

Gulfsouth Youth Action Corp

Curriculum Manual

Summer, 2007

Created by

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Introduction to Curriculum Manual of Gulfsouth Youth Action Corp

By Lisa Albrecht

“Dear future GYAC counselors from an ‘06 counselor,

“This camp and the children who have been a part of it have truly made this summer my most memorable one yet. Although we didn’t have all the ideal materials because of the hurricane, the kids’ spirits were always full of energy and they always were flexible to the many changes that happened. The kids of gulfsouth have helped me to see that life is only as hard as you make it. They handled situations with optimism and they never focused on the negative.

“I arrived in New Orleans not quite sure what to expect. I had never been here before and I had never worked with or taught children of this age group. As I look back on my last six weeks, I’m flooded with snapshots of touching memories and moments of laughter. The kids may not have learned everything we had idealistically set out, but the lessons we did learn were invaluable. The campers were my instructors in many ways – from learning dance moves, to New Orleans lingo to showing me the meaning of resiliency, determination and love. I have never met so many strong, talented and creative children. We, as instructors, did not teach them anything they didn’t already know. Simply, we guided them to realize the knowledge, skills and talents they already hold inside.”

This curriculum manual offers teacher/counselors a variety of activities to use in working with GYAC campers. The youth you will be working with are creative, resilient, funny and bright. They are also survivors of the hurricane. Many have moved several times, and are still not settled. Many have lost homes and loved ones. Yet, they are still youth who, by their very nature, want to have fun and learn. Some will have come from schools that are overcrowded and under-funded and/or they have come from several different schools in other states. Many of our campers love school and learning. Some do not like school at all because they have not been afforded positive learning environments. Remember, we do not see any young people as “at risk;” however, we do see many young people coming from “at risk” school systems where teachers are overworked in overcrowded classes, and there’s not much access to quality materials. Our goal is to provide a positive learning experience for all our campers.

After reading all the training articles and going through our two week training, this manual will make more sense to you. We have tried to give you a variety of activities to use with your campers. There are chapters that have specific activities for each of our three themes: culture, media and environmental justice. There are also sections in this

manual that offer activities that are for: writing, art, icebreakers, and body movement/theatre.

Each activity has its own page in the manual. Though the activities are not complicated, we are leaving you space to take notes on what works and/or how you might revise the activity. This will help us in the future. The writing, art, icebreakers and body movement activities can be used again and again, based on your success using them. Keep track of what works best, and let us know if you've created any new activities. Use this manual to share your ideas with other teacher/counselors.

From a camper –

“My camp experience was extraordinary. I met a bunch of amazing people and learned a lot. I learned how to leave my quiet zone and become an outgoing person that had been hidden away for so long. This camp gave me an opportunity to tell my Katrina story, a pain that I would have otherwise harbored as one of my best kept secrets. All the counselors were great. You could tell they cared and had a heart for the job they were doing. “

From a parent –

“I would like to say thank you for a job well done. My son had a great time at your summer camp. He is already looking forward to coming back next year. I had to take time out to say having this camp was great for so many parents. Having somewhere for your child to be is a great part of making our lives a little easier. So thank you for a job well done, and for helping these kids have something else to do besides thinking about all they have lost. I know first hand, it's not easy looking at your home being lost. May God bless each of you in a special way.”

“Dear Future Gulfsouth counselor (written last summer by a counselor),

Congratulations on your participation in the program and thank you for coming to continue the work we started. If you're open and dedicated and willing to work hard and be challenged, you'll have a very valuable experience this summer.

The kids you'll be working with will test you to your limits, tire you out and sometimes frustrate you. They will also energize you, make you laugh and ultimately remind you everyday why you are here. I've learned the importance of establishing boundaries with the kids, and making them very aware of who should be in control. But this must be balanced with a willingness and hunger to learn what they have to teach you. The service you are here to do is fundamentally about relationships, and therefore, always two-way and always about growth and learning. Let yourself learn and you will serve. And don't forget to have fun!”

Gulfsouth Youth Action Corp is committed to: *youth leadership development*; *youth service connected to community development*, and; *social justice*.

To build these concepts, the curriculum is organized around three key learning themes: *culture*, *media* and *environmental justice*. Your role is to both facilitate and teach our youth. You will also learn a great deal from our campers. Gulfsouth Youth Action Corp is a hybrid – it's not simply a school, or simply a camp. It's a combination. We do not want our camp to look like a traditional school. No rows of desks with the teacher at the front of the room. That's why we are using circle as a teaching and learning pedagogy that will engage both you and your campers in a different kind of relationship. As past counselors have said, you do have to establish rules and boundaries. Not every camper will behave perfectly. You do have more power and authority than the campers and you have a responsibility to use your power thoughtfully. You will have to find the balance that most suits you and your co-T/C.

Why do we use “circle” and what is it? Circle is a small gathering of people who come together to share ideals, goals, visions, practices, stories and experiences. There is no singular teacher. You are facilitators and learners simultaneously, though of course, you are the teacher/counselors and you do have more power than the youth. Participants in circle create dialogue and exchange ideas, develop new ideas, learn from each other and design actions. Circle is a place where we ask ourselves: How do we learn about ourselves and each other? How are we similar and how are we different? What actions can we take to make our lives better, given the learning goals of GYAC?

You will work with another T/C as co-facilitators of a circle of approximately 15-20 GYAC youth. You and your partner will be together for the eight weeks with the same group of youth. We believe that it's important to build relationships, so that's why you stay with the same people for morning circle at camp. During the afternoons, you'll have opportunities to move around at your site and work with other T/Cs; campers will also have opportunities to move around during the afternoons, based on what we schedule. You will also practice circle with all the other T/Cs as part of training, and in regular debriefing at the end of each day. Lastly, you'll also meet on Sundays in circle to prepare for each new week of activities.

For each theme, we will be working with a community mentor. We have selected these three people because of their work in NOLA related to our three themes. They will work with you during training, and they will come your site to work with the campers. They will also determine service projects that the youth will complete as part of camp. Just as you are doing service this summer, we are asking our youth to serve their own communities. One of the central premises of GYAC is this notion of service. We draw on the activist communities of NOLA who say, “Solidarity, not charity.” We are not here to “help” someone who is “underprivileged.” We are here to participate in a joint venture to work with the people of New Orleans as they re-build and restore their communities.

Key Themes and the Social Context in NOLA

The notion of organizing camp around key themes draws on ideas initially developed in the Mississippi Freedom Schools during the Civil Rights Movement, where African Americans learned to read and write by studying history and social justice based on their own lived experiences. The way you present these themes is rooted in teaching principles that come out of critical pedagogy theories and the work of Paulo Freire. What's most important to remember? The best learning comes when we draw on our lived experiences. We all live our lives connected to various cultures. In fact, most of us live within and across multiple cultures. (See the concentric circles drawing that follows this introductory chapter.) However, not all cultures are equally valued in this society. Racism is real and so is poverty. In many schools in this country, the cultures and rules that are often most highly valued are white and middle and upper class. This is often unspoken by those in power – the teachers and administrators. Traditional K – 12 schools rarely, if ever, talk about power and privilege, nor do curricula address how to make real change in students' lives and in society.

We are also living in a time where there is more segregation in schools than there was when *Brown v. Board of Education* passed in 1954. Inner city schools are populated by poor youth and youth of color, while suburban schools and select urban magnets are dominated by white, and middle and upper class youth. The other major context that shapes students' lives is the No Child Left Behind Act. Teachers are forced to teach students to pass tests, not to learn. If scores are low in schools, funding is cut. Louisiana is one of the poorest states in the country. Prior to the hurricane, the New Orleans' school system was not in very good shape. It is even more difficult now. Not all schools have re-opened, and there are various entities that control different parts of the once whole NOLA school district.

Within the context of each of our three themes, we expect you to always keep in mind that we are developing youth leaders. The challenges of the 21st century, and particularly the challenges of the rebuilding and restoration of the Gulf South mean that we need to develop new leaders who serve their communities and constantly work for social justice.

