disability culture.

In this study, students in past forums were empowered to envision themselves as leaders and as members of alliances between disabled and non-disabled students and staff. Further, students in the past three forums gained multiple perspectives of organizations and how they could work within complex systems.

With the California model as its "skeleton" model, the Ohio YLF staff developed a conceptual model of leadership that is based on current thinking about leadership development and is placed in the context of the disability culture. Self-identity and identity with one's peer group serve as a foundation for leadership development. For individuals with disabilities, this identity includes:

- Pride in oneself as a disabled person,
- Identification with other disabled people as a peer group, and
- Viewing one's group as a part of a unique culture, the disability culture.

Once individuals feel comfortable with themselves and feel part of a supportive group, they are open to think of themselves as potential leaders both within and beyond



that group. However, leadership “exists only in relationships” (Bolman & Deal, 1999, p.404), and an important part of becoming a leader is learning to interact with other individuals and groups. Students experience alliances between one group that has disabilities and another, between disabled and non-disabled groups, and between students and staff. At the Ohio YLF, non-disabled staff were welcomed and valued for the perspectives and experiences they could bring to the alliances, while at the same time, staff are challenged to examine their role in the disability movement. A number of staff currently hold positions in state and local governments, human service organizations, college and university personnel and business. As members of the alliances that are formed, students empower themselves to form coalitions that take action to affect the larger system or organization when they return to their school or community.

Leadership development is an increasingly important aspect for the future of our younger generation. The mission of the Ohio Governor’s Council on People with Disabilities (GCPD) Youth Leadership Program is to cultivate and support a cadre of students with disabilities who are grounded in and drive their leadership identity in the American Disability Culture. It is hoped that a long-term benefit of this program will be that delegates become future members of GCPD.

Despite enormous improvements in education for students with disabilities and improvement in public access, few efforts have been made to prepare youth and young adults with disabilities to function in leadership roles. Perhaps efforts have not been made, by this current generation of leaders, to “carry the torch” to a younger generation of leaders. This leadership development program is based on current thinking about



leadership development and places emphasis on understanding the disability culture. There are simply not many leadership activities for students with disabilities. In this model, self-identity and identity to one's peer group serve as a foundation for leadership development.

In addition, an important part of becoming a leader is learning to interact with other individuals and groups, one of which has not been tried in Ohio until recently. It is important for students to experience alliances with their peer groups and to work within systems to assist students with disabilities in discovering the power within themselves, in understanding how organizations work, and in developing leadership skills that they can use to contribute to the common good.

#### Purpose of the Rationale

Young people with disabilities have more opportunities and more challenges at any other time in our nation's history. With the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act), young people with disabilities have unprecedented opportunities to fulfill meaningful lives as constructive, contributing members of society. However, many ways of encouragement and information about resources to develop as leaders is often unavailable. The forum enables delegates to learn from each other and befriend successful adults with disabilities who are recognized as leaders, role models and who can also serve as mentors. The forum benefits not only the participants (delegates), but also all young people with or without



disabilities, our communities in general, and adults who assist in the program activities and presentations.

The forum also allows the sharing of information with each other. Educational programs include topics as: “developing self-esteem”, “choosing a career”, “the history of disability as a culture”, and “assistive technology for independence”. In addition delegates identify existing barriers to personal and professional success and develop plans to deal with those barriers.

As a young body of students with disabilities, the delegates as a whole develop public policy recommendations to the Governor’s Council on People with Disabilities who in turn make recommendations to the Governor of Ohio and the Chair of the President’s Committee on the Employment of People with Disabilities in Washington, D.C. The purpose of my study will describe the Ohio Youth Leadership Forum for Students with Disabilities Leadership program using a grounded theory design for my qualitative component and a survey design for my quantitative component.

The study will also explore affective (feelings), social (place in society) and educational (key learnings) factors that may have contributed to gaining an improved self-esteem, emancipation and self-advocacy skills, which in turn, will improve leadership potential and capabilities. The study will also show the impact of the Ohio Youth Leadership Forum for students with disabilities both the short and long term effect.



## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

There has been little research that has explored the effects of the Youth Leadership Forums across the United States, specifically students with disabilities, on the relationship among the impact of its forum and leadership. The researcher; however, performed a thematic literature review (Creswell, 2002) to encompass the main components of the forum. The issues surrounding disability culture, leadership and transition for youth with disabilities is reviewed briefly by obtaining research documents from experts in the aforementioned fields.

#### Background on YLF

In 1989, the California Governor's Committee on the Employment of People with Disabilities (CCEPD) decided to promote the employment of disabled persons more effectively by inspiring and preparing young people with disabilities to overcome the barriers to social participation they confront more fully as they become adults. The CCEPD began by establishing a 4-day training program that aimed to accomplish various objectives such as: an awareness of civic rights and responsibilities, exposure to academic and career goals, motivation techniques to develop leadership potential, appreciation of



cultural history of disability and provide avenues for young people with disabilities to gain an understanding of leadership, independence, and personal and career goal setting.

The first Leadership Forum for Students with Disabilities was in California in 1992. The researcher and colleague Maureen Fitzgerald, Program Director of the Ohio Governor's Council on People with Disabilities, attended YLF training in 1997 in hopes to bring this unique program to Ohio in 1999. The researcher also attended the 1998 forum in California to immerse in the program to gain an understanding of the California's mission and accomplishments. After a year of planning the first YLF in Ohio was held at the Ohio State University in late July of 1999 and has been held at the Radisson Airport Hotel in Columbus, Ohio, since 2000. Reasons for the switch of sights will be mentioned later in the dissertation.

### Disability Culture

“Disability is not a brave ‘brave struggle’ or ‘courage in the face of adversity’ .... Disability is an art. It’s an ingenious way to live.”  
(Neil Marcus, 1993)

For the past two decades, people with disabilities have been portrayed as tragedies whose lives are spent trying to fit into the normalcy of society (Finkelstein, 1987). For some disability is a medical condition; to others it is really nothing at all, a minor difference best overlooked and unmentioned (Longmore & Umansky, 2001).

Disability is however, a struggle to secure independence by battling the powerful political and cultural groups and attitudes possessed by people without disabilities. There



is confusion about the continued fight to fit into a non-disabled world. Rather than continuing to fight, many argue that the world must be changed to embrace and adapted to people with disabilities (Brown, 1992).

Despite all of the factors that limit people with disabilities, disability is largely defined by the medical model of disability as physiological pathologies located within individuals. This model views cure or correction as the only means by which people with disabilities could achieve social acceptance and social assimilation (Longmore, 1995). In a report by Robertson (1994) to Projects LEEDS curriculum committee, people with disabilities have been developing a new group consciousness. This consciousness reflects people with disabilities experience of societal oppression and an emerging disability culture. This culture has the potential to support not only individuals with disabilities, but the larger disability civil rights movement.

People with disabilities live in a society that expresses fear, pity, hostility, and condescension toward them. On one hand, people with disabilities experience a vast array of discrimination in employment, education, housing, and other avenues of life. On the other, they receive praise for being “superhuman”, or an “inspiration” for people without disabilities (Longmore, 1987). To some disability is a medical condition, to others disability is a curse.



Longmore and Umansky (2001), state that “people with disabilities themselves, as individuals and in organized associations, have, in all eras, struggled to control definitions of their social identity, to direct their social careers.” (p.2)

The implications of the medical model are profound for people with disabilities. Its definition of disability ignores the social factors affecting the lives of people with disabilities. Also, the negative attention given by the medical and social services field creates oppressive stereotypes of people with disabilities. These stereotypes create the notion that people with disabilities need decisions made on their behalf which could result in a less-than-acceptable lifestyle for that individual. For example, current policies typically don’t provide the kind of in-home attendant services that would allow people with disabilities to live in their own home, independently, at a far less cost than nursing homes (Shapiro, 1993).

Many people with disabilities believe they are the source of monetary gain for medical agencies and organizations. A huge sum of money is directed toward the “disabled industry” making it profitable for some in the medical and social organizations. Finally, advocates of people with disabilities challenge organizations like the Muscular Dystrophy Association and Easter Seals for their dependence on images of disability, one that causes pity toward people with disabilities. This type of disability image further supports the medical model.



The new generation of activism has presented a critique of the medical model. It has argued that by locating the problem in the bodies of individuals with disabilities, the medical model cannot account for, let alone combat, the bias and discrimination faced by people with disabilities. It has institutionalized prejudice and discrimination (Longmore, 1995).

A second function of the medical model is definitional control (Gamson, 1992). If disability is defined as a flaw of the individual rather than a social limit requiring broader societal change, the flaw has been on the individual adaptation for the ostensible convenience of the larger society (Longmore, 1993). For a large number of people, prejudice is a larger problem than the impairment itself. To the non-disabled, people with disabilities do not want equal opportunity; they instead want special treatment (Casey Martin case 1999). This in turn, creates the notion that you cannot be equal and have a disability.

Rehabilitating the individual has been one of the means to assisting people with disabilities to function like the non-disabled peer. Rehabilitation could mean striving to use crutches instead of a wheelchair or teaching the deaf to speak. Although rehab may make the person appear more “normal”, it really doesn’t result in the actual increase in of functioning in society. Discrimination against people on the grounds of “non-normal” bodies or intellectual capacity places them outside the mainstream of social life. In order to participate meaningfully within the community, members must actively engage in the issues that confront them. In doing this, they provide the material for their own cultural development that is self-determining and self-governing (Finkelsten & Morrison, 1993).



One way to weaken the definitional model is to elaborate on the social nature of the definition. Using the idea of heroes as it pertains to culture in general is one way to achieve this. A hero is someone who does something courageous. Many people in every community perform heroic deeds. By the nature of the way people with disabilities in this society are treated, there had to be heroes with disabilities in every community. This can best be defined as people who rose above everyday routine, who performed some action that moved beyond the expected and into the exceptional (Brown, 1992).

In the Youth Leadership Forum, a hero and mentor are used simultaneously. The mentors' heroes ultimate task is to communicate to people who insist on the exclusive evidence of their senses (Campbell, 1949). To become more flexible in thinking about disability issues encourages a socio-political paradigm of disability. This paradigm promotes positive views of disability to help disseminate the stereotypes brought about by the medical definition. This world-view places the disability in a societal context rather than on the individual with a disability. It provides argument for removing the physical and attitudinal barriers for people with disabilities.

The movement for emotional reactions and beliefs regarding issues such as eugenic abortion, nursing homes, community access, entitlement to accommodation, media images and "special" anything are becoming universal. This is due not only to our exchange of more information, but also to our transmission of values about life with a disability (Gill, 1995). This movement is guided not only with people with disabilities, but by the civil rights movement, the women' rights movement, and the gay and lesbian movement.



For years, we have discussed integration like it was our business to fit people with disabilities into the mainstream society. As people with disabilities become more aware of their unique gifts, some of them have also become more convinced that this is a backward perspective. It is absolutely not the job of people with disabilities to fit into mainstream society. Rather it is the destiny of people with disabilities to demonstrate to mainstream society that it is to their benefit to figure out that we come attached to our wheelchairs, ventilators, canes, hearing aids, etc. and to receive the benefit exactly the way they are (Brown, 2001).

People with disabilities have increasingly viewed themselves as members of a distinct minority group, possessing a unique and valuable culture (Wade, 1992). People with disabilities of all kinds have begun to rally behind it with fervor rarely seen. In less than a decade, “disability culture” has become a popular term among people with disabilities whether an activist or not, young or old, scholarly or undereducated (Gill, 1995). This emerging culture is demonstrated through the arts and literature developments reflecting the disability experience. The presence or absence of a disability culture and involvement of people with disabilities in the arts, is an indication of the general state of success in reflecting upon and managing their own affairs (Finkelstein and Morrison, 1993).

People with disabilities have forged a group identity. They have shared a common history of oppression and a common bond of resilience. They generate art, music, and literature and other expressions of self, their culture, infused from the experience of having that disability. Most importantly, people with disabilities are proud of themselves.



They are now claiming disabilities as pride and as part of their identity. Brown (1996) states, “We are who we are: we are people with disabilities.”

A strong disability culture forms a base from which the socio-political view of disability can be further developed. Disability culture can provide people with disabilities with symbols, rituals, and values that can serve to strengthen personal and group identity. It can unify people with various disabilities and experience providing a supportive environment and facilitating group action. It can empower people with disabilities by providing a variety of ways to inform others about themselves. Finally disability culture can inspire other people with disabilities to self-identify as people with disabilities, rather than staying in the shadows (Gill, 1993).

The foremost value emanating from this culture is pride rather than shame (Disabled and Proud, 1993). Viewing the disability as part of the whole complete self has replaced seeing it as a deficit. This mindset is important to believing that life with a disability is worth living and can be celebrated. It supports the notion that people with disabilities do not need constant medical intervention to have a good quality of life. Awareness gives alternative views of the right-to-die movement, and for the ongoing debate concerning abortion. From this point, people with disabilities and social scientists have merged and criticized the readiness of right-to-die advocates to pave the way for assisted suicides for people with disabilities when social factors contribute heavily to the circumstances that lead people with disabilities expressed desire to die (Shapiro, 1993).



The value of being independent is another important component of the disability culture. Independence is redefined to mean such services which will make the environment accessible. In addition to the redefinitions, the construct of independence as it is employed in the American ideal of individualism may be seen as less important in the disability community relative to an alternative value of interdependence (Chelberg & Kroeger, 1993).

Congress in the implementation of the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) passes a major vein for people with disabilities to gain greater access to society in 1990. The ADA is a representation of a vision for people with disabilities but the details of its implementation are subject to compromises of regulations and definitions of what constitutes access versus the difficulties placed on businesses and organizations.

Those working in the field of disability probably agree on several basic points. First, disability culture is not the same as how different cultures treat different disabilities. Instead disability culture is a set of artifacts, belief, and expressions created by people with disabilities to describe the life experience. It is not how people with disabilities are treated, but what has been created. Second, disability culture is not the only culture people with disabilities belong to. They are also members of different religions, nationalities, color, professions and so no. Finally, people with disabilities have worked, researched, studied and written about disability culture, have most often begun in the arena of cross-disability culture, meaning all disabilities and cultures.



People with disabilities are aware that there may be nuances or even larger differences between some of them. But one thing for sure, there is a unique and common bond. If we consider all of the possibilities of all disabilities and cultures it's probably more accurate to say that there are more "cultures of disabilities" (Disability Culture, Institute on Disability Newsletter, 2001). This idea could be the starting point for the emergence of leaders with disabilities who could create the transformation necessary for a genuine inclusive society.

### Leadership

"You can only lead others where you yourself are willing to go."

(Lachlan McLean)

### What is leadership?

According to a recent review of literature by Barbara Robertson of the University of Minnesota, emphasis on leadership ability was basically confined to leadership traits until the mid-1940s, reflecting the notion that leaders are born, not made. Stogdill (1981), states that there are cultural assumptions directing research that leaders were superior individuals who possessed leadership abilities due to inheritance or exposure to challenging social experiences.

In a review of 124 studies of leadership traits, Stogdill (1948) found that leaders were characterized by six clusters of traits: capacity, achievement, responsibility, participation, status and situation. In this framework, capacity consists of intelligence, alertness, verbal facility, originality, and judgment. Achievement includes scholarship,



knowledge, and athletic accomplishments. Responsibility encompasses dependability, initiative, persistence, aggressiveness, self-confidence, and desire to excel. Participation involves activity, sociability, cooperation, adaptability, and humor. Status refers to socio-economic position and popularity. Situation includes mental level, status, needs and interests of followers, objectives to be achieved etc.

In Stogdill's 1970 follow-up review, he found that leaders are characterized by a strong drive for responsibility and task completion, "drive" to take social initiative, motivation and facility for problem-solving, self-confidence and sense of personal identity, motivation to accept responsibility for consequences of decisions and actions, high tolerance threshold for frustration and delay, readiness to cope with interpersonal stress, ability to influence people's behavior and capacity to structure the social interaction context to meet group goals.

The National Organization on Disability (NOD) defines leadership in the present as one of shared power and community building. A leader can be anyone, regardless of a position, who serves as an effective agent of social change. Leadership must empower individuals, and help people develop talents and attitudes that will enable them to become social change agents.

### Characteristics of Effective Leaders

The traditional view of "leading" others because they may not be able to lead is shifting to one based on shared power and community building. A leader can be anyone, regardless of position, who serves an effective social change agent. Leadership



development must empower individuals, and help people develop talents and attitudes that will enable them to become social change agents. Mentoring and modeling also play a valuable role. The following review of literature encompasses a variety of leadership definitions.

Kellogg (1999) stated that leadership requires self-development; meaning assessment of one's strengths as well as one's weaknesses and understanding one's values, motivations and passions. The outer or personal development requires relationship building through empathy and inclusion and the ability to understand others. Leadership according to Roger Sublett, director of the Kellogg Foundation, signifies leadership as both an inner and outer journey, with the inner being the most difficult.

The following skills are needed to be an effective leader, according to Spears (2000):

Communication skills, such as the ability to listen are a priority. In addition, good intercultural communication and non-verbal communication are essential. In the larger context, conflict resolution and the ability to be a follower are also attributes. Risk taking is essential as it is to all successes. Increased self-confidence, which is a natural outcome of skill building and leadership development, allows for growth and particularly the taking of risks and standing up for a cause. This in turn leads to expanded vision and greater self-exploration, both inherent characteristics of a good leader. Generally, leadership is defined by the following characteristics: fosters change, value-based, recognizes all



people are potential leaders, understands leadership is a group process, fosters continual learning, creativity, flexibility, and resilience and vision.

Steven R. Covey's national bestseller on leadership (1990), states that mentoring or modeling in leadership programs helps one acquire leadership skills or learn new behaviors by observing others. Modeling occurs each and every day in the way we conduct ourselves. Mentoring programs can be established within schools, government offices and/or faith groups. In addition, leadership can be integrated by giving what we have learned, shared and taught to someone else.

In October 2000, the White House Office of Public Liaison partnered with the Presidential Task Force on the employment of Adults with Disabilities, the American Association for People with Disabilities (AAPD), and others to sponsor a mentoring day for people with disabilities who were matched with various federal government offices. The National Disability Mentoring Day is a part of National Disability Employment Awareness month.

Andrew J. Imparto (2002), AAPD president and chief executive officer says that investing in leadership is particularly important for the disability movement because people with disabilities do not always have the natural intergenerational opportunities for passing the mantle of leadership that exist in other communities. For many having a disability can be an isolating experience and it can take years to learn about and connect with the community of disability advocates. At its first YLF in Ohio, Executive Secretary of GCPD, Karl Lortz (1999), stated that "We must develop a new era of leadership with our younger generation so we can pass the torch to a better tomorrow."



NCD conducted fourteen regional briefings across the United States during the summer of 2000. The focus of the briefings was discussion points on how to think proactively about the next decade of disability civil rights movement. The outcomes of the fourteen regional briefings were highlighted by the fact that the disability community needed training for grassroots groups, including youth and young adults in high school and college, include civil rights and how to participate in local, state, and federal policy making.

Grassroots leadership focuses on the sharing of power and creating innovative solutions. According to Kellogg (1999), grassroots efforts leadership can be different from many mainstream leadership programs. Because of its uniqueness, grassroots leadership efforts can “emerge” from the cultural needs and sensitivities. The curriculum must be adapted to those needs and those unique characteristics of the culture.

Grassroots leadership moves from single issue or an isolated problem, which usually motivates and starts an effort, to the understanding of the connection and interrelationship of broader issues and strategies. The bigger picture becomes the focus. According to Arnstein (1969), This leads to a community-wide systems approach that requires commitment and systemic visioning. Since social change occurs at the individual, community, state and national levels, there can be some major individual barriers.



These barriers include: the ability of individuals and communities to deal with differences; capacity and time to focus on the big picture; lack of planning; too much emphasis on isolated issues with a lack of attention to the linkages to the real problem; territorial “turf” issues and insufficient time and resources.

Most public comments in the NCD briefings included encouraging young people to join with older leaders in becoming effective self-advocates (leaders). In a concept paper on enforcement of disability rights laws, NCD recommended that federal agencies support leadership training of persons from traditionally underserved groups.

Moving leadership forward in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is imperative. Many people who study leadership development have cited a lack of evaluations or concrete outcomes that demonstrate lasting change from current leadership development programs. According to NCD, there is a legitimate need for long-term evaluations and effective models so duplication can be performed in various communities (local, state, and federal).

Collaboration becomes a natural outcome in any leadership process says Arnstein (1969). The model of power and authority should be non-existent to create social change. The essence of this shift therefore becomes community. It moves from individual-centered to group centered action and outcomes. The collective vision exceeds that individual vision. The purpose of leadership now becomes focus on capacity building and or community development. This model requires detachment from the need to hold power to control and to an open-mind and discovering a common ground amidst diversity.

Leadership training plays a vital role in developing our future leaders. Conger (1992) suggests a set of factors that should be included in leadership training, based on



results from a variety of leadership training approaches that he reviews. Leadership training programs in the 1980's assumed that leaders are people in touch with their personal desires and talents, who will act to fulfill them. So, efforts at leadership training involved getting people to understand their inner abilities and dreams. Training should address the needs, interests, and self-esteem of the participants helping them clarify the status of each, and link the importance of leadership vision and drive.

