

YLA Newsletter



YOUTH LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

A Not-For-Profit 501 c 3 Corporation

YLA Cadets Recognized with Elgin Image Award

Volume 1, Issue 9

April 2011



Pictured above top row: Helen Strom from Administer Justice, Jose Velasquez, Dianha Ortega-Ehreth. Middle Row: Ramiro Lara, Edna Acevedo, Neomy Rojas, Anthony Ruiz, Alondra Carmenatty, Berenice Gomez. Front left is Claudia Rodriguez, front right is Grace Hamiel.

Members of the YLA Student Council took a major leadership role in the Coalition for Latino Organizations' fall 2010 Candidate's Forum. This project was selected as the 2010 Elgin Image Project of the Year by the city's Image Advisory Commission. For 19 years, the annual Elgin Image Awards have recognized the many efforts of individuals, organizations, civic groups and businesses whose work has significantly improved the image of our community.

This coalition of 15 community organizations helped to educate the Hispanic community on the issues directly impacting them while also introducing candidates for local political office. Citizenship became the focus of the evening and children of all ages were taught the rights and responsibilities of being a citizen—which included the responsibility of voting. More than 300 people—mostly Latinos—came together in October at the Gail Borden Library to make informed decisions at the polls.

Congratulations cadets! You made a big difference in the city of Elgin!

The YLA Newsletter is produced at the YLA office and is distributed once per month. Any comments, questions or letters can be addressed to YLA 410 Renner Dr., Elgin, IL 60123.

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YLA Cadets Participate in Global Youth Service Day on April 16

Thirteen YLA service-learning groups have been busy planning since January 2011 for their participation in Global Youth Service Day, April 16. On or before this date, over 100 cadets will be implementing a variety of projects to benefit their communities.

Global Youth Service Day is an annual campaign that celebrates and mobilizes the millions of children and youth who improve their communities through service-learning. It is the largest service event in the world, and it is celebrated in over 100 countries. YLA projects are posted on the Global Youth Service Day web site at www.gysd.org. Under the "Project Map" tab, type in any Elgin-area zip code and you will get a list of the projects taking place in the area. If you would like to help out with any project, contact the project leader by following the prompts on the web site.

Some YLA service-learning projects include: education of middle school students on drug abuse prevention, raising awareness about invisible children in Uganda, a day retreat for girls to address self-esteem, and collecting supplies for a local animal shelter. Service-Learning is an important part of the YLA curriculum. It provides a platform for students to exercise their leadership skills, learn more about the issues affecting their communities, and make their community a better place.

A special thank you goes out to all the adult volunteer mentors from the Elgin Leadership Academy who have been working hard alongside YLA cadets since January to move their projects forward. Your time and energy are previous investments in developing the next generation of community leaders!

Quote of the month: "An education that teaches you to understand something about the world has done only half of the assignment. The other half is to teach you to do something about making the world a better place." – Johnetta Cole

YLA Teambuilding Day is April 30

Once a year every spring, YLA cadets spend one of their Saturday sessions to focus on teambuilding. This year, this day is April 30 and it will be at Camp Big Timber which is located at 37W955 Big Timber Road in Elgin, off of Big Timber Road west of Randall Road. We will be outdoors doing various group activities (such as life jacket relay, tent set up relay, spider ropes, fire building and more) so **jeans and sneakers will be allowed that day**. All cadets must wear their YLA shirt that day! We will begin at 9am sharp and go through 12:00 noon. Teambuilding activities will be led by the YLA Venture Crew in partnership with other area Venture Crew leaders and YLA adult volunteers trained in outdoor skills safety. The goal of Teambuilding Day is to strengthen cadet skills through group problem-solving. All cadets are required to be present. We will be taking attendance! If you have questions about YLA Teambuilding Day, contact the YLA office at 847-214-6965.

YLA Benefit Dinner a Big Success!

Thank you to all those who helped make the first annual YLA Benefit Dinner on March 11 a big success! The keynote speaker, Alan Bjerga, shared about various leadership characteristics and the importance of education in leadership. YLA cadets shared about their experience in the program and were celebrated as community leaders today. All in all, the YLA raised more than \$6,000 which included donations for silent and live auction items. All proceeds will directly benefit YLA's program focused on making higher education accessible to low-income community youth. To see pictures from the evening, turn to page 4. Be sure to attend our event next year!

What Did You Do on Your Spring Break?



