

PNWD YRUU CONFERENCE
PLANNING HANDBOOK
ConTemplate

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2000-2001

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	6
INTRODUCTION	7
HOW DO YOU USE THIS BOOK?.....	7
PURPOSE OF A YRUU CONFERENCE	7
APPLYING TO HOST A CON	8
PACIFIC NORTHWEST DISTRICT RULES AND POLICIES.....	8
PART I: DECIDING & GETTING STARTED.....	11
STEP 1: CHOOSING TO HOST THE CON	13
<i>PWND YRUU Conference Hosting Application Form</i>	14
STEP 2: ASSIGNING ROLES FOR THE PLANNING TEAM.....	16
1) <i>Conference Chair:</i>	16
2) <i>Dean(s):</i>	16
3) <i>Registrar(s):</i>	17
4) <i>Treasurer:</i>	17
5) <i>Workshop Coordinator:</i>	17
6) <i>Worship Coordinator:</i>	18
7) <i>Touch Group Coordinator:</i>	18
8) <i>Food Coordinator:</i>	19
9) <i>Operations Manager:</i>	19
10) <i>T-Shirt Coordinator:</i>	19
11) <i>Go-fer:</i>	20
12) <i>Adult Advisor:</i>	20
13) <i>Head Sponsor:</i>	20
14) <i>Camp Nurse</i>	20
15) <i>Chaplain</i>	21
16) <i>Sponsor</i>	21
STEP 3: FINDING A SITE	22
<i>Sites to Hold Con:</i>	23
<i>Site Review Checklist</i>	24
STEP 4: PUTTING A DEPOSIT ON A SITE	26
STEP 5: PICKING A THEME	26
<i>YRUU CON - Initial Information</i>	27
PART II: FOUNDATION PLANNING.....	28
STEP 1: PLAN A BUDGET	30
<i>Sample Budget</i>	32
STEP 2: TSHIRT DESIGN & COSTS	33
STEP 3: CREATE & SEND THE REGISTRATION FORM	33
<i>Essential information:</i>	33
STEP 4: GROUP SITE VISIT, DETERMINE WHAT WILL HAPPEN WHERE.....	34
STEP 6: FIND KEY ADULTS, INCLUDING THE THEME SPEAKER	35
STEP 7: GROUP DECISIONS: NO-TALENT SHOW, DANCE, MUG BOOKS, DETERMINE THE SCHEDULE, THEME INFUSION	35
PART III: CREATING CON.....	37
STEP 1: RUN-THROUGH EVERYONE’S ROLE AT CON.....	39
STEP 2: REHEARSE ORIENTATION	39
STEP 3: SET-UP & CLEAN-UP: WHO’S DOING WHAT?.....	39
STEP 4: ITEMS TO PURCHASE.....	40
<i>Sample Supply List</i>	41

STEP 5: ITEMS TO MAKE.....	42
<i>Welcome or Registration Packets:</i>	42
<i>Name Tags:</i>	42
<i>Mailboxes:</i>	42
STEP 6: MAKING SURE YOUR TEAM IS READY	42
STEP 7: MOST IMPORTANT STEP: THE SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PLANNING TEAM AT CON.	42
STEP 8: PLANNING GROUP MAINTAINING THEIR SANITY DURING THE CON:	43
AFTER THE CON IS OVER.....	44
PART IV: POSITION PLANNING.....	45
CONFERENCE CHAIR.....	46
<i>Key set-up tasks:</i>	46
<i>Key foundational tasks</i>	46
<i>Key con creation tasks:</i>	46
REGISTRAR	47
<i>Foundation planning duties:</i>	47
<i>Con creation tasks:</i>	47
<i>On-site tasks:</i>	47
<i>Confirmation Packets:</i>	47
<i>Sample Con Registration Form</i>	48
<i>Sample Con Confirmation Letter – All Youth</i>	54
<i>Sample Con Confirmation Letter – New Youth</i>	56
<i>Sample Confirmation Letter – All Sponsors</i>	57
<i>Sample Confirmation Letter - New Sponsors</i>	61
DEAN.....	62
<i>Key foundational tasks</i>	62
<i>Key con creation tasks:</i>	62
<i>On-site tasks:</i>	62
<i>Orientation Outline</i>	63
CONFERENCE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE	65
<i>Committee Guidelines:</i>	65
<i>Purpose of a Conference Affairs Committee</i>	65
<i>Composition of the CAC:</i>	65
<i>Order of Procedure for a CAC Meeting:</i>	65
<i>CAC Process</i>	65
CONFERENCE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE INCIDENT REPORT	67
TREASURER	68
<i>Key set-up tasks:</i>	68
<i>Key foundational tasks</i>	68
<i>Key con creation tasks:</i>	68
<i>On-site tasks:</i>	68
WORKSHOP COORDINATOR	69
<i>Key foundational tasks</i>	69
<i>Key con creation tasks:</i>	69
<i>On-site tasks:</i>	69
WORSHIP COORDINATOR.....	70
<i>Key foundational tasks</i>	70
<i>Key con creation tasks:</i>	70
TOUCH GROUP COORDINATOR	71
<i>Key foundation tasks</i>	71
<i>Key con creation tasks:</i>	71
<i>On-site tasks:</i>	71
<i>Sample Touch Group Packet for Touch Group Leaders</i>	72
Touch Group Leader Letter	72
Tips & Pointers:	73
Games & Activities:.....	74
FOOD COORDINATOR.....	79
<i>Key set-up tasks:</i>	79

<i>Key foundational tasks</i>	79
<i>Key con creation tasks:</i>	79
<i>On-site tasks:</i>	79
OPERATIONS MANAGER	80
<i>Key set-up tasks:</i>	80
<i>Key foundational tasks</i>	80
<i>Key con creation tasks:</i>	80
TSHIRT COORDINATOR	81
<i>Key set-up tasks:</i>	81
<i>Key foundational tasks</i>	81
<i>Key con creation tasks:</i>	81
GO-FER	82
<i>On-site tasks:</i>	82
DANCE DJ	83
<i>Key foundational tasks:</i>	83
<i>Key Con Creation Tasks:</i>	83
<i>On-site tasks:</i>	83
NO-TALENT SHOW HOST.....	84
<i>On-site tasks:</i>	84
ADULT ADVISOR	85
<i>Key set-up tasks:</i>	85
<i>Key foundational tasks</i>	85
<i>Key con creation tasks:</i>	85
<i>On-site tasks:</i>	85
HEAD SPONSOR	86
<i>Key foundational tasks</i>	86
<i>Key con creation tasks:</i>	86
<i>On-site tasks:</i>	86
<i>Sponsor Orientation Sample Agenda</i>	87
<i>Sponsor Check-ins</i>	87
CAMP NURSE.....	88
<i>Key con creation tasks:</i>	88
<i>On-site tasks:</i>	88
CHAPLAINS	89
<i>Key foundational tasks</i>	89
<i>On-site tasks:</i>	89
SPONSORS.....	90
<i>Pre-Con tasks:</i>	90
<i>On-site tasks:</i>	90
<i>Sponsor Confirmation Letter</i>	91
<i>New Sponsor Confirmation Letter</i>	92
ATTENDEES	93
<i>First Time Conference Go-ers:</i>	93
<i>Pre-Con tasks:</i>	93
<i>On-site responsibilities:</i>	93
THEME SPEAKER:	94
<i>Pre-Con tasks:</i>	94
<i>On-site responsibilities:</i>	94
SPIRIT COMMITTEE:	95
<i>On-site responsibilities:</i>	95
YOUTH CON CONSULTANTS:	96
<i>Key set-up tasks:</i>	96
<i>Key foundational tasks</i>	96
<i>On-site tasks:</i>	96
APPENDICES	97
FIVE STEPS TO BUILDING COMMUNITY	98

<i>Step One: Bond Building</i>	98
<i>Step Two: Opening Up</i>	98
<i>Step Three: Affirming</i>	98
<i>Step Four: Stretching</i>	98
<i>Step Five: Deeper Sharing and Goal Setting</i>	99
<i>Action</i>	99
EVALUATIONS	100
<i>Fall Con 2006</i>	101
<i>Spring Con 2007</i>	102
<i>Fall Con 2007</i>	104
UUA YOUTH OFFICE RESOURCES	108

Introduction

INTRODUCTION

You hold in your hands the latest incarnation of a planning handbook for those doing youth conferences in the Pacific Northwest District (PNWD). Planning a conference (“con”) is challenging but rewarding. Local groups discover that the planning process contributes to: stronger community in the group, development of leadership skills, increased communication skills, and enhanced relationships with adults and deepened commitment to our faith. We hope that this Planning Handbook will help you negotiate the sometimes tricky waters of planning and carrying out the con. Have fun and good luck!

HOW DO YOU USE THIS BOOK?

Do I date myself by mentioning the “Choose Your Own Adventure” books? Well, this book is a bit like those books. It’s divided into 4 sections:

1. Deciding & Getting Started (Up to 12 months out – 4 months out)
2. Foundational Planning (4 months out – 2 weeks out)
3. Con Creation (2 weeks out – Con happening)
4. Position Planning

The first three sections are designed to take you step-by-step through planning con. In fact, each section begins with a list of the steps you should complete during the planning time. These sections are directed at the overall group and what it needs to accomplish. While it does include position information at points, it is usually only as that position relates to the whole group. These sections, if you are going to print this book, can be printed for the whole group and used by the whole group.

The fourth section, position planning, is completely different. This section goes position by position into the overall duties, and what each position should be doing during each of the first three sections. It includes *every* position, from the Con Chair at the beginning to the attendees themselves at the end. Within the con planning team, if there are forms that are useful to a position, they are included in that section. Don’t print this section en masse; and if you do need to print it, just print your position.

At the end, there are some appendices: some all-group information/forms, evaluations of the past 3 cons, and then UUA-level resources.

PURPOSE OF A YRUU CONFERENCE

The Youth-Adult Committee of the Pacific Northwest District (Youth Empowerment Services or YES) embraces the purposes of YRUU as stated in the by-laws of continental YRUU:

Young Religious Unitarian Universalists (YRUU) shall serve its members for the purposes of fostering spiritual depth, creating a peaceful community on earth and peace within us, and clarifying both individual and universal religious values as part of our growth process. Our purposes are to provide and manifest a greater understanding of Unitarian Universalism and to encourage the flow of communication between youth and adults.

In so doing, we shall nurture the freedom and integrity of the questioning mind, and embrace all persons of diverse backgrounds. We shall encourage the development of a spirit of

independence and responsibility. We shall strive to support our members with educational resources, a communications network, and with love.

These purposes shall assist us in developing an effective system for social action, and serve to raise our levels of mutual respect, communication, and community consciousness.

A conference can be one of the most important and life-changing events you will ever experience. It is a gathering of Unitarian Universalist youth and the adults who work with youth from all over the district. It generally lasts from Friday evening to Sunday afternoon, and includes workshops, food, great people, hugs, worship, and fun social events. District cons are hosted in the fall and spring at camp sites by local youth groups with the assistance of the YES (Youth Empowerment Services), while cluster conferences may be hosted by YES members or cluster groups and generally are at church locations.

APPLYING TO HOST A CON

Any local congregational group of enthusiastic youth and adults who wish to take on the planning of a con must apply to the district. Please use the Application Form provided in this handbook (see the appendices) and send it to the address below one year in advance. You will be notified if you are accepted as the planning group.

PACIFIC NORTHWEST DISTRICT RULES AND POLICIES

The following policies were adopted by the PNWD YAC in September 1999 and revised in January 2000 and again in May 2000. They were reaffirmed with minor changes by the District Staff in June 2006. Please read and follow these carefully. They are the minimum requirements for cons. You may discover that the site has additional rules or you may want to add your own (for example, the use of candles or whether boating/swimming is allowed). Remember that the main goal is to:

- provide a safe space for all con-goers
- request common sense around activities that may be dangerous to self or others, regardless of the stated or implied rules
- request respect for others, the site, and the environment

Each PNWD YRUU conference sets an example to others in society at large as to what we are like. Generalizations about our actions and behavior can and will be made by others within and outside our community. Cons and their participants are expected to set a good example and preserve the integrity of our programming and ensure a future for it.

1. The age range for PNWD YRUU events is 14-20 years of age, the same range used by continental YRUU. Post-high youth ages 18-20 are encouraged to transition into Young Adult (ages 18-35) activities by receiving a 20% discount on Young Adult cons. Adult sponsors for PNWD YRUU events must be at least age 25. No exceptions will be made.
2. All sponsors and youth must be members/ active participants of a congregation (as determined by each individual congregation) in the Pacific Northwest District or British Columbia Region.
3. The goal of each con is to provide a safe place for youth to be in inclusive community with each other. To this end, behavior expectations are clearly stated on each registration form and the

youth sign a covenant agreeing to abide by the behavior expectations. Youth who cannot abide by the expectations in order to achieve this goal will be subject to a process called a CAC (Conference Affairs Committee, composed of both youth and adults). Consequences for all rule infractions, including the possibility of being sent home from the con, will be handled by the CAC.

4. Enforcement of behavior expectations will be handled by a Spirit Committee comprised of youth and/or adults from the local planning group, Youth Chaplains, Youth Ministry Consultants, and adult sponsors. The Spirit Committee is a 24-hour presence and has the authority to bring issues to a CAC.

5. The “No Sex” rule has been expanded in an attempt to be less vague. “No sexual activity between the neck and the knees” includes both intercourse and outercourse. Fully clothed hugs, kisses, and backrubs (all by consent) are appropriate between youth at cons.

6. The behavior expectations for **all** YRUU cons for youth and adults are as follows:

- No smoking, illegal drugs, drug paraphernalia or alcohol (caffeine pills and uber-caffeinated drinks are not a good idea and should also be left at home.)
- No sexual activity between the neck and the knees
- No weapons or explosives
- No pets
- No walk-ins or walk-outs
- Abide by the rules of the site and the laws of the city and state/province in which the con is located

7. Youth are expected to arrive at the conference site with no illegal items. Youth will **not** ask adults or other youth to “hold” anything for them which is, or may be, illegal. Any *legal* item which the youth does not wish to have accessible during the con (money, pocketknife, etc.) may be given to a sponsor, dean, or chaplain for the duration of the con.

8. Cons are generally planned by a local hosting Youth Group with local adult guidance. The Youth Con Consultants (Anne-Marie Davidson: amkdavidson@gmail.com; Ben Griffin: zap180@comcast.net) are coaches to the planning group and the planning group reports to the Youth Con Consultants on its progress. The planning group, with Youth Con Consultants approval, appoints a “Head Sponsor” to mentor other sponsors and be the main responsible adult at the con. The Head Sponsor works collaboratively with the conference deans, registrar and planning group, and with the Youth Con Consultants. The Youth Con Consultants keep the District Program Specialist and Youth Programming Coordinator in the loop.

Cons may also be sponsored by cluster groups. While these are not (usually) officially sponsored by the District, these planning groups may seek the guidance of the Youth Con Consultants.

9. Adult sponsors must fill out a registration form and pay fees the same as any con participant. Both youth and sponsors will receive confirmation letters after registering for a con. The adult sponsor confirmation letter or email will include a list of all youth who claim that adult as their sponsor. If the list is inaccurate, the sponsor must call the registrar before the con. For the benefit of first-time sponsors, the adult sponsor confirmation will also include sponsor tips about

inclusive community and behavior expectations at cons. **An emergency phone number for the site will be included in all confirmation letters.**

10. The Youth Programming Coordinator or Youth Con Consultant will confirm sponsors and youth in their care with the corresponding Director of Religious Education. She will also confirm that safety background checks of sponsors are on file in the church office. If they are not completed and on file, then the Program Specialist will conduct a safety background check. If related problems arise, the Program Specialist will take responsibility for correcting the situation.

11. Con participants receive an orientation during arrival night which includes behavior expectations, con schedule, introduction of the con planning committee and key leadership, etc. Chaplains are also introduced at this time. Chaplains are available for consultation on personal and interpersonal issues or concerns between youth or youth/sponsors. The District has an official team of trained Chaplains who should be used when possible.

12. Sponsor orientation will also occur during arrival night. The Head Sponsor, the Chaplains, Youth Con Consultants (if present) and the planning group Deans will lead this orientation and field questions and concerns from adult sponsors. Sponsors will be clear about behavior expectations, enforcement policies, who to turn to in case of rule infractions, how to help monitor the energy of the con, and where adults will be sleeping.

13. Conferences will provide the option (site-dependent) of same gender sleeping rooms, a quiet room, co-ed rooms and all-night designated space. The policy of "one body per bag or blanket" will be enforced throughout the site. All night areas must have the lights on all night. Sleeping areas will be clearly labeled: Male Only (one body per bag); Female Only (one body per bag); Co-ed (one body per bag); Quiet Room (one body per bag). Lighted all-night space will also be labeled: All-Night Space (one body per bag.)

14. These policies and rules are also in effect for any PNWD cluster conferences that are endorsed by the District.

Part I: Deciding & Getting Started

Steps to Take in this Section:

- Decide to Host the Con
- Choose roles for the planning team
- Find a site
- Put deposit on site
- Pick a theme & create design

The steps within this section should occur, ideally, at least 6 months ahead of Con. It can happen in a shorter time frame, but it is not advisable.

Step 1: Choosing to Host the Con

Usually when a congregation chooses to host one of the main YRUU district conferences, there's a few people very excited, a few people willing to help out, and a few people either terrified or new to the group and not sure what they are getting themselves into.

It's important the group be united, and Con definitely follows the Unitarian Universalist principle of one person, one vote. During a youth group meeting, have a discussion about the pros & cons of hosting con, and put it to a vote. If the group is split, decide how you'll handle it: do you have enough people willing to host you can form a smaller group and meet separately from your regular youth group time? Are the people who voted no willing to help those who voted yes? Remember to respect each other.

You should have a minimum of 8 youth and one adult planning Con. Fewer than that and the burden is too great on too few. A maximum of 15 youth should help plan: above that, and there's too little ownership and too many people not sure of what they are supposed to do – too many things fall through.

Once you've made this decision, you need to fill out the form on the next page, (e-)mail it in, and then move on to step 2: choosing roles.

PWND YRUU Conference Hosting Application Form

Please fill out the form below and send it to:

Anne-Marie Davidson
6503 188th Ave E.
Bonney Lake, WA 98391
425-246-3581
amkdavidson@gmail.com



The district youth community seeks groups that are intent on making the conference a safe place for youth to explore their spirituality and be in community with other youth. Our expectations include:

- At least 8 committed youth and a consistent adult over 25 years of age to work with them.
- The hosting group will abide by all PNWD guidelines, rules, and financial policies.
- The group will interface with the Youth Con Consultant and the district Program Specialist.
- The Youth Con Consultant will attend 1 or 2 planning meetings to support the planning process and address any questions or concerns.

Name of hosting congregation:

Name/ phone/ email of main contact person:

Name/ phone/ email of adult working with your Youth Group:

We are interested in applying for

Fall Con

Spring Con

Year: _____

Please explain your reasons for wanting to plan this con/ what are your goals:

What theme is you interested pursuing?

What keynote speaker(s) do you have ideas about pursuing?

What kind of help/ guidance/ resources would you like from the district Youth Con Consultants and staff to help you be successful?

***Leadership Development Con**

Leadership Development Conferences are small working conferences designed for youth and adult leaders. A leadership development conference (LDC) focuses on making the YRUU group mind "smarter" by helping the participants learn how to be leaders. At an LDC, YRUU youth and advisors learn concrete leadership skills within a structure that helps them reflect on why they are involved in YRUU, what roles they play in their YRUU group (local or district), and what they think it means to be a leader in YRUU. Leadership training is a process of empowerment-giving the members of the group the skills they need to have power in their group.

An LDC can also provide benefits to local youth groups and congregations; the youth and advisors returning from LDC conferences often bring their congregations new skills and energy. Most importantly, an LDC is about personal empowerment, offering each participant a chance to grow in terms of actual skills, self-confidence as a leader, and enthusiasm and commitment.

Recommended ratio of youth to adults 3:1

***Spirituality Development Con**

Like LDC's, Spirituality Development Conferences are small working conferences for youth and adults. An SDC focuses on ways to design effective, creative & meaningful worship services; ways to integrate spirituality more deeply into youth programming and the lives of the participants. SDCs work to bring youth and adults together to share common worship experiences. Of the 5 components of balanced youth programming (worship, community building, leadership development, social action & learning) the first, worship, is often overlooked or saved for Youth Sundays. This training helps youth and their adults put the R back in YRUU. (The 'R' stands for religious.) An SDC can greatly transform the tone and culture of a local youth group and congregation; people return from an SDC inspired to integrate worship more deeply into their program and congregation as a whole.

An SDC provides experience and skills for those that are inexperienced in leading/designing worship services. They also give the experienced worship leader an opportunity to grow and stretch through exchanging ideas and inspiration.

Recommended ratio of youth to adults 1:1

***If you have questions, please contact
Program Consultant Tandi Rogers Koerger tkoerger@uua.org or 253-278-4646.***

Step 2: Assigning roles for the planning team

Assigning jobs *usually* is a straightforward process. As mentioned above, there's usually a few people willing to take on the big jobs (registrar, con chair, deans); a few who have a particular affinity for an important on-site role (worship, touch groups, workshops) and a few who want something they can fill-in for (con clothing, site ops, food coordinator). The treasurer & the go-fer likely should be adults for reasons explained later.

Read the job descriptions below, and ask for volunteers. If two people want the same job, and there are enough positions to go around, it's fine to have them work together. If there aren't enough people for all positions and two want the same job, do what you can to work it out – possibly both people could share 2 jobs, or one is willing to do something else.

Remember something else: Stuff happens. It frequently occurs that someone has to (for good reasons or bad) back out within a fairly short time period before Con. Do what you can: let people know if they choose to participate, they need to be in until Con happens. It's not fair for someone to leave everyone else in the lurch at the last minute. If an emergency comes up, that's a different story, but emphasize to the planners they are not to be flaky about this. One of the important lessons of Con Planning is that we are not alone, but rather interconnected and asking for help is a good and respectful thing.

