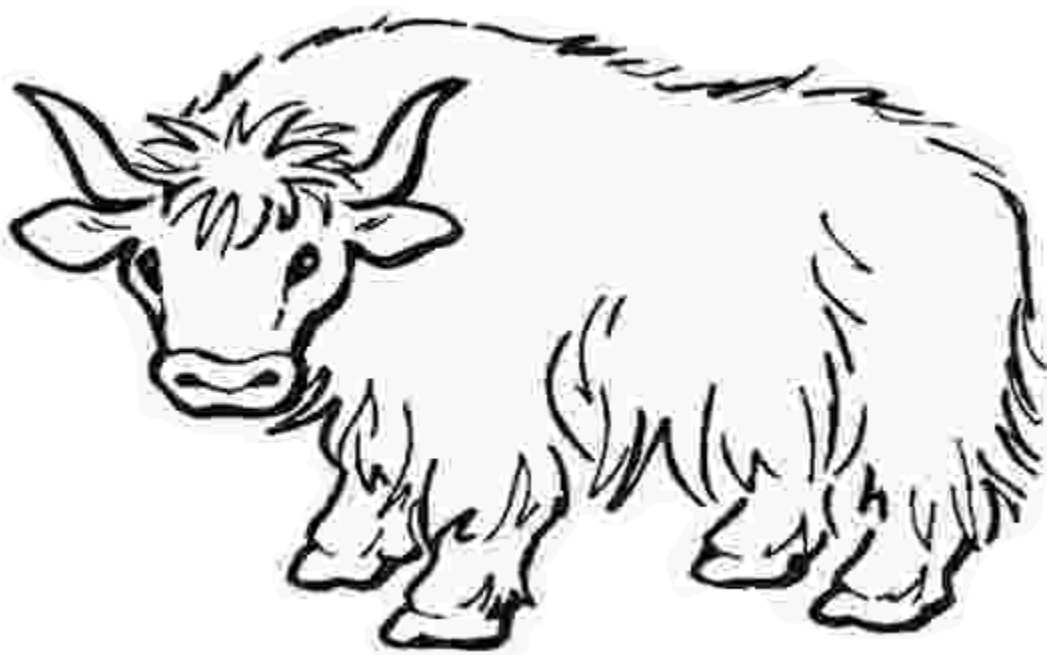


# **OPERATION: YAC IN A BOX**



**Camp Fire USA**<sup>SM</sup>

Today's kids. Tomorrow's leaders.

# **WHY CREATE A LOCAL YAC?**

One of the most important things about Camp Fire USA is remembering that it is not for adults. Just look at the mission: *Camp Fire USA builds caring, confident youth and future leaders*. It shows you right away that youth should have a say in things, and Camp Fire USA is ready to give you that opportunity within this cool kit: the YAC in a Box!

A local Youth Advisory Cabinet (YAC) in your council plays a key part in promoting Camp Fire USA and serving the community. Being connected to both the youth and adults in the council greatly helps with promoting programs that can be initiated and promoted by the local YAC. When youth in the council need someone to talk to about new ideas or suggestions, the local YAC is always there to listen to those ideas and bring them up to the board of directors to see that they are taken into consideration.

Without a local YAC in your council, you are passing up an opportunity to connect more completely with the youth in your area. Being easy to set up and maintain, giving the youth a voice, and above all, being extremely adaptable to your community, a local YAC is one program that makes a council whole.

## **IN A NUTSHELL A LOCAL YAC WILL:**

- Increase ownership of Camp Fire USA programs,
- Provide adult leaders with valuable youth perspective,
- Develop leadership, organizational and time management skills,
- Increase communication between youth, adults and program coordinators, and
- Extend youth involvement with inclusive programming.

## **STRATEGIC GOALS:**

- ✓ **THE RIGHT ADVISOR**
- ✓ **FIND A FOCUS**
- ✓ **ESTABLISH SELECTION  
PROCESS**
- ✓ **LOGISTICS PLAN**
- ✓ **TALK IT UP**

# THE RIGHT ADVISOR

One of your first steps in forming a local YAC is finding an advisor, someone who is passionate about youth and who wants to be a part of what they do. It could be your council's Executive director, a teen program coordinator, a board member, or a volunteer. If you have trouble finding one, ask around your council. You may be surprised with who will want to help.