Another leadership education approach is more conceptual in nature. This approach is taught primarily at colleges and universities, and consists of studies of what leaders actually do, with attention given to the contingencies involved in leadership. The programs usually employ lecture, case studies, but have limited skill building and feedback (Conger, 1992).

A behavioral modeling approach reviewed by Bass (1981) involved observing supervisors dealing with a variety of situations, followed by group discussions of how effectively the supervisors acted. Then, participants role-play the desired behaviors in front of their training group and received feedback of their performance.

In conclusion, the leaders of tomorrow will not fit the old version of hero but rather fulfill the role of teachers, guides, facilitators, and stewards. Effective leaders become facilitators and they constantly learn, share and encourage. This learning focused environment builds capacity and naturally becomes action focused transferring the leadership learning into real life practical application. It is a group of, for, and by the participants.



## Transition

In 1990, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997 provided people with disabilities the opportunity of living a full life and being a part of the community by virtue of a required plan dealing with issues surrounding transition from school to work or school to post-secondary activities (IDEA of 1997 PL-104-17, p.1). Prior studies before the implementation of the law showed that graduates with disabilities were not successful in adjusting to adult life. This was based on low employment rates, low wages, and low rates of post-secondary education (Benz, Yovanoff & Doren, 1997). The purpose of planning for transition is to make sure that the student has enough skill, service, and support to enter post-school environments, such as, employment, post-secondary education, and living on their own.

Izzo (2001), states that transition planning must be the cornerstone of the students' IEP. To be effective, the transition plan must be a partnership involving the students' families, school and post school service personnel, local community representatives, employers and neighbors (Welsman, 1992).

With IDEA of 1997 as its guide, the author was asked to sit on the State Superintendent's Advisory Council for Special Education in Ohio to develop the transition component for the new IEP. In developing this document, the author carefully thought of the purpose behind the law.



The IEP team must address the following four areas related to transition:

1. Instruction that occurs as part of the course of study that teaches the students necessary skills, knowledge, and attitudes to navigate adult life.
2. Community experiences that occur in local businesses, independent living or recreational opportunities.
3. Development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives.
4. If appropriate, the individual needs of the students' acquisition of daily living skills and a functional vocational evaluation (Kohler, 1993).

The Ohio Department of Education Division of Exceptional Children (2002) encourages five guidelines to assist IEP teams incorporate transition planning in their IEPs:

1. Build upon the students' strengths to assist students in developing career goals and activities to accomplish their goals. Thus, providing a foundation for planning transition services to assist students in gaining employment.
2. Involve the student and family before writing the IEP objectives. The student of the family must feel a sense of ownership for the goals and objectives set forth in the IEP before they can be expected to participate in meeting these goals.



3. Balance and integrate the IEP goals and objectives. A student's educational program should be balanced and integrated across vocational skills leading to employment, applied academic skills, and daily living skills.
4. Select an IEP team member to oversee the coordination of transition services. The student and or family member should select this person.
5. Involve adult service agency representatives at least 2 years prior to graduation. It can take over six months to establish agency eligibility for services from adult service agencies.

It has also been researched that more males with disabilities (46.1%) were likely to be employed 3-5 years after exiting school than females with disabilities (40%). Black and Hispanic youths with disabilities were less likely to acquire employment than white youth with disabilities; dropouts were less likely to be employed than high school graduates. Students who "aged-out" (service beyond the age of 21) were less likely to be employed than those who dropped out. After being 3-5 years out of school almost 38% of all males with disabilities had been arrested (those that were unemployed). Youth with disabilities who were out of school and competitively employed earning less than minimum wage were unlikely to be receiving vacation, sick leave, or medical insurance (Wagner, 1993).

Policy developments have helped shift the focus of education and adult service delivery from "systems" to "individuals" (Kahler, 1996). This shift redirects the focus to students' interests and abilities (Wehman, 1992). A transition perspective of education



promotes the idea that educational programs and instructional activities should be based upon students' post-school goals, and driven by individuals' needs, interests and preferences (Clark & Kolstoe, 1995). Kohler (1996) states "This perspective recognizes transition planning is not an add-on activity for students with disabilities once they reach age 14, but a foundation from which education programs and activities for the child are developed (p.2)

Within this transition meeting, and plan development, numerous authors also suggest that parents and educators must promote self-determination of students with disabilities (Algozzine, Browder, Karvonen, Test & Wood, 2002); (Benz, Lindsstrom & Vavanoff, 2000; Field, Martin, Miller, Ward & Wehmeyer, 1998). Others believe students with disabilities are not receiving appropriate career development they need to gain and maintain employment (Benz & Kochhar, 1998).

An individual's sense of self-determination and career development is often affected by culture and gender and is mediated by the needs and demands of each person's environment (Izzo & Lamb, 2002). Culturally diverse groups often define roles differently, and parents can be a valuable resource in helping educators understand transition outcomes valued within that family's culture (Bauer & Growick, 2002). This idea is best developed through cooperation and partnerships, information sharing, communication and organizational alignment (Whelley, Hart and Zaft, 2002). The transition plan and its outcomes must be developed "at the table" with all of the stakeholders present. Stakeholders should include: School district representatives,



potential and college student personnel, and potential employer, Rehabilitation Services Commission (RSC), parents, the student, and selected disability service organizations.

The current practice in transitioning shows four barriers which challenge the coordination and management of supports and services: 1) Few partnership establish interagency cooperation at the state and local level; 2) Uncoordinated mechanisms for information sharing and communication; 3) Lack of resource mapping and alignment on state and local levels and 4) Lack of identification of service gaps and lack of development of resources to address them (Whelley, Hart & Zaft, 2002). Improving the changes for youth with disabilities to be successful after high school should include but not limited to the following suggestions (Izzo, 1999). There is a need to devote more resources to exploring the role of educational assistance provision as youth prepare for post-secondary situations. The effort needs to focus on research-proven practice when assessing the effectiveness of assistance provision for youth in secondary schools.

Clarification of language needs to be consistent across policies. Words such as “services” “supports” and “accommodations” need to mean the same thing as youth transition to post-high school environments.

Assistance providers for people with disabilities should become more accountable for the long-term outcomes of assistance provision. This may be accomplished by incentives for the utilization of effective practices, and follow-up. Individual assistance related needs should be considered within the context of post-school environments, rather than fitting people and types of assistance needed into broad categories or focusing on the short-term educational needs.



Since types of assistance for youth with disabilities in secondary school are determined by the IEP, it is necessary that these persons have an active role in planning. Youth with disabilities should have the opportunity to make decisions which carry the responsibility and consequences similar to the adult roles which they will soon have. There should be improvement in the guidance and level of support offered to individuals with disabilities at the post-secondary and employment levels. Personnel at the secondary school level should involve the student in the process of planning the level and types of assistance provision found within post-school environments. They must include where the youth with a disability is coming from, where they are going, and match the provision of assistance to these long-term goals (Stodden, Jones, & Chang, 2002). Findings suggest that an emphasis on career exploration and counseling during the high school years could have a positive influence on the extent to which all students are engaged in productive work and schooling activities once they leave school (Bentz, 1997).

Borgen, Amundson and Tench (1996) investigated factors dealing with vocational theory, adolescent development, and unemployment. This theory is largely based on the assumption that satisfaction and identity formation are essential both to achieving a secure, healthy, adult psychological status in which the person is free from negative states such as depression and lack of self-esteem and to developing adult identity. Studies indicate that career counseling, employability counseling and job interview preparation are critical skills needed to prepare for transition from school to work. These services can make a significant impact on the success of both youth with or without disabilities (Izzo, 1998).



The real test of the value and necessity of making changes will be the future outcomes and voices of those with disabilities. As professionals, we need to rethink our roles and provide opportunities for self-determination and exercising rights to choose throughout the educational process. These are the keys to opening doors for those students with disabilities (Izzo, 2002).

Now it is time to take a look at the two post-secondary options for youths with disabilities: transition from school-to-work and from school-to-higher education.

#### Transition from School-to-Work

Kohler and Rusch (1994), identified specific outcomes needed to ensure enhanced employment opportunities for youths with disabilities. The outcomes were organized using a systems-level analytic approach. Using a Delphi approach, Kohler and Rusch (1994) concluded that the following transition-to-employment practices are validated as best practices.

1. Provide job exploration and job training opportunities as part of the school curricula.
2. Utilize individualized transition planning.
3. Develop strong cooperative linkages with adult service agencies dealing with people with disabilities.
4. Provide technical assistance to adult service agencies to coordinate services across agencies.
5. Provide job placement services.
6. Place students into competitive, integrated employment.



7. Provide job support services.
8. Work with adult service agencies to ensure job placement.

A part of the transition planning from school-to work should include a vocational assessment (Parent, 1997; Singleton, Neubert & Leconte, 1997). The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) endorsed the following definition of transition assessment:

Transition Assessment is the ongoing process of collecting data on the individuals' needs preferences, and interests as they relate to the demands of current and future working, educational, living, and personal and social environments. Assessment data serve as the common thread in the transition process and form the basis for defining goals and services to be included in the Individual Education Program (Singleton, Neubert & Leconte, 1997, p. 71).

The Vocational Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1992 allows rehabilitation service providers to develop an Individualized Written Rehabilitation Plan (IWRP). The information shared on the IWRP should consist of the individuals' strengths, weaknesses, needs, preferences and interests. In this plan, several components of transition should be discussed, such as: referral information, eligibility and service, coordination case history, and individual evaluations.

Important to the process of the vocational assessment making sure there is a clear match between culture and disability in regards to needs for making this match by Singleton, Neubert, Begun, Lombard & Loconte (1996) include analysis of background



information, interviews, psychometric tests, work samples, curriculum-based assessments, behavioral observation and situational assessments.

However, according to Bauer and Growick (2003) cultural variables, such as inherited family values, willingness to leave the area away from home, demographic attributes, religion and current employment opportunities play a significant role in the acquisition of employment for the high school student with a disability.

For example, some families in Appalachian America would rather suffer the consequences of employment rather than disrupt the family values and traditions of that family. For some families, dedication to religion values, can account for some non-acceptance of some jobs based on the type of job available and when they would have to work.

Although more abundant in urban and suburban areas, jobs for youth and adults with disabilities are few and far between in rural America. Some cities in rural America are single industry cities that employ up to 60-70 percent of that town's population. For the non-disabled person to get a job at an industry like this is sometimes tough, as you can imagine what a person with a disability has to go through. Another factor that Bolton, Bellini, & Brookings (2000) suggested that could enhance employment outcomes is the effect of the client-counselor relationship. The 1998 Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act stated that individuals with disabilities served in the state-federal rehabilitation system must be "active and full partners" in the vocational rehabilitation process. Client involvement in this process has been viewed as important for increasing the likelihood to successful employment outcomes (Chan, Shaw,



McMahan , Kach & Strauser, 1997). A key factor helping the client become an active participant in this process is the development of a working alliance between the client and his or her rehabilitation counselor. Horvath & Symends, 1991, states that this working alliance is conducive to active participation between counselors in the rehabilitation process.

### Transition form School-to-Postsecondary Colleges

In addition to following the primary guidelines for transition planning, the student with disability who wishes to attend college must also make sure their particular attention is focused on academic success.

More high school students with disabilities are planning to continue their education at postsecondary schools, including career and vocational trade schools, two and four year colleges, and universities. Students with disabilities need to be well informed of their rights and responsibilities that post secondary schools and students with disabilities have (Office of Civil Rights, 2002). In 1998, three times more students with disabilities were admitted to colleges across the country than were admitted in 1988. Over the past decade, students with various learning disabilities have come to represent the largest group of students with disabilities on college and university campuses. Of the college freshman where reported having a disability in 2002, over 40% indicated the presence of a learning disability. In 2000, 51% of college freshmen having a disability indicated a desire to pursue a degree beyond the bachelor level (Henderson, 1999)

The Office of Civil Rights enforces Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Acts of 1973 (Section 504) and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Acts of 1990 (Title II),



which prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability. School districts and postsecondary schools must comply with the same laws; however, the responsibilities are significantly different. Listed are five major differences among high school to postsecondary academic transitioning according to the Office of Civil Rights (2002). Students with students planning or attending college should know the following:

1. Unlike high school, the postsecondary school is not required to provide a free and appropriate education. However they are required to provide appropriate academic adjustments necessary to ensure the institution does not discriminate on the basis of a disability. For example, if the postsecondary institution provides housing to non-disabled students, it must provide accessible and convenient housing to students with disabilities at the same cost.
2. Self-disclosure is the avenue to obtain any services. The student must disclose their disability to the appropriate officials to get the services they need.
3. The school will require to provide documentation that a person has a disability and need academic accommodations (IEP placements).
4. In providing academic assistance, the postsecondary school is not required to lower or effect substantial modifications to essential requirements. For example, extend testing time may be allotted however the institution cannot change the substantive content of the test. The postsecondary school does not have to make modifications



that would fundamentally alter the nature of a service, program or activity or would result in undue hardship financially or administratively. The academic institution does not have to provide personal attendants, individually prescribed devices, readers for personal use or study, or other devices of a personal nature such as, tutoring and typing.

5. Evaluations to determine eligibility must be paid by the individual rather than the educational institution. This is a rather sharp contrast from school distinct responsibilities. Financially, students with disabilities may struggle as the non-disabled peers.

The federal government is the single largest source of assistance for postsecondary education. Most federal aide is awarded on the basis of financial need. However, students with disabilities should be encouraged to apply for assistance for this state office of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services to assist in college funding (Gardener, 2002).

### Assistive Technology in Postsecondary

Assistive technology is defined by the Technology-Related Assistance Act of 1988 (P.L. 100-407) as any technology used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities. Although assistive technology is recognized in the area of rehabilitation as a means to improve the quality of life for persons with physical disabilities, it has received little attention as a tool for helping



individuals with learning disabilities (LD) to compensate for specific cognitive deficits. In the field of education, reports, addressing the benefits of using assistive technology to compensate for specific learning disabilities have been generated primarily by professionals at the postsecondary level attempting to meet the needs of increasing numbers of students with learning disabilities attending college (Raskind, 1994).

As noted, an increasing number of students with disabilities are enrolling in and graduating from postsecondary institutions (Adelman & Vogel, 1992; Fairweather & Shaver, 1991; Henderson, 1992). In 1991, 8.8% of full-time college freshmen reported having some form of disability, compared with 2.6% in 1978. Of the types of disabilities reported, learning disabilities were the fastest growing group, increasing from 15% to 25% of all students with disabilities over the 13-year period (Henderson, 1992). A number of researchers (Rothstein, 1993; Shaw, McGuire, & Brinckerhoff, 1994; Vogel, 1993) have pointed to factors that result in increased numbers of individuals with disabilities attending postsecondary institutions:

1. The passage of Section 504 “E” of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 mandated accessibility to postsecondary institutions to provide “auxiliary aids,” such as taped texts, to students with disabilities.
2. P.L. 94-142 and P.L. 101-406 mandated special education programs and services for elementary and secondary students with disabilities; as a result, more of these students are completing high school and view attending college, with the assistance of support services, as the next logical and viable step.



3. As a result of being placed in least restrictive environments, many students with disabilities have taken sufficient academic course work prerequisite to attending college.
4. Students with disabilities have become increasingly attractive to college admissions officers as a viable student market.
5. Advocacy groups and postsecondary guidebooks (e.g., Peterson's Lovejoy's) have made these students aware of both their needs and their rights in regard to college options.
6. The increased availability of computers and other compensatory technology has resulted in greater student independence and access in the college setting.

As students with disabilities attend college in increasingly large numbers, the impact of assistive technology on their ability to successfully complete postsecondary education is being recognized (Raskind, 1994; Raskind & Scott, 1993). Educational support service providers, in meeting the demands of these students, will likely rely on assistive technology.

In 1994, The National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities offered a list of roles and responsibilities for students, parents, secondary school personnel and postsecondary institutions.

To contribute to successful transition planning, the student should:

- Understand his or her specific disability, including its effect on learning and work;



- Establish realistic goals;
- Present a positive self-image by stressing strengths, while understanding the influence of the learning disability;
- Know how, when, and where to discuss and request needed accommodations;
- Develop personal qualities, such as realistic self-assessment, willingness to take risks, and ability to sustain efforts;
- Develop and use social skills;
- Develop and apply effective studying, test-preparation, test-taking, time-management, and note-taking strategies;
- Seek instructors and learning environments that are supportive;
- Maintain an ongoing personal file that includes school and medical records, individualized education program (IEP), résumé, and samples of academic work;
- Know rights and responsibilities necessary to prepare for and to access postsecondary education;
- Identify and access resources that will provide needed support;
- Explore postsecondary education options and entrance requirements;
- Select courses that meet postsecondary requirements; and
- Prepare for and participate actively in the postsecondary application process.



The primary acts of parents during transition planning are to encourage and support students to plan and achieve their educational goals. Parents should encourage students to develop independent decision-making and self-advocacy skills.

To contribute to successful transition planning, parents should:

- Be involved in transition planning and ensure that the student is also included;
- Help the student develop realistic goals;
- Encourage the student to develop future educational plans and to explore realistic postsecondary options;
- Help the student select high school courses that meet postsecondary requirements;
- Collaborate with secondary and postsecondary staff to make decisions regarding programs, services, and resources;
- Help the student collect and maintain an ongoing personal file that includes school and medical records, IEP, résumé, and samples of academic work;
- Communicate confidence in the student's ability to be successful in a post-secondary setting; and
- Encourage the student to develop maximum independence in the learning, study, and living skills critical to success in postsecondary settings.



Secondary Setting – personnel and administrators must show students how to look beyond high school toward postsecondary education. This is accomplished by initiating designing and evaluating effective transition plans and coordinating services that are consistent with federal and state statutes, rules, and regulations. To contribute to successful, transition, secondary school, personnel should:

- Form a transition team consisting of a coordinator, the student, the parent(s) administrators, teachers, and related service personnel;
- Include the student and parent(s) in the entire planning process;
- Demonstrate sensitivity to the culture and values of the student and family;
- Develop an appropriate packet of materials to document the student's secondary school program and to facilitate service delivery in the postsecondary setting;
- Provide administrative support, resources, and time to foster collaboration among team members;
- Inform the student about statutes, rules, and regulations that ensure his or her rights;
- Provide appropriate course selection, counseling, and academic support services;
- Ensure competency in literacy in mathematics;



- Ensure that the student learns effective studying, time-management, test-preparation and test-taking strategies;
- Help the student use a range of academic accommodations and technological aids, such as electronic date books, videodisc technology, texts on tape, grammar and spell checkers, and word processing programs;
- Help the student to evaluate his or her dependence on external supports and adjust the level of assistance when appropriate;
- Help the student develop appropriate skills and interpersonal communication abilities;
- Help the student to develop self-advocacy skills, including a realistic understanding of the learning disability and how to use this information for self-understanding and communication with others;
- Foster independence through increased responsibility and opportunity for self-management;
- Encourage the student to develop extracurricular interests and to participate in community activities;
- Promote the student's self-esteem and self-confidence;
- Encourage the student to develop extracurricular interests and to participate in community activities;
- Inform the student and parent(s) about admission requirements and demands of diverse postsecondary settings;



- Inform the student and parent(s) about services that postsecondary settings provide, such as disabilities, academic services, and computer-based writing services;
- Ensure the timely development of documentation and materials in keeping with application time lines;
- Help the student and parent(s) select and apply to postsecondary institutions that will offer both the competitive curriculum and the necessary level of learning disability support services; and
- Develop ongoing communication with postsecondary personnel.

#### Postsecondary Personnel Responsibilities

Postsecondary personnel must network with and disseminate information to secondary educators, parents, and prospective students to realistically frame the expectations for the rigors of the postsecondary experience. Providers of services for students with disabilities in postsecondary education settings must be prepared to meet the needs of a diverse student population who have a variety of skills, educational backgrounds, and intellectual abilities. To contribute to successful transition planning, postsecondary personnel should:

- Provide linkages to high schools through outreach efforts;
- Inform secondary school personnel of the prerequisites for the transition to postsecondary options;



- Disseminate information about college/vocational school preparation and the expectations associated with various postsecondary settings;
- Provide opportunities for campus visits for prospective students and their families, educating them about the unique features of the specific postsecondary program;
- Help students to effectively negotiate postsecondary settings;
- Offer summer orientation programs on the admissions application process, admissions requirements, and general postsecondary education program survival skills;
- Clarify the roles of the student and the service provider in a postsecondary setting;
- Offer comprehensive orientation programs to students with disabilities who have elected to attend a given situation;
- Teach students how to advocate for themselves in the postsecondary setting;
- Advocate on behalf of students, when necessary, to ensure that their rights are safeguarded under Section 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA);
- Negotiate “reasonable academic adjustments” with faculty and administration that will maintain the integrity of the curriculum;



- Establish written policies and procedures concerning admissions, diagnosis, accommodation, curriculum requirements, and service delivery to students with disabilities;
- Work closely with admissions officers to ensure that students with disabilities are fairly considered;
- Act as a liaison to the greater college/vocational school community, and inform them about serving students with learning disabilities; and
- Provide faculty and staff development disabilities.

