



Camp ASCAA 2012

Touch A Life

The primary responsibility of the RYLA Counselor is to help the students to receive the greatest benefit from the RYLA program in a safe and healthy environment. Whatever a counselor does, will be perceived as being okay by other counselors and students. It is nothing less than being a role model 24 hours a day during the weekend. RYLA's definition of leadership is: **“One who compels others to positive action by the power of their own positive actions.”**

An important function of the counselor is to pass information on to their teams. The teams need to be kept informed and on track as to scheduled activities. The students need to be reminded, frequently, that they are to wear their nametags and be on time to all activities. More importantly, they represent their community, their school and sponsoring Rotary Club.

The counselors' main role will be that of a facilitator for the team discussions, helping to develop a team identity, and fostering creativity and leadership in the teams' designated activities.

Counselors **MUST NOT** dominate the discussions; they should facilitate and draw all members of the group into the discussions and activities.

Counselors are to be a friend, a confidant, and a resource for the students as they explore new ideas as well as a source of help to find answers to questions that might arise. Counselors also have a responsibility to observe, remind and encourage the students to abide by the rules and fully participate in activities of the conference. Items such as rise-and-shine or lights-out sometimes require persistence by the counselors in keeping the schedule. The students are sometimes so stimulated by the conference activities that they are reluctant to bed down. **Adequate sleep is a must to gain full benefit from the program.** In addition, if the students are allowed to sleep in and miss morning activities, the task of enforcing lights-out the following night becomes significantly more difficult. Enforcing the lights-out and rise-and-shine schedules is the counselor's responsibility.

The students, for the most part, are mature and cooperative. If there are problems, they are usually minor and are resolved with a little attention.

We insist that students attend all sessions and conduct themselves with dignity. This sometimes means a gentle reminder of what constitutes appropriate behavior. The counselors are expected to know where their students are and see that they are in attendance at the various scheduled activities

Past counselors have found the weekend to be a fun and rewarding experience. The students are bright, sociable and full of great ideas, idealism and energy. Counselors can learn a great deal from the young people involved and often gain more from the program than the students.

Emergencies: - The students have been instructed to contact the nearest counselor if anyone is hurt or injured. Please go to the person that is injured to determine the extent of the problem. Have someone contact Bob Kelley or Dana Rickman immediately. Stay with the injured party.

Counselor Information Summary:

Communication:

- ◆ Get to know your team, by name and personality as quickly as possible.
- ◆ Make them ALL an active part of the team.
- ◆ Make them a respectful friend, so they are not alienated from you.
- ◆ Ask, "how can I delegate and help develop skills?"
- ◆ Never give the answer; be patient, they will get it if you let them.

Information:

- ◆ Stress the importance of the schedule and that you expect them to be personally responsible for knowing and following it.
- ◆ Keep them excited about the speakers and other activities.

Enjoy:

- ◆ Make this week fun for yourself and your team.
- ◆ Laugh with them, cheer them on, be a part of them and love them, for they are all neat kids in their individual way.

More Practical Tips

- ◆ Give your team members lots of permission to brag about themselves and their accomplishments. "If you can do it [or have done it], it ain't braggin'" --- Baseball Hall of Famer, Dizzy Dean.
- ◆ At the end of the weekend, or if a team member has to leave prematurely, engage in the "ritual of good-bye." Each team member tells the person leaving one thing that they want to give (e.g. courage, confidence, etc.); one thing they will take (e.g. your sense of humor); and one wish for them in the future (e.g. "I wish for you success in your service project this year). Then they actually say the word, "Good-bye."

- ◆ Begin the weekend by being very clear about your expectations of the conferees behavior (e.g. they will follow the rules and principles of RYLA). “We will always treat you as adults unless you give us reason not to.” It is always easier to begin with a “tight ship” than to try and tighten it after you are initially “loose.”
- ◆ Suggest that if students “go with the program” and not resist it, they have a great opportunity to transform their lives in a weekend.
- ◆ Spend 10-15 minutes a day in solitude and silence.
- ◆ Listen. Listen. Listen not only to words, but also to the feelings being expressed and listen to what is not being said.
- ◆ Maintain eye-contact when speaking or listening.
- ◆ The best way to make a new friend is to let them help you.
- ◆ “If you think learning is stupid, try ignorance!” --- Suggested by JC, Josh.
- ◆ Keep in mind your actions speak louder than your words, soooo “walk your talk.”
- ◆ When you think of it, initiate...don’t procrastinate.
- ◆ Take the initiative, but emotionally let go of the outcome

Also remember: Common sense supersedes all rules!