- An experienced leader can give the group great direction.
- They will serve as a valuable link between the youth and adults.
- Guide in development of skills (leadership, organizational, and time management) of youth
- An adult passionate about Camp Fire USA and youth empowerment makes a great fit

You may ask you advisor and the rest of the group to make a written statement of what they will and will not do. This way everyone is clear that they are there to work and the advisor is not there to baby-sit. It is important for everyone to realize if that advisor were not there, you would not be able to function as a Camp Fire USA group. For liability purposes, an adult must be present. Besides, this is another way to form a lasting bond with an adult mentor!

Statements such as the following would be helpful to include:

I will always \_\_\_\_\_.

It is not my responsibility to \_\_\_\_\_.

It is my responsibility to \_\_\_\_\_.

If I feel overwhelmed I will \_\_\_\_\_.

These are really just a few suggestions. Take time in these beginning stages to really discuss with the group how everyone envisions your local YAC functioning.

# FIND A FOCUS

The needs of every Camp Fire USA council around the country are unique. By forming YAC bylaws, each council can better address its own needs. Defining goals for your local YAC is important because it assures a better use of time. The basic structure of how your local YAC will function can adapt to fit your community and be more efficient in helping to solve community and council issues. Refer to pages 9-13 for an example of one council's YAC bylaws.

Also to be decided is your focus. As a YAC you can take on as much responsibility as you would like but in the interest of time it is usually best to pick one issue and focus on that for the year. Examples include:

- National Youth Campaign Issue (Chosen at National Leadership Conference)
- Host a Local Youth Leadership Forum
- Absolutely Incredible Kid Day
- Fundraising
- Host Teen Volunteer Appreciation Weekend

Or something completely different, it's up to you, just do not overestimate your time.

## **A WORD FROM THE WILANI COUNCIL:**

“My local Wilani Council YAC helps with recruiting new Camp Fire USA members and clubs and organizing educational activities concerning different cultures around the world, and avidly promotes public awareness of Camp Fire USA, as we are the youth advocates for the Wilani Council. Bridging the gap between youth and adults in the council is something that the Wilani YAC does best. We have an alumni member who attends all board meetings, as well as our YAC meetings, and she transfers information from the YAC to the board of directors. A local YAC in your council will play a key part in helping to get your youth to take on a more active role in Camp Fire USA as well as in their community.”

-Andrew Neill

Wilani Council YAC President  
National YAC member

# **ESTABLISH A SELECTION PROCESS**

To maintain your local YAC, it is vital to continually talk it up. At your annual event or whenever you have a large group of teens at your disposal, it is important to tell them what you do, and how they can be a part of it as well. Have applications on hand so they will have something to remind them when they get home. Make yourselves available for questions and show them the awesome responsibilities the group holds.

To establish your group's selection process, start out by answering a few questions:

- What will the application process be?
- Will there be an application or just recommendation?
- Will there be an interview?
  - Who will perform it?
- How long are terms?
  - Calendar year or school year?
- What will the age range be?
- Will members be from different programs?
- Will any members sit on the council board of directors, or any other council advisory board?
- How will the cabinet chairs be selected?

These (like everything else here) are just to get you started. Refer to page 14 for one council's application as an example of what may work for your council.

# **LOGISTICS PLAN**

No need to fret, logistics is just a big word for all the details. This is really going to be the part where you sit down with the group and your advisor and really work

everything out. However the group decides to do things, remember it will be different for each council. Below are some questions to get you started thinking:

- What kind of pool are you drawing from?
- How many older youth?
- How many members will there be?
- What will the age range be?
- How will local YAC represent my council?
- Will there be chairs?
  - How will they be selected?
- Where will meeting be held?
  - How often will meetings be held?
- Will the council help with funding?
- Means of communication between meetings?
- How is local YAC going to be representative of my council?

## **A NOTE FROM THE MINNESOTA YAC:**

“In the Minnesota Council, we are in the midst of transitioning our YAC from primarily club-based to after-school based programming (Teens in Action). This is due to change in participation: we just don’t have the participation in the classic club program we formerly experienced. Instead, we will be taking on one or two students from each TIA site to sit on the YAC. From there, the representatives will vote on specific positions (i.e., president, secretary) if they so chose. Our council is sometimes able to help us with funding, but we are responsible for fundraising most of our resources. We’ve worked at a grocery store bagging groceries and held a fun run. Since beginning our YAC, we’ve discovered that it works bests if the bylaws allow flexibility in the number of youth representatives, meeting times, location of meetings, etc...because group dynamics change and evolve over time.”