Culture Theme

This all sets the stage for teaching and learning about culture first. The youth of GYAC live primarily within their own racialized communities. Most of the youth are African American or Vietnamese, depending on your site. There are also growing numbers of Latino/a youth. In NOLA, few are Native Americans, though there is a rich history of Native peoples living in and around NOLA.

The cultures of New Orleans are also connected to great music and food. That's what most of us think about when we think of NOLA. Food, music and Mardi Gras. We don't

often think of the rich histories of resistance and the struggles of people of color and poor people. Read the timeline from your training packet and read the articles about NOLA to get a sense of its diverse histories. For example, there is a long history of racism surrounding Mardi Gras practices; most of the organizations (crews) that run Mardi Gras have been exclusively white.

The concept of culture from a critical pedagogy viewpoint is complex. Culture is about the ways particular groups live and make sense of their “given” circumstances and life conditions (McLaren, 2003). “Given” is an important word, because when we look at the cultures of historically disenfranchised peoples, the conversation is often about power. Culture is made up of sets of practices, ideologies/worldviews and values from which different groups make sense of the world. If the group is marginalized, many of the group’s cultural practices are connected to who has power and privilege. Dominant culture (generally white, middle and upper class) affirms their own values, interests and concerns for the most part. They place value on owning “stuff,” and accumulating more wealth. Subordinate cultures or sub-cultures can affirm dominant values (“we want lots of stuff”) and/or reject dominant values (“we all need to share the planet’s resources”).

During the first two weeks of camp, your work with GYAC campers will focus on facilitating dialogue about culture. You’ll learn from campers what their home culture is, as well as their group identity culture. You’ll ask them to write and talk about themselves, and do interviews with each other and their families. You’ll help them think about oral history and story-telling, and how important these cultural forms are for the memory and survival of communities. Our Community Mentor, Carol Bebel, is from the Ashe’ Cultural Arts Center. She has several projects in mind that our campers can participate in beyond the daily activities of camp. Read all the articles in your training packet on NOLA so you can learn more about this amazing city, especially since Hurricane Katrina.

Media Theme

We will transition from culture to the theme of media, and media critique. The transition is logical, since culture is “represented” by the media all the time. For this theme, campers will look at how stories are told in various media formats, e.g. writing (newspaper and ‘zine); spoken word; theatre; art; film; photography and music. We will also learn how to critique mainstream media because of the many incorrect, misleading and stereotypical stories that they tell. Our Community Mentor for the media theme works with youth doing hip hop ‘zines, so there’s a good chance that our youth will create their own hip hop publication. The readings on media in your training packet come from the Center for Media Literacy and are excellent resources to help you facilitate conversations that critique media.

The key questions and concepts they present are: 1) who created the message?; 2) How did they get our attention?; 3) How might different people understand the message differently?; 4) What lifestyles, values and points of view are represented in the message (or omitted)?; and 5) Why was this message sent? As you can see, all these concepts are

deeply rooted in culture so our youth can take the leap from culture to media. During this theme, campers will dissect and analyze media, and then create their own pieces of media.

Environmental Justice Theme

Our last theme is centered around environmental justice, and the Earth Charter. You have a copy of it in your training manual. The Earth Charter is a declaration of fundamental principles for building a just, sustainable, and peaceful global society for the 21st century. It is a widely recognized, global consensus statement on ethics and values for a sustainable future. It has been formally endorsed by over 2,400 organizations, including global institutions such as UNESCO and the World Conservation Union (IUCN). We've chosen the Earth Charter as a frame for understanding our last theme, environmental justice. The Earth Charter has sixteen core principles that you can share with our youth. We've also included in the training packet another statement of principles by people of color about environmental justice. You will be able to draw on both documents to work with campers about contemporary local and regional environmental concerns.

Our community mentor for this theme does work around wetlands restoration in Louisiana. You will also engage in dialogue about toxic waste dumps and global warming. We've included readings in the training packet to give you some background on wetlands restoration.

During your eight weeks in camp, you will have access to Xavier University's library, and you will also be connected to the internet in the dorm where you will be living. Beyond the activities and information in this curriculum manual, I suspect you will want to research other ideas to enrich your teaching. If you need supplies that we have not provided, please contact Arianna Gilbert. She will do the best she can to give you the resources you need. New Orleans is still a city in crisis; we hope we will be able to serve you as best as we can. Though I will not be present during the eight weeks of camp, feel free to email me with any questions at lalbrech@umn.edu. I'll do the best I can to help. I am hoping to get down to NOLA briefly during camp to see all of you in action, and meet the youth.

Work hard, enjoy the challenge, be creative and have fun!

For justice,

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What are our overarching learning goals this summer?

1. We want GYAC youth to understand community service, and be able to be a part of a meaningful community project.
2. We want GYAC youth to become leaders in their communities by learning how to take positive actions for community change.
3. We want GYAC youth to understand the meanings of social justice, particularly in relation to their lives, histories and the communities in which they live.
4. We want GYAC youth to learn that social change happens when people work for it and become engaged citizens in their communities.
5. We want GYAC youth to learn to be introspective about their lives so that they discover their own strengths and learn to empower themselves.

What kinds of skills do we want GYAC youth to develop this summer?

1. We want GYAC youth to be able to tell their own stories, through speaking, performing, writing, song, art, photography, film, etc. – stories that are inspirational and about making a difference.
2. We want GYAC youth to learn to interview people in their communities to learn other people's stories, and to recognize the history and strengths of their own cultures.
3. We want GYAC youth to learn to assess the strengths of their communities, identify community needs, and develop strategies to make change.

4. We want GYAC youth to understand and participate in youth philanthropy/giving, including how to conceptualize their own service projects, and how to draft their own proposals.
5. We want GYAC youth to develop their leadership abilities.
6. We want GYAC youth to learn to critique media and to develop their own media projects.
7. We want GYCA youth to learn to respect the earth and learn about the environment that surrounds them so they can actively work to protect it.

WEEK ONE – June 11 – 15, 2007

Beginnings / Culture

Learning Goals:

1. to get to know each other.
2. to learn what circle is.
3. to create ground rules for circle for respectful behavior.
4. to learn what GYAC is and why it's different than other camps.
5. to learn about what it means to be a leader.
6. to learn about the importance of service to our communities (including the notion of youth philanthropy).
7. to introduce first theme – culture.

Screen film: *Children of New Orleans: Still Weathering the Storm*

Activity: Something Special About Me (Week 1/Activity 1)

Objectives:

1. To encourage campers to identify, share and appreciate positive qualities about themselves.
2. To encourage campers to get to know each other.

Materials: butcher block paper, magic markers, crayons, worksheet for activity

Implementation:

Tell campers that the purpose of this activity is to get to know each other and to see everyone's strengths and positive attributes.

Each camper gets one worksheet to fill out first. Read aloud each question and ask campers to suggest possible responses. Then, let campers work silently for a few minutes. Circulate and help them if they are stuck. Then ask campers to meet in a small group of about 4 or 5 and read what they wrote to each other. Ask them to see if they can add to their list. Then have students write their names in BIG letters on the butcher block paper and write their responses to their worksheet. (TCs – do this also and share w/ campers!)

Discussion:

Post on walls (or lay out on floor). Have everyone walk around and look at each poster. Questions to ask of whole group:

1. What are some special qualities you shared about yourself?
2. What's unusual that others appreciate in you?
3. Was it hard/ was it easy to find something special about yourself?
4. Why is it important to focus on positives?

Activity: Learning about Circle (Week 1/Activity 2)

Objectives:

1. to engage students in a discussion of circle and how it's different than school.
2. to create ground rules for respectful behavior in circle
3. to discuss why saying negative things about each other is not part of circle.

Materials: chairs (if no chairs, campers can sit on floor); butcher block paper & marker.

Implementation:

1. Ask campers to go into two groups. One TC in each group.
2. Question – How do you sit in classrooms in school? Have campers arrange chairs.
3. Question – What does the teacher do in school in that arrangement?
4. Both groups report back and show each other what they came up with.
5. Ask campers if they like school – why or why not?
6. Go into circle as a whole group.

Discussion:

What makes circle different than school classrooms?

Why do you think we do circle?