### SUMMARY

For many students with disabilities, participation in employment and postsecondary education is applicable. However; to achieve this goal, comprehensive transition planning is essential. The primary objective of transition planning is to help the student become successful after high school. The result of effective transition planning is a student with disability who is confident, independent, self-directed and in actual pursuit of career goals.

Students with disabilities can succeed in life after high school in employment at a postsecondary school or in the community if the student, parents, and professional personnel work together to design and implement effective transition plans.



## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

This Chapter describes the mixed-methodological design, population and sample, data collection procedures and the data analysis of the project entitled: The impact of leadership development programs on high school students with disabilities.

To effectively start the evaluation process, the researcher ask the following research questions:

#### Quantitative

- Does a leadership development program for high school juniors and seniors with disabilities impact their ability to become leaders? In other words:

#### Null

1. H<sub>0</sub>-Delegates who participate in the leadership development program do not become more effective leaders.

#### Alternative

2. H<sub>1</sub>-Delegates who participate in the leadership development program do become more effective leaders.



Does a leadership development program for high school juniors and seniors with disabilities impact their ability to become effective agents of change?

Null

1.  $H_0$ -Delegates who participate in the leadership development program do not become agents of change.

Alternative

2.  $H_1$ -Delegates who participate in the leadership development program do become agents of change.
- How do participants from delegate groups (1999-2001) differ from group (2002) in terms of the Youth Leadership Forum process.

Null

1.  $H_0$ -there is no difference between delegates from groups (1999-2001) and delegates of group 2002.

Alternative

2.  $H_1$ -there is a difference between delegates from groups (1999-2001) and delegates of group 2002.

Independent Variables-Potential to be a leader

Self as a leader

Potential to be an agent of Change

Self as an agent of Change



Knowledge of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Individuals  
with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

Dependent Variables-Leadership Forum survey scores

Qualitative

- Central Question

What is *leadership* for youth with disabilities at the Governor's Council on People with Disabilities Youth Leadership Forum.

What does it mean to be a *leader* upon returning home after the Forum?

- Subquestions

How did the forum unfold?

Who were the people involved?

What events occurred?

What was the outcome?

What were the participant/delegate feelings about the forum?

What are participant/delegates doing with the information gained from the forum?

Qualitative vs. Quantitative

The purpose of this section will describe the strengths and limitations of qualitative and quantitative research for my committee. A brief overview of each method will be discussed followed by advantages and disadvantages. The final part of this section will clarify the need for both disciplines (methodologies) in order to fully grasp the research topic and results.



Qualitative/post-positivist information from research is grounded in the German idealist thought (Burrell & Morgan, 1979) and grew out of many concerns over the use of statistical procedures or the use of numerical data (Ponterotto & Grieger, 1999; Junke, 1997; Best & Kahn, 1989). Researchers needed an alternative approach to handling problems initiated in the quantitative designs of inquiry. An uncontrolled natural study where variables are not manipulated and behavior is recorded is a strong component of qualitative analysis.

Some experiments often do not have a prior hypothesis that they wish to test, but rather generate a hypothesis after information is gathered. Qualitative information is subjective, open ended but thorough and lends itself to other theories or hypothesis (Ponterotto & Grieger, 1999; Best & Kahn, 1989). In addition qualitative studies explain *why* a person behaves in a certain way. A qualitative study is to be designed to be consistent with the assumptions of the qualitative paradigm. Studies in this paradigm is an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem, based on a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants in natural settings (Creswell, 2002).

#### Assumptions of the Qualitative Paradigm

Firestone (1987); Guba & Lincoln (1988); and McCracken (1988) established a series of assumptions of the qualitative thought. In the qualitative paradigm, reality is subjective and multiple as seen by participants in a study. The researcher interacts with what is being researched and is quite methodological and interchangeable in its approach.



Patterns, themes and theories arise from the course of the research and the research in the qualitative paradigm is reliable and accurate through a verification process.

### Research Modalities

The three approaches to scientific research—the positivist, interpretivist and critical modes of analysis—are derived from different epistemological points of view. In evaluating the difference among the modalities, the positivist/quantitative mode is guided for a quest for certainty and absolute truth and objectivity. This researcher in the positivist mode of inquiry is a long distance spectator who observes and documents the facts (Creswell, 2002). Interpretive researchers argue that science “is concerned not so much with gaining access to some absolute truth as with eliminating the prejudices and dogma that distort everyday common sense thinking” (Carr & Kremmis, 1986). Assessing common sense knowledge and assumptions develops Science. Carr & Kremmis (1986), also state that “common sense thinking lead to undesirable or united results, or by showing how some alternative theory either has advantages over a common sense understanding and a more adequate explanation of reality” as quoted by James-Brown (1985).

Bredo & Feinberg (1982), state that positivistic/quantitative approach to knowledge is monological, and interpretive or a qualitative approach is dialogical. Philosophical beliefs in the qualitative/post-modern/interpretivist design have the researcher and his or her subjects engaging in a reciprocal relationship that enforces collaborative partner shipping. According to Lather (1989), “The primary goal of the



researcher aligning to this worldview is to emancipate people from personal and social ideologies through their own understandings and actions”.

According to Glesne and Peshkin (1992), whether a researcher opts to utilize a traditional method or non-traditional method of qualitative research, it must be consistent with their paradigm.

Information gathered from a qualitative study is more individualized and lends its ability to understand a population as a part or a whole (Hoshmand, 1999). Qualitative designs also allow information to be allowed from a non-standardized point of view. While quantitative information is rigidly fixed to particular groups, qualitative information is more open to the subject (Best & Kahn, 1989). This allows it to understand more diverse, multi-cultural consumers with different kinds of disabilities, which was needed in this study.

The researcher in qualitative design becomes a part of the subject’s world (Merrick, 1969). This allows the subject to become in contact with real events rather than being manipulated by the researcher. This opens the researcher up to a greater understanding of emotions and cognitions utilized, not just comparing collections of data (Merrick, 1999).

Qualitative information is useful with groups of people (Goldman, 1992; Drum, 1992). For example, in the critical paradigm focus groups allow collaborative insights and specific recommendations that would not be achievable through quantitative analysis (Gorden, 1996).



## Delimitations and Limitations of Qualitative Research

Advocates for quantitative research are quick to point out that in spite of its descriptive nature there can be no way to fully describe an individual. Even the most comprehensive observations leave out some aspects that are critical to a person's functioning. With this aspect in mind, qualitative analysis is not generalizable to a certain population. For example, research that was available in 1976 stated that hearing impaired persons should be educated in a vocational setting rather than college prep settings. The candidate and his family, followed this irresponsible study and trend. A high school guidance counselor showed the candidate information and statistics that showed that deaf and hard of hearing people are entering the field of computer programming because "those kinds of people are good with numbers and have the visuals needed to succeed". The field of the candidate's choice was teaching but that guidance counselor said, "You can't be a teacher, you are deaf!"

Although there was much research performed in the early 1970's regarding people with hearing impairments, none of the studies showed that people with hearing impairments could become teachers. How could they pass the hearing test? Regardless of the studies, the candidate persisted and became a schoolteacher. This shows the powerful influence of number crunching and reliance of quantitative studies in the field of disabilities. Researchers in education have begun to realize that the world of disability is not homogenous. Individuals come from different cultures and have different sets of experiences, expectations and or paradigms.

Qualitative analysis findings could be subject to other interpretations (Kuhns, 1991). For example, questions of reliability and validity arise more so in qualitative



design. Qualitative researchers have no single stance or design consensus on addressing traditional topics such as validity and reliability to the procedures in qualitative research (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). Qualitative writer develop their own language to distance themselves from the positivist/quantitative paradigms. Lincoln and Guba (1985) and more recently, Erlandson, Harris, Skipper and Allen (1993) discuss establishing criteria such as “trustworthiness” and “authenticity” to describing reliability and validity. Both of which are discussed further in this chapter.

Merriam, (1988) and Miles & Huberman, (1984), describe how a study can address the issue of internal validity, the accuracy of information and whether it matches reality. A researcher may triangulate, or find convergence among information, different methods of data collection or different investigators. Another researcher, for example, might provide an “audit” trial of key decisions made during the research process and validate that they were good decisions.

A researcher may also discuss plans to receive feedback from the informant/participants (member checks). The researcher could take the categories or themes from the outcomes back to the informants and validate or ask the informants/participants if conclusions are accurate.

The epistemological assumption of the qualitative paradigm is based on minimizing the distance between the researcher and the informant/participant (Guba & Lincoln, 1988). Key informants might be identified for interviewing or observations, participants might be data gatherers, and might review findings as they emerge.



The limited generalizability of the findings, external validity, is not in qualitative research, but to form unique interpretations of events. However, limited generalizability might derive from data analysis or the data collection protocol utilized by the researcher.

To replicate the study, it must be reliable according to quantitative believers. However, statements about the researcher's positions—central assumptions, selection of participants/informants, biases and values of the researcher—enhance the study's chances of being replicated in another setting. For example, in case study research, in which the researcher explores multi-site cases, one can examine whether the same pattern of events or thematic constructs are replicated in different settings. In fact, Yin (1989) strongly suggested reporting a detailed protocol for data collection so that the procedure of qualitative case study might be replicated in another setting.

Creswell (2002), states that additional limitations include the possibility of probing with highly personal questions and having to spend considerable one-on-one time with participants for a long period of time. Qualitative research is labor-intensive and requires patience and persistence to find themes that can be transferred to additional theoretically established frameworks.

### Assumptions of the Quantitative/Positivist Paradigm

Quantitative information seeks the facts or cause of social and psychological phenomena (Smith, 1983; Cook & Reichart, 1979). It is an inquiry into a social or human problem, based on testing a theory composed of variables, measured with numbers, and analyzed with statistical procedures, in order to determine whether predictive generalizations of the theory hold true (Creswell, 2001).



Die-hard quantitative researchers ascertain that quantitative research methods are far more superior to qualitative methods. Consistent with the methodologies from a positivist framework instruments are used to collect data.

According to the positivist researcher and unlike the post-positivist researcher reality can be measured and exists apart from the researcher. Validity and reliability issues become very important to the researcher through various manipulations of variables in the study.

The positivist view of validity ascertains credibility and is based on the validity and reliability of instruments and internal validity. In qualitative research, the primary criterion is the credibility of the study, (McMillan, 1996). Credibility is the extent to which the data, data analysis and conclusions are believable and trustworthy based on a set of standard practices.

The post positivist view of validity reduces distortions introduced by the evaluator predisposition and is based on “empathic neutrality,” a kind of impartiality that works to minimize researcher effect while recognizing that “the data inevitably represent the perspective rather than absolute truth.” Member checking is a crucial component of the reliability component of qualitative study. It allows the researcher to reduce bias and therefore have a study that promotes. The researching team (member checkers) play a role to assure validity and reliability throughout the research process.



### Delimitations and Limitations to the Quantitative Paradigm

According to Creswell (2002), possible limitations in any study could be summarized in the following way:

- Loss or lack of delegates
- Small sample sizes
- Errors in Measurement

All efforts by the researcher will assure that the study is comprehensive in nature using the dominant less-dominant design. With this in mind, several limitations may be foreseen using the quantitative paradigm. For example, the sample size for the 2002 forum is 30 students/delegates that were used for the qualitative analysis whereas the retrospective surveys will have approximately 73 delegate/participants to meet the quantitative component. The 73 delegate/participants who participated in the 1999-2001 forums had the chance to fill out the surveys that were mailed to them at home. An extrinsic reward of a \$25.00 gift certificate to Wal-Mart was given to a delegate/participant to promote a prompt return of the retrospective surveys.

### Research Design

Evaluation of the Ohio Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) used both qualitative and quantitative methods. Quantitative analysis will be conducted on results of surveys, both 2002 and retrospective surveys of 1999-2001. A retrospective survey was mailed to the participants of the 1999, 2000 and 2001 forums. The 2002 participants were evaluated using the pre-post test method with longitudinal data six months after returning home. The surveys attempted to capture how participants rated themselves on a variety of



dimensions before, immediately after, and 6 months after the forum. The survey was not developed until 2002, therefore a separate survey was developed for the participants of the past three forums to collect retrospective self-ratings (how they believed they viewed themselves before the forum) and follow-up data (how they viewed themselves at the time they completed the survey). Surveys received after the 6 month survey deadline were added to the total quantitatively but not to the qualitative component (2 were received after the deadline).

The researcher in this study utilized a mixed methodological approach using the dominant-less dominant design in which the study engaged in qualitative/post positivist observations and textual ascriptions with a limited number of ten (10) participants/delegates, in conjunction with a quantitative design Likert type survey from the entire sample of the delegates that have attended the forum in the year 2002.

The advantage of this mixed methodological approach is that it presents a consistent paradigmatic picture of the study. The chief disadvantage to this type of approach is that qualitative purists would see this approach as misusing the qualitative paradigm because the central assumptions of the study would not match or link one of the quantitative data collection procedures (Likert Scale). Quantitative purists also would be concerned with the match of not having hard-core numbers throughout the study.

The study will utilize the dominant (qualitative) approach of methods with a quantitative data collection questionnaire (pretest - posttest).

The following formula is offered in the Creswell (2002) text that was followed:

QUALITATIVE----- Interpretation -----quantitative



## Mixed Method Designs: Triangulation Exploratory Design/Grounded Theory

Research emphasizes more qualitative (QUAL) data rather than quantitative (quan) data. However, both data collection methods are used to complete a solid study of the forum.

Researcher has a sequence to data collection that involves collecting quantitative data followed by qualitative data. Delegates/participants were asked to fill out a survey before the forum began. Upon registration at the forum, delegates filled out the 2002 survey. Parents were asked to fill out consent form before data was collected. Textual information, observations and videos were collected by the researcher during the forum and analyzed. After completion of the forum, delegate/participants were asked to fill out a post-forum survey. A longitudinal survey was sent to the delegate/participants home in January of 2003.

Researcher plans utilize the qualitative findings as a primary mode of inquiry and backing it up with the quantitative numbers.

### Steps of Conducting a Mixed Methods Study

1. Determine if a Mixed Method study is feasible.
2. Identify a rationale for a Mixed Method study.
3. Identify the data collection strategy and type of design.
4. Identify qualitative and quantitative research questions.
5. Collect qualitative and quantitative data.
6. Analyze data separately or concurrently.
7. Report the results



## Strengths and Weaknesses of Mixed Method Research

### Strengths

Helps to provide a holistic picture of a research problem

It is a means to incorporate quantitative data into a qualitative study

### Weaknesses

One must have training in both quantitative and qualitative research methods.

Greater cost of time and money.

Not all audiences are open to mixed method studies.

Potential weaknesses for this design are that the procedures may lead to a premature commitment to a set of analytic categories (Robrecht, 1995) and a lack of conceptual depth (Becker, 1993).

Also, grounded theory has a distinct language which some educators may view as jargon and in need of careful definition (e.g. open coding, dominant theory).

One criticism, according to (Charmaz, 2000), is that terms are not clearly defined.

With the varied approaches to this design and the continual emergence of new perspectives, readers may become confused and not know which procedures would best produce a well-developed theory.

## The Study

During the summer of 1998, as Chair of the Ohio Governor's Council on People with Disabilities, the researcher developed the Ohio Youth Leadership Forum for Students with Disabilities with the assistance of Governor's Council on People with



Disabilities (GCPD) staff. The forum provides high school juniors and seniors and opportunity to gain leadership skills, learn their rights and responsibilities, gain and understanding of post high school options, assistive technology demonstrations, and self-advocacy skills.

Modeled after the California program, Ohio's Youth Leadership program of Ohio high school juniors and seniors with disabilities is now starting its 5<sup>th</sup> annual forum in the summer of 2003. Guest speakers and mentors with disabilities throughout Ohio and the United States are brought to Ohio's capital city for a four-day program that also includes speeches by local, state, and national political figures.

Several local politicians in the past have included Columbus Mayor Ron Coleman, and city Councilperson Charletta Taveras. The Governor of Ohio Bob Taft has spoken to the group as well as well known disability rights attorney, Ted Kennedy, Jr. The goal of the forum is to provide *emancipatory* experiences that include the history of disability and culture, laws and regulations, and to hear from adults with disabilities and their struggles and triumphs during their lifespan. In turn, the forum hopes to enhance the self-efficacy or self-empowering of the individual participant/delegate.

Several state organizations have provided monetary support to supplement the funds needed to operate the four-day forum (See appendix E for the organizations). The experience is "expense-free" for the participants that included 30 total delegates throughout the State of Ohio in 2002. The delegates/participants were interviewed from a list of applicants who filled out an application and went through an interview process in their own hometown conducted by Governor's Council staff and members (See Appendix F for the questions asked during the interview process).



## Grounded Theory

The researcher will be using the grounded theory component of the qualitative aspect of the research. Grounded theory provides a means for developing theory in which theories are inadequate or non-existent. It offers a step by step procedure for analyzing the data collected. The thrust behind grounded theory is to develop a theory “grounded” in the data rather than use one borrowed from the social sciences literature. According to Creswell (2002) there are three types of designs. The systematic procedure of Strauss and Corbin (1998) involves using predetermined categories to interrelate the categories, visual diagrams, and specific propositions or hypotheses to make the connections explicit. The emergent design, consistent with Glaser (1992), relies on exploring a basic social process without pre-set categories. The constructivist approach of Charmaz (2000) focuses on subjective meanings by participants, explicit researcher values and beliefs, and suggestive or tentative conclusions.

Although grounded theorists might explore a single idea (e.g. leadership skills), they more frequently examine a process because the social world that we live in involves people interacting with other people. Grounded theorists generate an understanding of a process related to a substantive topic. A process in grounded theory research is a sequence of actions and interactions among people and events pertaining to the topic, such as the Youth Leadership Forum (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Categories in grounded theory designs are themes of basic information identified in the data by the researcher and used to understand a process. In vivo codes are labels for categories (themes) that are phrased in the exact words of participants, rather than in the words of the researcher or in social science or educational terms.



For the purpose of this research, grounded theory provides a means for generating a theory “grounded” in the YLF participant’s views rather than using an existing theory, it offers a step-by-step process for conducting the design, and it enables an inquirer to let the study emerge through analysis close to the data. Central to the process is coding, in which a theory emerges via visual pictures, series of propositions (or hypotheses), or narrative descriptions.

Glaser (1999), also suggested that the researcher must have three important characteristics: an ability to conceptualize data, an ability to tolerate some confusion, and an ability to tolerate confusion’s attendant regression. According to Glesne & Peshkin (1992), a qualitative researcher must categorize, synthesize, search for patterns and interpret the data that have been collected. As Glaser & Strauss (1967) indicated, during the analysis for of the data for categories, grounded theorists identify a core category (or central phenomenon) that will “process out” into a theory. Grounded theorists explore this process in order to develop a theory. Throughout the grounded theory procedure, grounded theorists memo to themselves. I decided that the research design of my study include retrospective interviews and testimonials of the delegates as well as questionnaires and surveys.

### The Research Site

The student delegate participants in this study are all high school juniors or seniors that live in Ohio who have filled out an application form. Twenty-five hundred applications were mailed to all Ohio Schools and the Department of Education supplied the labels of the schools in Ohio. Also included in the distribution of information on the



forum were the labels from the Ohio Rehabilitative Service Commission and the State Special Education Resource Centers. The site for the forum was the Radisson-Airport Hotel due to its central location in Ohio and the easy access to the interstate. Also, it allows the delegate to feel like he or she does not have to attend a postsecondary institution after high school.

Some delegates from 1999 indicated that they might not go to college but rather work. The site is accessible and is host to many disability related organizational functions. The researcher and YLF staff did a walk through before the start of the YLF in the year 2000 to assure its accessibility. Many disability-type conferences have been held at this site due to its location and its cooperative staff and disability accommodations. Youth Leadership Forum staff and the Governor's Council on People with Disabilities members have commented over the years about the excellent accessibility.

Student delegates stay overnight in the hotel and attend weeklong variety of small and large group lectures. Meals are provided at no cost to the staff and delegates and provided by the hotel staff. Many donations of in-kind supplies were accepted and placed into a "goody" bag for all of the delegate/participants.

### Sample and Sample Selections

Since its inception, 103 students have participated in the forum. As in the past, the delegates for the 2002 forum were selected from a pool of applicants. A wide range of disabilities were represented in the students and staff participants including: mobility, visual, hearing, psychiatric, learning and systemic. Students in the past forums included both visible and hidden disabilities (such as diabetes, epilepsy, learning disabilities).



Students are given an application that include a five page personal description form and a four-part essay that include questions regarding current activities in school, why they want to attend the forum, who the people who have influenced them during life and what they see their future holds (See Appendix G for sample form).

The students must have disability (as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1998, See Appendix G for listing of disabilities on application form) and have demonstrated leadership potential in school and the community as justified by two letters of recommendation (See Appendix G for sample). With these data, purposeful random sampling was completed as indicated by Creswell, 2002. The rationale for this style of sampling is two fold: so that the researcher can develop a detailed understanding and so that the researcher can best understand a phenomenon as to why the YLF was successful.

Upon receipt of the application form, adults from YLF committee interviewed the potential participants/delegates with disabilities in their hometown. A list of thirty delegates were selected and invited to the forum.

### Data Collection

The data collecting methods of this study consisted of open-ended interviews, small and large group focus sessions, persistent observations, video and audio taped observations as well as grounded surveys, all with the four-day forum festivities.

