

## **YLF Session Descriptions**

July 26, 2015-July 31, 2015

### **Self-Advocacy Keynote and Panel** (1 ½ hours):

This session will help youth better understand how developing strong self-advocacy skills can help them reach their personal, educational and employment goals. The keynote, Tia Nellis (proposed speaker) will talk about her personal experiences developing her own self-advocacy skills while giving participants examples and activities to help them develop their own skills in a variety of situations such as on the job, at school, and in college. Tia will be joined by a panel of YLF graduates who all attribute their leadership and advocacy skills to attending the YLF.

Tia Nelis is a self-advocacy specialist at Rehabilitation Research Training Center Institution on Disabilities University of Illinois at Chicago. Amy Burger will focus on going to college and employment, John Eller will focus on college, Nicole Neupert will focus on employment and independent living and Elyse will focus on college.

### **Team Building** (1 ½ hours):

Amy Climber will be invited to spend the morning with the delegates to help them understand how to contribute as an effective team member in a variety of situations such as group projects at school or work, community projects like the ones they will identify during YLF, and employment settings. Students will learn valuable employment skills such as taking initiative, pulling their own weight, trust, leadership, problem solving, and resolving conflicts.

### **One on One Conversations** (1 hour):

Brian Juchems will be invited back to the YLF to talk to the delegates about how to have one on one conversations to improve your listening skills, develop stronger relationships, figure out solutions for when others have a different opinion. Brian will connect this session to interviewing skills, which will be followed up on in a separate session.

### **Mock Interviews** (1 hour):

Senior staff will lead the delegates in a mock interview activity that will help youth prepare for job interviews. The session will include common Do's and Don'ts, tips for interviewing and actual role plays or "mock interviews" using common questions asked in a job interview. Staff will

interview 1 or 2 students and provide immediate feedback on what the student(s) did well or what they could improve on. At the end of the activity, staff will debrief

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with the large group about the experience – what they learned, what they will do to prepare when they have an actual job interview coming up, etc.

### **Peer Networking/Mentoring Picnic** (1 ½ hours):

YLF graduates and other young adults from programs such as Cutting Edge and Partners in Policymaking will meet with the current delegates to talk about their experiences with recently transitioning from high school to the adult world. It is expected that graduates will have a mix of experiences such as using adult services (e.g. DVR, IRIS, Family Care), going to college either through regular admissions procedures or by participating in a Think College program, going to work with both successful and unsuccessful experiences, and moving out. Delegates will prepare a list of questions in their small group before the picnic to help get conversations started. An informal setting and assistance from the staff will help develop high quality conversations to get the youth thinking about future education, employment and independent living goals. The Networking/Mentoring picnic is held early in the week to allow the youth to use the information they learn from the graduates throughout the week and, more specifically, in their Personal Leadership Plan (PLP).

### **Amazing Race to Employment: State Street Edition** (2 hours):

The purpose of the Amazing Race activity is to expose students with and without disabilities to local businesses where they might seek employment, while also exposing as many businesses as possible to students who want to work. To make this fun, the Amazing Race creates a gamelike atmosphere, where small groups of students are competing with one another to approach the most employers and gather the most business cards and job applications. Each employer, business card and job application counts as 1 point. The team with the most points at the end of the activity wins the game! Delegates are pre-assigned to a small group before they arrive at the YLF. Each small group has a facilitator (senior staff), counselor and peer mentor who will supervise the activity. Each group will be assigned a block of businesses on State Street to “visit”. Students will develop questions for employers ahead of time such as, what are 3 skills a good employee should have, how does your business advertise job openings, and how does someone apply for a job here? They will also develop a script and practice what they will say to the employer and will decide who will talk at each location to ensure employers have a positive interaction with the students.

### **Amazing Race Debrief** (1 ½ hours):

Once staff and delegates are back on campus, the Director will lead a large group discussion about what the students learned from this experience, what kinds of jobs they were interested in or were not interested in once they learned more about it, and how they can apply that

to their personal situations when they returned home. They will also determine the “winner” of the activity and celebrate that they tried something different! After

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the group debrief, delegates will get in their small group to complete the Employment section of their Personal Leadership Plan.

### **Social Capital – Where Everybody Knows Your Name** (1 ½ hours):

Most delegates have never heard the term “social capital” even though it’s one of the best ways for them to make employment connections. This session will teach delegates about the importance of developing their own social capital or, their own network. Delegates will learn that a strong network can help them accomplish many of their future goals such as finding a job, figuring out which college is right for them and what kinds of supports they can get at college, feeling comfortable joining a community organization like the Rotary or gathering a support for a school fundraiser. Delegates will learn about the many ways they can increase their social capital such as from their current network of friends, neighbors, faith communities, school clubs, community associations, etc. and how to put that network to work for them.

### **Relationships** (1 ½ hours):

Youth with disabilities oftentimes don’t have a strong sense of appropriate vs. inappropriate relationships. This session will talk about the wide variety of relationships in people’s lives – from acquaintances, to friends, to co-workers. It will include soft skills information that is applicable to workplace situations.

### **Postsecondary Education Options** (1 hour):

Youth will learn about the wide variety of college options that are available to them as well as what kinds of supports they can expect to receive, what kind of disability documentation is required to get services, how to choose a campus that best meets their needs, what the major differences are between high school and college

### **Community Living** (1 hour):

There are a lot of things to work through when thinking about moving out of your parent’s house. Where do you want to live? Do you want roommates? Pets? How many? Can you afford it? How will the cooking, cleaning, bill paying, etc. get done? Who will support me? This session will help delegates begin thinking about these things while providing specific ideas of how they can start preparing now for moving out on their own.

### **Strengths/Weaknesses/Skills/Abilities** (1 hour):

Understanding yourself is an important step in determining what employment options may work for you. This session will help youth think about their strengths, weaknesses, skills and abilities and apply that information to different jobs they may want to do. Understanding these key areas about themselves will help them make better decisions when it comes to choosing career goals.