-Bridget Wall  
Minnesota YAC member  
National YAC member

## **TALK IT UP!**

Your last task in forming your local Youth Advisory Cabinet is to set up a meeting with council leaders, your council executive, and board of directors. Basically, you need to explain to the leaders of your council your desire for a local YAC and how it will benefit the

council. Tell them about all the groundwork you've done and hard work you've done putting together a program that will benefit your council like nothing else. This process may take time and several meetings, but if your group is prepared and enthusiastic about what you are doing, they will be too!

In the next couple of pages, there are example bylaws, applications, and contracts from the Minnesota and Wilani Councils. They are there to help you get started making your own. Remember, you are not alone in this. National YAC wants to help you in any way possible. Feel free to ask questions anytime. The easiest way for this to happen is to e-mail [yac@campfireusa.org](mailto:yac@campfireusa.org) and someone will get back to you.

**WHEN YOU HAVE SET UP A WORKING  
LOCAL YAC IN YOUR COUNCIL LET US  
KNOW, WE WANT TO CELEBRATE TOO!**

CAMP FIRE USA MINNESOTA COUNCIL  
**YOUTH ADVISORY CABINET**  
BYLAWS

Approved and adopted at Special Meeting of YAC on February 17, 2002.

**ARTICLE I**                    **NAME**

The name of this organization is Camp Fire USA Minnesota Council Youth Advisory Cabinet.

**ARTICLE II**                    **PURPOSE AND FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES**

Section 1.                    Purpose

The sole purpose of this organization shall be to serve in an advisory capacity and represent the youth who participate in council programs:

Youth Advisory Cabinet (YAC) members discuss matters of mutual concern related to youth; review program curricula; help plan for Camp Fire USA Minnesota Council events; deliberate on organizational issues as identified by the executive director; consult with executive director and youth board members on youth issues, as identified through communications with youth at the local level; represent Camp Fire USA Minnesota Council at local and national events and with liaison organizations; and provide a supporting, learning role for youth involvement with adults in various aspects of the organization.

Section 2.                    Fundamental Principles

YAC shall maintain a policy of openness to all without regard to race, religion, sex, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, or other aspect of diversity.

**ARTICLE III**                    **JURISDICTION AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

Section 1.                    Jurisdiction

The territory under jurisdiction of YAC is the same as that of Camp Fire USA Minnesota Council.

Section 2.                    Accountability

YAC members will be accountable to the executive director of Camp Fire USA Minnesota Council.

**ARTICLE IV**                    **MEMBERS**

Section 1.                    Membership and Voting Privileges

- a.        Membership in YAC shall be open to all youth who meet the qualifications outlined in the YAC Guidelines and are selected through the YAC Application Process.
- b.        Members must have reached the age of 15 and may not have attained his/her 21<sup>st</sup> birthday in the year of appointment.
- c.        Members of YAC may establish dues and privileges for members providing they are not in conflict with these bylaws or the bylaws, policies, requirements and standards of Camp Fire USA.

- d. With the approval of the executive director, members of YAC, by a two-thirds (2/3) vote, may terminate or withhold membership with or without cause provided that proper notice is given and that the member is so notified.
- e. The voting members of YAC shall be the officers and other members who have been appointed by the executive director and who subscribe to the mission of Camp Fire USA Minnesota Council.

**ARTICLE V RECRUITMENT OF NEW MEMBERS**

Section 1. Nominating Committee

- a. The president shall appoint a chairperson and two other members to serve on the nominating committee each year.
- b. The nominating committee shall identify and recruit new applicants for YAC each year.
- c. Members of the nominating committee shall be conscientious in their efforts to recruit diverse applicants, ensuring that YAC is representative of the youth served by Camp Fire USA Minnesota Council.
- d. The nominating committee shall provide regular progress reports to YAC.

**ARTICLE VI APPOINTMENTS AND ELECTIONS**

Section 1. Appointment to YAC

- a. Youth will be appointed to YAC using the selection process outlined in the YAC Guidelines and Application Form.
- b. Members of YAC will review the Guidelines and Application Form annually.

Section 2. Elections

Elections of the officers shall be by ballot and/or voice vote.