1) Conference Chair:

The Chair plays **the** critical role during the planning time. They are responsible for convening and facilitating all con planning meetings and makes sure that everything is on schedule and people are doing their assigned jobs. They are also responsible for ensuring information and resources get to those involved in planning; and they need to stay in touch with both the adult advisor and the youth con consultants with progress reports. The Chair works closely with the Dean (and may also be a dean). The key difference is the con chair is the primary administrator prior to the Con; on-site, the Dean(s) is (are) the person(s) most responsible for ensuring Con functions well.

As the planning team sets the tone on-site for the success of Con, so the Con Chair sets the tone for the success of the planning team. It is important this person be a good leader, able to encourage others, to be pro-active about providing help and checking-in, and ensuring that the planning team goes into Con confident about themselves and their roles. When that happens, Cons are usually very successful. When that doesn't happen, there tend to be more behavior issues, less clear boundaries and issues with people not knowing where to go or what to do. The leadership of the Con Chair is vital to overall Con success.

The Con Chair also serves on the Conference Affairs Committee.

2) Dean(s):

The dean or co-deans are your hosts on-site. They need to know what is happening, when, where, and who is responsible. Deans should be strong youth leaders, able to influence their peers and willing to make decisions. They should have been to several Cons so they have an idea of the different issues that can come up and atmospheres that take place at Con. While during the planning process they are more passive than active, they do need to be attending all meetings and familiar with what will happen at Con.

Dean duties include:

- Leading orientation
- Making announcements as needed as Con progresses.
- Working with the sponsors to communicate concerns or challenges from the adults as well as the youth
- Attending the sponsor orientations.
- Being the liaison between the various groups on site, including the site hosts

A Dean serves on the Conference Affairs Committee.

3) Registrar(s):

The Registrar is probably the time-consuming position on the conference planning committee, and one of the most intense, especially just before Con. We can use the official District Registrar, which can make things easier. Duties include:

- Creating the registration form, using the data-gathering template.
- Getting approval from the District Con Consultant on the registration form
- Distributing the registration form through the congregational Directors of Religious Education, Youth Advisor list-serve, and ConPeople list-serve.
- Getting updates from the District Registrar
- Fielding questions & concerns from youth and advisors about the upcoming con
- Ensuring everyone is properly registered & has paid
- Handling registration on site

4) Treasurer:

The Treasurer is one of the hardest jobs for a youth to fulfill. Most of the treasurer's responsibilities do not start until Con is over, which is when everyone else wants to be done. As well, in terms of handling or creating budget, youth tend not to have much experience with what things cost. If the youth are willing, having an adult handle this position can be very helpful. This will be a responsible, trustworthy person to whom all the checks and money orders that come in at Con are given and who can stay in constant contact with the district bookkeeper.

Duties include:

- Plan the budget & figure out how much to charge for Con
- Getting advances (well in advance) for major expenses (site deposit/food deposit)
- Provide Expense Voucher forms to those planners requesting reimbursement (receipts **must** be attached) for con expenses (supplies, food, postage, etc)
- After con, take all expenses and mail them to the district office for reimbursement. **Be sure** to make a copy of the receipts & expenses in case anything happens to the originals.

5) Workshop Coordinator:

Your job is to link the workshops with the chosen theme. Some standard workshops include: massage; bubbles; fishbowl; games; hair dye; social action; art; music/singing; theater sports. A good guiding question for choosing and/or designing workshops is "how does this strengthen our Unitarian Universalism?" Your duties include:

- Deciding what workshops, in addition to those volunteered to by people, should be offered at this Con: any thing related to the theme, or those needed by the district, or "standard" workshops (hair dyeing, for example).

- Contacting workshop volunteers to understand any supplies they need as well as any location requirements.
- Coordinating reimbursement for workshop supplies.
- Posting a schedule on site as to which workshops are happening when and where they will be located.

6) *Worship Coordinator:*

Since worship sets the tone for the whole weekend, this is a very important position. The opening service should be brief, have some substance, and impress upon people to be open with each other and have a positive attitude about the weekend. Usually the last service has an element of passing the chalice while saying a word or sentence about the experience of the con. A typical worship format includes chalice lighting, welcome, prelude music, affirmation, songs/musical interlude, homily, thoughts, poems, meditation, closing, linking, and bonding. Try to vary your worships: participatory, structured, unstructured, long, short, lively, quiet, etc.

The district does now have both youth and adult chaplains who have been trained in worship development. You are free to use this resource to help you plan worships, either for ideas, or to have them actually plan the worships for you. Contact Tandi Koerger for a list of current chaplains.

Duties of the Worship Coordinator include:

- Create one worship service per day, linked to the theme if possible
- Recruit people to help with each service
- Coordinate supplies needed for each service (chalice, candles, aesthetics) and make sure they arrive at the camp
- Select the sites for each service, considering space and heating needs
- Publicize on the schedule where and when each worship service will be
- Set up the site prior to the service

7) *Touch Group Coordinator:*

You are responsible for helping to build community among participants. Touch groups and workshops are the only place where you can get to know people closely. They are also an outlet to talk about how participants are feeling about the con. Touch groups will consist of 10-20 people and should meet 3-4 times during the weekend. Duties of the Touch Group Coordinator include:

- Recruit touch group leaders. It is best if they have con experience and are respected by their peers.
- Supply leaders with a packet of suggested activities, the “rules” for safe touch group interaction, etc. The more structure and clear direction provided by you, the easier it will be for the leaders to ensure a successful experience.
- Gather resources for touch group leaders and have available at the site.
- From the list of registered youth, assign youth to groups based on mixing geographies and mixing churches (the goal is to get to know **new** people.)
- **CLEARLY** label the meeting site for each group.
- During orientation, stress the importance of meeting with your touch group
- With the planning group, decide whether touch groups will be assigned special duties such as clean-up, set-up, or kitchen crew.

- Contact the touch group leaders before the con to confirm them and answer questions they may have. Be clear what the expectations are. Make sure they know who the con leaders are in case they need to direct members of their group to specific people, such as the Chaplains.
- It is good if the touch group leaders meet a couple times during the con to see how things are going and problem solve any challenging situations.

8) Food Coordinator:

Even if the site is providing meals, someone needs to act as the communicator with the site, and also take charge of snack foods. Duties include:

- Give information to the site regarding the number of vegetarians and vegans who will be attending (usually we have about 30% vegetarians and 5-10 vegans)
- Find out when meals are served and coordinate with the rest of the con schedule; the site may have some flexibility about times
- With the planning group, agree on what **free** food (24 hours) will be provided and where it will be located.
- Recruit people to purchase this food and to re-stock as necessary throughout the con
- If you provide soda pop, establish a large “return” trash bag for used cans which can either be returned for deposit or recycled
- Publicize where free food is located

9) Operations Manager:

The Operations Manager helps with the camp facilities and is the liaison to the campsite. You report to the camp any repairs needed or problems occurring (stopped up toilets!). You know where all the equipment, tools, and supplies are. You are responsible for ensuring that sound equipment gets to the site and gets set up, as necessary. It is your job to see that chairs and tables are moved when needed for events.

The operations manager should not be shy about recruiting others to help them out. Many hands make light work.

10) T-Shirt Coordinator:

Your job is to recruit someone to design a t-shirt. Be sure no copyright laws are broken. The design **must** be approved by the Youth Con Consultant. Find someone to screen the shirts, order them, pick them up, and transport them to the camp. Usually 30-50% of the total registrants will purchase a t-shirt. Coordinate t-shirt delivery during registration to those who have pre-paid. T-shirt costs are typically separate from registration costs. Charge \$2-3 more for the t-shirt than you will pay the vendor, and be sure to order some extras (about 10-15% more than ordered) to sell on site.

It is also possible to design a silkscreen and have people create their own t-shirts on site. This can be a great workshop and bonding time, and everyone has their own, unique souvenir. Contact Ariel Fitzgerald (awwdee@comcast.net) for more information on how to do this.

Also don't forget to get the Free Hugs tshirts. These are provided by Dev Nambi (kosmedi@gmail.com); he charges us \$10 and we sell them for \$12. Including this on the registration form is great, but you can also notify people ahead of time they will be available and

allow them to purchase the shirts on site. Usually nearly as many of these shirts are sold as of the Con tshirt.

11) Go-fer: (optional, but highly encouraged)

You may wish to appoint someone who drives and is over 18 years old as the official person to leave the site and pick up necessary supplies during the con. This is best if it's an adult, although an older youth could be picked as well. If an older youth serves this role, they must have up-to-date car insurance and cannot have anyone under 18 in the car with them.

12) Adult Advisor:

The adult advisor, along with the Con chair, is critical to the overall running of Con. Con is planned by youth, and led by youth, but the adult advisor still provides the strong foundation from which the youth build. This adult needs to be **actively** involved with the planning team. They should work primarily through the Con chair to ensure steps are being taken, planning is on track, and the youth are getting what they need to get their jobs done. They should provide guidance with their experience. For example, if the youth are wildly overestimating (or underestimating) costs, they should step in to help make sure costs are done correctly. They should be willing to ask questions and probe for concrete information so issues the youth may not have considered can be uncovered early in the process. The adult advisors need to be strong in their support & their praise of the work the youth are doing. The adult advisor is key to building youth confidence in running Con.

CONFERENCE JOBS FOR ADULTS

13) Head Sponsor:

It is required that each con have an appointed Head Sponsor. This is an experienced Youth Advisor and/or con sponsor who has good rapport with youth and is credible to the adults. The Head Sponsor leads the Sponsor Orientation on the first night, mentors sponsors new to the role, and is a member of the Conference Affairs Committee should it need to be convened. This person connects with the Youth Con Consultant and the Program Specialist before the con, and writes a debriefing report after the con. The Head Sponsor works with the Youth Deans to ensure smooth running of the con, equitable enforcement of the rules and policies, and proper handling of emergencies. The Head Sponsor, Chaplains, Youth Con Consultant and planning group determine a schedule for Spirit Committee monitoring 24 hours a day (including night shifts). The Head Sponsor needs to be introduced during the Friday night orientation.

The planning group may have someone in mind who fits this role that they wish to ask. Due to the amount of work involved, we highly recommend that the Head Sponsor **not** be the adult advisor who is on the Con Planning Team. Please consult the Youth Con Consultant and the Program Specialist to help recruit someone as needed. It is a **vital** and **mandatory** position.

14) Camp Nurse:

You will need to recruit a trained medical professional (doctor, nurse, nurse practitioner, etc) to be on call at camp for the duration of the con. This person keeps and dispenses medications that individuals need over the weekend, attends to minor medical emergencies, and recommends trips to a doctor's office or hospital as necessary. All medical release forms and medical information on the registration forms stay in the hands of the Camp Nurse for the duration of the con. The Camp Nurse needs to be introduced during the Friday night orientation. If possible on site,

please provide the Nurse a separate space to sleep, hopefully with a bed or two available for youth who might become ill or have a medical need.

15) Chaplain:

The District now has an official, trained team of youth and adult Chaplains available for the purpose of serving at Cons. The Youth Con Consultant can provide you with the list of Chaplains. An ordained minister may also be on this team, which should consist of two youth and two adults (with gender balance as a goal.) The Chaplains are available for personal crises and pastoral care, and s/he can help orient and mentor youth who wish to act as peer counselors. Chaplains needs to be introduced during the Friday night orientation so people know who to turn to. It is highly advisable that the Chaplains have a designated, semi-private place to meet with people. Somewhere near the Camp Nurse is great!

16) Sponsor:

Adult sponsors for youth attending conferences must be 25 years old and must be recruited by either the attending youth or the Youth Advisor/ Director of Religious Education from the youth's home congregation. Neither the District Staff nor the local planning group is responsible for finding suitable sponsors. Sponsors cannot sponsor more than 10 youth. They must confirm they are sponsoring the youth in their care, send in their own registration form with the Conference Release signed, pay the registration fee, and sign the Adult Code of Ethics. The confirmation letter to sponsors outlines their responsibilities and engagement with youth. If a sponsor does not have a safety background check on file with the congregation, then the District Staff will conduct a check for sexual and/or violent crimes.

When everyone has decided on their position, it's a great idea to have each position identify 3 things they are going to do before the next planning meeting.

Now that everyone knows what their job is, you're ready to move on to Step 3: Finding a site.

Step 3: Finding a Site

Finding a site may be the hardest task in all the planning to get right. No site is perfect, but some are definitely better than others. Considerations to get the right site:

- Start as early as possible. Sites are booked, especially closer to summer, up to a *year* in advance. If you find a site you like and they have availability, ask to put a hold on the site for 2 weeks while the decision is made.
- Be flexible in your dates. If you have a hard-and-fast weekend, it will be harder to get the “ideal” site.
- Do a site visit before making the final decision. Take pictures, bring them back to the planning team.
- Talk frankly with the site about our culture. A site may be physically perfect, but not accommodating to youth who are up all night, running around, making noise; they may not allow the moving of mattresses; or there may be other cultural challenges. While we need to be respectful of the on-site staff, we also don’t want a site that is hostile to YRUU culture.

A comprehensive list of questions to ask the camps is found on the next two pages. Remember, no site is perfect. Decide what your deal-breakers are, and be sure that the camp fulfills as many of these considerations as possible.

Brainstorm possible places in the district to hold the conference. A list of past sites can be found in the appendices. Once you have some ideas, assign members of the planning committee to contact the possible sites and report back to the group. When you narrow it down, the group should plan to do a visit together to get the “lay of the land.”

Things to look for in choosing a site (also see comprehensive list on next page):

- Large enough facility to hold 200-250 people
- Accessibility
- Is it compact enough to keep the community together?
- Enough bathrooms? Same-gender bathrooms? Heated sleeping areas?
- Meals provided? Vegetarian and vegan options?
- Outdoor space for activities
- Room for quiet sleeping area and same-sex sleeping areas
- A large common area for all-night, non-sleeping space
- Rooms for all conference activities: workshop spaces, touch group spaces, dance/talent show
- Layout of sleeping rooms: cabins? bunks? dorms? how spread out?
- Price, site rules.
- Sound system for a dance? Electricity in all rooms that need it?
- How easy will clean-up be?

You will need to get an insurance waiver from the District Office. Call Diane Brinson at 1-800-313-7693 or administrator@pnwd.org.

Sites to Hold Con:

These are places that have held Con or could hold Con. Don't limit yourself to just these.

ELCs - Environmental Learning Centers

<http://www.parks.wa.gov/elcs.asp>

Not all of these are large enough to accommodate a Con, but the price is right and the people are very nice. Typically about \$8.50 per person per night.

Fall 2002 Con was held at Fort Flagler, which holds 270 people and we maxed it out. Fall 2000 was at Fort Casey - apparently very muddy, but fun.

Fort Worden and Fort Casey are also under the jurisdiction of the Washington State Parks.

CampFire USA

<http://www.campfire-usa.org/> a

This is the Western Washington State part of campfire. Camp Sealth is where Spring Con 2004 was held; Camp Niwana only holds 130 people so is probably too small for the district con, but could be fun for a cluster con.

Camp Seymour

www.campseymour.org

This is owned and run by the YMCA and has room for about 200.

Lions Camp, Birch Bay, Washington

<http://www.lionscamphorizonpark.org/>

Fall 2001 Con was held here. It's a pretty site, near the water, but had rooms with doors that closed, so Spirit Committee was opening and closing doors all night, which wasn't much fun.

B'nai Brith Camp, Lincoln City, Oregon

<http://www.bbcamp.org/>

Spring 2002, Fall 2003, and Fall 2006 cons were held here. This is a lovely site near the Oregon coast with home for 200. However, if you use this site, get a kitchen witch, because the food was atrocious.

Site Review Checklist

Basics:	
Site Name:	
Location:	
Current overnight price:	
Current food prices:	
Breakfast	
Lunch	
Dinner	
Contact Person	
Address:	
Phone:	
Email:	
Camp Capacity:	
Noise:	
Noise-friendly:	Yes No
Noise ordinance?	Yes No
Nearby neighbors	Yes No
Cabins:	
Number of Cabins	
People per cabin	
1 floor or two?	
Style: dorm, bunks, individual beds, individual rooms, etc.	
Bathroom in cabins?	Yes No
Shower/s in cabins?	Yes No
Ability to host bus drivers separately?	
Ability to place nurse separately?	
Ability to place staff separately?	

Facilities:		
# of showers		
Sound system available?	Yes	No
Main lodge/dining hall	Yes	No
Performance space	Yes	No
Dance hall	Yes	No
Rec hall/game room	Yes	No
Spirit committee hang-out	Yes	No
Bus accommodation/parking	Yes	No
Recycling capabilities?	Yes	No
Grounds		
Openness of site (vs. wooded)		
Compactness of site		
Fire pit	Yes	No
Ropes Course	Yes	No
Lake	Yes	No
Swimming pool	Yes	No
Ampitheatre	Yes	No
Kind of paths - dirt, gravel, paved, etc.		
Other outdoor features?		
Attitude		
UU Friendly?	Yes	No
Christian or non-Christian camp?	Christian	Non-Christian
Any special rules/issues?		
Additional Notes:		

Don't forget to take photos!

Step 4: Putting a deposit on a site

Sites vary in the amount they require to be put down, but all sites expect that you will pay some portion of the visit prior to the Con.

It is an easy, but vital step to obtain an advance.

Use the PNWD Expense Voucher form (<http://www.pnwd.org/pdfs/expvoucher.pdf>) and write ADVANCE under the “other” heading. Provide the site contact & address the check should be sent to. Allow two weeks from receipt of the form to receive any advance.

If you are supposed to get the advance in by a specific date and are running late, talk to the site. Tell them you are running late, and let them know the date the advance will arrive by. They’ll be understanding.

Step 5: Picking a Theme

The final step in this initial part of the planning process is picking your theme. This is important because it drives the remainder of the decisions. Any theme should be reflective of Con Culture, uplift Unitarian Universalism, and be important to the YRUU youth. It is very helpful when the theme can be driven throughout Con:

- The theme speaker can speak to it or some aspect of it
- Touch group names relate to it
- Worships can form a theme around it
- A special workshop can be hosted on it
- The in-gathering can have music that relates to the theme
- Mug book background relates to the theme
- People can dress up related to the theme

Not all of these aspects have to be covered, but think about how you might apply theme as you choose a theme. A great theme can be expressed in all kinds of different ways, infusing Con and helping to make it memorable.

At this time also come up with the artwork to express your theme. You’ll need it for the next section when you design your registration form, and for the t-shirt.

YRUU CON - Initial Information

Please supply name(s) and phone(s) and email(s) for the following. This form should be copied and given/sent to the hosting Youth Advisors, hosting DRE, District Youth Con Consultant, and District Program Specialist 4-6 months before the con.

Group hosting con: _____

Con date: _____

Host main contact: _____

Con Dean(s): _____

Con Registrar(s): _____

Con Treasurer: _____

Con Head Sponsor: _____

Chaplains: _____

Con doctor or nurse (certified): _____

Con site address and phone: _____

Con site after-hours emergency phone number or cell phone available 24 hours: _____

Part II: Foundation Planning

Why is this section called “foundation planning?”

If you’ve attended Con before, you probably recognize that a lot of things happen in the last couple of weeks before Con – suddenly all sorts of people come out of the woodwork wanting to sign up, find rides, get sponsors, etc., etc.

As planners, that can be very frustrating. You can’t assign touch groups until you know who is coming. In order to order t-shirts or plan final food counts, you have to know how many people are attending. As such, much of the early planning is long on form and short on action: you are creating the shape of Con – or the foundation – so that you can fill it in with your attendees in those last 1-2 weeks. This section covers that time frame, from having made the decision to host con up to 2 weeks prior to Con.

Steps to Take in this Section:

- Plan a budget
- T-shirt design & costs
- Create & send registration form
- Group site visit, determine what will happen where
- Position Planning (overview)
- Find key adults, including the theme speaker
- Group decisions: No-Talent Show, Dance, Mug Books, Theme Infusion, Determine Schedule

The steps within this section are those that affect the overall planning team and occur from the point of the decision up to 2 weeks ahead of Con. If you have a strong, responsible planning team, it is possible that you would only need one meeting during this time period and then a method of exchanging information online.

One challenge of Con Planning is that there are few steps that involve the whole group, which is why having much of the work take place individually is very possible during this time frame, using the group meeting to plan next steps & report in on what has been accomplished. The final section of this manual looks at each individual position and their responsibilities.

Step 1: Plan a budget

The District does not budget money for district cons. It is expected that cons will be self-supporting; that is, they are not intended to make a profit nor a loss. Any profit made returns to the District budget for the remainder of the year, after which it reverts to the general district account. If a loss is incurred, the District is expected to cover it out of their budget, which is very limited.

EVERYONE must be careful to save all receipts for any con expenses. They will be reimbursed from the conference account by the district, but **only** if receipts are attached and the **expense voucher form is filed within 3 months**, or by June 30 (the end of the fiscal year) for spring cons. The District Program Specialist must approve expenses and give the okay to the District Bookkeeper. An acceptable way to do this is to email the list of expense items (how much, incurred by whom, and for what) to the Program Specialist, who will then email approval to the bookkeeper. **However, the forms must still be filled out for each person who has an expense and sent to the bookkeeper at the district office.**

You need to plan out a budget in order to determine what you will charge to attend the con.

Key rule: Figure out your average cost per person to attend. This should form your early registration price, because there will be many people who are **not** paying full price (including staff). The late registration folks will make up the balance to get you to the average.

Basic formula for budgeting:

Fixed per-person costs:

- Housing
- Food

Fixed means the cost remains the same per person regardless of how many come. So if the camp is \$60 per person for food & shelter for the weekend, if you have 100 people, it'll be \$60 per person, if you have 150 it'll be \$60 per person.

Variable per-person costs:

- All camp supplies (worship, workshops, name tags, mailboxes, spirit committee candy & toys, etc., etc.)
- Mug books (usually about \$500 - \$700 overall)
- Free food (usually \$350 - \$500 overall)
- Other costs (see list in appendix)

These costs will be less per person the more people you have. So whether you have 100 people or 200, you're going to spend the same amount on supplies for workshops.