The inquiries during the study served as conceptual guideposts that allowed each participant to reflect on past experiences as well as reflecting upon his or her feelings (affective) and lived experiences. The individual interviews to select the delegates were



performed at a site located at or near the delegate's hometown. Delegates were asked where such an interview could take place to make sure the delegates feel "at home."

The small and large group sessions were held at the forum site and were taped by the researcher and the AXIS Center audio and videocassette. Permission to do so was done prior to the forum (See Appendix C for the consent form). The small group sessions were centered on the completion of activities in the delegate workbook using focus group process. The researcher obtained Human Subjects Review Approval in July 2002.

The researcher conducted structured and unstructured individual and small group sessions with the participant/delegates. Individual textual information was provided to the researcher after completion of each day highlighting any thematic overtones. A 12 – item pre-survey and post survey were given to the delegates and post-video open-ended dialogue was provided to gain testimonial outcomes or themes from the four-day forum.

Small focus groups reviewed the delegate handbook (copy may be obtained by contacting the researcher or the Ohio Governor's Council on People with Disabilities) and completed the exercises. The large group sessions were facilitated by researcher and Council Chair Wayne Cocchi. Guest speakers on various topics were on hand to present their particular topics. The video testimonials were done to (1) triangulate the statements of the delegates; (2) to allow those students not focused on the research process to be heard, and (3) to see the impact of the forum. The testimonial outcome and post-test survey process allowed the researcher to listen to the delegates/participants carefully and seriously. This process allowed them to reflect on the week's activities and comment on the strengths and weaknesses of the forum.



### Observation, Interviews and Prolonged Engagement

Prolonged engagement of activities (immersing in the culture) with the 10 random selected delegates included a minimum of a 45-minute daily interview was recorded. Two-hour observations in the small group settings and 1-hour observations in the large group settings were analyzed and scripted by the co-counselors and data given to the researcher. The surveys were done in small group setting and given to the researcher (Appendix D). Follow-up interviews were accomplished via personal leadership plan as well as open-ended surveys from past participants. Phone calls to past participants and emails were used. Surveys were mailed to past delegates getting their retrospective views and a survey to the current delegates (2002) was offered 6 months after the survey.

The researcher used face-to-face interviews to obtain documents from the delegates (surveys). To assist in the observation and interview phase, the researcher used field notes, providing a detailed account of ways the researchers used the time when on site and in the transcription phase and analysis phase. The researcher recorded details of the observations in a field book and kept a field diary to chronically record his or her own thoughts experiences and perceptions throughout the research process. The documents are located under lock and key in the researchers office. The researcher used the grounded theory methodology and focused on the experiences and events of the Ohio Youth Leadership Forum and to perceptions and meanings attached to the experiences and expressed by the participant/delegate.



### Data Analysis and Collection

Merriam (1988) and Marshall & Rossman (1989) contend that data collection and analysis must be a simultaneous process in qualitative research. Schatzman and Strauss (1973), claim that qualitative data analysis primarily entails classifying things, persons, and events and the properties that characterize them. The researcher documented identification and description of patterns and themes emerge from the exposure to the forum programs and activities.

Qualitative analysis was done using data from a variety of sources. Analysis of these data include:

- Open-ended questions on the surveys
- Transcripts of the focus group interviews conducted in all of the forums conducted.
- Daily evaluations of the collected at all of the forums.
- Testimonials given by the delegates at the conclusion of the forums.
- Results of the student development plans
- Parent feedback from current and former delegates
- Staff feedback

Data was organized categorically and chronologically reviewed and coded. A list of major ideas that surface was chronicled as well. The video taped testimonials were transcribed verbatim via transcriptionist. The researcher regularly reviewed field notes and daily entries. Field data, including interview data, observations, research notes, and illustrations will be pulled out and then reassembled in a new configurations almost daily.



Quantitatively, at the beginning of the 2002 Youth Leadership Forum, participants were given a survey to assess their perceptions of self as a leader, as change agent and if they can responsibly carry out their personal leadership plan. At the end of the forum another survey assessed these same dimensions. A third survey was sent to participants/delegates six months later (December) to determine how their perceptions may have changed.

Participants/delegates were given a survey after the completion of each small and large group focus session. This quantitative data was entered into a database and submitted to a set of analysis using SPSS. The primary analysis performed was a paired sample t-tests with alpha set at .05 (Wilcoxon T), using various “before” and “after” measures. Strong treatment effects should cause the different scores to be consistently positive or consistently negative. In the extreme case, all of the differences will be in the same direction. This produces a Wilcoxon T of zero. On the other hand, where there is no treatment effect, the signs of the different scores were intermixed evenly. In this case the Wilcoxon T will be relatively large. In general, a small t-value (near zero) provided evidence for a real difference between the two treatment conditions. Whenever sample data produce a T that is less than or equal to this critical value (.05) we reject  $H_0$ . For example, the retrospective measure of perception of self as leader was compared to the follow-up measure of the same for the 2002 forum delegates.



The pre-forum measure of perceived potential to be an agent of change will be compared to the post-forum measure of this year's group. Together and separately, the qualitative and quantitative results were used to assess the impact and effectiveness of the forum.

#### Data Collection Instruments (Appendices-D)

- 2002 Daily Evaluation of Curriculum
- 2002 Daily Reflective Feedback Questions
- 2002 Focus Group Interview Protocol
- 1999-2002 Retrospective/Follow-up Survey
- 2002 Pre-Forum Survey
- 2002 Post-Forum Survey
- 2002 Follow-up Survey

If in the rare case of death or sickness of a participant, the author utilized the input of an eleventh delegate for qualitative purposes. Using the instrument of Parent Consent for Permission (Appendix B) parents granted permission before the delegate participated in the research.

#### Methods of Validation (Trustworthiness)

To ensure internal validity, the following strategies will be employed.

1. Triangulation of data – According to Creswell (2002), triangulation in the mixed method design consists of collecting both quantitative data and qualitative data, merging the data, and using the results to best understand a research problem. The rationale for this design is that one data collection form supplies strengths to offset the weakness of the other form. The



direct comparison of the two data sets (quantitative and qualitative) provides a “triangulation “of data sources. In the mixed method design the researcher gives more priority to qualitative than quantitative data. The mixed method researcher also collected both sets of data simultaneously during the study. Finally the researcher compared the results from quantitative and qualitative analysis to determine if the two databases yield similar or dissimilar results.

The data was collected from interviews, observations and document analysis (surveys, workbooks, personal plan, testimonials, small and large group reactions from script).

2. Member checking – According to Earlandson (1993) member checking is critical because the participants who rendered their thoughts should verify interpretations obtained. Member checking is the process of having participants review the transcribed interviews and provide them the opportunity to clarify information, (Patton). Each delegate was provided an opportunity to make additional comments on any survey or to any part of any transcribed interview, or to restate any of the transcript. The goal of member checking is to report as accurately as possible the participant’s views. This process provided enhanced trustworthiness of the study. It was important that ongoing dialogue regarding the interpretation of the delegates reality and meanings to ensure the truth-value of the data happen



- throughout the process. According to Mason (1996), member checking is considered a method for establishing “face validity” in qualitative research.
3. Long term evaluation – was conducted by phone interviews, survey questionnaires (open-ended and Likert) emails and video and audio-taped information.
  4. Peer examiner – Robin Moore-Cooper, a doctoral student in rehabilitation assisted me in the collection of data. A backup person was established in case Ms. Moore-Cooper was unavailable. That person was Maureen Fitzgerald, Program Director of the Governor’s Council on People with Disabilities.
  5. Participatory mode of research – the informant (delegate/participant) was involved in most phases of this study, from design to checking interpretations and conclusions.

To ensure external validity the researcher provided a thick detailed guide for the facilitators and the delegates. A training session on the usage of the guides was held the day before the forum to assure its transferability (Merriam, 1988), at the Radisson Airport Hotel. The training lasts about a day and a half before the forum actually begins and the arrival of the delegate/participants.

Three techniques provided a detailed account of the focus of the study, the researcher’s role of the forum, the informants (delegates) position and basis for selection, and the context from which the data will be gathered (Goetz, 1984). Second, triangulation or multiple methods of data collection and analysis were used, which



strengthens reliability as well as internal validity. Finally, data collection and analysis strategies were reported in detail in order to provide a clear and accurate picture of the methods in the study. It is this researcher's intent that phases of this project were subject to scrutiny by an external auditor. An external auditor is a person who is "outside" the study to review different aspects of the study. The external auditor was Wayne Cocchi, the Chair of the Governor's Council on People with Disabilities. Mr. Cocchi offered no change in any aspect of the study.

#### Possible Limitations of the Youth Leadership Forum Evaluation Process

A couple of limitations should be noted in terms of data. Calculation of results for each of the Forums hosted by the Governor's Council on People with Disabilities was based on small groups of people, limiting the generalizability of the results for quantitative purposes. Another possible limitation might lie in the use of retrospective measures of the 1999, 2000, and 2001 participants' perspective of themselves as leaders, agents of change and so on. Just how far back can a participant remember the impact of the forum? The Forums first year of 1999 served as a "pilot" for the future forums and changes from the "pilot" year of 1999 were implemented into future forums. A detailed list of limitations emerged from the study and will be further discussed in Chapter 5.



## CHAPTER 4

### ANALYSIS

#### Interpretation of the Findings

The findings of the forum experience are the vehicle for communicating a holistic picture of the experiences and effects of the forum on the participants. The final project is a construction of the delegate/participants experiences and the meanings that [s]he attaches to them. This allows the readers to vicariously experience the forum and provide a lens through which readers can view the delegate/participants worldview.

#### 2002 Forum

The evaluation of the 2002 Forum was built upon previous years forum (1999, 2000, 2001) evaluations including the retrospective survey. All the strategies were adapted and modified (See Appendix A for the copies of the surveys and protocols).

Daily Evaluation of the Curriculum and Facilities. Once again, as in previous years (1999,2000,2001) participants were given evaluation forms to rate each session and to provide feedback on conference support services.

Daily Reflective Feedback. The Daily Reflective Feedback Questions were adapted to become a part of the Daily Reflective Feedback Journals. The



journaling process was to assist the participants in reflecting on the Forum and his/her reactions to their learning and growth.

Focus Group Process. The external evaluator (Maureen Fitzgerald), and the researcher helped project staff develop interview questions and train the group facilitators the night before the Forum. The questions were made to explore what aspects of the Forum helped participants develop skills, consider the role of disabilities in their lives and change their attitudes regarding becoming a leader. YLF staff facilitated the discussions. Students were randomly selected into their groups by drawing their name out of a hat.

Data from the Daily Evaluations of the Curriculum and facilities were summarized. Table 4.1 provides a summary of the ratings. The voluntary evaluation of the program sessions were simply a checklist of the sessions that were most enjoyable or affected the delegates positively.

<b>Session</b>	<b># liked the most</b>	<b># disliked</b>
What is Leadership?	17	2
Understanding Disability Culture	17	0
Technology and Resources to Reach My Goals	18	0
Living on My Own	16	1
Life after High School –Choosing a Career	14	5
Life after High School-Choosing a College	18	1
Contacting your Legislators	14	2
Successful Leaders	15	1
Benefits of Voting	11	4
Leading in the Community	13	0

Table 4.1: 2002 Forum Large Group Session



The highest rating was given to Technology and Resources to Reach My Goals and Choosing a College. The Technology and Resource session had a panel of 4 speakers with disabilities that utilize assistive technology in their daily life. Also, vendors were on hand for the delegates to try out various pieces of assistive technology.

The session on Choosing a College also received high ratings. This session had former YLF delegates talk about their experiences in college and also had a couple of personnel from offices of disability services.

The most unpopular session rating went to Choosing a Career although it did receive popular votes from some. The second lowest rating went to Benefits and Voting which participants found interesting, but dry and too much like a lecture in format. Delegates felt this could have been held as a post-session rather than a lecture.

Session	Number of Positive Responses	Number Negative Responses
Mentor Luncheon Speaker	$\frac{18}{30}$	

Table 4.2: 2002 Mentor Luncheon Session

The mentor luncheon speaker was Steven K uusisto, who spoke about growing up with a disability. He is a person who is blind and is an English Professor at The Ohio State University. He has appeared on *Oprah*, *20/20* and *Prime Time*. He talked in depth about growing up with a Disability and the successes and failures he had in his life. Although, only 18 of the 30 delegate participants returned the evaluation is was very clear



that his impact was significant through the textual information given further in this research. The timing in asking for the evaluation of Dr. Kuusisto was poor as the researcher was asking the delegate/participants to fill out the evaluation form while listening to the delegate/participant testimonials.

After the 2002 Forum, the Youth Leadership Forum staff reviewed the data from the small and large focus groups, journals, and daily assessments of the curriculum. A briefing held at a local restaurant (Bravo's) after the completion of the Forum concluded that:

- The 2002 Institute was viewed as a very valuable experience.
- The 2002 Institute addressed many of the issues identified in the previous evaluations.

Factors that promoted the success of the 2002 YLF forum include:

1. YLF participants were diverse, a factor that enhanced the learning environment and outcomes from both the staff and participants.
2. The four-day forum (instead of a three day forum) from previous years is a better fit as relationships build and more information could be thoroughly covered.
3. The variety of the sessions and various teaching methodologies used fit the learning styles and personal needs of each participant.
4. Supportive climate was created as in previous YLF forums. Acceptance of various learning styles and accommodations were met throughout the Forum.



5. A climate of equality where staff or participants did not receive any special privileges was obvious.
6. The YLF staff was professional and gave the Forum tremendous credibility. Many of the staff members were people with disabilities themselves and some of them were previous delegates to the Forum of past years.
7. YLF staff went out of their way to make sure participants' issues and needs were met.
8. The time devoted to the Leadership Development plan this year(2002) was well used.
9. The schedule and the pace of the schedule were perfect. There was not a lot of down time but just enough to encourage fellowship with other YLF participants.
10. The use of the various liaisons as volunteers enhanced the learning and operation of the Forum. Many volunteers took time off work to volunteer at the forum.

The evaluation of data indicated that the 2002 Forum could have been improved by:

1. Establishing a climate where it was okay to leave a session (small or large group). In some sessions, delegates said they needed to use the restroom or were thirsty but did not leave their sessions thinking that it would disrupt the focus group process.
2. Participants needed to bring folders with them to put place their papers.



3. Changing the format of a few of the sessions, such as the voting session and perhaps just give a flyer and have the students register throughout the Forum.
4. Providing different food choices at the hotel (although comments were much better than last year when chicken was the main food).
5. Recognizing that each Forum is different and develop its own culture; therefore be flexible with formats and programs offered to better meet participants' needs, group dynamics and group cultures.
6. Perhaps having a "career fair" instead of a panel in the career segment.

The 2002 Forum was perceived as a very valuable experience which led to personal and professional growth, development, introspection and reflection. In the focus-group interviews, journal, and final Forum evaluations, participants testified to the significance of the Forum at the Mentor luncheon and written text.

**A sample of the comments** from the participants comments follow:

At the age of 16 I've had more surgeries than birthdays. My life has been hard and troubling for a reason. At this forum I will make a decision that will change my life and open a new door to the future.

(The forum) has significantly impacted my life.

We want to continue to support the efforts of YLF and glad that our organization continues to help with the program.....We will always support the YLF to make sure it continues for years.

I think that it is a beautiful program.....and I'm glad to be a part of its program for the last 4 years.

The entire program is a wonderful success. A wonderful thing to be a part of. I wouldn't trade this experience for the world.



I'm extremely grateful for the changes in myself that I've been able to bring about. I am a believer in myself now. I am going back to help others.

The staff at YLF is like no other. You all care about us so much. You care deeply about how we really feel.

This experience opened my eyes to people that I have never seen before.

This forum has changed my life. I always thought myself being depressed. I feel like a weight has been lifted from my shoulders. I can change the way people think. Can I come back next year?

You allowed me to open up. I have always been quiet about my disability.

This is my family. My real family.

At the Mentor luncheon..... You've made my dreams come true.

This is like heaven.

These 4 days have been the best in my life. I will return to my community and be a better leader.

I've really learned what it means to be a leader. And that it's not just about my disability (blindness) but all disabilities.

I want to go back and share what I learned with everyone in my high school. Can you go back with me?

### Outcomes

This section addresses outcomes of the Youth Leadership Forum. It is organized into three sections: 1) delegate/participant outcomes; 2) professional staff outcomes; 3) total forum outcomes. Information regarding the outcomes was obtained from field notes, pre-post and follow-up surveys, journals (2002), and focus-group interviews (1999-2001, and 2002). The outcomes described were documented for at least a majority, and in some cases, all, participants, unless otherwise noted. Quotes printed were given a code to assure confidentiality. Of



the ten delegates randomly selected from the 30 delegates this year and 34 retrospective delegates, the following themes were generated from the 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002 Youth Leadership Forums.

### **Delegate Participant Outcomes**

#### **Changed, challenged and/or educated my views of personal disability.**

Experiences at the Forums (1999-2002) were very personal. Students during and after the 1999-2001 and the 2002 Forum reported that they were challenged and had reflect at times, rethink the role their disability played in their lives. Some students reported developing a sense of pride of having a disability while other struggled with what pride in disability means.

[The role my disability plays in my life] did change for me. I've always been confident about my self, but I have never spoken out in the open about who I was. It is so encouraging to talk about myself and not others.

[On the way here] I wasn't sure what I was getting into. I didn't know that this forum thing was going to be like. I am glad I came but I never knew that there were so many people just like me. I am proud of who I am.

It has opened my eyes to all of the different kind of people and their disabilities it has also helped me to know what rights I have.

I opened up with people at the forum. It allowed me to see that my learning disability is okay.

It (the forum) help me know my rights.

I was never able to go to my instructors to talk about my disability. Now I am able to go to them about my disability.

I'm not disabled, just rearranged.

The impossible just takes a little longer.



It (the forum) taught me about my rights and how they are violated every day.

The knowledge, skills, and confidence at the forum provided me with the motivation to continue to pursue my dream of becoming a student at the University of Notre Dame.

### **Increased understanding of the broader disability community.**

The YLF delegates/participants reported in their journals, in focus group discussions, and on surveys how YLF helped them learn about disabilities other than their own. Additionally, it also helped them learn about and see learning disabilities, physical disabilities and hidden disabilities as part of a broader disability community. Along with increased awareness came a freedom to ask others about their disabilities.

I know now that I have a better understanding of different disabilities other than my own... I never knew all of the things they had to deal with. I am lucky.

It feels good to be a part of a large community....it's helped me become more aware of other people's problems. In my school, I am the only one with a visual impairment. But to see other people with the same struggles I have, it is encouraging.

It is so neat to see what the Seeing Eye dogs do. All I thought they did was pick stuff up. I saw one this week open the door for the girl who needed help. She was so lucky to have a friend like her dog.

We all just have different differences.

The forum broadened my horizons on assistive technology and people with disabilities.



### **Decreased feelings of isolation.**

Many of the students from the 1999-2001 and the 2002 forum talked of being a part of a larger community of people. With this unity they felt as if they could come together to effect change in a variety of ways.

I've found other people with the same problem.

I'm not the only one with a learning disability.

There are other students with disabilities who have gone through the same struggles I have.

United We Stand! I think once we take pride of being who we are, we can do anything. We have more power to change. I am going back to school and sit in my friends IEP conferences and help him. I really think I know what he needs.

I got to see what different disabilities people had, and what their life was like.

This YLF group of people is one great big happy family. No one is judgmental. Everyone helps me. Everyone here listens to me. Do I have to go home?

It is not so much that I bonded with people at the forum with disabilities—it seems to be like that they have gone through the same things I have gone through. I can be myself not the “deaf one”. I don't mind being deaf but the problems seem to be society not mine.

People treat me like a person here. I feel like a leader here. I am not a leader at home. I am kind of shy and introverted at home but here I am thought of as a leader. Man this feels good!

Anyone can be a leader and speak out.



**Issues are common as with other people with disabilities.**

Another part of the isolation aspect was that delegates were beginning to realize that the difficulties that they have at home (school, recreation and community) are the same ones faced by other delegates.

The first night I didn't get any sleep. I spent the whole night talking with my roommate she and I talked about the problems we had in school. They just don't seem to understand me at school. She told me she had the same problems with her teachers.

I have always been the only person at my school with a vision impairment. Now I know that people like me are all over this state. I am having surgery soon and I am not scared because Jeff Moyers (speaker that was blind) said that I shouldn't be.

It is just great to meet someone who shares the same disability as I do and know what they've been through.

**Delegates developed friendships, but also relationship that became a network of support.**

The development of friendships and support network was an outcome from the forum and was one of the main reasons that the delegates felt less isolated.

Delegates from the forums (1999-2001 and 2002) felt that they left with a new set of friends and support networks and deep meaningful, relationships. As one said, "I am so thrilled to be a part of this family, it is really magic."

**It also appears that these relationships and support networks were continued and enhanced through e-mail and snail mail.**

You people are my family. (email)



YLF has helped me make lasting contacts with persons especially those with a visual impairment.

I have made personal relationships that I am certain will last a lifetime. (email)

You don't know what this Forum has done for my son. I hope I can call on you again. (email)

### **Found a sense of direction and purpose.**

Comments from delegates indicate that they found a sense of direction and a sense of purpose from the Forums. Comments like these were aplenty:

The forum allowed me to see what type of career path I wanted to go into.