Section 3. Vacancies in Elected Positions

Vacancies occurring during the year in any officer position shall be filled by the members of YAC for the unexpired portion of the term in consultation with the executive director.

**ARTICLE VII OFFICERS**

Section 1. Officers

The officers of YAC shall be a president, a vice president, a secretary, and a treasurer.

Section 2. Election of Officers: Vacancies

The officers shall be elected at the first meeting of each program year for a term of one (1) year or until their respective successors are elected, and shall assume office immediately upon election. No officer shall serve in the same office for more than two (2) consecutive terms. Any vacancy occurring during the year shall be filled by the members of YAC for the unexpired portion of the term, in consultation with the executive director. An officer who is elected to fill a vacancy will be deemed to have served a "term" by virtue of such election only if, at the time of the election, there is more than six (6) months remaining in the unexpired portion of the term.

Section 3. Duties of the Officers

- a. The president shall be the chief officer and shall preside at all meetings of YAC. The president shall perform all duties usually pertaining to the office and shall appoint, with approval of the other members, chairs of committees. The president shall submit an annual report to the members of the council at the annual meeting. The president may assign duties to other officers.
- b. The vice-president shall assist the president in the exercise of the president's duties, and perform the duties of the president at all times when the president cannot give active service.
- c. The secretary shall keep and maintain records, give notice of regular and special meetings, and perform such other duties as may be assigned.
- d. The treasurer will assist the members in monitoring the financial health of the organization.

**ARTICLE VIII**            **MEETINGS**

Section 1. Regular Meetings

- a. Regular meetings shall be held at least three (3) times each program year at such time as shall be determined by the officers of YAC, or in the absence of action by the officers, as determined by the president.
- b. The purpose of the first meeting of each program year shall be:
  - To elect officers,
  - To amend bylaws,
  - To adopt resolutions which guide the officers in their administration of YAC,
  - To receive reports of the officers and committees,
  - To consider such other business as may come before the meeting,
- c. The agenda shall be prepared by the officers. This provision shall not preclude introduction of other business from the floor, provided that previous notice is not required.

Section 2. Notice of Meetings

- a. Written notice of regular meetings shall be sent to all members in good standing at least fourteen (14) days in advance of the meeting, and at least two (2) days in advance of any special meeting. Such notice shall include an agenda with all items requiring previous notice.
- b. Items requiring previous notice shall be included in the notice of the meeting at the request of the officers or other members.

Section 3. Voting Privileges

All voting members as defined in Article IV, Section 1, who are in good standing on the day of a regular or special meeting shall have voting privileges at that meeting.

Section 4. Quorum

Fifty percent (50%) of the members of YAC shall constitute a quorum at any regular or special meeting.

Section 5. Proxy Voting

Voting by proxy shall not be permitted at any meeting.

**ARTICLE IX**                    **COMPOSITION, TERMS, AND SERVICE ON THE COUNCIL BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Section 1.            Composition

- a.            YAC shall be composed of:
  - four (4) officers,
  - up to eight (8) other youth members,
  - the executive director will serve as advisor without vote.
- b.            YAC shall be not more than twelve (12) nor fewer than four (4) members.

Section 2.            Term of Service

Members shall be appointed for a term of three (3) years and shall be eligible to serve no more than two (2) consecutive terms.

Section 3.            Service on the Council Board of Directors

- a.            The president of YAC shall serve as a member of the Camp Fire USA Minnesota Council board of directors.
- b.            One youth position on the Camp Fire USA Minnesota Council board of directors shall be filled by a member-at-large of YAC.
- c.            The remaining three board positions may be filled by either officers of YAC or members-at-large.

**ARTICLE X**                    **PROGRAM YEAR**

The program year for YAC shall be September 1 through August 31.

**ARTICLE XI**                    **PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY**

*Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*, current edition, shall govern YAC in all cases to which they are not inconsistent with these bylaws or special rules of order the council may adopt.

**ARTICLE XII**                    **AMENDMENTS**

Section 1.            Amendments

These bylaws may be amended at a regular or special meeting of YAC at which a quorum is present, by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present, if a written copy of the proposed amendment is sent to all members with the notice of the meeting. If there is no previous notice, a vote of a majority of the membership is needed to amend bylaws.

Section 2.            Revision

The officers may order and prepare a revision of these bylaws. The requirements for notice and adoption of a revised set of bylaws shall be the same as in the case of an amendment.

