



# Youth Leadership Development Program

*Developing Youth of Character Into Tomorrow's Leaders*

## Program History and Introduction

In addition to monthly meetings, the YLDP operates numerous, staff approved, student created and enacted service projects. YLDP participation projects are also available to students to assist community organizations e.g. The CSM Bennie Adkins Foundation, The American Village, and the Birmingham Botanical Gardens. Whenever students plan a service project they are encouraged to focus on what morals are being experienced within the project, and also identify any aspect of the Pillars of Faith and/ or Patriotism as a part of the service experience.

A major component of the YLDP is its special relationship with its College Partners. These colleges actively support the belief that sound character is vital for leaders to possess. And that by supporting students of character they are helping to fulfill a major goal of higher education, preparing leaders of tomorrow. This support is shown by the scholarships they provide exclusively to the students of the YLDP. A very important component of the YLDP is to encourage students to be informed about different colleges, preferably of different sizes in order to be certain of where they believe they will be most successful, both academically and socially. The YLDP conducts two College Fairs in the first quarter of the year, which are only available to YLDP students, parents, and College Partners. The YLDP encourages students, and parents to arrange college visits to our YLDP College Partners. The YLDP encourages all of our students to attend YLDP College Partners. Preference in the selection of students chosen for the YLDP must be given to those interested in attending college at one of our college partners, students who are undecided on the college they want to attend, or students who want to attend one of the military academies. The YLDP does encourage students to attend YLDP College Partners because the colleges have demonstrated their support for students of character.

The YLDP evaluation process is based on a point system, which is given to both students, and parents at Orientation. All YLDP students should understand that future success in the YLDP is entirely in their hands. All students begin equally and are informed that points are earned exclusively by active participation in the YLDP. In March qualified students can select up to three colleges, in order of preference, that they want to compete for scholarships to attend. Scholarship recipients are determined by the highest YLDP point totals. Through the experience of the fair and equal competition of the YLDP, students experience the joy found in having and successfully completing responsibility, an understanding of the work ethic needed to successfully compete, and experience the rewards earned for dedication, determination, and hard work. Whether students have earned one of the many YLDP scholarships or not, the YLDP provides many valuable and rewarding lessons and experiences that help prepare students for the next phase of their lives.

The YLDP is a special experience for students that assists in heightening awareness of the belief: "This nation will remain free only so long as it is the home of the brave." And an understanding that "the greatest legacy one can pass on to one's children and grandchildren is not money or material things accumulated in one's life, but rather a legacy of faith and character." In essence the YLDP is an experiencing of the rightful "social inheritance" of every American child, to have faith, be given a moral foundation for good character and a patriotic passion of the United States of America.

## Program Staff

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