General formula is to take your housing & food costs + about \$12-\$15 per person to cover supplies, and that is your early registration cost.

e.g.: \$30 housing + \$34 food + \$15 misc. = \$79. So for early registration, you'd charge \$80 and for late registration \$95.

Remember in your budget:

- There needs to be \$500 available for half-scholarships for youth. Have youth ask their congregation first, but if their congregation doesn't have the money, help them attend con. This will cover 12-13 youth, depending on the cost of registration.
- Youth Ministry Consultants/Youth Con Consultants do not pay the registration fee because they are required to attend (budget for 8 members)
- The head sponsor & nurse should attend free.
- Depending on the size of the staff, the staff may attend for free, or may attend at a reduced rate, or may have something given to them for free. For example, they might attend for \$25 and get their con shirt free. Work this out within your budget as to how much revenue you are willing or able to lose. The larger the staff, the less of a discount you can provide.
- T-shirt expenses should be accounted for separately. Be sure to charge \$2-\$3 more than the cost of the t-shirt to cover the possibility that not all tshirts are sold. Tshirts should be a break-even proposition.

Once you have worked up a budget, please run it past the Adult Youth Con Consultant prior to finishing the registration form (Anne-Marie Davidson: amkdavidson@gmail.com). Cons are not designed to make money, but neither should they lose money. Give the budget to all the point people. The Treasurer makes sure that each group/person follows the budget as outlined.

Sample Budget

Budget		
	200 people	150 people
Expenses		
Site Rental - \$25/person	\$5000	\$3750
Food - \$35/person	\$7000	\$5250
Confirmation Packets (do via E-mail, web)	\$25	\$25
Welcome packets (copies)	\$100	\$100
Other letters (workshop, touch group leaders)	\$25	\$25
Signs	\$100	\$100
Other photocopies (misc.)	\$50	\$50
Mug Books	\$800	\$600
Worship (\$100/service)	\$300	\$300
Workshops (supplies)	\$500	\$500
Dance - DJ - transportation, fee if needed	\$0	\$0
Touch Groups - copies, supplies?	\$50	\$50
Misc. Supplies (mail bags, paper, etc.)	\$200	\$200
First Aid Supplies	\$100	\$100
Toys/candy for spirit committee	\$250	\$200
Theme Speaker - Travel, fee	\$100	\$100
T-shirt expenses	\$495	\$360
Sweatshirt Expenses (\$19 avg.)	\$665	\$475
Snack Shack food	\$150	\$125
Free Food	\$250	\$200
Total - Expenses	15,665\$	\$11,510
Average Per Person	\$78.32	\$76.73

Income			
<i>Play with the numbers below both for different numbers of people. Con ranges between 120 – 200 people, with Fall con usually being bigger than Spring Con. How much do you need to charge if 120 come? If 200 come?</i>			
Registration – assuming 150 people.	Price	# of People	Total
Scholarship/District people (<i>figure 8-10 people half-off</i>)	\$40	8-10	\$480
Staff price reduction (<i>determined by planning group – figure half-price; again 10-15 @ \$25 - \$40</i>)	\$40	12	\$480
YMC Members, Con Consultants, Chaplain, Head Sponsor, Nurse	\$0	12	\$0
Early registrants - \$80 (up to 3-4 weeks ahead) <i>This is hard to gauge. At least half register early, but lately it seems the latecomers have been large numbers.</i>	\$80	60	\$4800
Late registrants - \$95 (3-4 weeks out – up to Con)	\$95	60	\$5700
Total Income from Registration			
Sweatshirts (@ \$20 each)	\$20	30	\$700
T-shirts (@ \$10 each)	\$10	55	\$550
Total Income			\$12,710
Per person average			\$84.73

As long as your average, per person income EXCEEDS your average, per person expenses, you're good. Play with the numbers and see where you start to lose money. What happens if you only have 100 people? Or if everyone registers early?

On things like t-shirts and sweatshirts, don't forget taxes! And utilize the con care kit to reduce the amount of supplies you have to buy.

Step 2: Tshirt Design & Costs

N.B. Although we're consistently referring to this as a t-shirt, your choice of Con Clothing could be a t-shirt (long or short sleeve), sweatshirt, scrubs, toques, or anything else that strikes your fancy.

Usually the t-shirt design is the same one that forms the Con Theme and goes out on the registration form, but it doesn't have to be.

Once you have your artwork, decide what kind of clothing you want to offer. Choose your color(s); consider if you can have a staff version of the same outfit, either with staff names on the back or in reverse colors of the shirt everyone else will have.

Remember again that in UUism we have one person, one vote. A good way to handle the often-contentious argument over color is to let everyone nominate the colors they'd like to have; then do rounds of voting. In the first round, everyone can vote for any color they like. The top half get taken into round 2; now people can vote for up to 3 colors they like. The top 3 choices are taken into the last round, and people have to pick one. The top choice is the color the clothing will be.

Have the tshirt coordinator talk to a local firm & get a quote on the number of tshirts needed. You'll likely need between 50 – 100 of whatever you're getting. Most places have cut-off points and can tell you up to 75 would cost this much, up to 100 this much, etc. Be sure you know how far ahead of time you need to get the order placed, so you can get the tshirts in time for Con. Don't forget to factor in the cost of the silkscreen.

You then need to add this cost into the registration form.

Step 3: Create & send the registration form

PNWD requires certain things on the registration form. Please be sure all the information is included. Creative forms with doodles or graphics are encouraged, but not at the expense of the vital information. The easiest way to do the registration form is to take the form in the appendix, add your own artwork and message, and send it off to the Adult Con Consultant for approval. If you have special questions you want to add, feel free to do so, but do not take out any of the required information already there. See sample form.

Essential information:

- Date and location of con, with site address and phone number
- Please state that this is a PNWD YRUU Conference
- Age restrictions: "PNWD cons are for youth between the ages of 14-20. Youth under the age of 18 must have a sponsor who must be 25 or older."
- Please state that sponsors may not sponsor more than 10 youth.
- The rules are incorporated into the Conference Release (see sample). Youth under 18, parent, and adult sponsor must all sign these.
- A Medical Form and a Code of Ethics must be included (see sample forms).
- An early registration deadline of 3-4 weeks before the con should be clearly stated. Be clear about the late registration fee. Registration should be cut off 1 week prior to Con.
- Registration fees must be in US dollars.

- Checks and money orders are made payable to PNWD-UUA. Please state: “DO NOT SEND CASH THROUGH THE MAIL”
- Please note somewhere: “NO WALK-INS ALLOWED! If you arrive without having registered, you will be sent home at your expense. Please phone the Registrar before the con if you think s/he may not receive your form in time (at least 14 working days before the con begins)”
- Provide space for: name, address, city, state/prov., zip/postal code, email, phone, birthdate, sponsor’s name, sponsor’s signature, sponsor’s phone, parent/guardian name, parent/guardian address, parent/guardian phone both daytime and evening, name of congregation, gender to circle, housing preference to circle (all-female, all-male, quiet, co-ed), first conference?, want a buddy?, want to be touch group leader?, want to lead a workshop?, carnivore/vegetarian/vegan to circle
- T-shirt information, sizes, and cost (if applicable)
- The Registrar’s name and address and phone; providing the dean’s name and phone is nice but optional
- Refund policy should be clearly stated

Step 4: Group site visit, determine what will happen where

At least 6 weeks before Con, the planning group should do a site visit. Take a camera with so you can take pictures of where you go; afterwards it will be hard to remember. Also be sure the site provides you with maps when you arrive so you can mark notes on the map, e.g. if there are cabins with no electricity or heat; where you want the staff cabin to be; where the nurse could be put; which buildings will host workshops; where the dance will take place, etc., etc.

Have questions ready for the staff if you have specific concerns: who will be the host that weekend? Do they have a p.a. system or do we need to provide one? If there’s a problem on site, how do you reach someone? Do they have any special requirements for us?

Take note on the site as well: where are your trouble spots? Are there cabins that should be locked? Are there areas that are unsafe? What are the camp boundaries? Be sure you’re clear on the site rules so they can be incorporated into orientation.

Do your best to make sure everyone can make this visit. In particular, it is extremely important the head sponsor, site ops person, food coordinator, worship coordinator and the deans attend this meeting.

Step 5: Position Planning (overview)

Specific position requirements will be provided in the position section of this book. However, every job has elements they should be working on during this planning period. Some examples:

- Touch group leaders should be creating a touch group packet to hand out and recruiting leaders for touch groups, deciding on touch groups names, size, and if there are to be specific items for each touch group meeting to accomplish.
- Worship coordinators should be creating their worships.
- Workshop coordinator should be informed of anyone who volunteers to host workshops; they should have a list of workshops they’d like to see done; and they should be recruiting people as necessary for workshops.

- Food coordinator should be working with the site to decide on a menu, should figure out what kind of free food will be provided.

And so on. At the initial decision, when roles are given out, each position should identify three things they need to do before the next meeting. At the next meeting, they should be able to give a progress report on where they are at, what is going well, what they need help with, when the objectives will be accomplished. If the person can't do this, or hasn't made any progress, the Con Chair should ask for specific dates they intend to have made progress and then call to follow up with that person to make sure it's getting done.

Step 6: Find key adults, including the theme speaker

6-8 weeks ahead of Con you should be identifying and asking key adults to work with you:

- Head sponsor
- Nurse
- Chaplains
- Theme Speaker

The head sponsor does not have to be from your congregation. It can simply be an adult who has been a sponsor at many cons and who is willing to lead the sponsors for the weekend. If your advisor or sponsors at your congregation are new to cons – *do not* have them be the head sponsor. Also, do not have the head sponsor and the planning team advisor be the same person. They are both a lot of work and should be split between two people.

Ask around your congregation for a nurse volunteer. Often there is someone who is willing to come for the weekend.

The chaplains are provided by the District, but please check in with the Program Specialist to see who the current chaplains are and who is planning on attending.

Brainstorm ideas for the theme speaker, not only among your group, but asking your DRE, minister, or other key people in the congregation about people in your congregation. There may be people with a special talent or past that relates well to your theme. For "Fantasy Con", there was a transgendered woman in the congregation – what could once have only been a fantasy (changing your sex), she had made reality. You may have a favorite adult who is known to be dynamic & interesting. Perhaps there is a performance group that would be appropriate. Try to think of 2 or 3 good choices, as it is not always possible to get your first choice. Decide who is going to speak to whom, and in what order, so you wind up with a great theme speaker.

Step 7: Group decisions: No-Talent Show, Dance, Mug Books, Determine the schedule, Theme Infusion

There are several overall decisions that need to be made at this time that the group should address during the planning meeting.

- No-talent show: how many people will participate, and who will emcee it? How long can acts go for? (Note: 20 acts keeps it lively and a reasonable length of time. 25 is okay. More than that is too many.)

- Dance: How will you do the dance? Will you hire a DJ? Compile a list of songs? Have a theme, either for the dance, or the music? This has been one of the bigger challenges in recent Cons, so put some time and thought into this one.
- Mug books: Who is in charge? Who will take photos? How will they get done after Con? The biggest problem with getting mug books finished is not getting the photos taken – it's the motivation to get them finished afterwards. Can you get them done during the weekend? How?
- Schedule: Every con tweaks the schedule a little bit. Consider trade-offs as you create it: if you have breakfast later, do you have enough time for workshops? How long do you expect your theme speaker to speak? Is your Saturday night worship an Angel Wash, and if so, what time does the dance start? How does clean-up work on Sunday a.m., so congregations from far away can depart easily as need be?
- Theme infusion: you discussed this when picking a theme, now apply it! What are all the ways you can work your theme throughout the weekend? Often a criticism of Con is that the theme has little to do with the actual weekend. Don't be afraid to put the theme in everywhere.

Part III: Creating Con

Creating Con

This is the “Action, Jackson!” part of Con. Now is when the planning and discipline come in to play: if you’ve created the form of what you needed, all that’s left is to fill it in. If you haven’t, then you’re going to have a ton of work to do during this time.

On the other hand, this section of the book will be one of the shortest, because almost everything that needs to be done will be discussed within the individual position. The group duties are fewer at this point. Again, assuming people are individually doing their jobs, you can handle this with one all-group meeting and the rest of the communication taking place via email.

Steps to complete in this section:

- Run-through everyone’s role at Con**
 - Rehearse Orientation**
 - Set-up & Clean-up: Who’s doing what?**
 - Items to purchase**
 - Items to make**
 - Making sure your team is ready**
 - The Special Responsibilities of the Planning Team at Con.**
- If you read nothing else in this manual, read this section.*
- Maintaining your sanity at Con.**

Step 1: Run-through everyone's role at Con

At the team planning meeting about 2 weeks prior to Con: everyone should have their jobs as ready as they are going to be. The food coordinator should know what food they are getting, and when. The touch group person should be able to lead people through fun touch group games, and know most of their touch group leaders (and if they need to find more). The worship coordinator should be able to explain and/or practice their worships on the group. The registrar should be sending out confirmation letters. Workshops should be known and people recruited.

Have everyone run through what they are planning. If they aren't ready, block out some individual planning time and get it done before people leave the meeting. Be sure the team is ready during this last check-in, because the planning team sets the tone for the con-goer – and the more chaos there is on the planning team, the more there will be among the con-goers.

Step 2: Rehearse Orientation

It's vital not to overlook the importance of Orientation. Although this seems like a "dean duty," it needs to be covered as an all-group activity. The confidence with which the planning team conducts orientation, more than anything, sets the tone for the weekend going forward.

- Know what you need to cover. Get suggestions from the group.
- Have patience with orientation. People always talk, a lot. Expect quiet, maintain control.
- *Be sure* you have a p.a. system for orientation so you can be heard.
- Be thorough at orientation. The "head and shoulders" song is fairly clear, but consider having some role-play demos of areas that might not be quite so clear. What about people getting naked, or even taking their shirts off (in a non-sexual manner)? What about two people making out all night in the corner? Or how about the loner kid who is either plugged into his (her) iPod or texting friends back home because they are bored? Can you help con-goers figure out good ways to handle awkward situations, and help them to be more comfortable speaking up for themselves or bringing others in?
- Be sure to include all the important adults when introducing staff.
- Connect the dots: let people know whom they should talk to if they are having issues, whether for themselves or with others.
- Acknowledge new attendees.
- Speak to the Con Culture, esp. for the new attendees, but to remind everyone in general of their obligations. Speak to what it means to stay in community, and why con can be such a great experience if everyone cooperates.
- Don't forget to ask if there are any announcements.

Practice this one at least once; twice is better (after revisions have been made). The more you practice something, the better it will be – don't treat orientation as an after-thought. It's the one completely mandatory event of Con, and it deserves to have strong consideration.

Step 3: Set-up & Clean-up: Who's doing what?

Be sure people know the day of Con schedule: what time is the planning group expected to be on site? When should they meet at the church? What do people need to do when you get there? Who is providing food for the staff, as dinner isn't served? Go over the set-up so people know what is expected of them.

For clean-up, decide ahead of time how you want it handled. *Don't* have the planning team responsible for clean-up. You will be *exhausted* and it is the responsibility of the group to clean-up their messes. Decide how it can best be handled: each cabin can clean up their own area, but what about common areas? What about set-up and clean-up from meals? Don't be afraid to assign tasks either by congregation (best – the sponsor knows their kids and can corral them more easily) or by touch group (somewhat messier as touch groups tend to morph).

Step 4: Items to purchase

You should have the Con Care Kit in your possession so you don't have to buy everything anew when hosting con. However, there will be supplies that get diminished and you'll need to purchase, as well as other items that need to be purchased for every Con (mostly food).

Items to purchase:

- Free food. Make sure there's a good variety of healthy food as part of the spread.
- Candy & toys for the spirit committee to hand out.
- Check your flashlights & walkie-talkies to ensure they are functional.
- Are any supplies needed for worship?
- Are any needed for workshops?
- How about touch groups?
- Be sure you have bags for mailboxes, and check to make sure the group can bring magazines to decorate them with.
- Check the arts-and-craft supplies to ensure you have what you need.
- Make sure you have either butcher paper or poster board to post the schedule both for Con and Workshop places/locations on site
- Make sure you have sticky stuff with which to post these items.
- What else?

Sample Supply List

Supply list:

Registration packets

Labels for packets
Envelopes?
Site Map
Schedule
Rules

Mailboxes:

Paper for people to design
Bags
Tape to put up (push pins?)
Pens to create art with

Site:

Yellow caution tape
Stakes
Duct tape?
Signs for cabin: cabin name, number that
can sleep there
Touch group signs
Workshop signs

Parking

Parking flashlights (light sabers)

Touch Group Packets

Explanation of times and what each time
does
Rocks
Pens for designing/paint
List of games/explanations for leaders of
games

Worship

Driftwood
Peanut butter
Candles

Workshops

Supplies TBD

Mug Books

Camera Tripod
Digital Camera
Computer?

No-Talent Show

Stage
Microphone
Anything else?

Dance

Music
Speakers
Lighting? Anyone?

Free Food

Drinks
Sandwich stuff
Fruit/Vegetables
Sugar
Vegetarian/Vegan
Utensils
Plates/Napkins

Step 5: Items to make

The last planning meeting is a great time to get essential items made. Think about:

- Backdrop for mug book photos
- Posters for the dorms (don't rename cabins and then give them a touch group name too. It just confuses everyone.)
- Do you want a special Con Chalice? It's a great memento afterwards of what you accomplished.
- Consider making small chalices for those who have helped your planning team along the way, your theme speaker, etc., as a thank you.
- Review the song list for the dance.
- What else?

Welcome or Registration Packets:

Welcome packets are given out during registration. They should include a clearly-labeled map of the conference site, a complete schedule, a name tag, and the attendee's assigned touch group. These can be combined into one item with the name tag on one side/schedule on back/map in the middle/touch group name written in on name tag side, but be sure everything is legible, and always provide master versions in the main gathering hall of all information.

Name Tags:

Name tags are to identify each conferee's name, but they may also be used to indicate which touch group they are in. Finding people with a similar name tag makes it easy to find the others in your touch group. Make them original and theme oriented. You can even design your own name tags on the Friday night of the conference. String held tags or bracelets work best. Insist that people wear their name tags so that first-timers or newcomers don't feel excluded. Not everyone knows everybody! It's also a safety tool – if someone walks onto the Con campus and they shouldn't be there, your first clue will be that they don't have a name tag. **Best practice:** put the schedule on the back so it is always close at hand.

Mailboxes:

Don't forget this vital communication system. People love to know when others think of them. Mailboxes can be simple paper lunch sacks, decorated with crayons, markers, stickers, glitter, etc. Set up a decorating station and make sure there are supplies out for decorating. Tape (using blue tape) the completed "mailbox" sacks to the wall and you have a regular post office. It helps if the planning group brings some little things (Hershey kisses, a stick of gum, a balloon, etc.) to put in mailboxes once or twice during the con. This was everyone is assured of getting something, and no one feels left out.

Step 6: Making sure your team is ready

Really, this is just reiterating what was said above. Before people leave the last planning meeting, be sure they have done what they need to do. Don't let people be flakes. They have joined this team, and they need to be responsible for what they have agreed to do.

Step 7: Most Important Step: The Special Responsibilities of the Planning Team at Con.

Why is this step most important? Because it is.

Con Planning Teams are the coolest kids on campus. They are usually a great mix of the people who have been leaders at other Cons, whether explicitly or implicitly. You've all taken a stake in the Con Culture, and you're infusing other people with energy.

That's sexy, baby.

Some people find you sexy just because they do, and would whether or not you were involved with the planning team. Others see you up there, infused with joy and on a total high of putting this together and seeing it happen, and think, "Wow! I want to know that person!" Or perhaps in the course of handling con, you get introduced to more people and you meet someone really cool. Regardless of how it happens, you, as staff, need to be extra careful of your position, for several reasons:

- You are setting the tone for the con-goers, and you are creating the community that is tending to their welfare. If you ignore the boundaries, or are rude or thoughtless to someone, it carries extra impact. You have both the ability to create greater joy and greater hurt to those attending.
- You are a leader and in a position to make judgments. Always try to solve the problem; don't assume it can't be done because it hasn't been addressed so far. If you have to say no, do so in the nicest way possible.
- You do have to uphold the rules. If you don't uphold them, why would anyone else? People are watching you. They will follow your lead.
- You need to enforce the rules. If you aren't comfortable doing so yourself, approach a chaplain, the deans, other staff, a sponsor, the nurse... but don't let situations spiral out of control. You assume responsibility by being on staff, and you need to carry out your responsibilities.

In short, at this Con, you have power. You may not feel like you do, but you do. Because of this, you need to be extra-careful in how you deal with people. This doesn't mean you can't have fun. It means that you have to give an extra measure of consideration to your actions and consider their impact not just as an attendee, but as a staff member.

This is all found in the ethics statement you agree to on the registration form. Please be sure you read it.

Ethics statement to Youth in Leadership Positions at CON
(host planning group and YAC members):

Youth in leadership positions are uniquely visible and influential in any conference community. They should recognize that power imbalances exist in their interactions with other conferees. Inappropriate sexual behavior is never acceptable; additionally, youth leaders should remain aware of the impact of their actions and behave accordingly. Youth who abuse their roles as leaders, consciously or not, can damage individuals and the community. Youth leaders are expected to use their influence in a positive manner.

Power is sexy. Energy is sexy. You will be very visible and wanted during Con. Remember to use your power for Good.

Step 8: Planning Group Maintaining Their Sanity During the Con:

By the time the con rolls around, the planning group will be pretty exhausted. You will be "on duty" during the entire con, making sure that things are running smoothly, dealing with issues and logistical problems, making sure workshops and worships happen, etc. You probably won't be able to enjoy the

con as you normally might, but planning it is not supposed to be so taxing a job that you are totally wasted during the con. Delegate freely during the weekend! Get youth from other congregations to help with the worships, emceeding an event, setting out more free food, setting and cleaning up from meals and sharing in clean-up at the end of the weekend. Ask adult sponsors to help you as well, or require that Touch Groups do a job during the weekend. Don't volunteer to do more than your assigned job! Don't take on a job just because nobody else signed up for it! Take some breaks where you can relax and enjoy yourself. Figure out other ways that you can be kind to yourself and preserve your sanity during the weekend while still "on duty."