I wanted to be a registered nurse since I was a little girl.....YLF has inspired me to get a degree as an RN.

After YLF I became sure that I wanted to be an LD teacher.

This program has helped me decide to go on to a four-year college to get a degree in early childhood, because now I know I can.

### **Viewed leadership and being a agent of change in new ways.**

Delegates came away from the 1999-2001 and 2002 forums viewing leadership and an agent of change in new ways.

I now know what a leader is. I am usually a spokesperson for a group at my school. The teacher keeps calling on me. Now I understand what it is like to be a part of a whole.

I gained the knowledge and expertise I need to become a leader. I know the parts of leadership that I need to improve on.

I am going to be a leader at my school now. I am going to tell my friends that I can advocate for them. I will teach them what I learned from this forum. Hopefully it will help themselves too.



I was never a leader. But it is funny. I am a leader here. I have never been thought of a leader. But now that I think about it. I have never been asked or put in the position of being a leader.

I will be the first farmer to make a million dollars. I will die trying.

**Developed skills in leadership such as assertiveness, self-advocacy and effective communication skills.**

Additional qualitative information indicated that delegates learned skills on how to be a leader and an agent of change.

...if you have disability and you want to be a leader, you can do it, put your mind to it and it will be done great.

I talk up in committees now.

I realized that other people have the same views that I do, however, some don't. I have to be more patient when other people are talking. I can think of people at school who don't like to hear what I have to say about how things are at school. They wouldn't listen to me if they had to.

I won't be afraid to go back home to discuss the changes needed in farming.

I am now more active in local programs to help younger children in the community.

Just because you have a disability, does not mean you cannot make it in this world.

**Alliances formed, when the delegates got together, was highly evident. Collaboration played an important role.**

I hope I can do my Personal Development plan. I may have to call on others to help me. This place offered me so much that I feel I can call on anyone here to help me.

There isn't one person who will help me achieve my goals and dreams at school. But I know I can count on the people here.



I call Maureen all of the time and ask her what I should do about this and that.

I helped Samantha get a hold of disability services at her school. She uses them all of the time.

Upon befriending the ADA Coordinator, the researcher observed several students talking with the Coordinator about obtaining his phone number

### **Increased self-confidence about being a leader or agent of change.**

Quantitative questions explored if there was any change in the student's view of themselves as leaders or as having the potential of being leaders. Four different instruments were used:

1. 1999-2001 Retrospective/Follow-up Survey, in which participants involved in the 1999, 2000 and 2001 Forum were surveyed this year. The retrospective portion of this survey was developed for the purpose of permitting comparisons with data from the 2002 participants' Pre-Forum survey. In this portion of the survey, participants were asked how they thought about themselves as leaders/agents of change *before* they had attended their respective forum. Thus, these data are retrospective in nature, and are intended to serve as proxies for the "Pre-Forum" data. The Follow-up Survey contain the same questions as the 2002 Follow-up Survey.
2. 2002 Pre-Forum Survey, in which participants/delegates were asked at the beginning of the 2002 forum about their views of leadership.



3. 2002 Post-Forum Survey, in which participants were asked at the end of the 2002 Forum about their views of leadership.
4. 2002 Follow-up Survey, in which participants were asked about their views of leadership 6 months later (January of 2003).

In each of these surveys, all items about leadership and being agents of change had a response range of 1 (Not a leader/agent of change at all, or no potential) to 7 (A very strong leader/agent of change or strong potential). *T*-tests in all analysis showed positive responses in participants' views of their potential to be leaders being leaders. In each of the comparisons, participants who completed both of the relevant measures were included. In other words, the set of participants who completed both the Pre-Forum and Post Forum measures were the same set of participants who completed the both the Pre-Forum and Follow-up surveys. One Hundred percent (100%) of the surveys were returned pre and post for the 2002 forum (30). Retrospectively thirty-four participants delegates return their survey of the approximately 60 that were sent out.

The results indicate a little different quantitative scenarios. The people in one set of years may have given somewhat different ratings to the same session, resulting in different means, such as retrospective versus the 2002 Forum.



### Delegates Responses Regarding Leadership

	<b>N</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
retrospective self as leader pre-forum	34	1.00	7.00	4.1176	1.7014
retrospective self as leader post-forum	34	4.00	7.00	6.0000	.8876
Valid N (listwise)	34				

Table 4.3: How do you view your self as a leader?

	<b>N</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
retrospective potential to be leader pre-forum	34	1.00	7.00	4.4706	1.5223
retrospective potential to be leader post-forum	34	4.00	7.00	6.5000	.7487
Valid N (listwise)	34				

Table 4.4: Do you feel you have potential to be a leader?



Quantitative questions also explored the extent to which there was any change in students' views of themselves as change agents or as having the potential of being agents of change [1 (not an agent of change at all or no potential) to 7 (very strong agent of change or strong potential)]. As can be seen in Table 4.5 the results are mixed. All 34 of the *t*-tests show positive changes and.

	<b>N</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
retrospective agent of change pre-forum	34	1.00	7.00	3.5882	1.5786
retrospective agent of change post-forum	34	1.00	7.00	5.7059	1.3378
Valid N (listwise)	34				

Table 4.5: How do you see yourself as an agent of change?

	<b>N</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
retrospective agent of change potential pre-forum	34	1.00	7.00	4.0000	1.6330
retrospective agent of change potential post-forum	34	1.00	7.00	6.2353	1.1822
Valid N (listwise)	34				

Table 4.6: How do you see yourself as having the potential to be an agent of change?



	<b>N</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
self as leader 2002 pre	30	3.00	7.00	5.0667	1.1725
self as leader 2002 post	30	4.00	7.00	6.3667	.7649
Valid N (listwise)	30				

Table 4.7: How do you view self as a leader?

	<b>N</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
potential to be leader 2002 pre	30	3.00	7.00	5.9000	1.1250
potential to be leader 2002 post	30	5.00	7.00	6.6333	.5561
Valid N (listwise)	30				

Table 4.8: How do you view yourself as having potential to be a leader?

	<b>N</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
agent of change 2002 pre	30	1.00	7.00	4.8000	1.6274
agent of change 2002 post	30	2.00	7.00	6.3333	1.0613
Valid N (listwise)	30				

Table 4.9: Do you feel you are an agent of change?



	<b>N</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
potential agent of change 2002 pre	30	2.00	7.00	5.3333	1.2130
potential agent of change 2002 post	30	4.00	7.00	6.5667	.8172
Valid N (listwise)	30				

Table 4.10: Do you feel you have potential to be an agent of change?

\*There were 30 participants in 2002 Forum and 34 participants responded to 1999, 2000, and 2001 survey.

		<b>N</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Pair 1	RSLPRE & RSLPOST	34	.019
Pair 2	RSPLPRE & RSPLPOST	34	.173
Pair 3	RSACPRE & RSACPOS	34	.102
Pair 4	RSPACPRE & RSPACPOS	34	.017
Pair 5	RSKADAPR & RSKADAPO	34	.857
Pair 6	PREL02 & POSL02	30	.000
Pair 7	PREPL02 & POSPL02	30	.016
Pair 8	AC02PRE & AC02POS	30	.000
Pair 9	PAC02PRE & PAC02POS	30	.018
Pair 10	COP02PRE & COP02POS	30	.000
Pair 11	KAD02PRE & KAD02POS	30	.044
Pair 12	KNOW02PR & KNOW02PO	30	.034
Pair 13	PREI202 & F102	18	.073
Pair 14	PREPL02 & FP102	18	.055
Pair 15	ACO2PRE & ACF02	18	.095
Pair 16	PAC02 & PACF02	18	.000
Pair 17	KAAA02PRE & KADAFO2	18	.000

Table 4.11: Paired Samples Correlations



### Interpretation of These Findings

The somewhat mixed results could make sense do to these plausible explanations.

1. The smaller number of delegates greatly influenced the stability of the results. Eighteen out of the 2002 participants who completed both the pre and post survey also completed the follow-up survey which made the interpretation difficult due to only a little more than 60% response rate.
2. If taken at face value, it appears that the 2002 students left the Forum energized, with great confidence in their potential to be leaders and change agents. It appears that once back in the school or community environment something happened to decrease this confidence. It may be that it takes time to work on their personal development plan and the rewards of their work will come later.
3. The fact that follow-up with the 1999,2000, 2001 forum delegates indicated an increase in student's view of themselves as leaders and change agents may indicate there is success with their personal development plans, and views regarding leadership may increase.

Qualitative data provides another source which tends to support the conclusion that the 1999-2001 and 2002 forum helped students learn that **being a leader or agent of change does not mean that one has to be a person without a disability.**

I want to be a leader now. I want to change my school when I get home. I am going to start my own community YLF group when I get home.

I realize that I can make change. Knowledge is power. I feel I have that knowledge now.



The first day when I had to put down on the sheet what it takes to be a leader I put that I felt a leader had to be in charge, but I was wrong.

I am going to the Office of Disability Services at my school when I get back. I didn't know I had to self-disclose. Usually my mom did this for me. I guess I am going to have to do this myself. It is about time.

I am not afraid to try even though I'm shy to be in more leadership activities.

### **Used leadership/change agent skills.**

Follow-up qualitative data indicate that students are using their leadership skills.

I am talking to other classes about disabilities.

I am speaking to my teachers about what I learned at the conference. I am now the expert disability guy.

When I got home, I had a meeting with my teachers at school and told them how I felt. It felt good to get some things off my chest.

Now that I am a counselor at YLF, I can now show people my leadership skills. It is funny how people think I am a leader now. But back home I am not.

### **Recognized as a leader.**

At least 52 of all of the students have been recognized as a leader according to pre and post data from 1999-2002 delegates.

I fought for a new elevator at my school.

I had to tell my teacher I needed talking books.

I created change at my college to make it wheelchair accessible for a friend of mine.

Survey data (see Table 4.12) indicate the YLF was successful in identifying student leaders to be a part of the 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002 Forums and that these students continue to be involved in various leadership activities.



## Optional Questions Information



<b>Participated in School Organizations/Committee</b>	N	%Pre	%Post
1999-2001 Retrospective/Follow-up	34	91	85
2002 Pre/Follow-up	$\frac{18}{30}$	97	
<b>Served as an officer in school or community organization</b>			
1999-2001 Retrospective/Follow-up	34	29	38
2002 Pre/Follow-up	$\frac{18}{30}$	53	
<b>Served as an elected officer in the school or community organization</b>			
1999-2001 Retrospective/Follow-up	34	18	24
2002 Pre/Follow-up	$\frac{18}{30}$	47	
<b>Led or participated in an initiative/campaign to effect change at school or in community</b>			
1999-2001 Retrospective/Follow-up	34	9	35
2002 Pre/Follow-up	$\frac{18}{30}$	40	
<b>Served in or and/or led organizations in the home or in the community</b>			
1999-2001 Retrospective/Follow-up	34	29	47
2002 Pre/Follow-up	$\frac{18}{30}$	47	

Table 4.12: Delegates Responses Regarding Leadership Activities



<b>How well do you know people at the Forum</b>	<b><u>N</u></b>	<b><u>Pre</u></b>	<b><u>Post</u></b>	<b><u>Followup #</u></b>
1999-2001 Retrospective/Follow-up	34	2.34	6.52	N/A
2002 Pre/Post/Follow-up	30	2.31	6.33	

Table 4.13: Relationships-building at Forum

### Relationships Building at the Forum

#### Continued Relationships are evident

I keep in touch with other delegates.

I simply don't have time to contact anyone.

I've talked to Laura (former YLF delegate new staff).

I've contacted people a couple of times. But it's hard with college and babysitting.

I let people know how I'm doing.

Laura emails me. She's a big help.

A staff member helps me with my progress through the school year.

I contact all of my friends from YLF.

We tell each other how we are doing all of the time. I have so many friends from YLF. More than I have at home.



### Personal Leadership Plan Development

	<b>N</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
complete leadership plan 2002 pre	30	4.00	7.00	6.0333	.8087
complete leadership plan 2002 post	30	5.00	7.00	6.5333	.6288
Valid N (listwise)	30				

Table 4.14: Do you feel you will be responsible for carrying out your personal leadership plan after the forum?

	<b><u>N</u></b>	<b><u>Pre</u></b>	<b><u>Post</u></b>
1999, 2000, 2001 Retrospective	34	4.2	4.1
2002 Pre/Post/Follow-up	30	6.0	6.5

Table 4.15: Will you be responsible to develop and follow through the personal leadership plan after the forum?

**When asked, “Are you still working on your personal development plan? What have you accomplished at the Forum?” Delegates replied:**

Yes, I am the chairperson for S.A.D.D. and the president of the college paper.

Yes, you wouldn't believe how confident I am.

Yes, I'm still leading the recreation center project.

Yes, I work on my personal development plan.

Yes, I went to college and got my license. I drive to school, home and work.



Yes, I have gotten involved in college activities.

Yes, I have been elected to two offices positions.

Some, I have been able to take change more easily.

Yes, I better understand who I am now.

#### Knowledge of IDEA, ADA and History of Disability

	<b>N</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
retrospective knowledge of ada pre-forum	34	1.00	6.00	2.2059	1.4308
retrospective knowledge of ada post-forum	34	2.00	7.00	5.5588	1.3749
Valid N (listwise)	34				

Table 4.16: How much knowledge do you have of ADA, IDEA, § 504, etc.

	<b>N</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
knowledge of ada 2002 pre	30	1.00	7.00	2.8333	1.7633
knowledge of ada 2002 post	30	4.00	7.00	6.1000	.9229
Valid N (listwise)	30				

Table 4.17: What is your knowledge of ADA, IDEA, § 504 etc.



### **Roles of people without disabilities challenged.**

One of the major outcomes regarding the 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002 forums was to challenge the role of non-disabled allies and especially the role of the non-disabled staff person.

Being a part of this group made me feel like a minority. But I am proud to say that I am here. I am learning so much about differences and diversity. The delegates are so open with me, I am so thrilled they think of me as a person who can help them.

I look forward to when I can buy my first large combine or piece of equipment. I am going to take the title to the teacher who keeps telling me farming is a bad decision and tell him, I did it.

### **Used email and Internet as valuable tools to stay connected with delegates after the forum.**

Items on the 1999, 2000, 2001 Retrospective/ Follow-up Survey and the 2002 Pre-survey and 2002 Follow-up survey generally indicated that delegates/participants increased their usage of e-mail and Internet (See Table 4.18). Means in Table 4.18 are based on the following: 1=never, 2=less than once a month, 3=monthly, 4=weekly, and 5=daily.



<b>Student responses</b>	<b>Pre Mean</b>	<b>Post Mean</b>	<b>+/- Change</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>Use of e-mail</b>				
1999-01 Forum Retrospective/Follow-up	88%	97%	+11%	34
2002 Pre/Follow-up	83%	100%	+17%	$\frac{18}{30}$
1999-01/02 Combined	85%	98%	+13%	
<b>Use of the Internet</b>				
1999-01 Forum Retrospective/Follow-up	82%	97%		
2002 Pre/Follow-up	100%	100%	0	
1999-01/02 Combined	92%	98%	+6%	

Table 4.18: Delegates Responses Regarding Use of E-mail and Internet



Qualitative data indicate that e-mail and the Governor' Council on People with Disabilities Web-site has become **important tools in helping students remain connected after the Forums.**

I have kept up with at least 5 other people since my forum in 1999. I talk with 2 of them almost every day. I saw the form on the website.

I look at the Governor's Council web-site occasionally, but it would be nice to have a list-serve of people that have attended the forum.

Notation: The Governor's Council on People with Disabilities Web-site has a link to allow potential delegate/participants to download the application form.

### **Follow-up Responses**

**The question, "Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the impact of YLF has had on you?" This question brought positive and mixed responses.**

I'm better at understanding my reading and spelling because I am more confident.

It showed me how many people really have a disability, even though it is hidden, like dyslexia.

It's very uplifting for students with disabilities to have this program to attend.

I've learned so much and told my friend and they are trying to get YLF.

I have already used what I have learned and it was great.

YLF made me more confident and not afraid to do things. I've done so much this year that I probably wouldn't have done if I didn't go to the Forum. Thank you.

I just want to say it was the best four days of my life.

You have turned to my life around and made it better.

The session on life after high school got me thinking more about it.



## **Professional Staff Participant Outcomes**

### **Changed, reaffirmed and challenged views of role of disability in life on the staff participants.**

A few of the professional staff participants had disabilities. For some, the 1999,2000, 2001 or 2002 forum challenged or helped them change their view points regarding their own disability. For others, there was very little change in this regard.

Coming here gives me more a sense of pride that I am from a unique culture. I feel I have more of an “accurate” empathy for the delegates.

Each year brings new faces and challenges which help me to be more creative to meet the expectations of these young lives.

The forum has impacted my life. It is the way I live life now.

You know it is funny. I am proud to have a disability.

I am now able to see what other people with disabilities have to go through. It takes a little longer for people in wheelchairs to get around. Now I know why we need more time at each session and especially at meals.

### **Challenged and changed staff participants’ views of students and/or family members with Disabilities.**

In some cases, professional staff participants found their views of individuals with disabilities challenged or changed.

I think all we have to do is remove barriers. It is the “normal” population that creates disabilities. We need to break down the barriers of ignorance. I realized I was trusted as a counselor this year after a “delegate” opened up and told me about the death of his brother.

The forum and delegates have been very inspiring to me.



### **Broadened professional staff's understanding of disability movement.**

As with the delegates, professional staff participants expanded their view of the disability movement to include a broader perspective of culture and history of disability.

I learned more from Karla than I did from any one. She is a history book of disability.

YLF has provided me with an opportunity to meet people with a range of disabilities..... and to hear and see first hand the issues found by thousands of people in Ohio.

### **Developed Personally as a Professional**

YLF had a tremendous and profound effect on many of the professional staff participants as indicated by the following:

I cry every time I have to leave this forum. It is such a vacation for me. I feel like I have made a difference.

Rooming alone has taught me about my own weaknesses and gave me confidence about my strengths (former delegate who is now a counselor).

As a council member, community leader, and business person, I can better educate the general population about what can be achieved by individuals when we look at each other for who we are, not the shell our body presents.

### **Use of humor in self-acceptance**

In taking a boat cruise I couldn't see the water and everyone was getting sea sick. Sometimes its better not to see.

I talk more freely about my disability and don't hide it. After coming to YLF, I now help many understand my own disabilities. This is such a great feeling for me to be disabled and okay!



## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

After reviewing the data the researcher offers insight to the following, including lessons learned by the project staff and recommendations for replication.

#### **Lessons Learned**

Bringing young people with disabilities together and the adults with disabilities who worked with them proved very empowering. Participants came to realize that the problems that face them at school, home and in their community are not isolated. After the forum, the students felt a need to make several changes personally at home and at school. All were writing a personal development plan that addressed these needs.

Where activities were highly interactive or experimental, the delegates were particularly effective in engaging other delegates, raising awareness, and fostering team development. For example, the talent show required teamwork from many of the delegates to perform to work together and make up the program. Projects ranged from group singing, to group skit development and artistic appreciation

The Ohio Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) is one of only seventeen states to do a Forum for high school juniors and seniors with disabilities and the fourth state to do so. Each of the components was successfully implemented but some were faced with



challenges and obstacles over the years. Staff used these issues as opportunities to improve upon future forums.

### The Curriculum

Although modeled after the California program, Ohio's YLF was unique in its format. Perhaps the most critical lesson learned was that there is not a "one size fits all" approach to leadership development. For example, delegates enjoyed did not enjoy the assistive technology demonstration the first year, but during the third year, the YLF had vendors come in and demonstrate their products. This had provided more impact for the students as they could talk with the vendors and describe their wants and needs in their community life. YLF staff assumes the same curriculum year after year until participant speak out against any session or its facilitator as having very little impact. The most popular speakers are invited back and they are rated as having the most impact at the forum.

Each group was to come up with a theme or name of their group. The staff and the researcher noted that naming a group on the first day of the forum was a little preposterous. Waiting until the group gets to know each other will allow the groups to get a feel of the "air" of the group. Recommendation was made that the groups name the group later in the forum, perhaps the late afternoon of the list day or second day.

Each group needed more or less time depending on the dynamic of how their group was operating. For example, one group spent more time talking about their Independent Living goals than the 4 other groups. This is an important aspect of the forum. Flexibility should probably be given to assure that the key components of the forum are attended to intensely.



YLF staff made sure that the curriculum related to the speaker that was previously speaking on their topic in their small focus groups. All sessions should bridge with their readings and their guest speakers.

YLF staff placed a high priority in obtaining Forum faculty and staff who have disabilities themselves. Participants expressed a great appreciation for the perspectives gained from the staff that have disabilities, including their counselors and peer counselors. Training was necessary to educate staff of the mission and vision of the YLF. This full-day of training comes 1 full day ahead of the arrival of the delegates. High emphasis was placed at each forum about the importance of there being an interest in creating the “new era of disability leaders.” Some participants had mentioned that they would like to become a member of the Governors Council on People with Disabilities when they get older.