What ground rules can we make up so that circle is a place where we all feel positive?

Put ground rules up on butcher block paper after everyone agrees to them.

Have them up in circle all the time.

Possible Ground Rules

1. Take turns talking and never cut off anyone. (TCs can decide if you want to call on campers or if you want campers to call on each other, e.g. rotating chair.)

2. Never make fun of someone – it hurts. Be respectful.
3. Everyone should try to speak. Everyone's voice is important. If you talk a lot, try to listen more. If you are not talkative, try to speak!
4. Be positive towards everyone.
5. Yelling out isn't the best way to get attention.
6. If you disagree with what someone has said, discuss it – don't get angry.
7. When circle time is almost over, give each other positive feedback about what went well.

Activity: Community Service: To help & be helped – Community Assets & Community Needs (Week 1/Activity 3)

Objectives:

1. to learn that GYAC is different than other camps.
2. to learn what “help” means
3. to encourage campers to ask for help when needed, and give help when requested.
4. to learn about what it means to help as community service.
5. to introduce the concept of community assets.

Materials: butcher block paper, markers, worksheet on community needs and assets.

Implementation:

Have campers partner up and face each other. Taking turns...

1. When have you ever asked for help? Tell the story.
2. When have you ever helped someone? Tell the story.
3. Do neighborhoods/communities ever need help? How so?
4. How do you find out if a neighborhood or community needs help?
5. Do you have an example of when a neighborhood or community needed help?
6. Have you ever been involved in helping your neighborhood or community to be a better place? What did you do?
7. Explain the concept of community assets, and that you would like them to think about their own communities and what their strengths are. Use worksheet on next page.
8. After they have generated a list of their communities’ assets, ask them to generate a list of what their communities need to be stronger.

Return to circle and have partners share their stories.

Discussion:

When you think someone needs help...Ask. Never give help without permission.

When you need help--ask. Try to say exactly what you need. Don't ask someone to do something for you that you can do for yourself. Say thanks.

When a person asks you for help...Give it. If you can't, find someone else who can help. Never put someone down for asking for help.

Try to get across the concept of solidarity, not charity when talking about rebuilding and restoration of NOLA.

After the personal stories and a discussion of the concept of help, move the campers toward a discussion about community needs, using the worksheet on next page.

Link the concept of community assets/needs to a discussion of...this is how leaders in our communities figure out how to improve their communities. They are youth leaders and part of this camp is helping them to learn how to do service in their communities to rebuild and restore them. Link this conversation to the service projects that they will be doing with community mentors, and that we hope they will continue in their lives to do community service to assist in their communities' development.

What are our community's strengths? What do we already have? What do we need?

Community Assets	Community Needs

Activity: What is leadership? Who is a leader? What does it mean to be a community leader? (Week 1/Activity 4)

Objectives:

1. to identify key traits of leaders.
2. to help campers see themselves as leaders.
3. to discuss what leaders do.
4. to situate leadership in communities.

Materials: butcher block paper, markers, crayons, tape.

Implementation:

Start by brainstorming. Ask campers to come up with words that describe what a leader is. Make a list on butcher block paper of all the words.

Examples?

1. open minded
2. caring
3. competent
4. cooperative
5. courageous
6. dependable
7. fair
8. forward looking
9. honest
10. imaginative
11. independent
12. inspiring
13. intelligent
14. loyal
15. self-controlled
16. understanding

After you have created this list, put campers in small groups. Have each group take several examples and say more about each leadership trait. What

does it mean to be open minded? Or caring? Have them come up with a “leadership dictionary.” Post it on butcher block paper.

Discussion:

As you discuss leadership, keep bringing it back to leaders who work in communities. What does it mean to be a leader in your community, especially as a youth?

Activity: What is youth philanthropy? What does it mean to give to our community? (Week 1/Activity 5)

Objectives:

5. to define the concept of philanthropy
6. to define giving as a community project

Materials: butcher block paper, markers, notebooks.

Implementation:

You can start by defining philanthropy as a desire to help and promote the welfare of humanity as shown by gift giving to humanitarian institutions.

Of course, this is a complex concept. You can also ask campers to define what it means to “give,” and why people give gifts. Go beyond giving for birthdays and graduations. Move to a discussion of gift giving to strengthen institutions and ions to schools or religious institutions or organizations that work in communities.

It’s also important to convey something about the role of government and the social contract. Examples? Our government has social security, disability insurance, welfare. These are examples of how our government has stated it has a responsibility to help its people. However, in recent history, our government has backed away from this notion of a social contract. We are being told we have to pull ourselves up by our bootstraps. Welfare for people in need is viewed negatively, while welfare to corporations in the form of tax breaks is viewed positively. You can also explain that programs like GYAC are possible because institutions fund them.

Discussion:

Philanthropy, or giving, has become an essential part of community life. GYAC wants our youth leaders to develop an understanding of giving as part of leadership. We are in the process of building a larger program that will involve a Youth Leadership Council that gives out grants to other youth

who want to do community projects. We are in the beginning stages of developing this work. During camp, we will present several possibilities for campers to begin thinking about giving on a small scale. We will be introducing the idea of a youth grant-giving body that will work during the forthcoming school year to encourage youth service projects in various neighborhoods. We would like T/Cs to remind our campers during the summer that GYAC will form a Youth Leadership Council and that we hope that some of our campers will be interested in becoming members.

Activity: Personal Cultural History Exercise (Week 1/Activity 6)

Objectives:

7. to encourage campers to think about their race and their gender.
8. to encourage campers to see similarities and differences of people in the room.
9. to begin to get campers to “see” their cultural histories.
10. to begin to get campers to “see” privilege & power.

Materials: butcher block paper, markers, crayons, tape.

Implementation:

Ask these questions to campers. Tell them not to use words, but to draw images.

1. What is your race? What is your gender?
2. What is your earliest memory of someone being excluded based on race and/or gender?
3. What is your earliest memory of you being different or excluded based on your race or gender?
4. What is your earliest memory of feeling happy about who you are?

After campers are finished drawing, have them tape up their images and have everyone walk around and look. You can also just do race for this activity. Or do race first, and then gender.

Discussion:

1. What similarities do you notice? What differences?
2. What are some of the forces that shape people’s experiences? Family? Community? Society?
3. If anyone was not treated fairly, how did it affect their lives? If anyone was treated with great privilege, how did it affect lives?
4. Do some people have more power than other people? Why?

Try to get at the differences between individual/family AND community AND social/institutional forces.

WEEK TWO – June 18 – 22, 2007 –

Culture

Learning Goals:

1. to learn that people create our own cultures.
2. to show youth that they have their own cultures.
3. to learn how to do an interview and write it up.
4. to practice interviewing & learn about oral history.
5. to begin to produce 2 short pieces of writing that describe someone from camp and someone in your family or community.

Activity: Culture – who we are and what we create (Week Two/Activity 1)

Objectives:

1. to identify how we all create culture
2. to discuss meanings of culture in home & family
3. to discuss meanings of culture as part of group identity
4. to learn how to interview each other

Materials: notebooks, paper, pencils, pens

Implementation:

1. Have campers work in groups of 3 or 4.
2. Have them ask each other questions from the Home/Family list that goes with this activity.
3. Have them take notes when they are “interviewing” each other.
4. After about 1 hour, have campers report back to circle.

Discussion:

Talk with campers about what it was like to listen to each other and ask each other questions. Discuss how what they are doing is recording their own cultures. Encourage them to think of these interviews as portraits of people they know. Capture dialogue, and place where interview happens. Tell them you want them to interview someone at home and report back tomorrow.

HOME/FAMILY

What does your family look like? Who makes decisions? What roles do your family members play?

How do you spend your “free” time? Does your family have free time? What does it do?

Are you religious?

Do you read? Watch TV? Go to movies? Play video games? Listen to music?

If you do well, how are you rewarded? If you don't, are you punished?

What language(s) do you speak?

What do you like to eat? When you eat, whom do you eat with? Any rules? Or ways of eating?

Is the clock and time important to you?

If you care about someone, how do you show it?

If you disagree with someone, how do you handle it?