AFTER THE CON IS OVER

Months of hard work and meetings and planning details have ended with a really successful experience for you and the con-goers. The planning group has bonded incredibly well, but everyone is pretty tired. It is time to congratulate yourselves on a job well done! Set a date for a post-con party or activity to celebrate all your hard work and wind up your experience. Ask some adults for help in this celebratory event.

Before you celebrate your success, there are still some details to attend to. Get the planning group together to debrief. Appoint someone to take good notes. Discuss what went well, what didn't go so well, and what changes you would make. This discussion could be framed by content areas: Pre-Conference Planning and Registration; Program; Finances; Communication; Food; Site. Make concrete suggestions that can be passed on to the next group, the District YES, and the Program Specialist. Your input is valuable to other planning groups.

Be sure to write thank you notes to the theme speaker and workshop leaders. If a CAC was convened, make sure that the Youth Con Consultant and the Program Specialist each get a copy of the incident report.

The Treasurer must gather everyone's reimbursement vouchers and forward them to the district bookkeeper (receipts attached). S/he must create a Con Financial report. This report details the amount of income from registrations, t-shirt sales, food sales, etc. and then details all the expenses of the con. The result is an accounting of whether the con lost money or made money. This Send a copy of this report to the Youth Con Consultant and the Program Specialist.

The youth of this district *thank you* for putting so much energy and time into hosting a con. Your contribution to vibrant youth programming in the district is much appreciated.

Part IV: Position Planning

Conference Chair

The Chair plays **the** critical role during the planning time. Con Chair duties include:

- Convening and facilitating all con planning meetings
- Making sure everything is on schedule and people are doing their assigned jobs.
- Ensuring information and resources get to those involved in planning
- Keeping in touch with both the adult advisor and the youth con consultants with progress reports
- Setting the tone for the success of the planning team
- Being pro-active about providing help and checking in with team members.

The Chair works closely with the Dean (and may also be a dean). The key difference is the con chair is the primary administrator prior to the Con; on-site, the Dean(s) is (are) the person(s) most responsible for ensuring Con functions well. It is important this person be a good leader and has the confidence to lead others, so the planning team goes into Con confident about themselves and their roles. When that happens, Cons are usually very successful. When that doesn't happen, there tend to be more behavior issues, less clear boundaries and issues with people not knowing where to go or what to do. The leadership of the Con Chair is vital to overall Con success.

The Con Chair also serves on the Conference Affairs Committee.

Key set-up tasks:

- Organizing people
- Ensuring the site location is chosen & deposit is made
- Facilitating key decisions about the theme, design, con clothing & colors
- Staying in touch with the adult advisor & youth con consultants
- Setting up an online group or organizing other form of pooling & posting information.

Key foundational tasks

- Facilitating meetings as necessary
- Checking in with positions & making sure people are getting work done
- Being the liaison between the con planning team & the district

Key con creation tasks:

- Facilitating meetings as necessary
- Making sure every position is ready for Con
- Overseeing needed purchases
- Coordinating arrival on site, ensuring everything & everyone gets to Con

Registrar

The Registrar is probably the time-consuming position on the conference planning committee, and one of the most intense, especially just before Con. We can use the official District Registrar, which can make things easier.

Foundation planning duties:

- Create the registration form (see sample)
- Get the registration form approved by the Youth Con Consultant who will get additional approval from the District Registrar and Program Specialist.
- Email registration form to Program Specialist Tandi Rogers Koerger: tkoerger@uua.org who will send it to the congregations and post it on the www.pnwd.org calendar and list-serves.
- Contact the District Registrar Jenell DeMatteo: dematteo@olypen.com and let her know who you are. She will be sending you registration database updates 1 month, 3 weeks, 2 weeks, and 1 week out.

Con creation tasks:

- Create and mail a Youth confirmation letter (sample enclosed)
- Mail a Sponsor confirmation letter, listing the youth that claim that person as their sponsor (sample enclosed)
- Send first-time con-goers a First Time Attendee letter – both youth and sponsors
- Know the Program Specialist does background checks on sponsors who do not have them on file with their home congregation and will double check sponsor and youth lists with the sponsors and the home congregation. If there are changes she will notify you.
- Be sure to have the final list on hand at the con, and e-mail a completed roster to the Youth Con Consultant.

You will have a ton of phone calls & emails during this time. Enlist people to help you if you need it. Don't burn out before Con even starts. Remember to back-up your file: I can't tell you how many people have lost the registration file when their computer crashed...

On-site tasks:

- Handle concerns and questions as they arise from both youth and sponsors. If you have difficult problems that need to be addressed, please let either the Youth Con Consultant or Program Specialist know. They've got your back.
- Help put together Welcome Packets
- Direct registration of conferees as they arrive

Confirmation Packets:

A confirmation packet will be sent to all who register, preferably 10 days before the con. Please include: the address and phone for the site; the phone number of the Head Sponsor; the emergency cell phone number for the weekend; the schedule for the weekend; map and directions to the site; registration time and closing circle time; ferry schedules as necessary; what to bring; and a reminder of the rules. (See the sample letter.)

First time attendees get the YRUU First Time Attendee Letter. Sponsors get the above information and a letter detailing their responsibilities as adult sponsor. (See samples on following pages)

SUPERHEROES

Youth Spring Con 2007
March 23-25, 2007
Camp Killoqua,
Stanwood, WA

SuperHeroes: To Infinity and Beyond!
✧YRUU Visioning for the FUTURE✧

You Need Ordinary People to be Superheroes

We, your PNWD District Team, know that one of the greatest parts of being a Unitarian Universalist Youth is the sense of community that occurs when we come together as one. We also know that UU Youth can party like no other!

So we invite you, the Youth of the Pacific Northwest District, to bring your own individual energy, warmth, and light to a wild weekend of fun, bonding, and spiritual growth. Your superhero abilities and attire (cape, spandex, whatever makes you whole) are also needed!

Would you like to lead a TOUCH GROUP? You know you wanna.

If interested, contact Emily @ blahblah.net

Would you like to lead a WORKSHOP? We would love it if you would!

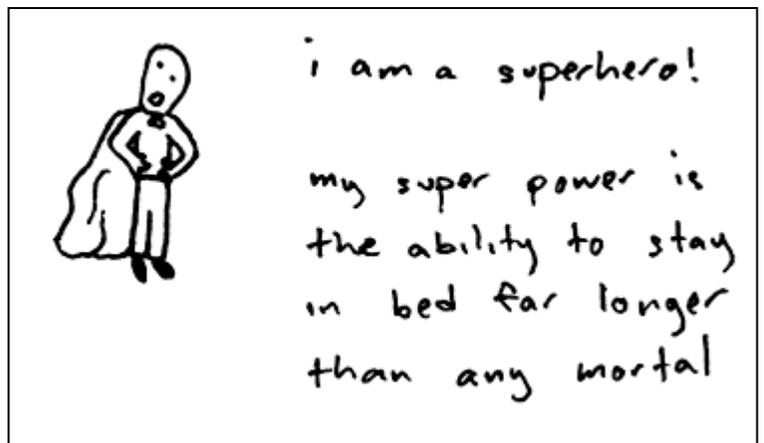
If interested, contact Ben @ blahblah.com

Be sure to include a list of supplies and materials you made need so we can help you out.

Because of the ✧YRUU Visioning for the FUTURE✧, workshop opportunities are limited at this con, so please contact us as soon as possible.

Please let us know your ideas and what you would like to help with!

Thank you, the planning committee!



drawing by drew, www.toothpastefordinner.com

SUPERHEROES
Youth Spring CON 2007
Camp Killoqua, Stanwood, WA
March 23-25, 2007

Superheroes are ordinary people who do extraordinary things!

Who: Con is for Unitarian Universalist, high school youth ages 14-20 who are active in a BC or PNWD congregation.

What: ✨ **YRUU Visioning for the FUTURE** ✨ - *As a group of SuperYouth, we have the awesome opportunity to be part of the planning for the future of YRUU. People from throughout the UUA & PNWD are visiting on Saturday to listen to our desires and concerns about our future activities as UU youth. This SuperVisioning activity will take the place of our normal theme speaker, and **we need everyone attending Con to be SuperCommitted to participate in these activities.** Help heal the world and make YRUU a better place. ✨Use your SuperPowers for good!! ✨*

Costs:

- If postmarked by March 1st: \$85 USD
- If postmarked after March 1st: \$100 USD
- Make checks and money orders payable to: **PNWD-UUA** (please put Youth Spring CON 2007 in the notation—do not send cash through mail)

Registration Information:

- **Due Date: No forms will be accepted after March 19th.** And for the sake of the entire Con Planning Committee's sanity, **please get your registration in ASAP! Thanks!**
- **First Come First Served:** Space is limited to the first **200 people**.
- **No Walk-ins** allowed. If you arrive without having registered, you will be sent home at your expense.
- **Confirmation:** After the registrar receives your registration form, a confirmation email including site and con rules, directions, what to bring, contact information for the campsite and other useful reminders and information will be sent to you. If you do not receive a confirmation email by **March 20th**, please call or email your registrar and they will assist you.

Special Instructions for Canadians: Remember that forms from Canada need to go in an envelope with first-class postage for mailing to the USA. Check with the Post Office for the currency exchange rate. Groups from Canadian churches can send one money order for all attendees from individual churches, to save the cost of multiple money orders. Make sure that it is clear which attendees are covered by the money order. Ideally, all registrations and the one money order would be mailed together. **All funds must be in U.S. dollars.**

Questions, Comments, Concerns:

Registrar Name

Address

Phone Number

email@blahblah.com

Mail Registrations to:

Jenell DeMatteo, District Registrar PNWD, PO Box 84, Chimacum, WA 98325

dematteo@olypen.com

Thank you and Please keep this page for future reference

REGISTRATION FORM – **EVERYONE**

I am (circle):	Youth participant	Youth Staff	Adult
Name	_____		
Address	_____	City	_____ State ____ Zip _____
Telephone ()	_____		
E-mail (print clearly)	_____		
Date of Birth	____-____-____	Age	_____ Sex: M F
Congregation:	_____		
Print the name of your adult advisor:	_____		

Scholarship Information—We are providing half scholarships for people with special needs or circumstances. Please check first with your church and/or your DRE for available funds; if that is not possible, please note below, and the registrar will contact you.

- Do you need a scholarship? Yes No

Please let us know the following:			
• Is this your first Con?	Yes	No	
• I prefer eating foods/snacks of the following:	Vegetarian	Vegan	Omnivore
• I'd like to stay in a cabin with:	All girls	All boys	Co-ed
• I want to sleep in a ____ cabin:	Quiet	Medium	Loud
• Would you like to lead a TOUCH GROUP?	Yes	No	
• Would you like to lead a Workshop?	Yes	No	

What **one** song do you want to hear at the dance? **(title & artist, please!)**

AIM/MSN screen name for mug book (MUST BE **LEGIBLE**): _____

Want A Superhero Costume? We've got **sweatshop-free short and long sleeve t-shirts for sale!**

	Cost: Before March 7	After	
7			March
<u>Short sleeve T-shirt</u> S M L XL XXL	\$12	\$14	
<u>Long sleeve t-shirt</u> S M L XL XXL	\$15	\$17	

Amount Enclosed

Registration Fee:	\$ _____	(\$85 USD before March 7 /
Shirt fee:	\$ _____	\$100 USD after March 7)
Total enclosed	\$ _____	

Checks and Money orders payable to: PNWD-UUA. Do not send cash through mail.
Mail registration forms to: Jenell DeMatteo, District Registrar, PO Box 84, Chimacum, WA 98325

AGREEMENT FORM – YOUTH

Name of youth: _____

Please circle: Participant Youth staff at CON* (host planning group or YAC)

Ethics Statement: The PNWD YRUU youth conferences are for people interested in exploring their personal Unitarian Universalism within a larger UU youth community and learning how to grow their local group. While intimate relationships are Super and part of healthy, human nature, we've found that sexual behavior excludes people at Cons and makes others uncomfortable. That's not Super. We invite Con goers to consider this and apply it to their decisions while at this Spring Con.

***Ethics statement to Youth in Leadership Positions at CON** (host planning group and YAC members) Youth in leadership positions are uniquely visible and influential in any conference community. They should recognize that power imbalances exist in their interactions with other conferees. Inappropriate sexual behavior is never acceptable; additionally, youth leaders should remain aware of the impact of their actions and behave accordingly. Youth, who abuse their roles as leaders, consciously or not, can damage individuals and the community. Youth leaders are expected to use their influence in a positive manner.

Conference Release

1. I understand that alcohol, tobacco, drugs, drug paraphernalia, weapons/explosives, sexual activity between the neck and the knees, pets, leaving the site, disrespecting the site and its property, disrespect for others and others property are all disruptive to the building of community. I will therefore not engage in such activities.
2. I will sign and abide by the Code of Ethics.
3. I agree to abide by the rules of the site and the laws of the city and state where the conference is being held.
4. I understand that if I violate these rules I may be asked to leave the conference at my own expense and/or may not be allowed to participate in future PNWD YRUU events.

Code of Ethics for Youth

Sexuality is a healthy and important part of young people's lives, but to keep EVERYONE feeling included and to keep a strong sense of community, everyone must abide by the following: I agree to do my best to contribute to the welcoming atmosphere and do my utmost to respect those around, as well as those not around me. It is tremendously important that boundaries--physical, sexual, emotional, or other be respected. Abuse and harassment will NOT be tolerated.

I, _____, have read, understand, and agree to abide by all the rules of this conference. I agree that if I break the rules I may be asked to leave at my own or my parent's/guardian's expense.

Signed (youth) _____ **Date** _____

AGREEMENT FORM - ADULTS

Name: _____

Please circle: *Adult Sponsor Adult participant Adult Staff member

*Sponsors/Advisors: Please attach a list to your registration form with the names of the youth you have agreed to sponsor. There is a 1:10 ratio of adults to youth.

Conference Release for Adults and Adult Sponsors

I understand that alcohol, tobacco, drugs, drug paraphernalia, weapons/explosives, sexual activity between the neck and the knees, pets, leaving the site, disrespecting the site and its property, disrespect for others and other's property are all disruptive to the building of community. I will therefore not engage in such activities. I will abide by the Code of Ethics.

I agree to abide by the rules of the site and the laws of the city and state where the conference is being held. I understand that if I violate these rules I may be asked to leave the conference at my own expense and/or may not be allowed to participate in future PNWD YRUU events.

Code of Ethics for Adults & Adult Sponsors

Adults are in a position of stewardship and play a key role in fostering the spiritual development of both individuals and the community. It is, therefore, especially important that adults be qualified to provide the special nurture, care, and support that will enable youth to develop positive sense of self and responsibility. The relationship between young people and adults must be one of mutual respect if the positive potential of their relationship is to be realized.

There are no more important areas of growth than those of self-worth and the development of a healthy identity as a sexual being. Adults play a key role in assisting youth in these areas of growth. Wisdom dictates that you and adults suffer damaging effects when leaders become sexually involved with young persons in their care. Therefore, leaders will refrain from engaging in sexual, seductive, or erotic behavior with youth. Neither shall they sexually harass or engage in behavior with youth, which constitutes verbal, emotional, or physical abuse. **Leaders shall be informed of the code of ethics and agree to it before assuming their role. In cases of violation of this code, appropriate action will be taken.**

I, _____, have read, understand, and agree to abide by all the rules and code of ethics of this conference. I agree that if I break the rules I may be asked to leave at my own expense.

Signature _____ Date _____

Printed Name: _____ Congregation: _____

***For Adult Sponsors Only**

With this signature, I, as Minister, Youth Advisor, or DRE, am acknowledging that the attached youth on the list have been involved in youth group or other church activities and are active UU's. Because of this, I am happy to be their sponsor for Spring CON 2007.

Signature _____ Date _____

Printed Name: _____

Medical/Photo Release - EVERYONE

***Parental Signatures Required**

Name of CON Participant: _____

Please circle: Adult Youth

Medical Conditions:

Describe any physical limitations and/or restrictions, disabilities, medical or food allergies, etc. Please list all medications you are currently taking. (Use back of sheet if necessary)

Restrictions/allergies: _____

Date of last Tetanus shot: _____

Emergency Contact Info: List two individuals in your family/community whom we may contact.

1. Name: _____ Relationship _____
Telephone: Home (____)_____ Work: (____)_____ Cell: (____)_____

2. Name: _____ Relationship _____
Telephone: Home (____)_____ Work: (____)_____ Cell: (____)_____

Participants 18 years or older: I hereby give consent to the camp staff to seek emergency medical treatment for me including related transportation, ordering x-rays, routine tests, anesthetic, medical and surgical diagnosis or treatment, or hospital services. I agree to the release of any records necessary for insurance purposes.

I grant permission for Pacific Northwest District of the Unitarian Universalist Association to use any quotations, photographs, or videotapes of my child/ me during this event for promotional purposes.

Signature _____ Date _____

***Custodial Parent/Guardian of participants under the age of 18:**

I am the parent/guardian of _____, who will be attending the Con. I hereby give my consent and authority for the staff of the program to take any reasonable action to ensure the safety, health, and welfare of my son/daughter. I understand that my youth will be required to follow the rules of the PNWD Con and the site used and that a breach of those rules may result in my youth being sent home at my expense. I expect to be contacted to arrange travel home if it becomes necessary.

In the event that I, the custodial parent or guardian, cannot be reached in an emergency, I hereby give permission to the physician selected by the camp to secure and administer treatment including hospitalization and surgical care if needed for the camper named in this registration.

I grant permission for Pacific Northwest District of the Unitarian Universalist Association to use any quotations, photographs, or videotapes of my child/ me during this event for promotional purposes.

Parent/Guardian signature _____ Date _____

Printed Name of Parent/Guardian _____

Sample Con Confirmation Letter – All Youth

If you have received this letter, you have been accounted for and are set to go to [CON NAME]. If you have requested anything, signed up for leading a workshop, offered to help in any way, or have a special situation, we will be in touch with you soon. The schedule and supplies to bring are included in this letter. We look forward to seeing you after 6:00 p.m. on [DATE], the official registration time. Thank you!

Please remember: An all-camp meal is not provided Friday night. There will be some free food out, but you may want to bring some of your own as well.

Date: [Date]

Theme: [Theme]

Activities include a dance, bonfire, capture the flag, talent show

Reminders:

- ❖ Adult sponsors must be at least 25 years old and youth must be between 14 and 20 years old.
- ❖ Sponsors and youth must be active in a Unitarian Universalist congregation.
- ❖ No sexual activity between the neck and the knees, which includes intercourse and outcourse. Fully clothed hugs, kisses, and backrubs (all by consent) are appropriate between youth at cons.
- ❖ No smoking, illegal drugs, drug paraphernalia or alcohol.
- ❖ No pets, weapons, or explosives.
- ❖ No walk-ins or walk-outs.
- ❖ No swimming.
- ❖ No leaving the site.

What to bring:

- ❖ Flashlight **with your name on it**
- ❖ Extra batteries
- ❖ Sleeping bag
- ❖ Pillow, blankets, etc
- ❖ Warm clothes (!!) and extra socks
- ❖ Toiletries
- ❖ No-talent show stuff
- ❖ Camera
- ❖ Money for a t-shirt if you didn't order and pay already

What not to bring:

- ❖ Drugs, drug paraphernalia
- ❖ Alcohol
- ❖ Tobacco
- ❖ Weapons
- ❖ Expensive possessions
- ❖ Exclusive items (mp3 player, laptop, cell phone, etc.)

**** PLEASE LEAVE PERSONAL LAPTOPS AND MP3 PLAYERS AT HOME****

Unless you are expecting an emergency call or have an on-going, precarious situation at home, please leave your cell phones behind or turned off for the weekend. Especially you, sponsors! If there is an emergency and your family needs to reach you, they can call the camp at [phone] or on-site contact, X, at [phone].

**There will be a chance to purchase Con clothing at the Con. They will be available both Saturday and Sunday. Please bring a little extra money if you think you might want to purchase these items.

Directions can be found at <http://www.pnwdyouth.org/directions.htm>.

And more information on Camp Adams can be found at <http://www.cpcucc.org/adams.htm>

Sample Con Confirmation Letter – New Youth

Sample Confirmation Letter – All Sponsors

Dear Sponsors,

Thank you for supporting youth programming in our district. This is the stuff good memories and strong faith connections are made of. We appreciate your support.

N.B. Friday night there is no food at Con. Free food will be out and available, but either bring food with you on the ride to Con, or arrange to stop somewhere along the way. We will provide a sack lunch for the ride home.

Please aim to arrive on site no later than 9:00 p.m. The camp will lock the gate at 10 p.m., and you really don't want to have to walk all your stuff in.

As a sponsor, you're in charge of keeping tabs of the youth in your care. This does not mean being with them at all times, but we do encourage you to check in periodically. Many sponsors have a rule either of seeing their youth every meal or at least one meal a day. "Seeing" the kids doesn't mean catching a glimpse of them across the room – say hello, have a short conversation, check their emotional energy. If it's their first Con, ask them whom they've met or something fun they did. Get a read on their overall health and be sure they are having a good time. If a youth in your care runs into trouble or makes a poor choice resulting in the calling of a Conference Affairs Committee meeting, know that you will be called in to assist. It's best that everyone knows the expectations ahead of time.

General Guidelines

Try to:

- be a reassuring presence, visible but unobtrusive
- be non-judgmental and flexible
- know the schedule and rules
- delegate to and problem-solve with youth
- protect the facility property in a friendly manner
- socialize, drawing youth and yourself into the community
- advise, suggest ideas, ask questions without directing

Avoid:

- monopolizing or dominating
- acting hastily
- being or looking like a one-dimensional "cop"
- overplaying little things
- ordering youth around
- adult cliques
- doing (whatever) by yourself; involve others
- not having fun

This event can be seen as a dynamic organism with a life of its own: it is youth community. This culture thrives on a creative blend of steering and energy from youth, together with insight and support from adults. Our intention is that the sponsors for this conference will work in conjunction with youth leaders and conferees as a team, caring for each other and for the conference's needs.