Structuring of the Personal Development Plan is an important component of the YLF experience. It was not until this year did we focus on making sure the plans were effective. Some completed portions of their plans while other completed their whole plan and wrote other plans that assisted with other avenues in their lives (college, work, church, etc).

The YLF staff placed a high value one on obtaining a diverse pool of applications with respect to type of disability, gender equality, demographical location within the state and racial and ethnic background. This led to greater cross-disability awareness, and about challenges both unique and universal to be addressed.



For the 2000-2002, the network of volunteers was in place, and the YLF staff had to pick who they wanted to come back to the forum as peer counselors and counselors. Alumni of previous YLF came back to serve in various capacities.

Delegates throughout the Forum showed a sincere appreciation for the diversity of the topics and the speakers who presented the topics. The YLF staff understood the mission and vision of the Forum as well as the philosophy during the Forum. A philosophy that increases the independence skills of the delegates and the recognition of the disability community.

Another key lesson from the first forum to the 2<sup>nd</sup> was the need for expansion of the Assistive Technology (A.T.) component. Instead of displaying A.T. on the table, the staff felt the need to invite vendors and people with disabilities to show how to use the equipment. This was accomplished in years 3 and 4.

Situating the forum away from the participant's home community created a sense of independence for the delegates. Because of the accessible accommodations, the delegates felt they were on equal ground. As potential delegates were interviewed you could tell the pride the students had about their own home school and hometown. One student in Southeast Ohio gave the interviewees a tour of their building and introduced the interviewees to her teachers. This setting also provided an atmosphere where alliances could be formed. Delegates felt as if they were all at the forum for a common reason outside of a school service setting.

Bringing professionals and other adults with disabilities together with the delegates proved very empowering for the delegates. Delegates realized their problems were not unique to themselves, but rather universal and had a "common thread" with



other people with different disabilities. A unique feeling of unity started in their small group sessions and developed more intensely as a whole group on the last day.

Delegates were very interactive from the moment they arrived. The researcher attributes this to the enthusiastic staff that met them at the front door. The enthusiasm carried over into the forum as delegates were engaging in social conversations, raising awareness, and fostering team unity. One small group session in the student's handbook had the delegates mark off what type of leader they are. At this time, delegates could identify with their strengths and weaknesses and openly talk about those.

Time was spent each day developing a personal leadership plan. This plan was inserted in their delegate handbook and was referred to daily. Focusing on the personal leadership sharpened the focus of the forum and helped organized the delegates thoughts and feelings about the forum.

The YLF staff placed high value on selecting a diverse pool of applicants from all over Ohio. Selection was based with respect to the type of disability, gender equality, and racial and ethnic background. This led to greater cross-disability awareness and cultural acceptance.

As forums one, two and three unfolded, a network of YLF staff (volunteers) was formed to become counselors, co-counselors and other staff. This staff of course kept the forum moving on time. As always with a forum this size, the staff met a myriad of small and large requests by delegates and other staff. Delegates from 2001 and 2002 made it clear that the staff is what made the experience so successful.

Governor's Council Staff found that site visits were extremely helpful for all involved and the Radisson Hotel staff was generous and very accommodating. "Staff" t-



shirts were given to the Ramada hosts to wear during the forum to promote unity. In addition, delegates were asked to bring a t-shirt from their own hometown to exchange for another delegates t-shirt. This provided a unique sense of welcome and “bonding.” Many delegates wore their swapped t-shirts the next day.

#### Communication After the Forum

Delegates kept in contact with staff members and via email. However, a list-serve was mentioned by some delegates as a way to keep posted on the activities of YLF staff and delegates. It was apparent throughout the post-forum surveys that email was vital to keeping relationships in tact.

A list-serve would allow staff to post information and allow for exchange of information on a regular more frequent basis.

#### Additional Forum Notables Included

The forum returning delegates were very enthusiastic and offered assistance throughout the day. Types of assistance included physical assistance and/or offering an “ear” to support and/or encourage.

Financial sponsors were represented throughout the forum and were asked to be staff members of some sort. The majority of external financial contributors were given “check-in” or “checkout” duties or to help with the cookout on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day. All sponsors were invited to the mentor luncheon and given special recognition on the program. It was very important to recognize these contributors in some fashion to keep them giving funds



on a yearly basis. This mentor luncheon also allowed the contributors to see the end result of their donations.

The selection of convenient dates, places and times were also critical. The end of July has been the week that has worked best for the student delegates who are out of school. It also was convenient for our speakers as well. Because of the new established dates, speakers are marking their calendars well ahead of time for a return visit.

### Dissemination

YLF staff spent an enormous amount of time distributing information about the forum throughout the state. A brochure was developed and a letter accompanying the brochures was sent to the following throughout Ohio:

Education Service Centers

Special Education Regional Resource Centers

Principals

Superintendents

Rehabilitation Service Commission – Regional Offices

Guidance Counselors

GCPWD website

Excellent media coverage has been available throughout all four forums via Columbus Dispatch, Developmental Disabilities newsletter, and the Rehabilitative Services magazine, as well as, local television and radio. Upon returning home, delegates



reported their experiences to their hometown media. The researcher has copies of all media coverage the delegate/participants received upon returning to their hometowns.

A delegates' video was developed for each staff member and delegate highlighting each year's forum. The video was paid for by a donor. All organizations and people who contributed to the forum, both in-kind and financial, were recognized in the video.

YLF staff learned about the importance of having alumni return as helpers to the forum. Having peer counselors with a disability allowed the delegates to see first hand that the alumni are successful. The alumni's advice and encouragement to the delegates was a major reason for increased attitudes and self-esteem for this year's delegates. Alumni delegates also return home and disseminate information about the forum and thus encourage new delegates to attend. Alumni also added significant insight to the various processes of leadership development and the impact of disability.

### Evaluation

Setting forth measurable outcomes was a primary focus for this researcher. Having both quantitative and qualitative data by using a combination of surveys, observation field notes, audio and visual tapes, and textual comments provided a rich source of data with which to ascertain the impact of the forum.

The thrust of the evaluation was formative (allowing staff to change and constantly further develop the curriculum), emphasis was placed on measuring the impact of leadership training and its constructs and the overall curriculum.



## Main Findings or Outcomes

The following findings as a result of the study were achieved and documented for at least the majority of the YLF participants:

### YLF Participant Outcomes

- Changed, challenged and/or reaffirmed their views of being a person with a disability.
- Increased their understanding and appreciation of the disability culture and community.
- Increased their comfortableness and their ability to speak for themselves.
- Realized that there is a “common bond” with other students with disabilities.
- Realized that there are issues similar to theirs with other YLF delegates.
- Found a sense of purpose, pride and direction with their life.
- Found out how to be a leader and advocate for themselves and others.
- Increased self-confidence about being a leader and or an agent of change (emancipatory).
- Developed specific leadership skills.
- Challenged the role of others and non-disabled allies.
- Recognized by peers and adults as leaders in their groups.



### Staff Participant Outcomes

- Continue to broadened their understanding of the disability movement.
- Made positive changes in their view of the YLF participants and encouraged them to become leaders.
- Moved from viewing themselves as leaders to viewing themselves as facilitators of student leaders.
- Challenged their views of their roles as counselors and advocates.
- Learned about group and team differences through their small “focus” group discussions.
- Participated in the change process by participating with others in their groups.
- Realized the importance of mentoring and the impact they have on the lives of students with disabilities.

### Implications of the Study

The Forum and this study can be replicated in many ways. YLF provides an avenue for delegate participants to develop self-empowerment skills that will have an impact in local, state and federal institutions and their internal and external processes.

The longitudinal impact beyond the six month reevaluation, will be felt years after the forum as a new generation of leaders with disabilities that participated in the forum will emerge in their local, state and federal communities. Presently, there is one delegate from the 1999 forum who now serves as a federal intern in Washington, D.C. She states that the information and the collaborative relationships that she has developed as the result of the forum and given her the confidence to empower herself and others.



Participants/delegates from the forum may also emerge as experts in the field of disability in their local communities and place of employments. This renewed self-empowerment of the individual with disabilities may be attractive to public policy makers who are looking to make change in current laws and rules regarding all people with disabilities.

The skills gained from the forum allow students to self-advocate and advocate for others with disabilities. All of the delegate/participants have received training in disability laws such as Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act as well as the Americans with Disabilities Act. This knowledge base is needed to effectively advocate for the rights of others with disabilities in Individual Education Plan conferences, city forums, organized rallies and parent conferences. A delegate from the 2000 forum says:

*I now sit in my best friend's I.E.P. conference. She is eighteen now and her parents don't go to the IEP conferences anymore. She is getting more services now that I know what to ask for.*

Academically, the effect on curriculum could be major aspect requiring change. For example, because of the training the delegate/participants have received, they may advocate for accessible formats, more accessible buildings and of course more sensitive educators that understand their unique needs. One student said:

*I will ask for a wheelchair ramp at my school. I see this girl in a wheelchair that has to go outside to get in the lunch room. This has to be embarrassing for her.*



Another student mentioned that he didn't know that his rehabilitation counselor could attend his IEP conference. He states:

*My transition meeting could be more effective with him (rehabilitation counselor) there.*

A self-empowered student with a disability will be able to communicate his/her wants and needs in the classroom rather than taking the status quo situation. These students will also be more able to "self-disclose" their disability when they attend two- or four year educational institutions after high school.

This research is the first of its kind showing the impact of leadership development programs on high school students with disabilities. This researcher has already received communication from other States asking for use of the assessments in the documents. One state (Kansas) wants this researcher to attend their newly developed Youth Leadership Forum and offer advice on how to measure its success. Many states have received state and local dollars to assist in their Youth Leadership Forums but do not have a measurable document to report its outcomes. Outcome-based measures that are data driven are sorely needed by recipients of grant monies locally, state and federally.

This information will be presented by the researcher at the University of Sydney in Australia in May, a National Rehabilitation conference in New York City in July and a local Conference for Occupational and Physical Therapists in Ohio in August of 2003. All of which could develop collaboration and networking with the researcher to develop Youth Leadership Forums in their local communities or state-wide.



## Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the experiences of being a part of the Youth Leadership Forum from 1999 to 2001 experience and evaluating the program, the following recommendations are made to any organization that wishes to replicate this model for future research.

- Educate the YLF staff the importance of selecting potential leaders or leaders not just a student who wants to attend the conference.
- Educate the participants the importance of their role in the future.
- Show respect for different perspectives at all times, while at the same time, expose the participants to new perspectives regarding the disability experience.
- Use a variety of methods to contact potential participants - it may take more than one try to get them to apply for the conference.
- Maintain constant communication with YLF staff and volunteers throughout the year.
- Create a speaker list and keep the preferred speakers coming back.
- Identify ongoing funding sources that will allow the forum to operate for the years to come.
- Provide full disability accommodations. This tells the participants that the philosophy of inclusion of people with disabilities is not merely a concept, but that it is regarded as a basic logistical concern.



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## APPENDICES



APPENDIX A

LETTER FROM OHIO GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON PEOPLE WITH  
DISABILITIES





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December 20, 2002

Mr. William Bauer  
109 Marshall Rd.  
Marietta, Ohio 45750

RE: Research Presentation for the Governor's Council on People with Disabilities

Dear Mr. Bauer:

On behalf of the Ohio Governor's Council on People with Disabilities we want to express our appreciation for your presentation of the results of your research on the Youth Leadership Forum. We also thank you for taking the time on December 12<sup>th</sup> to explain the data in an understandable format. Many at the Council meeting expressed how impressed they were with the presentation of the data.

As you are well aware, there has been no follow-up research done to quantify the impact of the Youth Leadership Forums taking place around the country. The results of your research will also be of interest to the many other states who have initiated this program. In Ohio, these results will be a particularly important tool in seeking sponsors for this event.

Your research has presented verification of the beliefs that originally initiated the development and expansion of the Youth Leadership Forums. Those who have worked on the Youth Leadership Forum have seen first-hand the impact of this important program on shaping the lives of youth with disabilities. Your research has shown that the delegates gain knowledge and understanding that increases their leadership skill and motivation.

We truly appreciate your innovation and efforts in quantifying the impact of the Youth Leadership Forums. Again, we want to express our appreciation for the research and presentation of the results which you provided.

Sincerely,  


Lucille Walls, M.S.W., M.S.P.H.  
Executive Director

  
Maureen Fitzgerald  
Youth Leadership Forum Coordinator



APPENDIX B

LETTER FOR DELEGATES AND PARENTS





Counselor Education,  
Rehabilitation Services  
& School Psychology  
School of Physical Activity  
and Educational Services

356 Arps Hall  
1943 North High Street  
Columbus, OH 43210-1130  
FAX 614-292-4250

July 28, 2002

Dear Delegates and Parents:

Congratulations on being accepted to the Ohio Governor's Council on People with Disabilities Youth Leadership Forum. You are to be commended for the hard work you have done to be selected to such an elite group of young adults with disabilities in Ohio.

By way of introduction, my name is Bill Bauer. I am the former Chair of the Ohio Governors Council on People with Disabilities and former Chair of the Ohio Youth Leadership Forum of which you are about to begin this coming late July. Currently, I am an Assistant Professor of Education and Counseling at Marietta College and finishing my research for my doctoral degree in Rehabilitation Counseling. I will be a volunteer at this year's forum (as I have been the last 3 years as director) and will be immersed in the YLF experience.

The research for my dissertation covers the evaluation of this year's forum. My dissertation is entitled, The Impact of Leadership Training Programs on High Students with Disabilities. With your permission, I would like to have your child participate in the research I am embarking upon. My dissertation is both quantitative (in which your child may be asked to fill out a survey) and qualitative in which I may collect data that may encompass the use of photographs (for publication in local media and reaction shots) the Columbus Dispatch has been invited. The videotapes (for testimonial information and promotion of the forum) will be analyzed by myself to come up with particular "themes" of which will be used to prove the success of the forum, and audiotapes (for gaining verbal information that will be transcribed to text for the research project). This text will be analyzed using qualitative methods to see if certain "themes" emerge from the forum. For example, if delegates state that teachers in their own home school do not pay attention to them and this "theme" is portrayed many times over, then educating teachers of children with disabilities will be an outcome.

Data will only be collected after each session (small or large group). A pretest before the forum starts will be given and a post test will be given after the forum. I will analyze the data and use your child's responses for my research (no names will be used). Data will be collected in the small and large group sessions of the trainings. These are the only times data will be collected.

Special Education  
292-6148

Sport & Exercise Sciences  
292-2504

Sections  
Counselor Education,  
Rehabilitation Services  
& School Psychology  
292-6167

Workforce Development & Education  
292-5057

College of Education



Your child will be exposed to various large group discussions and small group discussions and will be asked to fill out a survey that will ask their view on the speaker and his or her topic. During the small group discussions your child will be asked to reflect on the topic discussed and put it in written form. The research will also gain input from your child on how they feel about themselves as being a leader. Your child will also be asked to fill out another survey in December asking what the long term impact of the forum has been on them.

The research is important for the Ohio Governor's Council on People with Disabilities as it will serve as a mechanism to assess whether the program is successful and perhaps an avenue to gain additional funding sources so that the program will be offered for years to come.

Participation in this research project is voluntary of course and participation in the Leadership Forum will not be affected if you or your delegate do not agree to participate in this research.

However, should you wish to participate in this research please sign the attached consent form and return by July 25<sup>th</sup> 2002 to me.

After the study is complete, research data (photographs, videotapes, and audiotapes) will be stored in my office in a locked file and all documents will be destroyed in the year in January of 2006. If you would like to see any of the data, please contact me at any time.

I look forward to meeting all of you at the Youth Leadership Forum in Columbus. Until then, have a great summer. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call me at 740-376-4768 or email me at [bauerw@marioneta.edu](mailto:bauerw@marioneta.edu).

Sincerely,

William M. Bauer  
Chair, Emeritus OGCPD  
Researcher The Ohio State University



\

## APPENDIX C

### LETTER OF CONSENT FOR PARENTS OF DELEGATES





Counselor Education,  
Rehabilitation Services  
& School Psychology  
School of Physical Activity  
and Educational Services

356 Arps Hall  
1945 North High Street  
Columbus, OH 43210-1120  
FAX 614-292-4255

### Consent for Participation in Social and Behavioral Research

Protocol Title: The Impact of Training on High School Students with Disabilities

Protocol number: 02B0135

Principal Investigator: Growick/Bauer

I consent to my child's participation in research being conducted by Bruce S. Growick Ph.D. CRC and William M. Bauer, CRC of The Ohio State University and his/her assistants and associates.

The investigator(s) has explained the purpose of the study, the procedures that will be followed, and the amount of time it will take. I understand the possible benefits, if any, of my participation (and/or my child's participation).

I know that I can (or my child can) choose not to participate without penalty to me (and/or my child). If I agree to participate, I can (and/or my child can) withdraw from this study at any time, and there will be no penalty.

- I consent to the use of audiotapes and/or videotapes. I understand how the tapes will be used for this study.
- I consent to the use of photographs. I understand how the photographs will be used for this study.

I have had a chance to ask questions and obtain answers to my questions. I can contact the investigators at 614-292-8463 or 740-373-3977. If I have questions about my rights as a research participant, I can call the Office of Research Risks and Protections at (614) 688-4792.

I have read this form or I have had it read to me. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy has been given to me.

Print the name of the participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed Participant \_\_\_\_\_

Signed (PI) \_\_\_\_\_

Signed Parent \_\_\_\_\_

Special Education  
292-6148

Sport & Exercise Sciences  
292-7504

Sections  
Counselor Education,  
Rehabilitation Services  
& School Psychology  
292-8183

Workforce Development & Education  
292-5037

College of Education



## APPENDIX D

### SURVEYS FOR THE FORUM

- RETROSPECTIVE
- PRE-FORUM
- POST-FORUM
- FOLLOW-UP



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Ohio Youth Leadership Forum  
Retrospective Survey for 1999-2000-2001 Participants

Please circle your attended: 1999          2000          2001

Over the course of the last three (3) years, the Governor's Council on People with Disabilities Youth Leadership Forum committee and staff has continually worked to develop our evaluation process. We are attempting to evaluate the overall work and outcomes of our Forum.

The 2002 participants of the Forum will have the opportunity to share their thoughts about disability and leadership before they attend this years Forum. Unfortunately, you were not asked the same questions. For comparison purposes, please complete Section 1 of the survey which gives you the opportunity to reflect on the past.

We are also interested in your current perceptions about disability and leadership. In Section 2 of this survey, we have provided you with a chance to share your present thoughts on these subjects.

We appreciate your completing this survey—your answers are important, and will help us to understand the impact of the last three years of the Forum. Please carefully read and answer the following questions. (Feel free to use the back of the sheet if you need additional space). Your responses to these questions will be kept confidential. Please return completed surveys to Bill Bauer by no later than July 1<sup>st</sup> of 2002.

SECTION 1

Remembering your mindset before the Youth Leadership Forum may be difficult, and we ask that if you honestly do not remember, leave the question blank. We will take a blank response to questions to mean that you do not remember how you felt before attending the Forum.

1. Please circle the appropriate number to indicate how you viewed yourself as a leader before your Youth Leadership Forum experience.

Not a leader at all							A very strong leader
1	2	3	4	5	6		7

2. Please circle the appropriate number to indicate how you felt about your *potential* to be a leader before your involvement with YLF.

No Potential							Strong potential
1	2	3	4	5	6		7

3. Indicate what kind of organizational activities you had done before your YLF experience. Check all that apply.



- \_\_\_ Participated in organizations or committees at school or in the community.
- \_\_\_ Served as an officer in an organization at school or in the community.
- \_\_\_ Served as an elected officer at school or in the community.
- \_\_\_ Led or participated in an initiative/campaign to effect change at school or in your community.
- \_\_\_ Served in and/or led organizations at home or in the community.
- \_\_\_ Other

4. Please circle the appropriate number to indicate how you viewed yourself an agent of change before participating in YLF.

Not an agent of change at all							A very strong agent of change
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

5. Please circle the approximate number to indicate how you felt about your potential to be and agent of change before attending the Forum.

No Potential						Strong potential
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

6. What did leadership mean to you before you became a Youth Leadership Forum delegate?  
What did you think leaders do?

7. What role did disability play in your life before your participation in the Youth Leadership Forum? Please answer the appropriate item below.  
Before the forum, did you see yourself as having anything in common with other people with disabilities?

Yes or No? What?

8. Thinking back to before the Forum, to what extent did you believe that you would be personally responsible for carrying out your personal leadership plan.

Not Responsible						Completely responsible
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

9. a) What kind of information/skills did you expect to be provided with at the Forum?



b) What kinds of personal/team/group experiences and insights did you hope to gain at the Forum?

10. Before attending YLF, how often did you use e-mail?

- ☐ Daily
- ☐ Weekly
- ☐ Monthly
- ☐ Less than once per month
- ☐ Never

11. Before attending the Youth Leadership Forum, how often did you use other Internet tools or Assistive Technology (e.g. World Wide Web, Gopher, dialy assistive devices, etc.)?

- ☐ Daily
- ☐ Weekly
- ☐ Monthly
- ☐ Less than once per month
- ☐ Never

12. The knowledge of my rights under ADA, IDEA and history of disability before the forum was:

Not Knowledgeable At all							Very Knowledgeable
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	



## SECTION 2

Based on your experiences at the Forum you attended and returning to your school or community, please answer the following questions.