GROUP IDENTITY

Are you a member of a group? By gender? By race? By age? What else?

What do you have in common in each group? How important is this group to you?

What do you talk about? Do you talk a certain way?

Do you dress a certain way?

What activities do you share in your group?

What spaces do you live in, do things in?

Activity: New Orleans Cultures (Week Two/Activity 2)

Objectives:

5. to describe culture(s) in New Orleans
6. to tell a story about New Orleans culture
7. to link New Orleans culture to campers' own stories

Materials: notebooks, pens, pencils, butcher block paper (possibly tape recorders and cameras), film about New Orleans

Implementation:

1. Have campers generate a list of things they love about New Orleans – be specific! (e.g. food – what kind of food?)
2. Campers can also name people & things from their neighborhood that they love.
3. After generating lists, have campers try to “create” their story – write, artwork, scene, etc. about what they love about NOLA.
4. Link New Orleans' stories to their personal stories.

Discussion:

The goal here is to try to get campers to see how their personal stories are connected to New Orleans culture. It might take two days for writing up personal stories, but you can split time between this activity about New Orleans cultures, and campers' own stories.

Activity: Interviewing People (Week Two/Activity 3)

Objectives:

8. to teach youth how to write questions for interviews
9. to discuss oral history as a way to remember people's lives (handout – “Before the Storm: oral histories from New Orleans.” Read some of these stories aloud to the youth.)
10. to link New Orleans culture with people's stories

Materials: notebooks, pens, pencils. (possibly tape recorders and cameras),

Implementation:

Draw on Home/Family questions & group identity questions to help campers frame a set of questions for an interview of someone outside of camp as well as someone in camp. Who do they want to interview? Why? What would they want to learn? (Suggest interviewing an elder, rather than their best friend.)

Also, use the Worksheet that goes with this activity. Read the oral histories from the handout as well.

Discussion:

These two interviews (interview someone at camp, and then someone in community or family) will be short “projects” done individually by campers. They can create a small booklet and write the stories. They can also do some kind of a larger visual presentation with words. Hopefully, we'll be able to take pictures of people being interviewed and/or campers can bring in pictures if they might have at home. They can also draw a picture of the person. (Remember, lots of people lost all their family pictures.)

WEEK THREE – June 25 - 29, 2007 –**From Culture to Media**Learning Goals:

1. to finish up culture projects
2. to link culture to how media portrays culture
3. to discuss various forms of media
4. to learn to critique media
5. to discuss violence in media, and in local communities
6. to discuss a media project to complete

Activity: Key Questions/Core Concepts of Media (Week3/Activity 1)

Objectives:

1. to have campers identify all different kinds of media.
2. to discuss core concepts & key questions to inform media discussion and analysis.
3. to explore the three ways that media is used: to inform, to persuade, to entertain.

Materials: old magazines, newspapers, TV (taped commercials?), film clips.

Implementation:

Refer to the Center for Media Literacy materials in your Training packets. After discussing various forms of media, begin to get at the core concepts & key questions. Pick examples to help youth understand concepts. For example, discuss how the Gulfsouth film from last summer (Children of New Orleans: Still Weathering the Storm) is about – informing and persuading an audience.

Other ways to get at this? Pick a common commercial & break up campers into small groups. Have each group portray a different age group: preschoolers; elementary school kids; high school, college, young, middle and elder adults. How would they “sell” their product? Diet Coke, MacDonalds, or have youth pick a commercial.

Discussion:

Try to get at how people persuade others & give examples:

1. humor – funny images (e.g. cartoons)
2. macho – strong, tough usually males – can be violent, dangerous.

3. feminine – thin, objects of desire, not always smart, cleaning in bathroom and cooking in kitchen.
4. friends – groups of people doing things together. Friends enjoying themselves.
5. fun – people smiling, laughing
6. nature – outdoor settings, often without lots of people.
7. sexy – often female, revealing clothes, flirting.
8. celebrity – someone famous loving a product
9. wealth – fancy clothes, big house, beautiful car, jewelry.

Key Questions:

Who made it?

What techniques caught my attention?

How do I understand it? How can someone else understand it differently?

What lifestyle, point of view, values are represented? What's omitted?

Why was it created?

Activity: Media & Violence (Week 3/Activity 2)

Objectives:

1. to define violence
2. to address excessive violence in various forms of media.
3. to talk about how media violence can often slip into real life.
4. to discuss violence in our own communities locally.

Materials: Don't bring in images of violence – seems unnecessary. Just discuss.

Implementation:

Ask campers to define violence first. Have them write. Possible questions:

Is hitting someone violence?

If a parent hits a child, is that violence?

Is calling someone an insulting name violence?

In a movie, is watching someone get shot violence?

In the news on TV, if someone is killed and they show a body on the ground covered with a blanket, is that violence?

Is thinking about killing someone violence?

Is a car crash shown on TV or in a movie violence?

Is showing war and battle scenes in news or movies violence?

If a cartoon character is hit by a boulder, is that violence?

Is showing news coverage of hurricane disasters violence?

What kinds of violence happen in our local communities? Why? What can we do?

Discussion:

This is an important conversation. Do campers distinguish between different degrees or kinds of violence? Why? Do they think that watching violence on TV or in the movies can lead to real violence?

We are talking about media, but we are also talking about real violence that occurs in local communities. After campers have responded to how they define violence, move to a discussion of the kinds of violence that happens

in their communities. Have them talk about how they feel about the violence. It's not necessary to go into gory details, but to move campers to discuss how they feel. Next, move to a discussion of why there is violence, and what we can do about it.

Once you get to that discussion, identify these three parts of the violence puzzle:

1. the victim
2. the victimizer
3. the bystander

It's not always this simple, but what we want to get at is the role of the bystander. We are often bystanders, watching violence. What can bystanders do? Try some role playing. Generate some ideas with the youth about what to do if they are bystanders. Also, generate some ideas with the youth about what alternatives they may have if they are either victim or victimizer.

Activity: Media & Consumerism (Week 3/Activity 3)

Objectives:

5. to continue to do media analysis/critique, with focus on advertising.
6. to discuss target audiences & consumerism
7. to critique consumerism

Materials: newspapers, magazines, film clips/video depending on access. Also butcher block paper, markers, etc.

Implementation:

The goals of this class are to discuss people's needs to have so much "stuff." Companies hire advertising agencies to sell their goods. What is the culture of consumerism? Why are we all so hooked to want to buy so much unnecessary stuff? This can also be connected to our 3rd theme on environmental justice. We are persuaded to buy BIG cars and BIG everything. Most of these products are not good for our environment, yet advertisers convince us that we need them.

Ask campers to make a list of some of their favorite commercials. What are the products being sold? Do our campers want to buy these products? Why? Put students into small groups. Ask them to create several lists:

1. What are your basic needs in your family? What do you need to have? Make a list.
2. What things do you have beyond your basic needs? What do you have that is NOT essential?
3. What commercials hook you the most? What "stuff" do you want that you can't have?

Discussion:

Post all the lists around the room. Pull from each list to make three summary lists. Basic needs. Stuff that many of the youth have beyond basic needs. Stuff that many of the campers dream of having.

Discuss how media manipulates us to want to have expensive stuff that we don't really need.

See if you can connect the conversation to what society really needs to flourish. Connect to service. What if advertising was about “selling” how to make our communities better? Remember, campers are thinking about creating a media project – possibly doing a commercial. See if you can get them interested in creating public service-type commercials (like the film from GYAC from last summer). Again, this is a small project, but see if they want to do something fun that is both a critique of consumerism and something about positive social change. Lastly, see if you can connect to the environment to plant seeds for our third theme.

WEEK FOUR – July 2 - 6, 2007 –

Media and Media Analysis

Learning Goals:

1. to continue conversations on media critique (violence, target audiences, etc.)
2. to create a media project in small groups – newspaper, spoken word, art, rap/freestyle, puppet or a mix of various media forms.
3. to learn to outline all the parts of the process of creating a (mixed) media project.
4. to learn to work collaboratively on media project.