Section 3.            Submitting an Amendment

- a.            Any member may submit an amendment, signed by at least three (3) other members, to the officers at least three (3) weeks before the next meeting.

- b. Such amendments shall appear in writing along with any other proposed amendments by the officers and shall be sent to all members with the notice of meeting.

Section 4. Approval of Bylaws

Final approval of YAC bylaws, including amendments or revisions, will be made by the executive director of Camp Fire USA Minnesota Council.

**CERTIFICATION OF BYLAWS**

These bylaws were approved and adopted by members of the Youth Advisory Cabinet at a duly called special meeting on February 17, 2002, with a quorum present as prescribed by bylaws.

The minutes of this meeting are on file at the council office.

\_\_\_\_\_  
President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

These bylaws were approved by the executive director of Camp Fire USA Minnesota Council on February 17, 2002.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Executive Director

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

# Wilani Council Youth Cabinet Application

(Please complete this application in a neatly typed font or by writing in blue or black ink.)

Camp Fire USA

Name

Address

City

School

State

Zip

Age      Grade      Male      Female

Years in Camp Fire USA      Advisor

Phone

Please list School activities and/or clubs that you have been involved with.

Please respond to the following essay questions in complete sentences and on separate paper. Please limit the total length of all responses to four pages.

1. Why are you applying for this position on the YAC and what strengths would you bring to the YAC?
2. What is the most pressing issue facing youth in the Wilani Council and how would you go about coming to resolution of this issue?
3. If you are accepted for the Wilani Council Youth Advisory Cabinet, what goals do you have and how do you plan on achieving them?
4. How has Camp Fire USA impacted your life?

In addition to answering these questions, two letters of recommendation are required. The attached recommendation forms need to be given to persons writing the letters.

## Letter of Recommendation for

Name of Applicant

Information provided by

Contact # or e-mail address

1. Please comment on the applicants' abilities in the following areas if you can: Based on your observations, please rate the applicant on a scale of 1 to 5, 5 being the closest to ideal.

1. The applicant is enthused about working with other teens and adults.
2. When sharing work with others, the applicant is democratic in his/her approach. The applicant solicits the ideas of others, shares his/her own ideas, participates in decision-making, abides by decisions made by the group and is willing to work and able to make the decisions happen.
3. The applicant values, respects and appreciates persons with backgrounds different from his or her own. His or her behavior is free of bigotry, prejudice, racism and sexism. He/she can work effectively with persons from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds, ages or life styles.
4. The applicant displays good judgment in issues regarding health and safety. Applicant is punctual and attentive to meeting and activity schedules.

Please state how you know the applicant.

Information of interest in the Letter of Recommendation should include acknowledgment of honors or accomplishments the applicant has achieved, involvement in extra curricular activities, service or commitment to his/her community, demonstrations of leadership abilities or comments or examples that indicate the applicant's strengths. Please contact the Teen Program Advisor with questions at 541-342-6338 or 1-877-945-2641.

Please return Letters to:

Camp Fire USA Wilani Council 3575 Donald Street #230 Eugene OR 97405

Fax: 541-342-6330

## YOUTH ADVISORY CABINET CONTRACT

As a member of the Youth Advisory Cabinet (YAC) I agree to:

- . Attend all scheduled meetings of the YAC during my term of office.
- . If I am unable to attend, I (not my parents) will telephone and/or leave a message about my plans in a timely manner.
- . I will promote Wilani Council and Camp Fire USA's visibility by appearing at events. If requested, I will wear Camp Fire USA attire, graciously.
- . I will work to promote council fundraising efforts.
- . I will plan or assist with planning council events.
- . I will work to increase youth membership and participation.
- . I recognize that as a Discovery or Horizon youth I am a unique member of Camp Fire USA and that adults and younger youth will look to me for leadership, guidance and appropriate behavior.
- . I will work with other youth cabinet members in a harmonious and thoughtful way, recognizing that each of us has unique qualities.
- . I recognize that it pays to take turns doing the hard tasks and sharing the leadership roles of the cabinet in order to accomplish our goals.

As a YAC member, I have read and understood the contract. I agree to abide by the responsibilities listed and am aware that my term on the cabinet may be terminated if I fail to observe them.

Youth signature

Date

Parent signature

Date