One of the key ways you can make sure your youth have a great time at Con is to know that they, and you, are aware of the RULES. Even if your kids swear up and down they know the rules, go over them with the youth anyway. **Especially** if you have first-time Con goers, go over the rules. **Most of our rules violations occur with first-time Con goers.** The rules are pretty simple, it doesn't take long. We never want to hear, "I didn't know that was the rule." Here are the basics:

- Adult sponsors must be at least 25 years old and youth must be between 14 and 20 years old. Youth must be actively involved in their congregation.
- No sexual activity between the neck and the knees which includes intercourse and outercourse. Fully clothed hugs, kisses, and backrubs (all by consent) are appropriate between youth at cons.
- One body, one bag. Youth may be in puppy piles, either without sleeping bags, or one body, one bag.
- No smoking, illegal drugs, drug paraphernalia, or alcohol

- No pets, weapons, or explosives
- No walk-ins or walk-outs
- No swimming
- Refrain from exclusive behavior. If you want to take a time out or some time to yourself, great, but understand that DVD players, mp3 players, cell phones, and laptops, are both attractive for stealing and put a barrier between you and those around you. For the purposes of this weekend, they're generally better left at home.

Rules will be gone over at Orientation as well. Keep in mind, rules apply to adults and youth **equally**. If a sponsor brought alcohol – even though they are of age – they would be brought to the conference affairs committee for a rules violation.

Sponsors and youth are also asked to sign up for a time slot of “Spirit Committee” which walks the grounds **at all hours** looking out for the overall health of the community. This is explained more below, and will also be gone over in more depth at the Sponsor Orientation. I hope you take this opportunity to have fun and bond with the other sponsors and the youth who walk with you. *There are some changes this time around to Spirit Committee that will be gone over at the sponsor orientation, which is at **9:45 p.m. Friday in the downstairs meeting room at the Lodge**. Please be sure you're there in time. Clancy Kelly is our Head Sponsor, and Ward Ramsdell is our “Spirit Committee Guru.”*

Here is some useful information to make your Con a success. Please share this with the youth in your care.

What to bring:

- Flashlight **with your name on it** (helps to navigate the site at night).
- Extra batteries
- Sleeping bag
- Pillow, blankets, etc
- Warm clothes (!!) and extra socks
- Toiletries
- No-talent show stuff or special outfits for the dance
- Camera, if desired *but be careful about the possibility of it being stolen*.
- **Money if you wish to purchase a Con t-shirt or Free Hugs t-shirt on site** (Con tshirts will be \$17; Free Hugs, \$10)

What not to bring:

- Drugs, drug paraphernalia
- Alcohol
- Tobacco
- Weapons
- Expensive possessions
- Exclusive items (mp3 player, laptop, cell phone, etc.)

Make sure your youth have **ALL** forms and money to the registrar by the start of con, when you arrive. We will not accept walk-ins. **People who just show up will be sent home at their own expense**. You should receive confirmation from Anne-Marie Davidson prior to Con about any missing information from you or any of your youth; if anything is noted, please be sure you or your youth have it taken care of prior to Con, or have it in their possession when you leave for attending Con.

Directions to Camp:

Address: 15207 E. Lake Goodwin Road, Stanwood, WA 98292

Office phone: 360-652-6250

Anne-Marie's Cell Phone: 425-246-3581

Your Spirit Committee bids you a special welcome to Superheroes Con!

Who the heck is the Spirit Committee, you ask? The Spirit Committee is comprised of youth leaders who, supported by adult advisors, monitor the "spirit" at a conference. They enable everyone at the event to have fun and feel included and safe by promoting an open and caring atmosphere and by encouraging respect among all members of the community at the event. The Spirit Committee deals with problems should they arise by forming a CAC (Conference Affairs Committee, composed of both youth and adults).who then decides on appropriate consequences (details of the CAC process are attached to this letter.)

1. **We promote inclusive behavior.** Conferences provide an atmosphere where youth are made to feel safe, accepted, and included. Exclusive behavior of any kind takes away from this sense of community. With the goals of safety and community in mind, participants are not allowed to leave the grounds of the conference at anytime without expressed permission from their own advisor and the Co-Deans of the event.
2. **We promote respectful behavior.** Conferences are a place where youth are encouraged and empowered to express themselves. This comes with the responsibility of being respectful towards one another. The space we are in must be respected and cared for; everyone will participate in clean up.
3. **We encourage open-mindedness.** Conferences foster an open community, where people who are different as well as similar are made to feel welcome. Participants will try to remain open to growing in unexpected ways through the love and conflict experienced during the conference.
4. **Sexualized behavior is not allowed.** Exclusive relationships prevent the community from remaining inclusive and safe for all. Sexualized behavior of any kind is not permitted at a district sanctioned conference or district event.
5. **Possession or use of drugs and alcohol are prohibited.** Possessing, using, or being under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol is not permitted at any district sanctioned youth conference. Possessing drug paraphernalia (even without drugs) is also prohibited. This destroys the safe atmosphere, as well as puts all of the participants at risk. They are also illegal and put our wider community at risk (ie. No more Cons.)
6. **Violence, abuse, and/or harassment are unacceptable.** All forms of abuse, harassment, and/or violence (physical, verbal, sexual, or otherwise) will not be tolerated during any district sanctioned event. **Weapons are not permitted**, and will be viewed as intending or ignoring the possibility of a violent outcome. No one can vouch for how others will behave if they were to mistakenly come into possession of an object.
7. **Have fun.**

What is a CAC?

Conference Affairs Committee Process

Using a consensus decision-making model, the Conference Affairs Committee deals with problems which arise that are not related to running the conference. Usually this relates to incidents in which participants act in ways which jeopardize the community (i.e. breaking conference rules). The CAC meets to problem solve and has the authority to hold participants accountable for their behavior. The CAC may or may not determine the consequences of such behavior – which can include sending participants home or not allowing them to come to future conferences.

Composition of the CAC:

- 1 youth from the PNWD Youth Ministry Consultant team
- 1 adult from the PNWD Youth Ministry Consultant team
- 2 youths from the conference planning group (ideally, a dean and a registrar)
- Head Sponsor or 1 adult from the conference planning group
- Person(s) who allegedly broke conference rules
- Sponsor of the person accused of rule violation
- Person(s) who reported the rule violation
- 1 conference chaplain or minister

Order of Procedure for a CAC Meeting:

The person(s) who report the violation must make sure the Dean(s) are notified of the violation, and if there is reason enough for a CAC meeting, the Dean(s) must inform the members of the CAC (see above) that the CAC will meet at a specified time and place. *It is very important to have the CAC meeting as soon as possible after the violation is reported.*

CAC Process: The process must be conducted with as much love, compassion, and fairness as possible.

- The group nominates someone to be the facilitator for the discussion.
- The group appoints someone to fill out the Incident Report Form after the process is complete.
- The facilitator outlines the process to the rest of the group.
- The facilitator reviews the ground rules for the process: no name-calling, use “I statements,” listen while each person speaks, etc.
- Try to meet in a circle for more effective communication.
- The person reporting the violation has five minutes to explain the infraction as s/he saw it.
- Witnesses, as necessary, may be permitted to speak.
- Person who allegedly broke the rules has five minutes to explain his/her behavior.
- Person who allegedly broke the rules has three minutes to ask clarifying type questions of the reporter as necessary.
- Person reporting the violation and other CAC members have five minutes to ask questions of the alleged violator. These questions should be focused on the violation, not on the consequences.
- The CAC members, minus the accused and the reporter, will decide on the appropriate consequences.
- If the violator is asked to leave the conference, his/her sponsor and the Dean will immediately make the arrangements for this to happen. If parents are asked to pick up the youth, the youth will be removed from further con activities and must stay alone in an area with his/her sponsor or other assigned adult until the parents arrive.
- The conference chaplain or minister should speak with the violator to make sure s/he understands that the consequence was a response to the behavior exhibited – to the rule violation – and not to the individual.

Sample Confirmation Letter - New Sponsors

As a new sponsor to this Con process, welcome! We are excited to have you as part of our community and this crazy little thing call Con. As a new sponsor, we understand that Con can be a little frightening and daunting as well, so here are some additional pointers to the main sponsor letter we sent out.

- It's okay to find Con overwhelming. If you aren't someone who attended Cons as a youth, adjusting to the energy at Con can be quite something. Do what you can to participate, but if you need to head out to a quiet cabin and read or sleep or hang out with others, feel free to do that.
- You ARE welcome to participate in all aspects of Con – except one. One of the best ways to enjoy con is to take part in it. Worship, games, touch groups, mug books, the dance, no-talent show – all of it is open to sponsors as well as youth. You can sleep in youth-dominated cabins (though how much sleep you get...). The one aspect you can't participate in? There isn't to be any intimate contact between adults and youth, such as an adult being part of a puppy pile or snuggling with the youth at night.
- Youth can and will have Con Flings, drape themselves all over each other, kiss, massage, and lay about in groups of 30 on top of one another. They will also sleep (one body, one bag) in piles from 2-10. This is okay. They will mostly be in co-ed cabins, and that's okay. Sexual contact below the neck and above the knees is not okay. We put our trust in them to respect those boundaries, and in the vast, vast majority of cases, they do. This can be hard to handle at first. If you have issues with it, talk to the Head Sponsor or chaplain, youth on the planning committee, or other youth leaders present at the Con.
- Adults are not in charge at Con. This isn't to say we don't have a responsibility. But one of the reasons why PNWD cons are the largest in the country is because we trust our youth to be the leaders, and they respond magnificently. If you see youth up to something you think isn't kosher, ask a youth. If they agree, ask them to go talk to the other youth about changing their behavior. They'll do it, and the whole community will be stronger for the leadership coming from the youth rather than the adults. It is amazing and beautiful energy, and we want to keep it that way. It's Religious Education and leadership development at its finest.

Two critical things we want to ask of you/be sure you know:

- There's **no food** provided on Friday night. Either bring food, or stop along the way. We will have free food out and available, but it's intended to be supplemental, not your main meal.
- Go over the rules with your kids. Even if they swear they know them, say, "I'm new – so why don't you tell me the rules?" See if they get them all. If you've got new kids, tell the old kids it's a refresher for them, and education for the new youth. Most rules violations happen to first-time con goers who swear they never heard that rule. So even though we'll cover it in orientation, covering it prior to arrival is even better.

If you have any other problems, questions, issues prior to or during con, you can contact adult leaders Anne-Marie Davidson (amkdavidson@gmail.com); Clancy Kelly, Head Sponsor (cpkelly1@msn.com), or Ward Ramsdell, Spirit Committee Guru (wramsdell@comcast.net) or youth leaders Lizzie Lamb, Con Chair/Dean (purpleduckfeathers@hotmail.com), Allison Krause, Worship/Chaplain (soccerpoet7@yahoo.com), or Grace Evans, Dean, (pink-kangaroo-box@comcast.net).

Dean

The dean or co-deans are your hosts on-site. They need to know what is happening, when, where, and who is responsible. Deans should be strong youth leaders, able to influence their peers and willing to make decisions. They should have been to several Cons so they have an idea of the different issues that can come up and atmospheres that take place at Con. While during the planning process they are more passive than active, they do need to be attending all meetings and familiar with what will happen at Con.

Dean duties include:

- Leading orientation
- Making announcements as needed as Con progresses.
- Working with the sponsors to communicate concerns or challenges from the adults as well as the youth
- Attending the sponsor orientations.
- Being the liaison between the various groups on site, including the site hosts

One Dean serves on the Conference Affairs Committee.

Key foundational tasks

- Attending all meetings so you're familiar with who is doing what, where, and when.

Key con creation tasks:

- Attending all meetings so you're familiar with who is doing what, where, and when.

On-site tasks:

- Being the host/ess. Welcome people. Help direct them where they need to go.
- Keep an eye on the planning team and be sure all tasks are being covered and the planning team is involved. Also be sure people are getting breaks.
- Conduct orientation.
- Attend the sponsor orientation.
- Make announcements on site as needed.
- Be the visible face of the planning team: you are the go-to person.
- Be a problem-solver. If something isn't working out how it was intended, what else can you do to make it work? Can it be done differently?

Orientation

The orientation includes a thorough explanation of the rules, the sleeping arrangements, the Spirit Committee, the Conference Affairs Committee and rule infraction consequences, and the responsibility of all present to build inclusive community. Any special site rules should also be explained (examples might include no swimming, no candles in cabins, which camp areas are off limits, etc). The planning group should introduce themselves and their jobs. People will need to know who to contact if the toilet backs up, the free food runs out, or they can't find their touch group. Also make sure that everyone knows where the first aid station is located. Youth Ministry Consultants should introduce themselves and explain how to get involved in district programs. The Head Sponsor, chaplains, camp nurse, and theme speaker should all be introduced.

You will need to go over the schedule and sites for events. You will need to explain the cabin arrangements, and where the all-night room will be. Explain how touch groups operate. Ask frequently if they have questions or need clarification on anything.

Orientation Outline

Staff Introductions

Introduce everyone on staff and how they can be identified.

Introduce head sponsor, chaplains, nurse, and explain where they can be found.

Introduce spirit committee head & where the 24-hour staffed area will be.

Introduce district representatives – Youth Ministry Consultants, Con Consultants

Explain who has walkie-talkies

Schedule Review

You don't to go event-by-event, but hit any changes from the past, and highlight any special events.

Now is a great time to introduce your theme speaker & emphasize that everyone should attend.

Also raise the level of importance on touch groups. Too often touch groups fall apart: in other districts touch groups are the must-do part of con because they are where you really get to know folks. Let's help promote this all-too-cool event.

The Rules!

First of all **SITE RULES**:

Customize these per your site – these are typical of most sites.

- No swimming!
- Respect the boundaries. There is a pond one side of the camp which you shouldn't go past.
- Don't feed the raccoons.
- There's a county noise ordinance of 10 p.m. When you're outside at night, please try to be quiet, especially if you are near the lake.
- If a building is locked, it's not for our use, so please don't try to get in.
- The cabins called XX are for on-site personnel, so don't go into those. (You may also want to post "no-entry" sign on these cabins.)

Also, it's great to give an idea of the space, esp. for those who have arrived after dark – what are the main areas of camp, where should they go to find the quiet cabins vs. medium vs. loud, etc.

YRUU Rules:

- One body, one bag !
 - no sexual activity between the neck and the knees (DO THE SONG)
- Respect space bubbles - hug with consent!
- No drugs, paraphernalia, alcohol or weapons at CON

Keeping Con-munity:

- Respect this space
- Take care of each other and yourself
- Affirm the inherent worth and dignity of every Congoer!
- Keep an open mind...and have fun!

Violations of community result in a Conference Affairs Committee or a CAC. This can result in you being banned from future cons or even sent home from this one.

Spirit Committee:

Explain what it is, why spirit committee is there – yes, it's a random check, but it's also a check on

everyone having a good time. If you're having problems, if you're bored, if you're feeling left out – spirit committee is there to help people have a good time.

Spirit Committee will be staffing a 24-hour common area (should be where free food is) with games & hanging out.

Role Play:

How would you handle the following situations?

- Someone taking their shirt off/getting naked?
- Someone clearly disconnected from others at Con?
- Someone swinging off furniture?
- People making out continuously

Emphasize the responsibility of *everyone* for keeping Con a safe, happy place.

Recognize New Con Attendees

You can give them leis, so they 'got lei'd' at Con...

Announcements:

Add in announcements of upcoming Cons, YRUU events, cluster gatherings, or anything else on people's minds.

Conference Affairs Committee

Committee Guidelines:

When dealing with rule infractions at a YRUU conference, the following problem-solving hierarchy is a good guideline:

- Deal with the individual or the group
- Communicate with the Dean
- Convene a Conference Affairs Committee process
- Consult with the District Youth Con Consultant and Program Specialist

Purpose of a Conference Affairs Committee (CAC):

Using a consensus decision-making model, the CAC deals with problems which arise that are not related to running the conference. Usually this relates to incidents in which participants act in ways which jeopardize the community (i.e. breaking conference rules). The CAC meets to problem solve and has the authority to hold participants accountable for their behavior. The CAC may or may not determine the consequences of such behavior – which can include sending participants home or not allowing them to come to future conferences.

Composition of the CAC:

- 1 youth from the PNWD Youth Ministry Consultant team
- 1 adult from the PNWD Youth Ministry Consultant team
- 2 youths from the conference planning group (ideally, a dean and a registrar)
- Head Sponsor or 1 adult from the conference planning group
- person(s) who allegedly broke conference rules
- sponsor of the person accused of rule violation
- person(s) who reported the rule violation
- 1 conference chaplain or minister

Order of Procedure for a CAC Meeting:

The person(s) who report the violation must make sure the Dean(s) are notified of the violation, and if there is reason enough for a CAC meeting, the Dean(s) must inform the members of the CAC (see above) that the CAC will meet at a specified time and place. *It is very important to have the CAC meeting as soon as possible after the violation is reported.*

CAC Process:

The process must be conducted with as much love, compassion, and fairness as possible.

- The group nominates someone to be the facilitator for the discussion.
- The group appoints someone to fill out the Incident Report Form after the process is complete.
- The facilitator outlines the process to the rest of the group.
- The facilitator reviews the ground rules for the process: no name-calling, use “I statements,” listen while each person speaks, etc.
- Try to meet in a circle for more effective communication.
- The person reporting the violation has five minutes to explain the infraction as s/he saw it.
- Witnesses, as necessary, may be permitted to speak.
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- Person who allegedly broke the rules has three minutes to ask clarifying type questions of the reporter as necessary.

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- The CAC members, minus the accused and the reporter, will decide on the appropriate consequences.
- If the violator is asked to leave the conference, his/her sponsor and the Dean will immediately make the arrangements for this to happen. If parents are asked to pick up the youth, the youth will be removed from further con activities and must stay alone in an area with his/her sponsor or other assigned adult until the parents arrive.
- The conference chaplain or minister should speak with the violator to make sure s/he understands that the consequence was a response to the behavior exhibited – to the rule violation – and not to the individual.

CONFERENCE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE INCIDENT REPORT

Incident date and time:

Reported by:

List all CAC members:

Describe the violation:

Who was involved? (names, addresses, phone numbers)

What actions did the CAC take?

Recommendations for further follow-up or feedback:

The report ***must*** be sent to the PNWD Program Consultant in Lifespan Learning and the PNWD YAC Chair within five days of the incident. Please use additional pages as necessary.

Treasurer

The Treasurer is one of the hardest jobs for a youth to fulfill. Most of the treasurer's responsibilities do not start until Con is over, which is when everyone else wants to be done. As well, in terms of handling or creating budget, youth tend not to have much experience with what things cost. If the youth are willing, having an adult handle this position can be very helpful. This will be a responsible, trustworthy person to whom all the checks and money orders are given and who can stay in constant contact with the district bookkeeper. Duties include:

- Email your name, phone, and email address to the District Bookkeeper, Carmen McDowell: bookkeeper@pnwd.org.
- Plan the budget & figure out how much to charge for Con
- For major expenses such as the site deposit, use the expense voucher (<http://www.pnwd.org/pdfs/expvoucher.pdf>) and send in to the district office *two weeks* before you need the money.
- Provide Expense Voucher forms to those planners requesting reimbursement (receipts **must** be attached) for con expenses (supplies, food, postage, etc)
- After con, take all expenses and mail them to the district office for reimbursement. **Be sure** to make a copy of the receipts & expenses in case anything happens to the originals.

Key set-up tasks:

- Getting the site deposit arranged & sent in.

Key foundational tasks

- Providing any expense reimbursement forms as needed.

Key con creation tasks:

- Providing any expense reimbursement forms as needed.

On-site tasks:

- Bring copies of expense forms with you
- Gather any and all receipts from people and have them fill out an expense form.
- Email everything in to the district office immediately following Con.

Workshop Coordinator

Your job is to link the workshops with the chosen theme. Some standard workshops include: massage; bubbles; fishbowl; games; hair dye; social action; art; music/singing; theater sports.

Your duties include:

- With the planning group, decide how many and which workshops you will have
- Ask the Youth Ministry Consultants if they require any workshop slots. They will usually present at least one workshop at each Con.
- Determine the length of time for each workshop
- Solicit and recruit reliable workshop leaders, both youth and adults, and tell them how much time they have
- Coordinate supplies the leaders request and shop for them
- Make signs for workshop locations
- Provide a list of workshops and their locations in the registration packet
- At orientation, outline the various workshop offerings
- Give to the Treasurer any reimbursement requests from workshop leaders
- Send thank you notes to workshop leaders after the con

Key foundational tasks

- Decide on any workshops the planning team feels needs to be offered
- Solicit & recruit leaders for workshops
- Figure out where on site workshops will take place & provide time & space for workshops.
- Publicize that there is a budget for workshops, so if people want to host one that needs supplies, they can do so.

Key con creation tasks:

- Solicit & recruit leaders for workshops
- Figure out where on site workshops will take place & provide time & space for workshops.
- Purchase any supplies needed or coordinate any reimbursement for supplies purchased

On-site tasks:

- Post schedule for each workshop time: which workshops are happening & where
- Check in with your workshop leaders to ensure it's happening
- Be available 15-20 minutes prior to workshops starting to ensure everyone knows where to go and is well set up.
- Ensure workshops get cleaned up.
- Thank workshop leaders for participating.

Worship Coordinator

Since worship sets the tone for the whole weekend, this is a very important position. The opening service should be brief, have some substance, and impress upon people to be open with each other and have a positive attitude about the weekend. Usually the last service has an element of passing the chalice while saying a word or sentence about the experience of the con. A typical worship format includes chalice lighting, welcome, prelude music, affirmation, songs/musical interlude, homily, thoughts, poems, meditation, closing, linking, and bonding. Try to vary your worships: participatory, structured, unstructured, long, short, lively, quiet, etc.

The district does now have both youth and adult chaplains who have been trained in worship development. You are free to use this resource to help you plan worships, either for ideas, or to have them actually plan the worships for you. Contact Tandi Koerger for a list of current chaplains.