1. Please circle the appropriate number to indicate your view of yourself as a leader now:

Not a leader at all							A very strong leader
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

2. Please circle the appropriate number to indicate how you feel about your *potential* to be a leader now:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

3. Please indicate what kinds of organizational activities you have done since your YLF experience:

- ☐ Participated in organizations or committees at school or in the community.
- ☐ Served as an officer in an organization at school or in the community.
- ☐ Served as an elected officer at school or in the community.
- ☐ Led or participated in an initiative/campaign to effect change at school or in your community.
- ☐ Served in and/or led organizations at home or in the community.
- ☐ Other

4. Please circle the appropriate number to indicate your view of yourself as an agent of change today:

Not an agent of change at all							A very strong agent of change
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

5. Please circle the appropriate number to indicate how you feel about your present potential to be an agent of change today:

No Potential							Strong potential
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	



6. Are you still working on your personal development plan? What have you accomplished since the Forum?

7. What are your fondest memories of the Youth Leadership Forum you participated in?

8. What insights about disability and leadership did you gain from your participation in the Youth Leadership Forum?

9. Please describe any accomplishments you feel that the Youth Leadership Experience has played a role in your life today.

10. What kind of information/skills were not provided at the Youth Leadership Forum that you wish had been?

11. What kinds of personal/team/group experiences and insights were missing from the Youth Leadership Forum you participated in?

12. How often do you use email now:

- ☐ Daily
- ☐ Weekly
- ☐ Monthly
- ☐ Less than once per month
- ☐ Never



13. How often do you use other Internet tools or assistive devices now?

- ☐ Daily
- ☐ Weekly
- ☐ Monthly
- ☐ Less than once per month
- ☐ Never

14. The knowledge of my rights under ADA, IDEA and history of disability after the forum was:

Not							Very
Knowledgeable							Knowledgeable
At							
all							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

15. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the impact that YLF has had on you?

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions. Again, we would appreciate your returning this survey to me by no later than July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2002.

Ohio Youth Leadership Forum  
Attn: Bill Bauer  
109 Marshall Road.  
Marietta, Ohio 45750

Phone 740-373-3977



Name \_\_\_\_\_

### Ohio Youth Leadership Forum 2002

#### Delegate/Participant Pre-Forum Survey

This survey is an important part of our evaluation of the Ohio Governor's Council on People with Disabilities Youth Leadership Forum. We appreciate your responding to this survey—your answers are important! Please carefully answer the following questions, as soon as possible after you arrive to register for the Forum. Your answers to these questions will be kept confidential. **Please complete the survey as soon as you can, as they will be collected this evening at dinner (or at the large group session in the morning at the latest). Thank you!**

1. Please circle the appropriate number below to indicate your view of yourself as a leader:

Not a leader at all							A very strong leader
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

2. Please circle the appropriate number below to indicate how you feel about your *potential* to be a leader:

No Potential						Strong potential
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

3. Please indicate below what kinds of organizational activities you have done. Please check all that apply:

☐ Participated in organizations or committees at school or in the community.  
☐ Served as an officer in an organization at school or in the community.  
☐ Served as an elected officer at school or in the community.  
☐ Led or participated in an initiative/campaign to effect change at school or in your community.  
☐ Served in and/or led organizations at home or in the community.  
☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

4. Please circle the appropriate number below to indicate your view of yourself as an agent of change:

Not an agent of change at all						A very strong agent of change
--	--	--	--	--	--	--



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11. What kind of information/skills do you expect to be provided with at this Youth Leadership Forum?

12. How often do you use computers?

- ☐ Daily
- ☐ Weekly
- ☐ Monthly
- ☐ Less than once per month
- ☐ Never

13. How often do you use email?

- ☐ Daily
- ☐ Weekly
- ☐ Monthly
- ☐ Less than once per month
- ☐ Never

14. How often do you use Other Internet Tools or Assistive Technology(e.g. World Wide Web, Gopher, Assistive devices)?

- ☐ Daily
- ☐ Weekly
- ☐ Monthly
- ☐ Less than once per month
- ☐ Never

15. The knowledge of my rights under ADA, IDEA and history of disability is:

Not Knowledgeable At all						Very Knowledgeable
1	2	3	4	5	6	7



### Comments

Most of the items in this questionnaire do not offer space for your comments, so please use the remainder of the space on this page (and on back of this page if necessary) to expand on any of the questions in this survey. For example, you may want to explain what you hope to accomplish at the Forum and what your initial reactions are. Or you may want to indicate access issues bearing on your use of computers or Internet, such as having a computer available to you, or not having the equipment or assistive devices you need for a computer or any daily living skill.



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Ohio Youth Leadership Forum  
2002

Post-Forum Survey

1. Please circle the appropriate number below to indicate your view of yourself as a leader:

Not a leader at all						A very strong leader
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

2. Please circle the appropriate number below to indicate how you feel about your *potential* to be a leader:

No Potential						Strong potential
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

3. Please circle the appropriate number below to indicate your view of yourself as an agent of change:

Not an agent of change at all						A very strong agent of change
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

4. Please circle the appropriate number below to indicate how you feel about your *potential* to be an agent of change:

No Potential						Strong potential
1	2	3	4	5	6	7



5. Will you be responsible enough to develop and follow through with a personal leadership plan after the Forum.

Not Responsible Completely Responsible

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6                      7

6. How well do you know people at this Youth Leadership Forum?

Not at all Very Well

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6                      7

7. How often do you use computers?

☐ Daily  
☐ Weekly  
☐ Monthly  
☐ Less than once per month  
☐ Never

8. How often do you use email?

☐ Daily  
☐ Weekly  
☐ Monthly  
☐ Less than once per month  
☐ Never



9. How often do you use Other Internet Tools or Assistive Technology (e.g. World Wide Web, Gopher, Assistive devices)?

- ☐ Daily
- ☐ Weekly
- ☐ Monthly
- ☐ Less than once per month
- ☐ Never

Small and Large Group Focus Discussions:

Use the space below to share your ideas, thoughts, or concerns that you did not share during the focus groups.



Date: November 5, 2002  
To: Delegates of Youth Leadership Forum 2002  
From: Bill Bauer

Please complete the enclosed survey so I can complete my research! This research will benefit future Youth Leadership Forums.

Those who return the survey by December 31 will have their name in a drawing for a \$25.00 gift certificate.

I look forward to getting your survey. Thanks for your assistance!



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Ohio Youth Leadership Forum  
2002  
Follow-Up Survey for 2002 Participants/Delegates

Over the course of the last three (3) years, The Ohio Governor's Council on People with Disabilities Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) has continually worked to develop our evaluation process. Now that you have been back in to your community you may have a job, going to college or back at high school, we would like to know of the impact of the Forum a half year from that date you met in Columbus with us.

We greatly appreciate your feedback you provided us at the Forum last July. You and your peer delegates have completed a personal development plan at the Forum. We are now interested in hearing about your current perceptions on disability and leadership. The survey provides you with an opportunity to share your thoughts on these subjects.

We appreciate your completing this survey – your answers are important, and will help us to understand the impact of Ohio's Youth Leadership Forum. Please carefully read and answer the following questions. (Feel free to use the back of the sheet if you need additional space). Your responses to these questions will be kept confidential. Please return completed surveys to Governor's Council by no later than January 31, 2003.

Based on your experiences back at home, high school, work or college, for the last 6 months, please answer the following questions.

1. Please circle the appropriate number to indicate your view of yourself as a leader now:

Not a leader at all							A very strong leader
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

2. Please circle the appropriate number to indicate how you feel about your *potential* to be a leader now:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

3. Please indicate what kinds of organizational activities you have done since your YLF experience:

- ☐ Participated in organizations or committees at school or in the community.
- ☐ Served as an officer in an organization at school or in the community.
- ☐ Served as an elected officer at school or in the community.



\_\_\_ Led or participated in an initiative/campaign to effect change at school or in your community.

\_\_\_ Served in and/or led organizations at home or in the community.

\_\_\_ Other

4. Please circle the appropriate number to indicate your view of yourself as an agent of change today:

Not an  
agent of  
change  
at all

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

A very  
strong  
agent of  
change

5. Please circle the appropriate number to indicate how you feel about your present potential to be an agent of change today:

No  
Potential

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

Strong  
potential

6. Are you still working on your personal development plan? What have you accomplished since the Forum?

7. What are your fondest memories of the Youth Leadership Forum you participated in?

8. What insights about disability and leadership did you gain from your participation in the Youth Leadership Forum?

9. Please describe any accomplishments you feel that the Youth Leadership Experience has played a role in your life today



10. What kind of information/skills were not provided at the Youth Leadership Forum that you wish had been?

11. What kinds of personal/team/group experiences and insights were missing from the Youth Leadership Forum you participated in?

12. How often do you use email now:

- ☐ Daily
- ☐ Weekly
- ☐ Monthly
- ☐ Less than once per month
- ☐ Never

13. How often do you use other Internet tools or assistive devices now?

- ☐ Daily
- ☐ Weekly
- ☐ Monthly
- ☐ Less than once per month
- ☐ Never

14. The knowledge of my rights under ADA, IDEA and history of disability after the forum was:

Not							Very
Knowledgeable							
Knowledgeable							
At							
all							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	



APPENDIX E

DEMOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION



Youth Leadership Forum delegate demographics

Forum Year	Males	Females	Disability	Race	Age	Year in school
1999	11	12	Brain injury-1 DD-2 Vision -2 LD-11 Cerebral Palsy-2 Deaf -2 Spina bifida-2 Muscular dystrophy-1	Caucasian-22 African American-1	6-17 12-18 4-19 1-20	12- Jr 11 -Sr
2000	9	15	Frederick's Ataxia-1 LD-13 DD-4 MD-1 Hearing-1 CP-3 ADHD-1	Caucasian-22 Hispanic-2	2-16 10-17 7-18 5-19	14 -Jr 10- Sr
2001	17	15	Deaf/HH-2 Cerebral Palsy-5 LD/SLD-13 Spina Bifida-1 TBI/Apraxia-1 Juvenile Arthritis-1 Hemiplegia-1 DD-5 Vision-2 COPD-1	Caucasian-24 African American-5 Native American-1 Asian American-1 Mixed -1	1-16 8-17 15-18 6-19 2-20	19-Jr 13-Se
2002	15	15	CP-2 LD-14 Paraplegia-1 Blind/vision-7 Deaf/HH-2 DD-3 Spina Bifida-1	Caucasian-29 African American-2 Hispanic-1	1-15 5-16 13-18 8-19 3-20	23-Jr 7-Sr

54 57

109



### Counties

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE Economics and Statistics Administration Bureau of the Census  
MAPS

CHSD 0-1



2000 YLF

Counties



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE Economics and Statistics Administration Bureau of the Census  
MAPS

OHIO Q-1



# 2001 YLF

Countries



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE Economic and Statistics Administration Bureau of the Census  
MAPS

OH80 3-1



1999-2002 YLF

Counties



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE Economic and Statistics Administration Bureau of the Census  
MAPS

OHIO G-1



# 2002 YLF

Countries



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE Economics and Statistics Administration Bureau of the Census  
MAPS

CHS0 9-1



Interviews with applicants for the Youth Leadership Forum

Sought from the interview:

Ability to provide thoughtful answers

Comfort level with the interview

Maturity level

Goal orientation/ motivation

Interest in the forum

**Remember to tell the delegates that those not offered an opportunity will be alternates. We have a limited number of positions available.**



APPENDIX F  
PUBLIC RELATIONS INFORMATION



## High school students share experiences and learn independent living skills at YLF each summer

Ohio's Youth Leadership Forum is sponsored by DD Council, Governor's Council on People with Disabilities and the National Organization on Disability. High school students with disabilities are invited to apply. Deadline to apply for 2003: 1/31/03.

For an application or more information, contact: Governor's Council, (606) 282-4536, ext. 1392 v/h/y, [maureen.fitzgibbon@sec.state.oh.us](mailto:maureen.fitzgibbon@sec.state.oh.us)



### Keynote at YLF Mentor Luncheon promotes "emotional intelligence"

"Generations of people with disabilities, who grew up struggling to be as normal as possible, have ended up with collective low self-esteem," proclaimed Steve Kuusisto, speaking at the August Youth Leadership Forum luncheon.



Steve Kuusisto, Worthington, OH

Kuusisto, professor of Creative Writing at The Ohio State University, authored *Plaid of the Blind*, a memoir of his struggle growing up blind in this culture. He confessed that his family early on entered into a kind of family conspiracy of denial of his

actual disability.

Adding that the schools joined the conspiracy, he said, "The public school system failed to teach me the things I needed to know about being blind, things like Braille, using a cane, learning to navigate the world... I didn't get the opportunity to fake being disabled."

Kuusisto warned the youth of "the fiercely competitive and often very fast-paced environments that today's culture creates." Centering on a phrase coined by Daniel

Goleman in his book by the same name, Kuusisto said, "Many people simply do not understand disability, and Americans generally have little emotional intelligence."

"Emotional intelligence," explained Kuusisto, "is being able to slow down our emotional response and use our imagination to think clearly about events that are unfolding; to think about them with greater care, so that better results will be produced for you."

Through poignant personal stories, Kuusisto demonstrated his realization that there certainly are times to fight. He simply suggests that the fight be engaged with strong emotional intelligence.





Governor's Council Executive Director Lucille Walls (standing, R) and Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) Coordinator Maureen Fitzgerald welcomed

"I'm extremely grateful for the changes in myself that I've been able to bring about. I'm a believer in myself now and I'm going back to help others."

"This was a group of people in one great big happy family. No one is judgmental. Everyone helps me. Everyone here listens to me. Do I have to go home?"

"I can be myself and not the 'dead one.' I don't mind being dead, but the problems seem to be society's, not

"I have always been the only person at my school with a vision impairment. Now I know that people like me are all over this state."

"This program has helped me decide to go to a four-year college to get a degree, because now I know I can."

"Now I understand what it's like to be a part of a whole. I am going to be a leader at my school now."

"This is what I want to do."

## Council Report

### Teens are the focus during December council meeting

Teens participating in a Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) make a measurable and lasting impact on the youthful trainees? Bill Bauer hopes to prove that it does through qualitative and quantitative research. Bauer has surveyed delegates from each Ohio YLF since its inception in 1999 to discover the influence, if any, that the Sunday workshop had on their lives. He presented his preliminary findings at the Dec. 12 meeting of the Governor's Council on People with Disabilities in Columbus.

"I have research that's going to help all of us understand why we're doing YLF and why YLF is so important," said Bauer, a past chair of the Governor's Council and a past YLF chair. He's undertaken the project as part of his doctorate program at The Ohio State University. "It's through the Youth Leadership Forum that students will realize their ability, right and obligation to pursue meaningful employment, and contribute to society. Hopefully, this research will tell you that at least they're doing some of these things."

"There isn't much research out

there's not much research out there about passing the torch to a new generation of people with disabilities."

Before each forum, student delegates with a variety of disabilities were asked how they viewed their potential to be leaders and change agents. Last year, the same questions

the 30 delegates who participated during 2002. Fifty percent of the past delegates and 100 percent of the '02 delegates responded.

Bauer shared some of the themes that emerged. "They feel that the forum changed, challenged or educated their views of a personal disability. That's a big concept. They increased their understanding of the broader disability community. In other words, if you were visually impaired and you roomed with somebody who was mobility impaired, then you learned more about each other. So that decreased feelings of isolation," he reported. "They found that issues are common for people with disabilities across the board. Delegates developed friendships but also became a network of support for each other."

"A parent e-mailed me two weeks after the forum and said, 'I can't believe what you did to my son. He's now going to the academic resource center and asking for accommodations that he'd never asked for before.'"

Bauer also shared the following comments from various delegates:

they were going to change the world! He hopes that his documentation will help groups raise money or write grants to do similar youth programs."

Coli Wynn, a 2002 student delegate from the Marietta area, attended the Governor's Council meeting with Bauer and had this to say, "YLF was

me a chance to meet other people with different disabilities and a chance to be myself. And it's really got me going a little bit more. I want to be more of a leader in my community to help change it, not just for myself, but for other people because I know there are all sorts of disabilities out there."

When the Governor's Council broke for lunch, programs for youth remained on the agenda. Cheryl Cohen of Cleveland discussed the High School/High Tech career exploration program for students with disabilities. Although the program is administered by United Cerebral Palsy, it advances the "independence, productivity and full citizenship" of youth with all types of disabilities.

One of the major funding sources is the NASA Glenn Research Center, a large Cuyahoga County employer of people with technology skills. Students in the program get a chance to go on field trips to places such as NASA, the governor's office, amusement parks, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, a printing company and a biomedical laboratory to see science, math and





PRESIDENT'S  
COMMITTEE  
ON EMPLOYMENT  
OF PEOPLE  
WITH DISABILITIES

February 11, 2000

Bill Bauer  
Ohio Governor's Council on People with Disabilities  
109 Marshall Road  
Marietta, OH 45750

Dear Bill:

Thank you for accepting the President's Committee's invitation to serve as a trainer at the upcoming the Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) Train-the-Trainer class. We appreciate your taking time out from your busy schedule to join us for this exciting event. As you know, the class will be held March 19-21, 2000, at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Bethesda, Maryland.

Enclosed with this letter is a registration form that includes information on making travel arrangements. Travel and hotel expenses for the trainers will be paid for by the President's Committee. Please contact our contractor, Isabelle Howes, at the Graduate School, USDA, if you have any questions related to travel arrangements or the hotel. Ms. Howes can be reached at (202) 314-3471 or <isabelle\_howes@grad.usda.gov>. Note that the registration forms must be faxed to Ms. Howes at (202) 479-6801 by February 29.

Also enclosed is the agenda for March 19-21. You will find your name listed by the session(s) for which we would like to be a member of the presentation panel. Of course, we look forward to your active input during every session. On Sunday, March 19, from 11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., we will have a trainer preparation session. Please plan to attend so that you can meet your fellow trainers, work out the details of the sessions, and get motivated and ready for the rest of the training. During the two-day class, we will have an overhead projector and flipcharts with markers available if you want to use them during your panels. If you have materials that you would like to distribute to the class, we can make copies of them for you. To have copies made, mark your items "Training Materials for YLF" and send them by Friday, March 3 to Ms. Howes at the Graduate School, USDA, Conference Management Dept., 600 Maryland Avenue, SW, Suite 280, Washington, DC 20024.

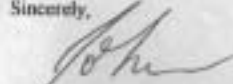
1301 F Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20004-1187  
202-375-6200 (Voice)  
202-375-6210 (Fax)  
202-375-6205 (TDD)



To add to the atmosphere of the class, we would like you to bring items and materials from your YLF to display, such as t-shirts, workbooks, badge holders, things from the "goodie bags" you gave to your YLFers, photos, and other things that might be of interest to the trainees. We would also like you to bring your YLF video, if you have one (preferably open captioned), so that we can show clips from them during our breaks. We want our trainees to feel a little of the excitement and energy of a real YLF!

We are so pleased that you will be able to join us for the YLF Train-the-Trainer sessions. You are one of the true experts on the YLF, having been intimately involved in the planning and implementation of this unique and effective program. If you have any questions, please contact Jennifer Kemp or Betsy Kravitz of my staff at (202) 376-6200, <kemp-jennifer@pcepd.gov> or <kravitz-betsy@pcepd.gov>. We look forward to seeing you in March.

Sincerely,



John A. Lancaster  
Executive Director

274.3298





### What do delegates have to say about YLF?

*"I've gotten more information in the past few days than I have in years of schooling."*

*"It was fun and very exciting."*

*"Words can't even describe how much being there meant to me."*

*"This is the greatest...they should do this forever."*



**Youth Leadership Forums** were developed by the California Governor's Committee on Employment of Disabled Persons in 1992. The President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities encouraged this program to be implemented throughout the United States. Ohio's YLF is directed by the Ohio Governor's Council on People with Disabilities.

### For more information, contact...

Maureen Fitzgerald  
Ohio Governor's Council on  
People with Disabilities  
400 E. Campus View Blvd. SW5C  
Columbus, OH 43235-4604

#### Telephone:

(614) 438-1292 voice  
(614) 438-1391 tty

#### Fax:

(614) 438-1274

#### E-mail:

rsc\_fit@rcscnet.A1.state.oh.us

#### Internet:

<http://www.state.oh.us/gcpd/contact.htm>

Partially funded by the Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council.



## for Students with Disabilities





### What is the Ohio Youth Leadership Forum?

YLF is a unique career leadership program for high school juniors and seniors with disabilities. By serving as delegates from their communities at a four-day event, young people with disabilities cultivate leadership, citizenship, and social skills.

### Why is YLF only for students with disabilities?

It's critical that people with disabilities growing into adulthood learn to identify themselves with pride as individuals and members of the very accomplished disability community. By providing a framework of history and an atmosphere of encouragement, YLF offers peers with common challenges and experiences the opportunity to learn from one another.

Delegates gain access to vital resources related to assistive technology, community support, and civil rights. Successful men and women with disabilities serve as role models in helping youth realize their ability, right, and obligation to pursue meaningful employment and contribute to society.

### What is YLF all about?

The educational and motivational forum involves an intense schedule. Throughout the training, small "working groups" explore personal leader-



YLF alumni take with them an obligation to follow through on goals outlined in "personal leadership plans" that they have written for themselves. Often, alumni return to YLF as volunteer staff.