Activity: Creating Media (Week 4/Activity 1)

Objectives:

8. to have campers decide on a media project.
9. to have campers decide on purpose of project (Inform? Persuade? Entertain?)
10. to have students start to script and/or storyboard their project.

Materials: notebooks, butcher block paper, markers, etc.

Implementation:

This small media project will take time to do. If campers are writing a newspaper article, they might need to interview someone. If they are going to do a news story for TV, they will have to script it and possibly interview or do research. If they want to do a commercial, hopefully we'll be able to video them. They will need to script the commercial and do a simple storyboard – do a sequence of drawings to show how the commercial will happen.

Discussion:

Break up campers into small groups and T/Cs can work with different groups.

Activity: Puppet (or mask?) Making & Media (Week 4/Activity 2)

Objectives:

11. to learn to make puppets or masks (for a purpose!)
12. to mix both writing and art making skills.

Materials: see Training packet article in Media Readings on supplies for puppet making.

Implementation:

Follow all the guidelines for how to make a puppet. This will obviously take more than one session. Use this as an activity for campers who want to do this kind of art making. If they are interested, they would create a script and invent character puppets. This needs to have a focus on media. It's another way to be creative and critique media, as well as a way for campers to do both writing and artwork.

If mask making supplies are available, campers can do masks to create characters for any kind of a skit.

Discussion:

This can be a group project for part of your circle group. To do this with your entire circle would be much more difficult to coordinate. You could have several small groups working simultaneously. If mask making supplies are available, you can have different media groups working separately also.

WEEK FIVE – July 9 - 12 , 2007 –

From Media to Environmental Justice

Learning Goals:

1. to finish up media project
2. to discuss the Earth Charter & its meaning
3. to discuss the importance of the environment & what environmental justice is about.
4. to begin to discuss: global warming, toxic waste and wetland destruction.

Activity: The Earth Charter – What is it? (Week 5/Activity 1)

Objectives:

1. to understand the meanings of the Earth Charter.
2. to discuss why the Earth Charter is important.
3. to discuss why the environment is important to talk about.

Materials: have copies of the Earth Charter, or else make a large copy to post on the wall. Butcher block paper, markers, etc.

Implementation:

Start with the Environmental Justice Handout on the next page. Read each statement aloud and ask campers to respond. After reading the list, discuss that all these statements are about our environment. Then move to the Earth Charter. Explain its history simply.

Late 1980's – The U.N. formed a commission to look at sustainable development, because of the concerns of many peoples around the world that our Earth might be at risk. (Link to campers' own communities.)

1992 – 1997 – various Charter Commissions made up of leaders from around the world created the document.

2000 – Earth Charter launched in Holland.

Many governments and over 2500 global organizations have endorsed it.

Discussion:

The Earth Charter has 16 principles, broken into 4 key areas:

1. Respect & care for the community of life
2. Ecological Integrity
3. Social and Economic Justice
4. Democracy, Nonviolence and Peace

Ask campers if they think these 4 key areas are important in their lives, and in the lives of the people in their communities. Create 4 groups – each

group takes one of the key areas and makes a list of how the principles in that list are related to their lives. Have each group discuss what the principles mean as well. Help with words that campers aren't familiar with.

Have them begin to create a list of specific ways the principles might be important for them to consider.

You can also refer to the Environmental Justice Principles from the 1st National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit in 1991 in the Training Packet.

Environmental Justice Handout (Week 5/Activity 1)

1. There is a gas station in your neighborhood.
2. You live near a freeway.
3. It is easier to get canned food near your house than fresh vegetables and fruit.
4. Your school has grass and trees on its property.
5. There are abandoned buildings/lot by your house.
6. There are factories near your house.
7. There is pollution in your community.
8. There are enough clean and safe parks near your house.
9. There is a factory that lets out smoke, steam or flames in your neighborhood.
10. Someone in your family has or had cancer.
11. The air near your home, school or work makes you cough.
12. Someone in your family has asthma.
13. You smell strange odors near your home or school.
14. You are told not to drink tap water from your home or school, or the water at home or school tastes funny or smells funny.
15. Your eyes have itched, watered or burned due to the pollution in your neighborhood.
16. Someone in your family works at a place where they have to wear protective gear in order to do their jobs.

The environment is not just the woods or rural areas, it's about: the food we have access to; what we are breathing all day; what resources are in our community; what health hazards are caused by environmental conditions including some kinds of cancer that can be caused by toxins; asthma which is often caused by chemicals that we breathe in; everyday things that we don't realize are hazardous to our health, like freeways and gas stations.

Save camper responses to this exercise. You'll come back to it later during this theme.

Activity: Local (and Global) Trends – Big Picture (Week 5/Activity 2)

Objectives:

1. to identify common local (and global) trends related to environment.
2. to connect these larger trends to campers' lives at home.
3. to reflect on the meanings of all these trends.

Materials: butcher block paper (for list making if needed), notebooks, pens.

Implementation:

Below is a list of 7 trends related to the environmental abuse that people (and corporations & governments) are responsible for:

- a. population explosion
- b. diminishing land resources
- c. diminishing water resources
- d. atmosphere destruction
- e. energy crisis
- f. social decline
- g. conflicts and more killing

Common features?

- a. Faster deterioration of our environment (physically and socially).
- b. Reaching our limits – too much suffering; too much damage to our planet.
- c. Earth's history is long, but this has happened fast (past 200 years).
- d. Within 50 years, dramatic changes & possible collapse of life systems on Earth.

Discussion:

Obviously, these are huge ideas. Our youth will be dramatically effected in their lifetimes. How can they connect to all these trends? Have campers respond – do art, do skits, do writing. Have them share with each other. Again, have them relate these trends to their everyday lives and the lives of people in their communities.

Activity: Global Warming (Week 5/Activity 3)

Objectives:

4. to define global warming
5. to identify how global warming effects all of us.

Materials: video – *An Inconvenient Truth* if possible.

Implementation:

Show film and then go into small groups. Have groups explain what global warming is. If you can't get the film, you've got to explain global warming:

Sun's light hits the Earth and warms it up.

Some of the light waves (infrared radiation) bounce off the Earth and go back into space.

Much of the light gets trapped in our lower atmosphere, which is good, since it heats us up.

Recently, too many light rays/ too much infrared radiation is getting trapped in our atmosphere because of too much human-caused carbon dioxide. The carbon dioxide and other gases, called greenhouse gases won't let enough light rays bounce back into space. Greenhouse gases trap carbon dioxide.

As a result, the excess light rays make for higher temperatures on Earth & makes snow/ice melt faster at the North/South poles.

Greenhouse gases are natural, but have increased dramatically because of human overuse. We have too much methane – coming from landfills, too much livestock farming, (which over produces manure which is turned into liquid and has too much methane in it), too many waste treatment plants, overuse of coal.

After discussing the impact of global warming, have campers begin to discuss ways that global warming affects them. Create lists, work in groups.

Have campers think about what they will lose if temperatures keep going up and we don't stop global warming.

Discussion:

You can talk about climate change when you define global warming. Of course, for New Orleans youth, that means talking about the change in ocean temperatures and how that brings more deadly hurricanes. You can also talk about how at the North and South Poles, too much snow is melting and that increases the size of our oceans, which can eventually flood coastal communities. You can also discuss the effects of higher temperatures on Earth and how that affects inland bodies of water, farming, animal and plant species.

WEEK SIX – July 16 - 20 , 2007 –**Environmental Justice**Learning Goals:

1. to define & discuss toxic waste & waste dumps & their impact, & to discuss recycling.
2. to define and discuss wetlands and wetlands restoration & their importance.
3. to figure out our Ecological Footprints.
4. to connect back to Earth Charter
5. to design a small project.

Activity: What is Toxic Waste and why does it matter?
(Week 6/Activity 1)

Objectives:

1. to understand what toxic waste is & why it is dangerous.
2. to look at toxic waste in our communities & how industries create and dump toxic waste.
3. to look at toxic waste that we generate at home, and learn about recycling.

Materials: Environmental Justice Handout from last week, butcher block paper.

Implementation:

Ask campers if they know what toxic/hazardous waste is. Refer to information on the following pages.