Duties of the Worship Coordinator include:

- Create one worship service per day, linked to the theme if possible
- Recruit people to help with each service (as needed)
- Coordinate supplies needed for each service (chalice, candles, aesthetics) and make sure they arrive at the camp
- Select the sites for each service, considering space and heating needs
- Publicize on the schedule where and when each worship service will be
- Set up the site prior to the service

Key foundational tasks

- Plan your worship services
- Visit the site so you have an accurate idea of what spaces are available and how many people they will hold.

Key con creation tasks:

- Have worship services ready & run-through them with the planning team
- Purchase supplies as needed.

One consideration:

While Angel Washes are very popular, they do lose their effectiveness when done every single Con. There are arguments both in favor of making it a fall con event (welcoming new people) and making it a spring con event (saying goodbye to those who are bridging). An angel wash was done at Fall 2007. My personal feeling is that this is better as a fall event. A similar event could be done just for the bridgers in the spring or a variation on the Angel Wash, and give the opportunity to explore other forms of worship in the Spring event.

Touch Group Coordinator

You are responsible for helping to build community among participants. Touch groups and workshops are the only place where you can get to know people closely. They are also an outlet to talk about how participants are feeling about the con. Touch groups will consist of 10-20 people and should meet 3-4 times during the weekend. Duties of the Touch Group Coordinator include:

- Recruit touch group leaders
- Supply leaders with a packet of suggested activities, the “rules” for safe touch group interaction, etc. The more structure and clear direction provided by you, the easier it will be for the leaders to ensure a successful experience. (see the following sample packet)
- Gather resources for touch group leaders and have available at the site.
- From the list of registered youth, assign youth to groups based on mixing geographies and mixing churches (the goal is to get to know **new** people.)
- CLEARLY demonstrate where each group will be meet.
- During orientation, stress the importance of meeting with your touch group
- Contact the touch group leaders before the con to confirm them and answer questions they may have. Be clear what the expectations are.

Key foundation tasks

- Publicize what you want from a touch group leader. The person should feel confident to ask people how they are doing in later groups, to get feedback both good and bad, and to have some idea of how to respond to people who have questions or concerns.
- Decide what you want touch groups to do. Touch groups can be orchestrated to provide more insight around the theme or to engage in events related to the theme. Consider the “5 steps to community” guide as well: what can touch groups do that will push people forward in the later groups? How can the touch group leader help the group grow closer?
- Create your touch group leader guide – use the one on the following pages as a start.
- Decide on your touch group names, which should relate to the theme.
- Try to position touch groups after key events where everyone is gathered together. When people move en masse from one site to another, it makes attendance easier. (After orientation, after breakfast, after theme speaker, etc.)

Key con creation tasks:

- Assign touch group leaders *and let them know*.
- Assign everyone (including adults) to touch groups. Given how many people register late, you can simply write touch groups names on the name tags, shuffle them, and let it be assigned at random when people get to Con. However, this may not mix people up as well as they could be.

On-site tasks:

- Host a touch group leader orientation on site so everyone knows what to expect.
- Be sure all touch group meeting places are clearly labeled.
- Try to have touch groups grouped together in the camp, so the majority of people will at least wind up in a touch group, even if not in their touch group, by heading out in the general right direction.

Sample Touch Group Packet for Touch Group Leaders

Touch Group Leader Letter

Dear Touch Group Leader,

Thank you for taking on this important leadership role! With your help, this will be a fabulous, memorable Con.

First off, **what are touch groups**? Touch groups are small groups of 10-20 people, including adult sponsors, which everyone is assigned to at Con. They serve as focus points for getting to know people more easily, as well as having somewhere to discuss anything that is bothering you about what's going on at the con, and providing a little bit of structure to balance the relative freedom of cons. Typically they evolve over the weekend.

The initial meeting generally focuses on game playing and “get to know you” fun. A variety of games are included with this packet, and there are many more Con favorites – someone in your group will have more ideas. Explain the theme of touch groups names and how it relates to the weekend.

The second meeting may be more community-building, playing games, but also is a good point to have a check-in, see how people are doing at con so far. Ask them what the best thing to have happened to them since they arrived was. Have a group hug. See if there are any issues that need airing.

The third meeting can again be more (active) games, or a chance to share thoughts or stories before heading home. Or both!

Please arrive 10 minutes ahead of when your touch group should start. Hang out and be patient. People are known to wander in early, late, and in between. If you're there to anchor the group, your group will happen.

As you know, the theme of this con is **ConPassion**, a play on the word “compassion”. This weekend is all about being compassionate to one another, and that extends to the touchgroups. While having a good time hanging out and getting to know people in your group, please make sure everything's going compassionately and respectfully.

Also, in accordance with the theme, the groups have been given the names of individuals from history known for their compassion and for helping others.

The group assignments are as follows:

Julian Michels – Jimmy Carter
Lizzie Lamb – John Lennon
Hafidha Acuay – Florence Nightengale
Jordan Bridges – Albert Schweitzer
Allison Krause – Paul Rusesabagina
Skye Rios – Steve Earle
Ian Schurr – Ghandi
Adrian Giesy – Eleanor Roosevelt
Yves Chamberlin – Mother Teresa

Before you get to Con, be sure you know something about your group name and can explain why it was chosen to your group.

Registration begins at 6:00 PM Friday evening, and **touchgroup leader orientation is at 9:30 PM**. I'm looking forward to seeing all of you there, and if you have any questions, don't hesitate to email me at firedreamer12@aol.com.

Maya Berman

Tips & Pointers:

Touch groups are an integral part of youth cons. In a setting in which there are as many as 200 new people around, having a smaller, assigned group where you can more easily meet people can be sanity-saving.

As a touch group leader, it is your job to watch out for the members of your group (not necessarily outside of the meeting times, although sometimes, like with con newbies, that's not a bad idea); be observant – if someone is being left out, or isolating themselves, especially in the Friday night meeting, make an effort to include them. Also, you are responsible for making sure that things stay relatively in control and safe. Don't worry *too* much though – you're also supposed to have a good time, like everyone else!

There will be about three touchgroup meetings over the course of the weekend: one Friday night, one Saturday morning after breakfast, and one Sunday morning after clean-up. In my experience with touchgroups, they tend to play a lot of games and such, and so I've included a list of games and activities that you may dip into. Of course, feel free to share your own.

Being a touch group leader doesn't take a *whole* lot of organizing and preparation, so don't stress it too much, but be aware that the less organized the group/leader, the more easily the group falls apart. Be prepared for a certain number of people to wander off to join other groups; this shouldn't be encouraged, but it is relatively inevitable. Coming prepared, with at least a general idea of what you will be doing with your group is a good idea.

On Friday evening, I will lead a brief touch group leader orientation, where I will explain more about what will be going on, and what should be going on with the groups.

Games & Activities:

Name Games:

Group Juggle-

Throwing balls (or stuffed animals, or a yarn ball) to others in a circle and learning names. Can be extended to "Warp Speed" by seeing how fast the group can throw balls through a set order to each group member.

Name Pantomime-

Each person chooses an action and word to go with their name (e.g., "Swimming Sam"), then show the action to the group who repeat it. Good way to learn people's names. Alternatively, the action-word doesn't have to begin with the same letter as the person's name, and/or the group repeats that person's name and word/action, *and* everyone else's behind that person.

Wam-Pum-

Standing in a circle, 1 person in the middle says someone's name. The named person has to say another person's name before getting tagged by person in middle.

Others:

NYC Tag-

- Pairs of TWO
- Object is only to tag your partner
- IT person closes their eyes (or everyone does?) and spins around 20 times
- Then open eyes and chase other half around trying to tag.
- Lots of crazy dizzy people!!!

Fruit Basket Upset (All my neighbors with, I like people who..., etc.)

- Choose your own version that you like best. There are lots. For example:
- Everyone sits in a circle (on chairs). Make sure that the leader is standing in the center, so there are one fewer chairs than people.
- Person in the center then says "I like people who _____" (can read, like star wars, are wearing Converse, etc.).
- All who match that criteria must get up and find another chair that is at least two chairs away and sit down before all the seats are taken.
- Inevitably, one person is left in the Center. They are the new "person in the center".

Fruit Basket*

- **Parameters:** 15 to 60 people
- Have the group sit in a large circle on the floor. Tell them each to pick a fruit (**Variation:** choose any category) and go around the circle once, each person calling out the fruit they have chosen. "It" goes to the center of the circle and picks another person by saying "Kiwi (that person's fruit), who do you love?" "Kiwi" picks another person by saying, "Kiwi loves Plum." "It" has to remember who "Plum" is and run over to him before he can say "Plum loves Guava." If he succeeds in touching someone before they can say who they love and redirect his course, that person becomes it.

Variation: "The Pillow Game" uses a pillow or scarf to do the tagging. One additional rule: no throwing the pillow.

Variation: This version is done with sign-language and in complete silence (except, of course, for shrieks and giggles). Have each person to choose a physical gesture to represent themselves. Instead of

saying “Kiwi loves Plum,” the person who starts it out demonstrates their sign, then the sign for love (crossed arms over the chest with hands in fists), then someone else’s sign.

Knots-

- Make sure no one’s insanely claustrophobic or uncomfortable with lots of human contact! That could cause problems.
- Everyone stands in a circle, just about shoulder-to-shoulder.
- Then each person reaches their hands out and grabs a random hand from across the circle (make sure it’s not the one(s) next to you, and that you’ve two separate people’s hands).
- Try to untangle without letting go.

Variation 1: Divide into two groups and race!

Variation 2: Try doing it silently.

Variation 3: Do both at the same time!!

Viking game-

- I don’t know the rules. Most people do. If you do, great, go ahead and play it, if you don’t, don’t bother – it can get a wee bit carried away.
- Just be aware that it does make some people uncomfortable.

Bananas*-

Sing this song with motions. *Order:* Do 1, 7, then 1, 2, 7, then 1, 2, 3, 7, etc. until finishing with 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.

1) Seek Bananas. Seek, Seek Bananas (x2)

Motion: Hand over eyes, seeking

2) Pick Bananas. Pick, Pick Bananas (x2)

Motion: Hands out, pulling bananas off tree

3) Peel Bananas. Peel, Peel Bananas (x2)

Motion: Peeling a banana

4) Eat Bananas. Eat, Eat Bananas (x2)

Motion: Shove ‘em in your mouth!

5) Squash Bananas. Squash, Squash Bananas (x2)

Motion: Throw banana peel down and stomp on it.

6) Go Bananas!. Go, Go Bananas! (x2)

Motion: Flailing arms in the air, jumping up and down.

7) Mmmmmmmmmmmmm.... bananas.

Motion: Rubbing belly and smiling

10 Fingers*

Parameters: five to 15 people

Everyone holds up 10 fingers. Each person gets a turn to say something that they have never done. For example, “I have never been to California.” Everyone in the group who has been to California must fold one finger down. The first person to have all 10 fingers folded into fists loses (or wins) the game. This game can rapidly degenerate into a competition to be the most daring, experienced person in the room, unless everyone is very conscious of what they are saying, and how it might affect the other players. Try to lead the conversation away from sexual and drug-related exploits if it makes people uncomfortable.

Fishbowl*

Parameters: 30 to 60 people

Materials: six to eight index cards and two pencils Break the group into two or three subgroups who have something in common with each other. For example: Adults/Youth, male/female/transgender, BGLTQQ/straight, etc. Have the two groups meet separately and come up with three to four questions for the other group. Reconvene and exchange cards. Form two circles, one subgroup inside the other, both facing in. Have the inside group read a question and have a discussion about it. The outside circle cannot speak, only listen. Go through each question, making sure everyone in the inner circle has a chance to speak. Then reverse circles.

Silent Football-

Parameters: 10-20 people

Don't do this one unless you have someone who knows the game and is up to teaching it, since it is complicated. Also, there will be a workshop on this game Saturday.

Duck Game-

The duck game can be played anywhere, anytime, with any group of two or more (the more the merrier!). The only requirement is that you can hear each other's voices.

The Game:

One person starts by asking another person (anyone playing), "Hey (person's name), you wanna buy a duck?" The dialogue would go like this: Person2 "A what?", P1: "A duck", P2: "oh, a duck!" Person 2 would then ask a question about the duck. It can be anything – what color is the duck, does it like to tap-dance, where does it live? - be creative. Person 1 answers the question, and the second person turns to another person and asks them if they want to buy some other random animal. The "A what" stage doesn't stop with the preceding person, but goes all the way back to the original person; the same goes for the question-asking stage. Eventually, the lines of question and answer cross (people end up with multiple animals to pay attention to), and the question asking gets wild and crazy. Great fun. Best when played on little or no sleep (Saturday morning, for example).

(If any of that didn't make sense, let me know; it's much simpler than the rules make it sound.)

Improv Game –

A group of about four people gets up in front of the rest of the group. The touch-group leader says the name of an object (example, a fishbowl), and the group has five seconds to make themselves into that object, as creatively as possible.

The objects can include: giraffes, rocket-ships, a birthday cake complete with candles, a whale, a tsunami, etc. This goes on for a few minutes, then a new group does it.

Honey, if you love me*

Parameters: 15 to 40 people

Sit or stand in a circle. The person who is "it" walks up to any other person in the circle and without touching them says, "Honey, if you love me, won't you please, please smile?" and attempts to make them smile with their beguiling ways. If the person being asked to smile manages to keep a straight face and respond, "Honey, I love you, but I just can't smile," the "it" person must move on to their next victim. Whomever they can successfully cause to smile then becomes the person who is "it".

Yes, we played it in fourth grade... but this game can still be devilish fun. It's just important to be aware that some people are very uncomfortable with this game.

Teapot*

- **Parameters:** 15 to 40 people

Choose a person to leave of the room. The remaining group chooses a verb. When the person returns to the room, the group must replace that verb with “teapot,” or another chosen word, when they speak. The person tries to discover the meaning of “teapot” by asking members of the group questions like, “Do you teapot a lot?” or, “What does it feel like to teapot?” Whoever reveals the verb in her answer to the question gets to be the next person to leave the room.

- This sounds like a downright hilarious activity, especially at a Con... just think of the scope for innuendo and inside jokes!

Vampire*

Parameters: 15 to 40 people and an enclosed, largespace free of sharp objects

This will help all of you Unitarians get back to your Transylvanian roots. Choose one person to be the referee. Everyone except the referee closes his or her eyes and begins milling around the room. The referee will keep you from colliding with anything but warm, living flesh. They will also pick one person to be the vampire and whisper it in her ear. The vampire keeps their eyes closed like everyone else, but when she bumps into someone, there’s a difference. She snatches him and lets out a blood-curdling scream.

Then he becomes a vampire as well. He is now on the prowl, seeking new victims. Only when two vampires snatch and feast on each other by mistake do they transform themselves back into regular mortals. Continue playing until your voices are hoarse.

Two Truths and A Lie*:

Parameters: five to 15 people

A great touch group activity. Have each person in the group come up with two facts and one falsehood about themselves. Go around the circle and have each person present the three statements as if they are all true. Then have each member of the group guess which of the three statements is false.

Variation: Two Lies and a Truth.

BLOB TAG-

This is a great game to play with other groups. First establish the boundaries and pick one person who wants to be “it.” This person is the beginning the “blob.” That person now chases people and everyone that he/she tags grabs onto the person that is “it” (grab their hand or shirt). As more and more people are tagged, the blob will get bigger and bigger as you can split it into smaller “blobs” if you wish. Obviously, the last person to be tagged is the winner.

Group-building activities:

Your group has the name of someone in history famous for Compassion. As at all Cons, people will have name-tags, and a good activity might be deciding on a symbol and/or color to represent your person, and putting it on everyone’s name-tags.

Anything to keep the group from falling apart – touch groups are important, as is group integrity in general.

Wish Activity (This one really *should* be done, on Friday night) –

Materials: paper, pencils/pens, some sort of hat/basket.

This activity is a little like a Secret Santa, except with wishes: Everyone gets a slip of paper and a pencil/pen, and writes a wish they have for the weekend (something that someone else could fulfill). Names are written on the papers, and then the papers are folded and put in a basket/hat/something.

They’re shaken around, and then everyone draws one out, and whatever that wish is, they’re supposed to try to fulfill it for the person whose wish it is.

This is a Compassion activity specifically, and it would be nice if all the groups did it. Of course we’re not requiring it, but please keep it in mind for Friday night.

*** = borrowed from Deep Fun**

Food Coordinator

Even if the site is providing meals, someone needs to act as the communicator with the site, and also take charge of snack foods. Duties include:

- Give information to the site regarding the number of vegetarians and vegans who will be attending (usually we have about 30% vegetarians and 5-10 vegans)
- Find out when meals are served and coordinate with the rest of the con schedule; the site may have some flexibility about times
- With the planning group, agree on what **free** food (24 hours) will be provided and where it will be located (bread and peanut butter? apples and oranges? cereal?)
- Recruit people to purchase this food prior to con and people to monitor & re-stock as necessary throughout the con
- If you provide soda pop, establish a large “return” trash bag for used cans which can either be returned for deposit or recycled – or work with the site on setting up a recycle area.
- Publicize where free food is located

Key set-up tasks:

- Decide whether the con planning team will provide the food, have it done by the site, or have it catered in. Get pricing so it can be included in the registration form & budget.

Key foundational tasks

- Be in touch with the site about meal options and timing of meals as well as expected attendance.
- With the planning group, agree on what **free** food (24 hours) will be provided and where it will be located (bread and peanut butter? apples and oranges? cereal? Hummus? Granola bars?)

Key con creation tasks:

- Recruit people to purchase this food & be sure to provide them with a reimbursement form so they are promptly paid back.
- Provide final food counts to the site by the time they need it (usually 7-14 days out). Take your final count at this point, and add 5-10% to it for last minute registrants. (e.g. if 160 have signed up, figure another 8 might come in, so a total of 168-170. While we don't want to be charged for more people than are registered, even being off by 5 is no more than about \$150 - \$200 worth of budget. The budget should be able to absorb that much money. Better to be up a few people than down a few people.

On-site tasks:

- Monitor & re-stock as necessary throughout the con
- If you provide soda pop, establish a large “return” trash bag for used cans which can either be returned for deposit or recycled
- Publicize where free food is located

Operations Manager

The Operations Manager helps with the camp facilities and is the liaison to the campsite. You report to the camp any repairs needed or problems occurring (stopped up toilets!). You know where all the equipment, tools, and supplies are. You are responsible for ensuring that sound equipment gets to the site and gets set up, as necessary. It is your job to see that chairs and tables are moved when needed for events.

The operations manager should not be shy about recruiting others to help them out. Many hands make light work.

Key set-up tasks:

- Facilitate the site deposit happening.
- Facilitate getting an insurance waiver from the district. Recruit an adult to help you if it is difficult to arrange during school hours.

Key foundational tasks

- Attend the site visit so you know what the site looks like, who to contact during the event, any group responsibilities, etc.
- Also check for restrictions on moving mattresses, posting information, ability to recycle, etc.

Key con creation tasks:

- Be sure all site rules are known and covered during orientation
- Put up clear signs around the site designating what's happening where – what cabins are which, touch group notices, etc.
- Use caution tape on any areas that shouldn't be entered – dangerous spots or cabins that are off limits.
- Have a poster for the on-site personnel area that notes “do not enter” – in the exuberance of the evening, people may not remember what cabins not to go into and we don't want the staff mad at us.

Tshirt Coordinator

Your job is to recruit someone to design a t-shirt. Be sure no copyright laws are broken. The design **must** be approved by the Youth Con Consultant. Find someone to screen the shirts. You will order them, pick them up, and transport them to the camp. Usually 30-50% of the total registrants will purchase a t-shirt. Coordinate t-shirt delivery during registration to those who have pre-paid. T-shirt costs are typically separate from registration costs. Charge \$2-3 more for the t-shirt than you will pay the vendor, and be sure to order some extras (about 10-15% more than ordered) to sell on site.

It is also possible to design a silkscreen and have people create their own t-shirts on site. This can be a great workshop and bonding time, and everyone has their own, unique souvenir. Contact Ariel Fitzgerald (awwdee@comcast.net) for more information on how to do this.

Also don't forget to get the Free Hugs tshirts. These are provided by Dev Nambi (kosmedi@gmail.com); he charges us \$10 and we sell them for \$12. Including this on the registration form is great, but you can also notify people ahead of time they will be available and allow them to purchase the shirts on site. Usually nearly as many of these shirts are sold as of the Con tshirt.

Key set-up tasks:

- Facilitate choosing a design, what kind of clothing you're going to offer, and the color/s it will be offered in.
- Decide if the staff will have a special shirt, and if so, what.
- Find a screenprinting shop that will create the shirts & get a quote to incorporate the price into the con budget & registration form.

Key foundational tasks

- Monitor how many people are ordering & in what sizes.
- At least 2 weeks ahead of time, place your order. Order up by 10-15% so you have shirts to sell on site.
- Talk to Dev Nambi to coordinate getting Free Hugs tshirts.

Key con creation tasks:

- Have a master list of who ordered & what sizes, so you can check them off when they pick up their shirt.
- Be set up at registration – it's a good idea to sort & pile your clothing by size.
- Have an additional time/s when you can be available for people to pick up their tshirts.
- Have a money envelope for those who buy shirts & give the money to the registrar or treasurer for safekeeping.

If you decide to do screenprinting on site instead, then an alternate process will need to be worked out. Schedule the t-shirt time during both morning & afternoon workshops.

Go-Fer

(optional, but highly encouraged)

You may wish to appoint someone who drives and is over 18 years old as the official person to leave the site and pick up necessary supplies during the con. This is best if it's an adult, although an older youth could be picked as well.

On-site tasks:

- Leaving site & getting supplies as necessary.
- Providing receipts to the treasurer & getting reimbursed promptly following con.

Dance DJ

Dance:

You will need to recruit a DJ if you plan to have a dance. Someone will need to bring a sound system and help to set it up. Ask youth to bring their favorite CDs. Don't forget decorations for the dance. If your dance has a theme (masquerade, formal, Hawaiian, '50's), you need to publicize it in the confirmation letter so that people can come prepared. Assign someone to be in charge of clean-up after the dance.