### How are delegates selected?

Delegates are chosen through a statewide competition that seeks students with disabilities who have leadership potential. Each applicant submits an application, an essay, and letters of recommendation. The group of students that are selected is representative of the state in terms of geography, gender, economic status, ethnicity, and types of disabilities.

### Is there a cost for delegates to attend?

No. The commitment of YLF is to enable youth with disabilities to grow personally, socially, and academically, and to fulfill their potential in their work and their lives. No student should be denied this opportunity because of economic hardship. All costs are paid through scholarships and corporate donations.

ship and career plans. Social, artistic, and recreational activities abound, as these are a part of a well-rounded life.

Guest speakers address such topics as disability rights laws, innovations in technology, and many types of resources. A guided tour of the state capital involves interaction with members of the press, government dignitaries, and often the governor. The social activities and dance offer time to celebrate accomplishments with new friends.

Key to YLF is leadership by example. Adults with disabilities who have faced similar concerns to those of these young people, serve as faculty and staff. Many other volunteers, some with disabilities and others without, help to make the program a success.



#### Mission Statement

The purpose of the Ohio Governor's Council on People with Disabilities is to serve in an advisory capacity directly to the governor and, as needed, to the General Assembly, on issues related to the needs, problems and concerns of Ohioans with disabilities.

Functioning as a public-private sector partnership, the council is the state's liaison to the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities. By cooperating with employers, unions, rehabilitation facilities and other agencies and organizations, the council acts as a resource to promote and develop employment and economic opportunities, and provides technical assistance on a variety of disability related issues.

Council members and staff develop and disseminate public educational materials and promote the elimination of architectural, attitudinal and other barriers.

Council advocates for the full participation and independence of people with disabilities in all aspects of society, and supports the right of self-determination of people with disabilities so as to enhance the quality of life for all.



The Ohio Governor's Council on People with Disabilities is a state affiliate of the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities.

Governor's Council on  
People with Disabilities  
400 E. Campus View Blvd.  
Columbus, Ohio 43235-4604  
Toll-free in Ohio 1-800-282-4536  
ext. 1391 (voice/TDD)  
In Central Ohio: (614) 438-1391  
(voice/TDD)

400 E. Campus View Blvd.  
Columbus, Ohio 43235-4604  
Toll-free in Ohio 1-800-282-4536  
ext. 1391 (voice/TDD)  
In Central Ohio: (614) 438-1391

G-10



#### History

The Governor's Council on Disabled Persons became the Governor's Council on People with Disabilities when House Bill 177 went into effect September 13, 1989. The Governor's Council on Disabled Persons was created by Amended Substitute House Bill 881, which became law on August 20, 1982. The Governor's Council, originally the Governor's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped, meets at least six times a year.

#### Composition of the Council

The Governor's Council on People with Disabilities consists of 21 members, the majority of whom must be people with disabilities. The members are appointed by the Governor for three-year terms, which are staggered so that seven members are appointed each year. The chairman of the council is appointed annually by the governor. The chairman and council members may serve no more than two terms.

The council is assigned to the Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission for administrative purposes, and the RSC administrator serves as an ex-officio member. The executive secretary and other personnel of the council are assigned by Rehabilitation Services Commission.

The Ohio Bureau of Employment Services appoints a member of its Employment Services Division staff to serve as an ex-officio member.

#### Council Powers

The council has the following powers and abilities:

- To cooperate with the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities;
- To cooperate with all other employers, both public and private, in locating or developing opportunities for people with disabilities;
- To encourage and assist in the creation of communities at the community level;
- To assist local, state, and federal agencies in coordinating their activities for the purpose of securing maximum utilization of funds and efforts that benefit people with disabilities;
- To encourage cooperation among employers, unions, rehabilitation agencies, and public and private organizations, to facilitate employment of people with disabilities;
- To serve in an advisory capacity to the governor's office directly, and, as needed, to the General Assembly on issues relating to the needs, problems, and other concerns of people with disabilities;
- To conduct educational programs to acquaint the public with the abilities and accomplishments of people with disabilities;
- To promote the elimination of architectural barriers to make buildings used by the public accessible and useable by persons with physical limitations;

- To make such rules as it deems advisable for the conduct of its own business.

Also, the council is to report annually to the governor on the activities of the council and on the status of Ohioans with disabilities.

#### Office and Staff Functions

In addition to carrying out the projects of the council, the staff is involved in other activities that enhance the quality of life for Ohioans with disabilities, such as:

- making presentations about the capabilities of people with disabilities;
- making presentations about the rights of people with disabilities;
- preparing and distributing printed materials about issues of concern to people with disabilities;
- providing information and referral regarding appropriate services, equipment, educational opportunities, job training, etc.;
- serving in an advisory capacity to a variety of committees to create awareness about issues concerning people with disabilities; and
- providing technical assistance on the implementation of federal and state laws affecting people with disabilities.



OHIO YOUTH LEADERSHIP  
FORUM  
MENTOR LUNCHEON



HYATT ON CAPITOL SQUARE AT  
COLUMBUS CITY CENTER

THURSDAY, AUGUST 1, 2002

SPONSORED BY

OHIO GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON PEOPLE WITH  
DISABILITIES

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR  
FRIENDS AND CO-SPONSORS

ACCESS CENTER

ADA OHIO

CEREBRAL PALSY OF CENTRAL OHIO  
COLUMBUS STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

DOROTHY E. ANN FUND.

HILLIARD CITY SCHOOLS

HYATT ON CAPITOL SQUARE

KARLA M. LORTZ

MARRIOTT AIRPORT HOTEL

MORGAN LITHO

NISONGER CENTER

OHIO DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COUNCIL

OHIO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OHIO REHABILITATION SERVICES COMMISSION

OHIO DEPARTMENT OF JOB AND FAMILY  
SERVICES

PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA-BUCKEYE

CHAPTER

NISONGER CENTER

RADISSON AIRPORT HOTEL

STATEWIDE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL

WASHINGTON COUNTY ARC



We gratefully acknowledge the support, enthusiasm, and energy of the members of the Planning Committee

William Bauer  
 Darlene Britford  
 Ken Campbell  
 Wayne Cocchi  
 Mark Driftmyer  
 Maureen Fitzgerald  
 Jessie Guidry  
 Bev Johnson  
 Rob Knight  
 Karla Lortz  
 Lisa Marn  
 Marfy Martinek  
 Robin Moore-Cooper  
 Jim Morrey  
 Derek Mortland  
 Leslie Paull  
 Reggie Smith  
 Angela Van Hoose  
 Nadia Webster  
 Sue Willis

# MENTOR LUNCHEON PROGRAM

1:00 P.M. LUNCHEON  
 Opportunity for delegates and  
 mentors to converse

1:30 P.M. OPENING REMARKS  
 Wayne Cocchi, Chair, Ohio  
 Governor's Council on People  
 with Disabilities and Chair,  
 Youth Leadership Forum

Karla Lortz, Executive  
 Secretary, Ohio Governor's  
 Council on People with  
 Disabilities

INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL  
 GUESTS

1:45 P.M. KEYNOTE SPEAKER  
 Stephen Kuusisto



## APPENDIX G

### APPLICATION AND SAMPLE LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION



The following state agencies have contributed funds for the operation of the program:

- Developmental Disabilities Planning Council
- ADA-Ohio
- Easter Seals
- Ohio Department of Education/Division of Exceptional Children
- American Legion
- Ohio Department of Health
- Ohio Department of Mental Health
- Assistive Technology of Ohio

With the assistance of the Governor's Council on People with Disabilities program staff, I developed a facilitator's guide and delegate handbook that serves as a synopsis of the forum and what is to be covered



**YLF 4 Questions**

**Why do you want to attend the forum?**

**Can you tell me about your leadership experiences?**

**Who do you admire as a leader and why?**

**What can you contribute to the forum?**

**If there is anyone (living or in history) you would like to meet, who would it be and why?**

**What goals do you have for your future?**



**WE ARE INVITING FUTURE COMMUNITY LEADERS  
TO ATTEND OUR ANNUAL YOUTH LEADERSHIP FORUM  
FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

**JULY 21 – 25, 2003**

**AT THE STATE CAPITOL, COLUMBUS, OHIO**

- Approximately 40 high school juniors and seniors with disabilities will be selected to attend.
- No charge to selected student delegates (all expenses paid)
- Exciting, fun, educational five-day training program includes meeting in the Governor's Office, tour of the State Capitol, and exciting programs with community leaders and celebrities.

(Please see “fact sheet” at back of this application packet for more details about the forum.)

\* \* \* \* \*

## APPLICATION FORM

**DEADLINE FOR POSTMARK ON MAILED APPLICATION: JANUARY 31, 2003**

**Students must complete ALL information on pages 1 through 5 of this application.**

**Please type or print.**

**Mail the application to the address on page 6.**

**Please see Page 6 for additional application instructions.**

- |    |  |  |       |        |
|----|--|--|-------|--------|
| 1. | Student's Last Name                      |  | First | Middle |
| 2. | Residence Address                        |  | City  | State  |
| 3. | Mailing Address, if different than above |  | City  | State  |
| 4. | (area code) Home Telephone Number        |  | 5.    | Zip    |
| 6. | Name of High School                      |  |       |        |
| 7. | Grade Level on December 31, 2002.        |  |       |        |
| 8. | School Mailing Address                   |  | City  | State  |



\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Last Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
First Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
School Mailing Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
City

\_\_\_\_\_  
State

\_\_\_\_\_  
Zip

9. \_\_\_\_\_  
High School Counselor's Name

10. \_\_\_\_\_  
(area code) School Telephone Number

11. Birthdate: \_\_\_\_\_ 12. Date Graduation Expected: \_\_\_\_\_

13. Please describe your disability. This information will assist in assuring that we include delegates with a diversity of disabilities.

Disability (medical diagnosis): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Onset of your disability (date): \_\_\_\_\_

Check **all** that apply:

\_\_\_ DEAF

\_\_\_ DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY

describe \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ HARD OF HEARING

\_\_\_ I use sign language

\_\_\_ Autism

\_\_\_ I use real time captioning

\_\_\_ Traumatic Brain Injury

\_\_\_ I use lip reading

\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ BLIND

\_\_\_ MENTAL HEALTH DISABILITY

\_\_\_ VISUAL DISABILITY

\_\_\_ NEURO/MUSCULAR  
DISABILITY

\_\_\_ I read with Braille

\_\_\_ LEARNING DISABILITY

\_\_\_ I read with large print

\_\_\_ ORTHOPEDIC DISABILITY

\_\_\_ I use a wheelchair

\_\_\_ OTHER: describe: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ I cannot walk upstairs

\_\_\_ I cannot walk long distances

\_\_\_\_\_



14. Please list the school classes you are currently enrolled in: \_\_\_\_\_

14A. Please state your cumulative grade point average: \_\_\_\_\_

14B. **Current Reading Grade Level:** \_\_\_\_\_ (If necessary, ask a teacher to assist you in getting the information in numbers 14A & B).

15. \_\_\_\_\_  
State Senator's Name (Ohio Senate) District Number

16. \_\_\_\_\_  
State Representative's Name (Ohio House) District Number

17. \_\_\_\_\_  
Names of Local Newspapers (Please list at least one).

18. **School and Community Involvement**

Below, please briefly list your involvement with your school and community. This may include any offices you held, club memberships, after school activities or work experiences. List the length of involvement, the grade level you were in at the time of participation, and the name of an adult you worked with.\*

**School Activities:**

<b><u>Name of Activity</u></b>	<b><u>Adult Contact</u></b>	<b><u>Dates</u> (From When to When)</b>	<b><u>Grade Level</u></b>
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

**Community Activities:**

<b><u>Name of Activity</u></b>	<b><u>Adult Contact</u></b>	<b><u>Dates</u> (From When to When)</b>	<b><u>Grade Level</u></b>
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____



## **Employment Experience:**

<b><u>Employer</u></b>	<b><u>Dates</u></b>	<b><u>Position</u></b>	<b><u>Grade Level</u></b>

\*Use additional sheets if necessary

## **19. Letters of Recommendation:**

Please attach two letters of recommendation which describe your demonstrated leadership skills or your leadership potential. One letter must be from a high school representative and one must be from a community representative outside your school.

List name, position/title, organization and telephone number of the two people who write these letters.

---

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>
-------------	--------------

---

<b>Organization</b>	<b>(Area Code)</b>	<b>Telephone Number</b>
---------------------	--------------------	-------------------------

---

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>
-------------	--------------

---

<b>Organization</b>	<b>(Area Code)</b>	<b>Telephone Number</b>
---------------------	--------------------	-------------------------

## **20. Required Essay**

Your answers to the following questions will be used to assess your readiness to participate in this leadership forum. Please write your responses on separate paper and attach to your completed application packet. Your total response for all four of these topics should not exceed four (4) typewritten, double-spaced pages.

**(a) QUALIFICATIONS** - Explain why you feel you are qualified to be a delegate to this forum and please tell us why you want to attend.







**(KEEP PAGES 6 & 7. DO NOT MAIL WITH APPLICATION.)**

**HOW STUDENT DELEGATES WILL BE SELECTED  
AND APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS FOR STUDENTS**

1. To be eligible for the Youth leadership Forum, students must:
  - (a) Have a disability
  - (b) Be in the 11th or 12th grade as of December 31, 2002.
  - (c) Have demonstrated leadership potential in school and the community; and,
  - (d) Reside in Ohio
2. Student applicants must mail the completed application packet to the Governor's staff office-postmarked no later than **Friday, January 31, 2003.**
3. Semi-finalists will be selected and contacted by telephone to arrange a personal interview. The interview will be conducted by a selection committee. Interviews will take place in March of 2003 at sites throughout Ohio.
4. All applicants will be notified by letter whether they are selected to attend the forum. (Letters will be mailed by the end of May, 2003. Approximately 40 students will be selected to attend.
5. After being selected, students will be asked to fill out a confirmation form and provide additional information to the Governor's Council staff office.
6. All appropriate expenses will be paid by the Youth Leadership Forum management, including such expenses as lodging, food, interpreters for deaf students and personal care attendants for students with physical disabilities.

**GENERAL INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS:**



## **Rules and Guidelines for Student Delegates of the Youth Leadership Forum**

In order to provide a fun, safe learning experience at the leadership forum, all delegates will be expected to follow the rules listed below.

Students are selected to attend this forum because of their leadership skills and potential.

**Consequently, students are expected to demonstrate their leadership ability, and must:**

1. Be punctual, with arrival times to the Youth Leadership Forum and all sessions/activities.
2. Be at designated places and stay with your assigned group at all times. Attendance at all sessions is mandatory.
3. Maintain a respectful attitude toward peers, counselors and conference staff.
4. Respect the facilities (maintaining the condition of sleeping rooms and all other areas).
5. When not in assigned groups, males and females are restricted to their own assigned rooms at all times. No coed visitation allowed.
6. Smoking and possession or use of illegal chemicals or alcohol are strictly prohibited. (Prescription or other approved medications require official verification and can only be dispensed under supervision by the medical staff.)
7. It is recommended that walkmans, radios and electronic games not be brought to the forum.

**Any violations of these rules will result in students being sent home immediately at parents'/guardians' expense. Your application to the Youth Leadership Forum indicates your acceptance of these rules and guidelines.**

**More importantly, we emphasize that delegates are chosen to attend the forum because of their leadership potential. Remember the responsibility that goes with the honor of being selected...and plan to have a great time!**



December 29, [REDACTED]

To: Youth Leadership Forum for Students with Disabilities

From: [REDACTED]  
Science Department Head

[REDACTED] would be an ideal candidate for the YLF award. She took my chemistry class last year. She has also taken biology and is presently enrolled in advanced biology here at Philo High school. These courses are very challenging for any student, but especially so for a deaf student. She often struggled with the instructions in the lab activities but participated fully. She was always on public display in front of the other students as teachers would have to check with her or ask her if she could hear as well as understand the explanation. As her hearing has gotten worse, so has her speech. High school students are so conscious of how they look to others. Her bravery is still remarkable to me.

In addition to her academics, she participates fully in extra-curricular activities. She is in several clubs and marching band. She is part of the flag corps. I suppose she counts carefully to know the beat of the music and when to do her maneuvers at the proper time.

Each year I have a classroom activity where each student shares something they would change. Amber said "I'd like to hear" and then described how she can appear to be stupid or "standoffish" when in reality, she simply didn't hear enough to make an answer.

[REDACTED] is a fine young lady, who is well liked and respected by all. She has truly overcome her disability by sheer determination and is a credit to her school and her fine parents.

Thank you,  
[REDACTED]



November 28, [REDACTED]

Governor's Council On People With Disabilities  
William Bauer, Chair, Youth Leadership Forum  
400 E. Campus View Blvd  
Columbus, OH 43235-4604

Dear Mr. William Bauer:

I have known [REDACTED] and her family for ten years. I have gotten to know [REDACTED] better over the last two years when [REDACTED] and her family started attending our church. I am NYI teen youth director where [REDACTED] is a member.

The teens are involved in a bible study biweekly, we have teen get-to-gathers, and all the teens are involved in fundraisers to raise money for church camps, lock-ins and winter retreats. Amber is always the first one willing to help. When we have had yard sales, she always stays to help box leftovers and clean up, when many want to run home. Our teens did a volunteer service this fall for our senior citizens in our church. Each teen was responsible for contacting their person and setting the time and date. [REDACTED] contacted Mrs. Wilson and made all the arrangements. When we went to Sudden Impact, (a weekend lock-in, with 750 teens) our group of teens participated in a drama. This took planning weeks before the event, where [REDACTED] helped write the skit. Her excitement helped get the other teens involved. We also had a girl's volleyball team, where the other girls volunteered to play just because they knew [REDACTED] wanted to have a team. [REDACTED] leadership in our teen group has help to get others involved.

When our teens have joined other church teen groups, Amber leads our group to get involved with the activities and meeting new people. This past September, she participated in a youth choir where several area churches were involved. This meant extra practices during the evening, on school nights, where she had to have school homework finished first. She was the only teen in our group who managed to be there every night.

[REDACTED] came to me on one occasion, asking for a copy of a song that they had sung in the choir. She needed it for a school art project/report that would help illustrate her drawing. I was amazed of how she put her faith in God together with her art project and report, so beautifully. Over the past two years, I admired how she has used her God given abilities, to overcome the hearing disability, and not to let it be a hindrance. I believe [REDACTED] would be an excellent candidate for the Youth Leadership Forum for Students with Disabilities (YLF). [REDACTED] is a very talented young lady and I highly recommend her.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]



To: Youth Leadership Forum for Students with Disabilities

From: [REDACTED]

I feel that I am qualified to be a delegate to the Youth Leadership Forum for Students with Disabilities because I have faced and overcome many obstacles which relate to being hearing impaired. I also know that there are many more things to face and overcome in the future. I believe that the forum will help and guide me with my career choice and increase my knowledge of what I may expect as a person with a disability in college and in the workplace.

One person who has been a positive influence on my life is my Junior High teacher, [REDACTED]. She always encouraged me to do the best that I possibly could and was always encouraging me in a very positive way. Due to her positive encouragement my grades improved and I also became involved in extra-curricular activities such as volleyball, basketball and the leadership club. I became involved in the leadership group because I realized that I could be a role model to other students and give positive encouragement and advice to them. [REDACTED] always made me feel comfortable in her class and this helped me to become more social and involved in class activities. I always knew I could go to her with any problem because she'd always be there to help.

The other person who has influenced my life is my mom. She is always there to talk to me about my hearing impairment, and any problems I have. She has enhanced my leadership abilities by always telling me that I could be anything that I wanted to be and to focus on my abilities and not my disability. She is a wonderful



role model because she was very good student in college and I want to be the same type of college student. She has battled cancer for the past year and her faith in God has kept her strong. She is an excellent example of God's promise that through Him we can do all things.

One experience with being hearing impaired has been with auditory trainers / Fm systems. My first auditory trainer was not effective and reliable. I kept telling everybody at school that it didn't help my hearing. Finally we found out about the F.M. system which I use now. I use it everyday at school and it is very effective. I

no longer miss out on what the teachers are saying. ( I can even hear the teachers when they are in the hall, if they forget and leave the microphone on.)

Another experience is when I went to a D.E.A.F. conference and I realized that I wasn't the only person who was hearing impaired, but in my school I am the only hearing impaired student. I met people who have had similar experiences and difficulties. I gave a short speech to the students, parents and staff about the importance of education and how it would effect my future. I also learned about all of the equipment that was available to help people with hearing impairments. I now use some of this equipment in my home to increase my independence.

There has been one negative experience when I learned that some people including adults may have difficulties relating to hearing impaired people. They often don't realize that we can do anything that anyone else can do. I learned that you will find people who are against you because of something about you which you



cannot do nothing about like my hearing impairment. I learned to stand up for myself and to go on without letting them get to me.

After graduation from High School I plan to attend college for four years where I will possible major in teaching or designing. I've not yet decided if I will teach art or special ed. or become an art designer. There may also be another career that I would like better that I haven't found yet.

Thank You,

The signature and address are completely redacted with black ink. The signature appears to be on two lines, and the address is on a single line below it.