Have campers go into groups with their handout from last week (Week 5/Activity 1). Have them generate one list of the toxic/hazardous wastes that they have at home. Have them generate another list of community/industry waste in NOLA. Bring groups together to generate two master lists from each category.

Also, discuss what recycling is and why it is important.

Discussion:

Go back to Earth Charter once again to talk about toxic wastes today, and what we envision for the future. Start a conversation about how we can personally change what we generate as toxic/hazardous waste. Begin conversation about how to think about industrial waste, and how to be personally responsible about recycling.

**Activity: What are Wetlands & Wetlands Restoration
(Week 6/Activity 2)**

Objectives:

1. to define wetlands and why they are important.
2. to explain wetland restoration and why it's important.
3. to connect wetland issues to campers' own communities.
4. to define Louisiana bayous in relation to wetlands

Materials: maps and images from the web about Louisiana's wetlands.
Community Mentor will provide materials.

Implementation:

Discussion here will be dependent on what our Community Mentor provides. At best, it's important to talk about wetlands locally in relation to Hurricane Katrina and climate change/global warming.

Discussion:

There will have been a field trip earlier in camp to a bayou. Build on information you learned there.

Activity: What's your Ecological Footprint? What Can We Do?
(Week 6/Activity 3)

Objectives:

1. to look at what each of us can do to change the environment personally, e.g. recycling & to learn what is in place in NOLA.
2. to discuss with your family & friends how to make changes.
3. to explain simply the concept of the ecological footprint.

Materials: Ecological Footprint handout. Computer access to actually enter data and find out what your footprint is – <http://www.myfootprint.org>.

Implementation:

Start to work on this questionnaire in camp. Ask campers to take it home and sit down with family members to discuss it and answer questions.

Discussion:

Talk about choices that individuals can make that can change the environment. Discuss how we need more than individual change but that this is a beginning. Discuss how our government needs to make structural changes. See if you can get campers to commit to make several changes. It's also important to note that some of these changes are expensive to make, and not all campers' families are in the position to make these changes. Ask what options might be realistically possible or what might need to happen to allow people to make some of these changes.

Ecological Footprint (ecofoot.org) Use with Activity 3 on previous page.

Ever wondered how much "nature" your lifestyle requires? You're about to find out.

This Ecological Footprint Quiz estimates how much productive land and water you need to support what you use and what you discard. After answering 15 easy questions you'll be able to compare your Ecological Footprint to what other people use and to what is available on this planet.

CAUTION: THIS QUIZ MAY SURPRISE YOU, SHOCK YOU, OR MAKE YOU THINK. PLEASE REMAIN CALM...BUT NOT TOO CALM!!

How old are you?

How big is the city, town, or place where you live?

What city has the most similar weather to yours?

Choose one city from the list.

Food Footprint

1. How often do you eat animal based products? (beef, pork, chicken, fish, eggs, dairy products)

Never (vegan)

Infrequently (no meat, and eggs/dairy a few times a week) (strict vegetarian)

Occasionally (no meat or occasional meat, but eggs/dairy almost daily)

Often (meat once or twice a week)

Very often (meat daily)

Almost always (meat and eggs/dairy in almost every meal)

2. How much of the food that you eat is processed, packaged and not locally grown (from more than 200 miles away)?

Most of the food I eat is processed, packaged, and from far away

Three quarters

Half

One quarter

Very little. Most of the food I eat is unprocessed, unpackaged and locally grown.

Goods Footprint

3. Compared to people in your neighborhood, how much waste do you generate?
- Much less
 - About the same
 - Much more

Shelter Footprint

4. How many people live in your household?
- 1 person
 - 2 people
 - 3 people
 - 4 people
 - 5 people
 - 6 people
 - 7 or more people
5. What is the size of your home?
- 2500 square feet or larger
 - 1900-2500 square feet
 - 1500-1900 square feet
 - 1000 -1500 square feet
 - 500-1000 square feet
 - 500 square feet or smaller
6. Which housing type best describes your home?
- Free standing house without running water
 - Free standing house with running water
 - Multi-story apartment building
 - Row house or building with 2-4 housing units
 - Green-design residence
7. Do you have electricity in your home?
- No
 - Yes
 - Yes, with energy conservation and efficiency

Mobility Footprint

8. On average, how far do you travel on public transportation each week (bus, train, subway or ferry) ?

200 miles or more

75-200 miles

25-75 miles

1-25 miles

0 miles

9. On average, how far do you go by motorbike each week (as a driver or passenger)?

200 miles or more

75-200 miles

25-75 miles

1-25 miles

0 miles

10. On average, how far do you go by car each week (as a driver or passenger)?

400 miles or more

300-400 miles

200-300 miles

100-200 miles

10-100 miles

0 miles

11. Do you bicycle, walk, or use animal power to get around?

Most of the time

Sometimes

Seldom

12. Approximately how many hours do you spend flying each year?

100 hours

25 hours

10 hours

3 hours

13. How many miles per gallon does your car get? (If you do not own a car, estimate the average fuel efficiency of the cars you ride in.)

- More than 50 miles per gallon
 - 35-50 miles per gallon
 - 25-35 miles per gallon
 - 15-25 miles per gallon
 - Fewer than 15 miles per gallon
14. How often do you drive in a car with someone else, rather than alone?
- Almost never
 - Occasionally (about 25%)
 - Often (about 50%)
 - Very often (about 75%)
 - Almost always

WEEKS SEVEN & EIGHT –
July 23-27 & July 31-Aug. 3, 2007

**Community Service & Community Development, Social
Change Organizing, Reflection, Celebration, Closings**

Learning Goals:

1. to complete a small environmental justice project if possible.
2. to work on community service learning projects.
3. to learn about organizing & activist skills.
4. to reconnect with youth philanthropy & learn about proposal writing.
5. to reflect on service projects.
6. to celebrate and showcase service projects.
7. to consider how to incorporate service into future work.
8. to reflect on entire GYAC experience.

**Activity: Organizing for Social Justice: Two Scenarios
(Week 7/Activity 1)**

Objectives:

1. to learn how to solve community problems.
2. to learn about activism and social justice organizing.

Materials: *Raining Rocks* story & *What's Up with School* story (next pages), and Strategy Chart.

Implementation:

Do both scenarios.

For *Raining Rocks* - Make 3 groups: Villagers who want to go up the mountain; villagers who want to keep up the rescue effort, and; Mr. Richie and his friends.

For *What's Up with School* – Make groups: Raising money group and confronting school superintendent group. If anyone wants to form another group with a different strategy, go for it.

Figure out your strategy to deal with the falling rocks problem and school problem. Can it work? Why or why not?

Let groups meet for 15- 30 minutes. Then have each group report on their collective decision. Let them act out their choices.

Discussion:

De-brief each scenario. Discuss with the youth how each story is about different ways that people can organize to work for justice. Ask them to think about which ways they would want to work for social justice. Show them Strategy Chart.

Raining Rocks (Week 7/Activity 1)

Once upon a time there was a little town in the mountains called Hillville. One winter, a villager taking a walk in the hills finds a man lying in the snow – he has been hit by a falling rock. The villager, being a very caring person, uses her jacket to bandage the injured man and carries him back to the village.

The next day two more people are hit by falling rocks and they are rescued by other villagers. The next day, four people are hurt, then eight, then twenty. Life becomes dangerous for all villagers, because rocks are being thrown by a millionaire, Mr. Richie and his friends, who hope to build a luxurious hotel and golf course in Hillville. They are throwing rocks hoping to get rid of the villagers so they can take over the land.

The Red Cross shows up in town. They set up a huge rescue operation. They set up a clinic to heal the injured, send dogs to find injured people who are lost outside, a shelter for those whose homes are destroyed, and social workers to help people deal with the traumatic effects of the falling rocks. Finally, the Red Cross makes a giant net to place over Hillville to stop the rocks from falling.

One day, the net breaks and rocks fall on the village, injuring hundreds and destroying homes, schools and stores. The Red Cross is working furiously to heal and provide shelter. From then on, rescue work becomes an important part of the villagers' lives. Everyone becomes involved in helping those hurt by the falling rocks.