The dance has been problematic in recent years, mainly as the youth have consistently objected to every style of music played. It would seem the best course at this point is to pick the songs, making them the ones most likely to be known to the majority of youth attending. The other option is to hire a DJ (which we've done in the past, though not in recent years) who has a wide variety of music & styles. It would likely also be helpful to emphasize to youth at orientation that just because they have a favorite song, it doesn't necessarily mean anyone else knows it or loves it – and that they should be tolerant of one another's requests. This contributes to thinking that the songs picked should be well-known, rather than something that might be really interesting but unknown. It seems there needs to be both some better selection by the planning team as well giving more music a chance by the youth.

Something that worked extremely well at Spring 2007 con was having the dance in a smaller site – being in a small area made the dance floor crowded & fun. When the dance is in a big space, it feels underattended no matter how many people are there.

Consider whether you want the dance Friday night or Saturday night. Friday night tends to have a lot more energy & might be a good time to host the dance. As well, worship tends to be short, while Saturday night worship can start late & run long.

Key foundational tasks:

- Decide if you will have a DJ, and if so, hire them and incorporate that planning into the budget. There are folks within the UU Community who are DJs or have DJ equipment, so look inside first, especially to save money.

Key Con Creation Tasks:

- Either work with the DJ or the planning team to create the songs you want to play at Con. While hip-hop & electronica seem to be the genres of choice, don't be afraid to put in other well-known, danceable songs. ("I will survive" comes to mind, or "Save a Horse, Ride a Cowboy" or even the "hokey-pokey". Intermixed with others, these can be fun.)

On-site tasks:

- Get the dance set up & decorated for.
- Either help the DJ set up & get ready, or set up the stereo system as needed for playing music.
- Be accommodating as possible. If you can accommodate requests, do so.

No-Talent Show Host

The no-talent show host should be someone who is funny, who can make appropriate transitions, and who will entertain as well as emcee. In years past, there were two hosts who had mini-skits they often did in between acts.

Decide on the length of the no-talent show. While traditionally 25 acts have been the norm, at Fall Con 2007, only about 20 people performed, and the shorter length was much appreciated by all, and made for a more lively show. Not a bad thing.

On-site tasks:

- Post the sign up sheet for the no-talent show.
- Set-up for the event.
- Ensure there's a PA system.
- Have fun with the acts, the people, and the transitions.

Adult Advisor

The adult advisor, along with the Con chair, is critical to the overall running of Con. Con is planned by youth, and led by youth, but the adult advisor still provides the strong foundation from which the youth build. This adult needs to be **actively** involved with the planning team. They should work primarily through the Con chair to ensure steps are being taken, planning is on track, and the youth are getting what they need to get their jobs done. They should provide guidance with their experience. For example, if the youth are wildly overestimating (or underestimating) costs, they should step in to help make sure costs are done correctly. They should be willing to ask questions and probe for concrete information so issues the youth may not have considered can be uncovered early in the process. The adult advisors need to be strong in their support & their praise of the work the youth are doing. The adult advisor is key to building youth confidence in running Con.

While not explicitly part of the adult advisor role, if it's possible, the adult advisor should help facilitate the purchase of items. Most youth don't have credit cards or the ability to make large purchases (free food, for example, can run \$400-\$500), so if the adult advisor can facilitate this, please do so. Keep the receipts and file it promptly with the district, and you should be reimbursed within 2 weeks. Take the youth with you to do the purchasing, but facilitate the payment for them.

Key set-up tasks:

- Manage the first few meetings: making the decision to host con, and getting people settled in to their roles, before handing off to the Con Chair.
- Help mediate problems, keep people moving forward, keep things positively focused.
- Review the budget and make sure it makes sense.

Key foundational tasks

- Attend all meetings.
- Work with the con chair to ensure tasks are getting done.
- Ask questions of the youth, probe to be sure they really know what they need to get done.

Key con creation tasks:

- Same as above – make sure jobs are getting done & they are ready to go on site. Insist on reviewing/running through things to uncover problems or even just uncertainties in how to do something. It'll make con run much more smoothly on site.
- Help them purchase necessary items – supplies, free food, fun stuff for the spirit committee, etc.

On-site tasks:

- Be available on site.
- Check on your team & their energy. Some youth will have a very hard time on site, or get in over their head and be exhausted early. Make sure they get enough sleep & food; if someone needs a break, help them find someone to fill in.
- Support them as needed during the weekend – help them get areas set up, etc.

Head Sponsor

It is required that each con have an appointed Head Sponsor. This is an experienced Youth Advisor and/or con sponsor who has good rapport with youth and is credible to the adults. The Head Sponsor leads the Sponsor Orientation on the first night, mentors sponsors new to the role, and is a member of the Conference Affairs Committee should it need to be convened. This person connects with the Youth Con Consultant and the Program Specialist before the con, and writes a debriefing report after the con. The Head Sponsor works with the Youth Deans to ensure smooth running of the con, equitable enforcement of the rules and policies, and proper handling of emergencies. The Head Sponsor, Chaplains, Youth Con Consultant and planning group determine a schedule for Spirit Committee monitoring 24 hours a day (including night shifts). The Head Sponsor needs to be introduced during the Friday night orientation.

The planning group may have someone in mind who fits this role that they wish to ask. Due to the amount of work involved, we highly recommend that the Head Sponsor *not* be the adult advisor who is on the Con Planning Team. Please consult the Youth Con Consultant and the Program Specialist to help recruit someone as needed. It is a **vital** and **mandatory** position.

Key foundational tasks

- If possible, attend the site walk-through. If not, ask them for pictures and to take notes to identify problem areas on site, where things will be located, any challenges that the sponsor team will need to watch out for

Key con creation tasks:

- Be a resource for (new) sponsors to ask questions of.

On-site tasks:

- Walk through the site to ensure everything is properly labeled and places off-limits are clearly marked.
- Conduct head sponsor orientation (see next pages)
- Get introduced at orientation – announce where the 24 hour staffed area will be, be sure people know they always have a place to go.
- Let people know where you'll be & when – “head sponsor hours” – in case there are questions or issues.
- Serve on & facilitate the CAC as necessary.
- Provide a sign-up sheet for spirit committee – both adults & youth
- Recruit both adults & youth to do spirit committee.
- Lead a sponsor check-in both on Saturday morning & evening or Sunday morning instead of Saturday evening.

Sponsor Orientation Sample Agenda

Be sure to have at least one dean or couple youth from the planning committee attend the sponsor orientation & subsequent check-ins.

- Have everyone introduce themselves, their congregation, how many youth they brought, how many times they have been to con.
- Go over the behavior rules & expectations for Sponsors. Especially for new sponsors, talk about how they can best interact with youth.
- Emphasize that sponsors have the right to participate in everything, and should participate as much as they can.
- Talk about spirit committee, signing up, working with youth, having the youth take the lead.
- What's the best way to enter the cabin?
- Where stuff is kept; how to communicate between shifts.
- Have sponsors list where they are staying so we can find them if need be for their youth.

Role play some situations:

- Group is sleeping in an all-night cabin with the lights off. Since it's an all-night cabin, lights are supposed to stay on.
- 2 kids are asleep, not up to anything, but they are not one body/one bag.
- Kids have a blanket (or sleeping bag) spread over them.
- Kids have their shirt off, but aren't doing anything sexual. Or have their shirts off and are giving back massages.
- Sign on the door says, "Don't bug us! We're asleep!"
- Someone says someone else brought drugs.
- You've got a kid who is overwhelmed, or crying, or seems very out of sorts.
- Bathroom cubicle is locked and/or there appear to be multiple people in one stall.

Sponsor Check-ins

Get questions & feedback, ask how things are going; get any suggestions for how things might be handled better.

If there are chores to be assigned, be sure that these are covered and sponsors know what their youth group is responsible for.

Camp Nurse

You will need to recruit a trained medical professional (doctor, nurse, nurse practitioner, etc) to be on call at camp for the duration of the con. This person keeps and dispenses medications that individuals need over the weekend, attends to minor medical emergencies, and recommends trips to a doctor's office or hospital as necessary. All medical release forms and medical information on the registration forms stay in the hands of the Camp Nurse for the duration of the con. The Camp Nurse needs to be introduced during the Friday night orientation. If possible on site, please provide the Nurse a separate space to sleep, hopefully with a bed or two available for youth who might become ill or have a medical need.

Key con creation tasks:

- Work with the planning team to identify your limitations. If you will provide aid but not dispense medication, let them know that.
- Work with the registrar to have a copy of any medical concerns, allergies, known problems for the people attending Con.
- As needed, organize bringing first aid kit, medical supplies, etc. If you need to be reimbursed for these items, we can do that; please just be sure we have knowledge ahead of time so it can be incorporated into the budget.

On-site tasks:

- Set yourself up in the first aid area. There should be a special sign on your door identifying your space as the nurse's/doctor's area.
- Get introduced at orientation
- Be available and visible to attendees – keep the walkie-talkie with you at all times.
- Tend to anyone needing medical help. Occasionally there have been injuries, but mostly it's youth who get headaches, girls who need something for their period, or youth who have just exhausted themselves a bit too much and are feeling overwhelmed.

Chaplains

The District now has an official, trained team of youth and adult Chaplains available for the purpose of serving at Cons. The Youth Con Consultant can provide you with the list of Chaplains. An ordained minister may also be on this team, which should consist of two youth and two adults (with gender balance as a goal.) The Chaplains are available for personal crises and counseling, and s/he can help orient and mentor youth who wish to act as peer counselors. Chaplains need to be introduced during the Friday night orientation so people know who to turn to.

The following people have all undergone the chaplaincy training:

Youth:

Danielle Ashworth
Allison Krause
Tyler Campbell
Sarah Henderson
Alex Fussell
Michael Kusz
Emma Sackinger
Caleb Raible-Clark
Kayla Reiman
Zoe Fenerstein
Annelise Iversen
Kiera Wesley
Rachel Cermak

Adults:

Kalil Kendall
Richmond Brainerd
Chris Conkling

Key foundational tasks

- If the planning team asks you, help plan worship services.

On-site tasks:

- Be introduced at orientation.
- Have some kind of identifying marker on you – green district t-shirts, a stole, something that marks you as a chaplain.
- Be available for youth or adults as needed.
- Help monitor the overall health & well-being of the community.

Sponsors

Adult sponsors for youth attending conferences must be 25 years old and must be recruited by either the attending youth or the Youth Advisor/ Director of Religious Education from the youth's home congregation. Neither the District Staff nor the local planning group is responsible for finding suitable sponsors. Sponsors cannot sponsor more than 10 youth. They must confirm the youth in their care, send in their own registration form with the Conference Release signed, pay the registration fee, and sign the Adult Code of Ethics. The confirmation letter to sponsors outlines their responsibilities and engagement with youth. If a sponsor does not have a safety background check on file with the congregation, then the District Staff will conduct a check for sexual and/or violent crimes.

In the best case, sponsors should be the regular youth advisor. This gives a measure of familiarity with the youth and a comfort level to act on their behalf. However, we understand that youth advisor can spend a shorter time per week, but may not be able to take an entire weekend. In choosing a sponsor, try to pick someone with some familiarity with the youth. It is an unfortunate – but not uncommon – situation when the sponsor arrives at Con and isn't entirely sure who all of their youth are. Also, try to settle the sponsor as much in advance as possible, and use the Con presentation to help orient them to what happens at Con. When the boundaries of responsibility aren't clear is when problems begin developing, so the more the adult is connected to the youth attending, the fewer issues there will be.

Pre-Con tasks:

- Verifying you know all of your youth and are willing to sponsor them.
- Review the rules with your youth.

On-site tasks:

- Keeping tabs on your youth. See the next few pages for information about Con and expected behavior during Con.
- Check in with your youth at least once per day during Con.

Sponsor Confirmation Letter

Dear Sponsors,

Thank you for supporting youth programming in our district. This is the stuff good memories and strong faith connections are made of. We appreciate your support.

N.B. Friday night there is no food at Con. Free food will be out and available, but either bring food with you on the ride to Con, or arrange to stop somewhere along the way. We will provide a sack lunch for the ride home.

As a sponsor, you're in charge of keeping tabs of the youth in your care. This does not mean being with them at all times, but we do encourage you to check in periodically. Many sponsors have a rule either of seeing their youth every meal or at least one meal a day. "Seeing" the kids doesn't mean catching a glimpse of them across the room – say hello, have a short conversation, check their emotional energy. If it's their first Con, ask them whom they've met or something fun they did. Get a read on their overall health and be sure they are having a good time.

One of the key ways you can make sure your youth have a great time at Con is to know that they, and you, are aware of the RULES. Even if your kids swear up and down they know the rules, go over them with the youth anyway. **Especially** if you have first-time Con goers, go over the rules. **Most of our rules violations occur with first-time Con goers.** The rules are pretty simple, it doesn't take long. We never want to hear, "I didn't know that was the rule." Here are the basics:

- Adult sponsors must be at least 25 years old and youth must be between 14 and 20 years old. Youth must be actively involved in their congregation.
- No sexual activity between the neck and the knees which includes intercourse and outercourse. Fully clothed hugs, kisses, and backrubs (all by consent) are appropriate between youth at cons.
- One body, one bag. Youth may be in puppy piles, either without sleeping bags, or one body, one bag.
- No smoking, illegal drugs, drug paraphernalia, or alcohol
- No pets, weapons, or explosives
- No walk-ins or walk-outs
- No swimming
- Refrain from exclusive behavior. If you want to take a time out or some time to yourself, great, but understand that DVD players, mp3 players, cell phones, and laptops, are both attractive for stealing and put a barrier between you and those around you. For the purposes of this weekend, they're generally better left at home.

Rules will be gone over at Orientation as well. Keep in mind, rules apply to adults and youth **equally**. If a sponsor brought alcohol – even though they are of age – they would be brought to the conference affairs committee for a rules violation.

Sponsors and youth are also asked to sign up for a time slot of "Spirit Committee" which walks the grounds at all hours looking out for the overall health of the community. This is explained more below, and will also be gone over in more depth at the Sponsor Orientation. I hope you take this opportunity to have fun and bond with the other sponsors and the youth who walk with you.

Here is some useful information to make your Con a success. Please share this with the youth in your care.

What to bring:

- Flashlight **with your name on it** (helps to navigate the site at night).
- Extra batteries
- Sleeping bag
- Pillow, blankets, etc
- Warm clothes (!!) and extra socks
- Toiletries
- No-talent show stuff or special outfits for the dance
- Camera, if desired *but be careful about the possibility of it being stolen.*

- **Money if you wish to purchase a Con t-shirt or Free Hugs t-shirt on site**

What not to bring:

- Drugs, drug paraphernalia
- Alcohol
- Tobacco
- Weapons
- Expensive possessions
- Exclusive items (mp3 player, laptop, turn your cell phone OFF, etc.)

Make sure your youth have **ALL** forms and money to the registrar by the start of con, when you arrive. We will not accept walk-ins. **People who just show up will be sent home at their own expense.** You should receive confirmation from Anne-Marie Davidson prior to Con about any missing information from you or any of your youth; if anything is noted, please be sure you or your youth have it taken care of prior to Con, or have it in their possession when you leave for attending Con.

New Sponsor Confirmation Letter

As a new sponsor to this Con process, welcome! We are excited to have you as part of our community and this crazy little thing call Con. As a new sponsor, we understand that Con can be a little frightening and daunting as well, so here are some additional pointers from the main sponsor letter we sent out.

- It's okay to find Con overwhelming. If you aren't someone who attended Cons as a youth, adjusting to the energy at Con can be quite something. Do what you can to participate, but if you need to head out to a quiet cabin and read or sleep or hang out with others, feel free to do that.
- You ARE welcome to participate in all aspects of Con – except one. One of the best ways to enjoy con is to take part in it. Worships, games, touch groups, mug books, the dance, no-talent show – all of it is open to sponsors as well as youth. You can sleep in youth-dominated cabins (though how much sleep you get...). The one aspect you can't participate in? There isn't to be any intimate contact between adults and youth, such as an adult being part of a puppy pile or snuggling with the youth at night. (But if you find another willing adult and follow the same rules the youth do, have fun!)
- Youth can and will have Con Flings, drape themselves all over each other, kiss, massage, and lay about in groups of 30 on top of one another. They will also sleep (one body, one bag) in piles from 2-10. This is okay. They will mostly be in co-ed cabins, and that's okay. Sexual contact below the neck and above the knees is not okay. We put our trust in them to respect those boundaries, and in the vast, vast majority of cases, they do. This can be hard to handle at first. If you have issues with it, talk to the other sponsors, youth on the planning committee, or other youth leaders present at the Con.
- Adults are not in charge at Con. This isn't to say we don't have a responsibility. But one of the reasons why PNWD cons are the largest in the country is because we trust our youth to be the leaders, and they respond magnificently. If you see youth up to something you think isn't kosher, ask a youth. If they agree, ask them to go talk to the other youth about changing their behavior. They'll do it, and the whole community will be stronger for the leadership coming from the youth rather than the adults. It is amazing and beautiful energy, and we want to keep it that way.

Two critical things we want to ask of you/be sure you know:

- There's no food provided on Friday night. Either bring food, or stop along the way. We will have free food out and available, but it's intended to be supplemental, not your main meal.
- Go over the rules with your kids. Even if they swear they know them, say, "I'm new – so why don't you tell me the rules?" See if they get them all. If you've got new kids, tell the old kids it's a refresher for them, and education for the new youth. Most rules violations happen to first-time con goers who swear they never heard that rule. So even though we'll cover it in orientation, covering it prior to arrival is even better.

If you have any other problems, questions, issues prior to or during con, you can contact Anne-Marie Davidson (amkdavidson@gmail.com); Clancy Kelly, Head Sponsor (cpkelly1@msn.com), or Ward Ramsdell, Spirit Committee Guru (wramsdell@comcast.net).

Attendees

First Time Conference Go-ers:

Special consideration needs to be given those who will be attending their first YRUU con. It is easy to “get lost” as a newcomer in a crowd of 150 youth, especially if most of them seem to know each other and you know no one! You want the con to be as inclusive and welcoming as possible. Pairing up new folks with veteran con-goers is a good idea. You might want to ask on the registration form if the person would like a “buddy” or would like to be a “buddy” if this is not their first con. Match people up, put them in the same touch group, and ask the experienced person to check in with their buddy every once in a while. The Registrar will send first-timers the YRUU First Time Attendee Packet in their confirmation packet.

Pre-Con tasks:

- Get your registration forms in ahead of time!! Late registrants put an unfair burden on the planning team & the site hosts.
- Know the rules.
- **READ** the code of ethics for Con.

On-site responsibilities:

- Following the rules.
- Leaving distracting devices at home. Unless you have a known family emergency and have to carry a cell phone with you, all these devices do is take you away from the people you’re supposed to be hanging out with. If you need down time, take a nap, go work a puzzle or play a game, or head for the snack bar for a cup of coffee or tea. Don’t pull out a video game and play it for 3 hours to lose yourself.
- Help others maintain the community.

Theme Speaker:

One of your early tasks is to brainstorm themes for the con. To tie the whole conference together and to convey the theme of your con it is a good idea to have a theme speaker. The theme speaker is a person who addresses the entire group about your theme or an important related issue. This often leads to a theme workshop for those who are interested in learning even more. An honorarium (pay) is appropriate for the theme speaker, and their travel expenses should be paid as well. Look for people who know how to address youth and are lively speakers.

Pre-Con tasks:

- Pick your theme speaker. Help them understand the theme and what they are there to do.
- Be sure they are good on their speaking topic.
- Coordinate with them for any on-site requirements they may have (projector, slide show, etc., etc.)

On-site responsibilities:

- Give the theme speech!

Note to the planning team: be sure the theme speaker is given pride of place. Don't schedule other items with the theme speaker. They are a centerpiece and everyone should attend. Don't offer alternatives. Sell the theme speaker at orientation so people know they are expected to attend.

Spirit Committee:

This is a group composed of some of the planning group, Youth Ministry Consultants, the Head Sponsor, adult sponsors, and the Chaplains. The planning group should identify and introduce the Spirit Committee. This group has the special task of monitoring the emotional and spiritual atmosphere of the con and of being a 24-hour presence available for guidance to con-goers. They remind all con-goers of the importance of building inclusive community, and of using common sense and good will when interacting with others. They must agree to take part in nightly strolls around the site; a youth/adult pair do this in two hour shifts. You may consider having day shifts, as well. They must also be willing to talk to youth they see breaking rules and to bring issues before a CAC as necessary. They are **not** police, but they **do** monitor the safety and well-being of individuals and the entire community. They are looking to catch people in community.

Time for discussion: assigning youth groups & their sponsor to do spirit committee shifts. This should be something like 5 youth with one sponsor, so bigger groups should take multiple shifts. In this way, every group and every person attending con would bear some responsibility for making sure it goes well. It makes spirit committee less of an adult-oriented responsibility and allows the youth to own their culture.

On-site responsibilities:

- Set up a gathering place/staffed 24-hour area with games & food
- Arrange for people to be there so there's always a place to go with someone available.
- Announce this space at orientation and be explicit about its purpose.
- Sign up for night shifts.
- Participate as much as possible in Con so you get a sense of who is there and how people are feeling.
- Provide a notebook or board to note issues, overall mood, general observations to be handed off between groups.
- Have lots of toys and candy to give out to people with spirit committee.
- Have a walkie-talkie for staff communication.

Youth Con Consultants:

When you agree to host a con, you immediately have a coach in the Youth Con Consultant. This person is available to answer your questions and concerns, and help guide you through the process of planning a con. She is a resource available to you – call often! She will need to “approve” your registration form and your t-shirt design before you use them. The District will cover travel costs connected to her attendance at your planning meetings (once or twice before the actual event.)

They also get a list of the youth (with phone numbers) who claim them as their sponsor and are asked to notify the Registrar immediately if someone shows up on this list who is unfamiliar to them or who they declined to sponsor. The Registrar will deal with these inconsistencies.

Key set-up tasks:

- Visit the planning team to ensure they are ready to go and give them a run down on this book, their responsibilities, and resources.

Key foundational tasks

- Stay in touch with the planning team and try to get a read on how everything is going. Offer assistance as needed.

