



THE YOUTH ADVISOR

RECRUITMENT OF A YOUTH ADVISOR

The importance of a dedicated, qualified and spiritually-oriented Advisor cannot be overemphasized with regard to the success of a Youth Conference. Young people, with the many distractions inherent to their age group, need an adult advisor to point them in the right direction as they progress on their journey as a conference under the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul.

For many of these young people, their experience within the Society represents their first taste of responsibility. They will grow under the guidance of an Advisor, whose role is not to act in the capacity of a parental figure, but instead to be a friend and mentor who will let the Youth Conference members decide how they want to fulfill their Vincentian vocation and guide them down their path.

The type of individual who is going to make a good Youth Advisor will, in all likelihood, be in high demand by many other types of groups as well. The Society is going to have to stand out from all the rest to attract such a competent person. They will be attracted to the Society if they believe a well-thought out plan has been conceived and implemented throughout the Society. They will not respond to a general request to come on board and help the Society start and run a Youth Conference. They probably wouldn't have the time or the ability to create a Youth Conference that would be compatible to the mission of the Society.

Therefore, it is of utmost importance to have a Particular Council who will provide full support to the advisor and be willing to provide all available support from the area.

HOW DO WE FIND A YOUTH ADVISOR?

The best answer to this question is to look where the youth are. See who takes the time to talk to them, who keeps abreast of what the youth are doing. Who are the adults the youth seem to turn to when they need help? Who is available anytime the youth need sponsors, financial assistance, or is just there?

These people are generally the best candidates for the role of Youth Advisor. They should be the first people you approach to work with the youth. That person may be young or old, male or female and preferably a Vincentian (if they are not, then recruit them into the Society!). They must be persistent, patient and, most importantly, have a vision; a vision to help the youth see what they can accomplish.

Sources for a Youth Advisor include:

- Members of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul
- Educators, school staff and school volunteers
- School board members
- Development and Peace Coordinator
- College and university students
- Campus ministry participants
- Parish and/or school religious education personnel
- Diocesan/Parish Youth Ministry
- Parents



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QUALITIES OF A YOUTH ADVISOR

The role of the Advisor is to act as a mentor and guide the conference. Conference leadership comes under the responsibilities of elected president and executive.

Important attributes of the Advisor include:

- Good listener
- Problem solver
- Mediator
- High energy
- Flexible
- Love of youth
- Willing to understand differences
- Musical ability (an advantage, but not required)
- Be willing to participate in Vincentian training

APPROACHING A POTENTIAL YOUTH ADVISOR

Potential youth advisors are searching for ways to satisfy their own call to holiness. Call it what you will, but these people need to be “sold” on the merits of a Society of Saint Vincent de Paul Youth Conference. The Society is going to have a come across to candidates as worthy and capable of meeting their needs.

When approaching a potential youth advisor, you should be prepared to address these questions:

- What would attract them to “the call” to participate in a Vincentian Youth Conference?
- What kind of support could an Advisor and his/her Youth Conference expect from the Society?
- What does the Society expect of a Youth Conference?

The Youth Advisor Handbook will serve as a guide for the Advisor as he/she begins to build a Youth Conference.

WE’VE RECRUITED AN ADVISOR, NOW WHAT?

Congratulations, you found your youth advisor! This person must be screened under the National Screening Policy, which includes a police check, before they have any interaction with youth. They should also receive training with the National Education/Formation Modules as soon as possible.

On an ongoing basis, the youth advisor should continue to get support from the Council/Conference which solicited them for the position. Each Advisor will need guidance to help with their goal of establishing a Youth Conference and keeping it going. Reports from youth conferences should be provided on a regular basis.

**For more information or if you have questions, contact the National Youth Representative at
youth@ssvp.ca**