Three months later, at a town meeting, a group of villagers get together to make a proposal. They are sick and tired of the falling rocks, of their people being hurt, and they want to change the situation. They propose that the villagers unite and go up the mountain to demand that Mr. Richie stop dropping the rocks.

The mayor and other politicians disagree, saying Hillville needs everyone to stay in town and keep the rescue effort going. If anyone leaves, they might not be able to continue tending to those injured by rocks. The town is split into two groups – those who want to stay and keep up the rescue effort going, and those who want to march up the mountain and confront Mr. Richie.

from School of Unity and Liberation (SOUL). 2007. *Building Power, Sharpening Minds!: The Political Education Workshop Manual, 2nd edition – School of Unity and Liberation*. Oakland: SOUL.

Strategy Chart (Week 7/Activity 1 – worksheet)

What are we trying to change in our community?

Goals	Who's on our side?	Who are we trying to change?	How are we going to do this?

Activity: Organizing for Social Justice: Your ideas?
(Week 7/Activity 2)

Objectives:

3. to learn how to solve community problems.
4. to learn about activism and social justice.
5. to have campers generate their own issues for organizing.

Materials: Strategy Chart, Finding an Issue Chart, Direct Action Organizing Chart, Understanding how to make change in our communities chart, butcher block paper, markers.

Implementation:

Start with Finding an Issue Chart. Have small groups list issues they want to work on. Re-group after 15 minutes to discuss issues and see if you can collapse different groups' issues into a shorter list.

Then, discuss Direct Action Organizing Chart. Have campers go into groups for the top 3 issues and use Strategy Chart and Direct Organizing Chart to try to figure out how to take on the issue to make change.

Discussion:

This activity can be based on their service learning projects in the community if it connects to making change. If service projects don't link easily, as campers if they want to work on social change after GYAC and how they want to think about that and do.

Understanding how to make change in our communities

ISSUE/PROBLEM: (Carefully define the problem. Whom does it most affect?)

VISION: How do you want the world to really be? What would your community look like if you didn't have this problem?

SERVICES TO PROVIDE: (Can there be some band-aid help that will make it a little easier, but not fix the problem.)

EDUCATION NEEDED: (What do you learn to know to make a change? What information do you need to research?)

ADVOCACY: (How do you want to make change? Go to see elected official? Elect someone new? Do direct action and protest? Write letters to the newspaper? Organize a large political meeting?)

ELECTORAL EFFORT: (Are there ways to get support from your elected officials? Do you want to support someone who is running for office?)

ORGANIZING EFFORT: (Who is your target? Not the "government," but specific people. How will you publicize what you are doing – how will you get press coverage? How will you get more people on your side to stand with you?)

Direct Action Organizing

Method	Examples
Direct service	Affordable housing, soup kitchen, shelter for homeless people, tutoring after school programs.
Education	Teach people to look for housing. Teach people how to shop for affordable food.
Self-help	Neighborhood clean-up day. Baby-sitting cooperative.
Advocacy	Propose new laws on behalf of people who might not know how to do that.
Direct action	People who have the problem take action to solve it. Make the city clean up. Make workplaces provide childcare.

Finding An Issue

What's an important issue?	Will it improve people's lives? How?	Will it make people feel powerful?	Is it easy for people to understand?	Do you have a clear target to go after?	Will the change be long term?

Activity: Youth Philanthropy & Writing a Proposal (Week 7/Activity 3)

Objectives:

6. to learn how to write a proposal for a youth service project
7. to think about working on a Youth Funding Council during the school year.
8. to explain how projects have to raise money to do their work.

Materials: notebooks, blank lined paper, butcher block paper, markers.

Implementation:

Use the worksheet on the next page as a template for writing a proposal. Explain that GYAC might form a Youth Funding Council. Campers will work during the school year to help fund other service projects proposed by other youth in the city. When people try to get projects funded, they have to write a proposal to give to the body that will fund it.

Discussion:

GYAC & Operation Reach really want to pursue the idea of youth philanthropy. This is a good activity to explain the process. You can also explain how GYAC has to raise money to fund the camp, so they can get an idea about how projects happen and how people work to get funding.

Pieces that Go into a Proposal

Preparation? How will your community's needs be evaluated?	
Action? What are you going to do?	
Reflection? How will you reflect on your experiences? (essays, journal writing)	
Celebration? Who will be recognized for the work? How will you do this?	
Youth voices? What will be the role of youth in making this project happen?	
Need? Will this project meet a real need in your community? How do you know that?	
Learning? How will this project be connected to learning for you?	
Partnerships? Will you be working with other people or organizations in your community?	

**Activity: Final Reflections on GYAC Camp & Next Steps
(Week 7/Activity 4)**

Objectives:

9. to reflect on entire GYAC experiences.
10. to think about future actions.

Materials: notebooks, blank lined paper, butcher block paper, markers.

Implementation:

Either work as whole circle or go into groups to generate lists:

1. Favorite activities? Why?
2. What did you learn that was new for you?
3. What can we do better next year?
4. What would you say to someone who wants to come to camp next summer? (You can write a letter to future campers.)

Have campers write final reflections as well as a letter to a future camper about what camp was like.

Discussion:

Share reflections and letters. Collect them.

Various Activities to Use Across Themes

Ice-Breakers

Art/Visual

Writing

Body Movement/Theatre

Book Club

Icebreaker Activities: (great for starting circle)

1. Everyone stands facing each other in the circle. Point to someone who starts. He or She makes a loud sound and gesture at the same time. Everyone mirrors it back to the person. Keep going around the circle.
2. Everyone stands in a circle facing each other. You start – you are holding a bolt of lightning. You get someone's attention in the circle and send the bolt to them and say, Zip. Then that person gets someone else's attention and sends the bolt saying, Zap. Then the next person....says Zop. Keep going. Don't rush or speed up. Maintain eye contact. Never drop the bolt of lightning. Purpose is to focus and work collectively.
3. Everyone sits in a circle and closes their eyes. When you tap them on the shoulder, they make a sound and keep repeating it softly. Everyone has to come up with another sound. Eyes stay closed. Once everyone is making sounds simultaneously, start reversing it. Two taps means stop saying your sound. Tell campers that one tap is to start a sound and repeat it softly. Two taps is to stop the sound. Eyes always closed.
4. Everyone faces each other in circle. You start with a movement and sound simultaneously. Next person repeats your sound/movement and then does their own. Next person repeats both people before them and adds their own sound/movement. And so it continues....
5. Toss the imaginary object. Make a circle, everyone facing each other. One person starts w/ an imaginary object that he/she will toss to someone else in circle. The object can be heavy, light, small, hot, messy, anything. Person who catches the object that the first person tosses. Then, the 2nd person "transforms" the object into whatever he/she wants it to be and tosses to next person. And so on...

Art/Visual Activities

You don't have to be an "artist" to make art. These activities help campers feel comfortable creating visually.

These activities can be tied to any theme, or can be used by campers to articulate any ideas they have. Use visual media as you see fit – mix with writing and theatre/body work.

Start gently. If some of our youth think they can't draw or paint, help them experiment. If you do any projects collaboratively (like a mural), make sure you have clear ground rules about working collectively.

1. Ask campers to do a visual depiction of their community. Ask them to portray both positives and negatives. If you connect this exercise with a service project, you can ask campers to imagine their community after their service.
2. What is art activity. Show images of "art" from a variety of places: museums, graffiti, murals, various cultures, masks, puppets, etc. Ask campers to define what they think art is. Talk about images, pictures, symbols, representation. Ask them to make lists. What is art? What isn't art? What's modern art? What's classical (old?) art? What's folk art? What's community art?
3. Ask students to create a visual "symbol" of themselves. You can do this after you've discussed what art is, and what symbols are and what representation is. You can have them make this symbol as part of a name badge that they wear. Have them discuss why they have created the symbol they have.
4. What is a mural activity. See if there are any murals around town. Photograph them if you can. Get some images of murals (e.g. Diego Rivera; Philadelphia Mural Project, AIDS/HIV murals in South Africa). Discuss how murals are community art and discuss how murals are often done collectively. Discuss that artists create murals to tell stories of their communities or raise social issues.
5. Practice making a mural. Roll out a long sheet of butcher block paper. Have campers sit on both sides of the butcher block, facing each other. Come up with a theme they want to draw (e.g. the future, NOLA before the hurricane, NOLA after the hurricane, the perfect school, youth at play, etc.) Give them 10 minutes to sketch/draw/ink what they want to make that's related to the theme. Rotate youth so that they move to another spot where someone has drawn something. They now add to it for 10 minutes. Then, they rotate again. **IMPORTANT:** Make ground rules about what they can do to someone else's work. They will feel ownership of their own work, and can get pissed when someone scratches out, defaces or changes their images.