Debbie Patino is an 11th grade YLA cadet. She is the leader of the Bracelets for Humanity project which just completed another great volunteer event on Wednesday, March 30, during students' spring break. A team of eight cadet volunteered for two hours at the Northern Illinois Food Bank in St. Charles. The team was given the job of sorting, boxing, and stacking hundreds of loaves of bread. The team worked out a great system that resembled a manufacturing assembly line. Michael Rodriguez and Eddie Rodriguez assembled the empty boxes. Alejandro Patino tossed the bread from the racks to tables (occasionally missing the table). Lizet Alba and Claudia Rodriguez packed the empty boxes with the loaves of bread. And finally Debbie and Jose Valesquez closed up the boxes, wrote the date on the box, and then stacked the boxes onto skids. Mr. Kevin was in charge of photography and taste testing. This volunteer effort made a contribution to feeding the hungry in Northern Illinois. YLA is proud of Debbie and the whole team! Keep an eye out for the next Bracelets for Humanity event, which will be fundraising at a Jewel Food Store in the next month or two.

YLA Fox River Trail Bike Hike

Want to get outdoors to enjoy spring? Join the YLA Venture Crew for a bike ride on the Fox River Trail on Saturday, April 23. To sign up, contact Robert Faber at 847-428-2533 or Mr. Kevin.



Call for YLA Cadets to Help Volunteer at Open Gym

Open Gym is a year-round effort after school program that offers children and teens a variety of fun recreational, education, and social activities. It is coordinated by the Hanover Township Youth and Family Services. They are calling for volunteers to contribute a few hours a week to help make a positive impact on the lives of community youth.

Volunteers gain experience in leadership skills by leading sports, games, assist with homework and more. Volunteers must be at least 16 years old and pass a background check. Open Gym schedule is:

Mondays—Bartlett Elementary, 2-6 pm

Tuesdays — Sunnydale Elementary, 2—6 pm

Wednesdays—Streamwood High, 3—7pm

Thursdays—Lords Park Elementary, 2—6pm

Fridays—Laurel Hill Elementary, 2—6pm

Your time commitment depends on your availability. For more information, or to sign up, please contact Jennifer Kleiman at 630-483-5799 or jkleiman@hanover-township.org.

2011 YLA Family Fun Day 70's Disco!

YLA Families—don't forget, Family Fun Day is April 30th! The 11th grade class will be hosting this fun event in the Heritage Room at ECC from 2-5pm on April 30th. Many fun games will be available for all to play, plus there will be snacks and raffle prizes. There will be a costume competition, so put on your best polyester and bellbottoms!

Registration forms were mailed to each home. The cost is \$12 per cadet family of up to 6, or \$3 per person. Non-cadet cost is \$5 per person. **Please RSVP by April 9!** Call the YLA office at 847-214-6910 if you have questions.

Youth Leadership Academy

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*"I AM on the path to success.
I AM college bound."*

**Visit us online at
www.ylaecc.org**

Mission of the Youth Leadership Academy:

We engage and inspire youth to maximize their potential to become successful community leaders through the access and responsible utilization of post-secondary education.

YLA Office Hours:

- Monday—Friday, 9:00 am—3:00 pm
- No office hours on Saturday
- Summer Schedule: Monday—Thursday, 9:00 am—3:00 pm.

YLA Board members:

- Dr. Wes Scott, President, Elgin
- JoAnne Fields Whittaker, Vice President, Elgin
- Kevin Stark, Treasurer, Algonquin
- Jeri E. Smith, Secretary, Elgin
- Eric Isibue, West Dundee
- Eary Isibue, Elgin
- V. Elaine Miller, Elgin
- Danesa Tamayo, Belvidere
- Dr. Bruce Austin, Grayslake
- Dr. Julie Schaid, Elburn

YLA Executive Director:

Dianha Ortega-Ehreth

YLA Administrative Assistant:

Karen McCoy



March 11 YLA Benefit Dinner Scrapbook

Top left: YLA Board member Jeri Smith and Peggy Jackson from ECC—TRIO. Bottom left: Dianha Ortega-Ehreth, YLA Executive Director; Johnny Beltran, YLA alumni class of 2008; YLA Board members Julie Schaid and Kevin Stark. Top right: YLA cadets Alondra Carmenatty and Berenice Gomez; Marlene Daubert, Zion Lutheran Church Diaconal Minister; Sam Ehreth, dinner guest; and YLA cadet Alexis O'Connor.