6. Do a puppet show. See copies of “how to make puppets.”
7. Make masks. Show examples of masks, e.g. African masks, Mardi Gras masks. Have campers sketch first. Hopefully we’ll have paper mache and appropriate supplies. I’m hoping we might actually have plain cardboard masks. Set up different tables for the process so you can slightly control the mess and campers can work in small groups.

Writing Activities:

Some Guidelines for Writing

What makes a poem? What makes strong writing?

Poetry/writing/storytelling are media for telling the truth.

Truths can be literal or figurative. That means you can tell a true story, or tell a fictional story, but in both stories you are conveying something that is truthful and something you believe it.

Poetry achieves maximum impact with a minimal number of words.

Poetry uses lots of descriptive verbs (get rid of the verb “to be.”). Keep it alive and active.

Stories (or poems) with characters have dialogue. Capture someone’s real voice.

Be specific, not general.

Read aloud and be dramatic.

Always revise to make it stronger.

As campers write, have them use their senses as a descriptive tool.

Put up a chart – SMELL / TASTE / TOUCH / SEE / HEAR,

I Wish poem

Have campers list all the things they wish for, using each of their senses at least once.

Whole Group Poem or Story

Write the first sentence of a poem. Send it to the next person in the circle. After she/he writes a line, that camper folds the paper over the first line. Then, hands it off. The paper starts to look like an accordion, and no one can see more than the line before their own line. Read it aloud after everyone has written one line. You can also do this with a story. Have someone start a story and write a beginning. Pass it to the next person who continues. Then, fold over the sheet of paper so only the last person’s writing appears. Read aloud at the end.

Metaphor/Simile Poem

Have students compare using “like,” throughout any description. Practice aloud first. For example...

The car engine, like a lion’s roar, speeds up my street.
The cat sneaks along the road, like a snake.

Spoken Word

Put on a beat to someone’s poem. Let them read to the beat and see if they can freestyle. Play some hip hop so they can hear it and practice to the beat, so their reading becomes rhythmic.

Story-telling

Encourage campers to describe characters using their senses. Ask campers to include dialogue in story telling. Have them work in partners creating a story and let them write together.

Stories/poems from magazine photo portraits

Gather a large collection of portrait like images from magazines. Put them out around the room. Have campers walk around and pick one picture that they want to work with. Have them create a character and write a story about the portrait. Use dialogue.

Stories/poems of Inanimate Objects

Have campers pick an inanimate object to write about, and tell them to give that object a voice and personality. What would it say? Do? (examples – oven, couch, computer, bed, school desk, washing machine, etc.)

Dream/Fantasy poems/stories

Have campers talk about their dreams, or have them make up a fantasy.

Sound poems

Have campers pick a place and have them listen to its sounds. Examples: a summer night; the Mississippi River; crickets; a baseball game; eating, etc.

Clothes poems/stories

Have campers pick a particular piece of clothing and give it a voice. What does it say?

Body movement & theatre activities

You don't have to be an actor to use your body in creative ways. These activities help campers feel comfortable in their bodies. The scenes, sculptures and stories that campers do are great ways for them to express themselves physically.

These activities can be warm ups for the day or they can be part of a larger activity that is related to one of our themes. You can also build these activities into short skits or plays that the campers write themselves. See where you can with them. Start gently. If some of the youth are initially uncomfortable, ask them to try it. Remember to remind campers of your ground rules. No one makes fun of someone else. Also remember, when touch is involved, that you are clear about what touching is ok, and what touching isn't.

1. Square off an area of your physical space. This is a silent activity. Have campers walk within the square area not touching anyone and trying to hit every space in the square. No touching, no talking. Call "freeze." Start again.
2. Square off an area of your physical space. Have each camper pick someone in the group that they will silently follow. But that person should not be able to guess who is following them. Silent movement, then freeze. Have campers guess who is following them.
3. Have campers pair up. Tell them that they will take turns being a mirror for each other. Camper A moves hands and feet slowly (e.g. up and down, in big arc, going to knees). Camper B has to mirror back the exact moves without touching their partner. Then reverse roles.
4. Sculpting images – Ask campers to work in groups of 3 or 4. Give them an image/short description of a scene and have them silently organize themselves into that image/scene. For example, a 5 year old just got lost in a huge store. His mother finally sees him and runs up to him in the aisle. Another example, 4 young people are trying angry and mad with each other, but they are trying not to fight. Come up with any idea you want and ask students to sculpt it. You can address powerful issues with this exercise. Always de-brief afterwards. Another way to sculpt is in pairs. Have one person sculpt the other person in a pose silently. Only gentle touch and guidance. Have 5 pairs do this simultaneously. Everyone stays frozen. The rest of circle walks around and makes up a story about each frozen sculpture.

5. Everyone sits in a half circle. Get 4-6 volunteers. Number them and give them a scenario that they will have to act out. For example, a Laundromat, with a table or bench and chairs; or a classroom at 3 pm on a Friday with a teacher no one likes. First person enters scene and plays a character NOT like him/herself. Second person enters with an imaginary object. Third person, fourth, etc. enter and must play a character not like themselves. No talking, no touching. You are eliminated if you start to laugh. Last character standing is the winner.

6. Divide the room into 4 corners. Divide up campers equally and send to corners. Each corner is assigned an emotion (e.g. anger, jealousy, fear, love, excitement, joy). Then assign each corner a task to act out (e.g. washing the floor, cooking, playing music in a band, digging a ditch). Have students silently act out their emotion doing their task. Then, rotate the square. Keep emotions the same in each corner, so when campers rotate, they have to go from demonstrating an emotion like anger to an emotion like joy doing the same task.

7. Creating a solution – short skits. Sit in a circle.

The point of this exercise to have campers discuss real social problems, look at root causes, and vision how the world will look if we solved the social problem. Campers will also imagine a realistic solution to the problem as well.

Facilitator asks question: What is the problem? (Think about using this idea in any of our themes.) List all the questions on butcher block paper. Have the group try to decide on one problem after all are listed. Next, brainstorm what the “ideal” needs to be – how we envision a world without that problem. Next, brainstorm realistic solutions to the problem.

Next, break up the group into 3 – problem, ideal and solution. Give them 15-30 minutes to create a skit based on your discussions.

GYAC Book Club - Regular afternoon activity

A regular afternoon activity for GYAC youth is the book club. Operation Reach has purchased copies of four young people's novels for every camper. We selected the books to appeal to youth because each is about a contemporary issue that we believe will be compelling for our campers to read and discuss. At each site, in the afternoons, students can elect to "do" book club. During that time, two TCs will schedule the book club in their room. TCs can determine which book the youth will read. So campers can get to know more TCs and move around the site, we encourage different pairs of TCs host the book club on a regular basis.

What can happen in book club?

1. Have everyone reading the same book.
2. Schedule a certain amount of time just for reading.
3. Schedule a certain amount of time after the youth have read to discuss the book. Write questions for discussion and facilitate it. Be creative – ask youth to role play characters, discuss pros and cons of decision making of the characters, etc.
4. If the campers are especially turned on by one of the books, ask them if they'd like to do a performance about it. They can write a short theatre piece about the story or about the issues addressed in the story. They can present it to all the campers at the site if they want.

References

Note:

I did not invent every single activity for the GYAC Summer 2007 Curriculum, nor did I discover every reading in the Training Manual. I've referenced the readings in the Training Manual, so now I'd like to give you my sources for the curriculum.

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