On-site tasks:

- Keep an eye out for what’s going well and what isn’t. Offer help as possible.
- Write up an evaluation after Con.
- Get back the Con Care Kit or any other supplies that need to go back to the district.

Appendices

Five Steps to Building Community

Adapted by Jennifer Martin from *Building Community in Youth Groups* by Denny Rydberg

Step One: Bond Building

The first step in building community is to break down the cliques and barriers that exist, and to establish a trust relationship among the individuals. This is accomplished by giving the group members some problem-solving task which requires them to work side by side with others in the group. As they discuss solutions and physically help one another accomplish the goal, bonds are built between people of diverse backgrounds. Cooperation is the main goal. As each person's input is accepted and welcomed by others, they begin to identify themselves as part of the group - part of the team.

At Con: Welcome, mailboxes, Touch groups

Step Two: Opening Up

When an individual can share non-threatening areas of his or her life, an exciting step in group building has taken place. People like to talk about themselves. If a person perceives that another person is genuinely interested in her or him, then telling one's peers about oneself provides an opportunity for trust to develop in the group. Unfortunately, the reverse is also true. If a person perceives that others don't care to listen, trust will not be built. The more empathetically a youth group listens, the more secure a person feels when sharing his or her personal struggles.

The exercises done in this step should be generic enough so that people can share to whatever degree they feel comfortable. Participants go away from these activities enthusiastic about the deepening friendships they are developing in their group. They realize that their personal imperfections are not unique. When people discover they are *normal* they are able to accept and deal with their problems in a much more constructive way.

At Con: Touch groups, worship

Step Three: Affirming

Crucial to the growing process of a group is the act of encouraging each other through affirmation. When a young man hears his peers complementing him, he enjoys his participation in the group much more and is more likely to share deeper feelings. When a young woman is told by her friends that they appreciate her, her feeling of self-worth dramatically increases. Many reclusive youth become active members of the group when they realize others care about them. Participants who have been involved in affirming strategies leave the meeting feeling *warm and fuzzy* about the group and themselves. This feeling is especially crucial at this stage in the process of community building. After revealing their inner selves during the *Opening Up* stage, people need positive feedback to reassure them the other members of the group think they are still okay before they will consider sharing further. It is important to remember that adult leaders and advisors are an integral part of the community building process and need affirmation just like everyone else.

At Con: Worship (esp. Angel Wash or Car Wash), hanging out at night

Step Four: Stretching

Group members facing struggles together must actively care for each other. Individuals cannot merely

say they care for each other in a stretching exercise; they must actively show it. With most groups, difficult situations naturally arise if the group is together long enough; i.e. divorce, extreme illness, division of the church, etc. However, since many youth groups are together for only a short period you may not want to wait for a stretching experience to surface on its own. It is sometimes necessary to initiate one.

Stretching experiences reap multi-faceted benefits. They create an atmosphere where people now feel comfortable enough to expose their imperfections to the group. For example, before the group travels to a hospital to visit terminally ill children, a popular member who appears to have his life together might admit his apprehensions about talking one on one with dying children. When he sees that the group still likes him, he realizes that his facade of perfection is unnecessary. And when the self-critical members of the group discover that even seemingly perfect people have struggles, they become free to love themselves. Suddenly, through a simple stretching exercise, individuals realize they can achieve much more as a group than they could as a collection of individuals. They realize the importance of each member to the entire group.

Stretching experiences can be a tremendous catalyst for personal growth. Facing and overcoming programmed difficulties give young people the confidence that they can cope with the everyday problems they face. They learn that they can accomplish more than they thought possible. They believe in themselves.

At Con: Sharing late at night, deep conversations, could be touch groups or worship

Step Five: Deeper Sharing and Goal Setting

At this stage, individuals share deeply with one another and set goals. The youth group becomes the setting where young people can express their inner hurts, visions and struggles. People are not laughed at nor condemned for admitting they flunked a test, or that they dream of becoming a US senator, or that they have a drinking problem. When a group member shares a problem, the rest of the group is empathetic and gives support and encouragement. The group helps the individual talk through possible solutions and set goals. The group holds the individual accountable while giving him or her the freedom to fail.

It is important to keep in mind that not all of a persons deep inner thoughts are appropriate to share in a group setting. Obviously, a person should be discouraged from telling the entire youth group the details of her or his struggles with a lover. Young people should be encouraged to share these struggles with one another or the advisor(s) on a one to one basis.

At Con: Closing circle, taking it back to our community

Action

Taking a group through the five steps is essential and growth -producing, but accomplishes only the beginning of the exercises' benefits. Once a sense of community is built, participants are ready to risk sharing with their peers in a non-programmed way. They are also ready to move ahead in a united way to accomplish other goals that the group may have set for itself, including outreach to others.

Evaluations

Fall Con 2006

Recap, Fall Con 2006: Constellation

I have a rule for Cons: every Con will have something the next Con should improve on, and something that should have improved on the Con before it. This Con certainly had both of those. Starting with...

The Good:

This con had some elements where I felt the kids clearly thought about what they were doing and did a great job of presenting it to the community. Touch Groups were better attended than I have ever seen – not just the first group, but all three times. By gathering people with their group in the dining hall and then sending them out, this Con ensured people found their group and participated.

I also thought the worships were terrific and really incorporated the theme of the Con. You can see in the design above that the “Constellation” was a UU chalice; the worship on Friday night had participants form into that shape and then light votive candles. I was sitting on some steps somewhat higher than the group as a whole, and the effect was positively breathtaking. The idea of having your light and having it burn brighter as part of the constellation could not have been more beautifully demonstrated.

Finally – it’s a small change, but it meant a lot – these youth found the courage to push breakfast back from the traditional 8 a.m. to 9 a.m. The extra hour of sleep was appreciated by many, and to me it gave the day a more natural and appropriate rhythm.

I also just want to call out the youth leadership, both for the Con and youth ministry consultants from the district. They faced a lot of challenges over the weekend, and I thought handled them very well, and with fairness and compassion.

Most everything else went well. If it doesn’t get mentioned above or below, then assume Constellation did a fine job.

Needs Improvement:

The most obvious “needs improvement” didn’t actually have anything to do with our youth. We contracted food from the site and it left a lot to be desired. They ran out of food at two meals and so served us limited portions the rest of the time; and while an all-veggie menu is fine, there are more vegetarian options than cheese sandwiches and lasagna. The kitchen gals definitely worked hard, but both the quantity and quality of food found a lot of folks looking for the free food in between meals. Do we have any aspiring Kitchen Witches? It’s more work – but it’s more reward, too.

The free food was one area that was lacking at this Con: while at most Cons free food is available the entire time, at this Con it seemed to appear only in the evening and then for a very limited period while folks devoured it. There definitely needs to be more food available for people – regardless of the kitchen standards! Staying up all night is hard work!

I’m not sure any con has solved the PA system problem and generally organizing announcements. However, I think the set-up/clean-up of meals and the site could have been organized a little better so groups were more aware of their chores. As it was, folks of course pitched in, but I think the planning staff wound up doing more housekeeping than they would have liked. It did lead to an accidental improvement, however: Sunday a.m. the (revised) schedule was posted on a big white board across from where everyone waited in line for breakfast, and there did not appear to be any issues with knowing who needed to be where and when.

One final note, again not related to the youth, is that I'd like to see the Sponsor Orientations have a set body of information that gets communicated to the group, especially for new sponsors. I think that's a task I get to work on.

Challenges:

Before rumor outruns fact, the biggest challenge of the Con was that we had three "CACs" – after a couple of years of having none! Do I think that means nothing happened at other Cons? Not at all. What impressed me most about this Con was the effort made by con-goers to address rumors appropriately, follow them to the source, and correct the issues. I think in the past a rumor was a rumor unless someone was caught red-handed. Now, our community has grown to the point that the youth are empowered and handle issues as they come up. I couldn't be more proud of them.

The first two "CACs" were both cases of laying rumors to rest. In the first case, a con-goer was suspected of doing drugs. It turns out he was neither doing drugs nor had brought drugs to Con, but he was having flashback from a prior drug experience. However, he said that he hadn't brought drugs to Con because the community meant a lot to him. The committee did go through his belongings and didn't find any drugs, so no further action was taken beyond a warning. This con-goer, in turn, thought someone else from his youth group had brought drugs. That too, was incorrect, but the con-goer had brought a homemade bong to show off his handiwork. Drug paraphernalia – while undoubtedly a bad idea – is not explicitly prohibited nor explicitly illegal. The bong was confiscated and broken; the con-goer did not attend the dance and had to write letters of apology. And the next registration form will include drug paraphernalia as something not to bring to Con.

The last CAC was unrelated, and was a report of two youth engaging in oral sex. The two youth did admit to this act taking place. As this happened at the end of Con, sending them home was not an option; one youth has been suspended from the next Con, while the other is suspended indefinitely. In both of the last two cases, meetings will also take place between the appropriate adults from the congregation, the youth's parents, and the youth. These acts are not just a violation of our community, but need to carry over into how these youth understand their actions when they leave the community. None of these were easy issues to deal with, but our youth did a great job of addressing these issues and handling them fairly and compassionately. Mark Aron was the chaplain and he was very impressed with how the youth managed the process. As long as we have Cons, we'll have kids trying to get away with stuff. Our community, however, is growing leaps and bounds with having the youth leadership to handle the incidents that do occur and having such a strong community that many incidents are prevented in the first place. As the first youth said – this community means too much to him to jeopardize his place in it. That's an incredible testament the power of Con.

I also want to note the job that our adult sponsors do. We have a great group of sponsors these days, with about half being new at Constellation. While we have the formal spirit committee at night, sponsors do a great job of checking in at all times of the day, and forgoing events to see what's happening when "everyone" is somewhere else. This gives us opportunities to check in with youth more informally and keep an eye out for youth who are overwhelmed or otherwise perhaps having issues. Some brave souls even sleep in the medium and loud cabins with the youth, and more than one sponsor was seen playing Ultimate Frisbee and Riding Three White Horses. The Karma Fairy blesses you.

Spring Con 2007

Recap, Spring Con 2007: SUPERHEROES

I (Anne-Marie) have a rule for Cons: every Con will have something the next Con should improve on, and something that should have improved on the Con before it. This Con had both, but it had a really long list of

amazingly great elements. This Con also had the SUPER VISIONING exercise as part of it – read on for what the youth had to say about it.

The Good:

At 2:30 a.m. Sunday, I started making my list. It's 14 items long, and I'm sure I could add more. I gotta bullet-point and combine, or this newsletter will go on forever.

THE STAFF! Every one of them exceeded my expectations, and that's not easy to do. They were on top of everything, and they set the tone the rest of the weekend followed. **They were also very easy to work with and finished what they promised to have done on time.**

Pre-planning: Monica as our youth registrar and Jennell as our district registrar worked great together; we were able to feed information to sponsors early on to reduce the last minute panic calls. We also got info to new sponsors and new youth attendees much earlier than normal.

Theme infusion: from superhero music to costumes on site to the mug book background, it was everywhere. (see the sidebar for the design – Ben did the artwork)

Orientation: was well run, organized, audible (thank you Jim Bushnell for the PA system), and had a VISUAL component. That was really good.

Watching 130 youth stand together and sing, "Head, Shoulders, No-no-no-no-no, Knees and Toes" is awe-inspiring every time I see it. **It also freaks out the con newbies, which is entertaining in and of itself.**

Set-up & Clean-up: every sponsor group was there and the jobs were done and meals went smoothly, **with minimal confusion!**

Attendance: the youth took tremendous part in every event, all weekend. From orientation at the start to the last touch group, participation was very strong, **and everyone seemed to enjoy themselves.**

The Dance! Several people said this was a highlight. The hall was small and hoppin', and the music was loud and fast. **The dance had been a problem in the past, whether it was behavioral or (more often) because of boring or undanceable music, but this time we had a good lineup of songs as well as a makeshift DJ (thanks to Iain for that) for song requests.**

Food... it was more than edible, it was enjoyable, and the camp staff was really nice. There was lots of free food, snack food, and candy too, **and, different from past cons, food was left over.**

Worship services. They were each powerful and helped bring the community together. The "car wash" on Sunday went on for an hour, and people easily could have gone longer. We bridged an amazing group of youth.

Considering the number of blocked off areas (like the treehouses), I don't think we had one person break the rules of where they could and could not go.

I survey the staff at the end of con and ask for a good, a bad, and a thing they would change. For the good, three of the youth said, "The whole con?" That's never happened before.

Changes & Considerations:

Although this was a great con, there are still some items to think through. We also made some changes this time that are still good ideas, but need to continue to be improved upon. Spirit Committee attempted some new ideas, and you'll hear from Ward Ramsdell on how he thought those went. We'll stick to the rest of Con.

We wanted to "green" Con by not having welcome packets that wind up being thrown away at the end of Con. We created a very clever quarter-page folded nametag on one side, schedule & touch group on the other, map on the inside. Unfortunately, the map was really small and didn't have everything on it. **It was hard to see, hard to know where you were in relation to where you needed to go on the map, and it wasn't clear what parts were blocked off.** A great idea; needs some work.

Site challenges: It was WET. The site was muddy. **Wet is an understatement; I forgot my snorkel.** Those in Hill House first swam across a lake (aka a meadow, but it was deep enough to have ducks swimming in it) to get to their bunks. It was spread out as well, which is always a challenge. There is no perfect site, but in spite of the really nice people and good food, we probably have better sites to choose from. **Besides, exercise is good for you; helps make you less likely to get sick; unfortunately for most people, too much exercise can get you sick too...**

The loud cabin also played host to free food and spirit committee (**and their "cleverly hidden" stash of candy**). It took some redirection to get people going there, and the loud cabin was off by itself (hey, it was loud).

Personally, I liked it; the food was where people are up and doing stuff, and if people weren't quite sure what to do or where to go, you could go there and have some snacks and see what was happening. But I also had feedback that it was awkward, folks are used to having the main lodge have the free food. I'd welcome feedback on this, as to what people thought. Thumbs up? Thumbs down?

There's no hard-and-fast policy on nudity of a non-sexual nature at Con. Massage workshops happen; is it okay for someone to take their shirt off? We gave the guideline that it was okay with the consent of the

attendees, but it can be hard to be the person to say, “no, I’m uncomfortable, keep your clothes on.” I would encourage the youth to discuss and debate this...should there be formal policies or procedures, and what guidelines or boundaries should be set?

Friday night food: you can always tell a Con with Anne-Marie, because I figure as long as we have food and sleep, people are pretty reasonable. Since there’s not a lot of sleep at Con, I make sure there’s plenty of food. I proposed the idea of a Friday-night potluck but it was vetoed as a logistical hassle, and that food would arrive very piecemeal (which is true). Is there interest in providing Friday night food, even if it adds \$5-\$7 to the price of Con, but allows people to arrive without stopping for dinner? Or something else? Ideas welcome.

Additional Thoughts from Ben:

I really enjoyed this Con, and had been looking forward to it for a long time. Five months or so of planning put into two days was a lot of fun, and I can’t decide which was better; working on the Con, or being at the Con. I really was hoping it would not be like the last few Cons, which seemed to me like they could have been better with just some minor planning or backup plans for if things didn’t work out. I remember my first Con in Randall, WA, at Camp Cispus, and how even though there were over 300 people there (if I remember right, I was drowning in UU-ness), there had always been hindsight and a way to correct things.

The main thing that pushed me to be on the planning team this time around was because of the dances at past Cons, however. They always seemed like there was potential for a better dance, if only the music were more active and popular, or if the people were motivated to dance (nothing like everyone standing around waiting for someone else to dance so they don’t look like the only one out there).

This brings me to my next point: I really liked this last Con’s atmosphere. There was a really good balance between “Con Virgins” and “Con Veterans/Returning Con-goers.” This is always good because I know at my first Con, I was not brave enough to totally let go of my wallflower-like attitude and go out and dance and whatnot. What really let me know I did a good job with trying to get some of the Con newbies out there and be themselves was two things: during the Car Wash, someone (I’m sure I know who it is, but I won’t say their name) wrote on the card on my back “Thank you very much for making this Con great, and making me feel included and able to express myself at my first Con.” The other reason was at the Talent/No-Talent show, there were at least three or four new people performing, which normally doesn’t happen. They were pretty good too; there’s a lot of unspoken and unshown talent at Cons.

I was really proud of everyone at Con, participants and staff alike, with the way it turned out. There’s nothing better to me than having 100 people coming up to you separately and saying “Hey, great Con, I hope every Con will be (or is, if they were new) like this one.”

Fall Con 2007

Recap, Fall Con 2007: Thrift Store

I (Anne-Marie) have a rule for Cons: every Con will have something the next Con should improve on, and something that should have improved on the Con before it. No Con yet has disappointed me by being perfect...

The Good:

There was a lot to like about this con.

Check out the tshirt photos in this newsletter. Ariel Fitzgerald created a screenprint, everyone brought their own tshirt, and the creations were phenomenal. I hope this continues!

No-Talent Show: Clearly there’s more talent than the name suggests! This was shorter than in year’s past, admirably hosted by my co-author, Ben, and seeing most of the attendees dance to Soulja Boy was ... well, mere words cannot describe it, you have to see it: [Video can be viewed here](#).

Theme speaker: I wasn’t able to attend, but I heard great things about the theme speaker. I was there for the first few minutes of it, and the speaker opened up with a bit called “A place for my stuff” by comedian George Carlin, which I would recommend listening to if you have the time. For those of you familiar with him, it’s from one of his early albums, so it’s clean.

Mug Book photos: James (above right) was the mug book photographer, and even Sunday as we were loading up, he was taking photos for those who wanted them. Nice job!

Pre-Con Info: getting more information ahead of time, particularly for new people, was much appreciated. We had 60 new (youth) con-goers, but if I had not been told that statistic, I wouldn’t have believed it.

Site: I heard a lot of jokes about the “mud con” that was the spring. This site was dry, compact, and lovely. Darn near perfect, with just one issue...shhh...

Sponsor fun: Often overlooked, the sponsors seemed to hang out more than at some cons, and our check-ins were good. I think we're getting an experienced cadre of long-termers who do a better job now of bringing along the new sponsors.

This con was unusual in that when I talked to various staff members on Sunday morning, they all had pretty much the same two dislikes. It's not normally that cohesive. We had a couple other considerations to add too, so read on...

Changes & Considerations:

We had a pretty significant run-in on Friday night with the camp administrators regarding noise. The county has a 10 p.m. noise ordinance – so have many other camps that we've been to, and it hasn't been a problem. However, this camp literally has neighbors within 100 feet of where we were, and the caretaker of the site lived on the campground. With the late-arriving Washington crew, we were heading to cabins en masse about 1 a.m., talking and chatting as we normally do, making enough ruckus that the camp administrator came out and was really upset with us, threatened to lock up all the buildings, etc. We promised to keep people quiet; fortunately it was about 30 degrees outside, so no one wanted to be outside anyway. Roscoe did a fabulous job of calming Jeff the administrator down; the youth were terrific about staying quiet outside. We made enough progress the next day that when a male youth came to dinner in full bustier and skirt, Jeff was laughing and joking with him. We left in a much more positive space than we entered. Still – we all would have liked to have been a bit rowdier and want to find camps that are friendlier to our particular brand of gathering. Jeff said it was quite unusual for kids to still be running around at 2 a.m... Roscoe replied that we were quite unusual. (Roscoe is pictured below, wearing his rainbow toque and ten-cent sunglasses.)

The Dance: After a great dance in the spring, this dance didn't work out as well. We've got some ideas for the next con, but the dance was really quite flat this time through. It happens! I really was happy about the glow sticks that were tossed out into the masses at the dance; the room was illuminated and it made dancing cooler...

Transportation: We're moving more and more to having buses take kids to and from con as we have some congregations that have very large youth groups and when we travel greater distances, it really helps the sponsors not have to drive. Unfortunately the Washington bus couldn't leave until 5:30 on Friday, (which ended up being more like 6:30, since the bus driver got confused and started driving west) so we didn't get in until midnight, which was late, hard on the planners, and made con super-short by cutting out Friday's portion. We did have a great orientation on the bus (there's Ben again! He made it clear that if you broke the rules, you would die be killed by the raccoons and the eels), but we really need to push to get on site by 9 or 9:30 regardless of how we get there.

Theme speaker: From all reports, the theme speaker was quite amazing. However, she competed against workshops. The thinking was that if youth weren't attending the theme speaker, they would be involved in something else, and that's admirable. The theme speaker really should have his/her own time slot, however, and be given the emphasis that they deserve.

More from Ben:

I really enjoyed this con, however short it was. First, the goods:

The new con-goers did an excellent job of tricking us into thinking they were con-veterans, and the con-veterans also did a good job of making the new people feel welcome (without overdoing it).

The sunrise was spectacular on Saturday morning, and by this point, I could not tell who had never been to a con and who hadn't. New con-goers had leis. They got lei'd at con. It's the only way you can...(and not get eaten by the raccoons and eels).

The reception that the Washington bus received was the perfect thing after a 6 ½ hour bus...er...adventure. By the end, I was texting Grace every, oh, 3 minutes: "6 mi to go" "where's the camp? We're here, where are you?" They had plenty of time to know we were arriving... very... slowly...

My favorite part was the cabins. They were heated, housed twelve, easily identified, and noise-resistant. There was a loft in each cabin, and two actual beds in each loft, while the downstairs held nine with mattresses.

Luckily, we had no arguments at all over who gets to sleep where, as most people were content with the large "cuddle puddle" that accumulated on the floor. I managed to snag one of the beds in the loft of our cabin, which amazed me, considering we were the last to arrive. You snooze, you...win? ☺

Now, the could-have-been-better, please-keep-in-mind-for-future-cons:

I highly disliked the dance. Every time a good song was played, it was either cut off short or nobody could really dance to it. I appreciate the help of whoever hosted the dance, but in the future, we need to work on the control freak aspect of it. When we put on the con forms what song we'd like to hear, usually the hosts make sure that the song is available, but they should also take requests. Allowing others to play their music is hardly the end of the world. Hey now now... it was late, and the staff had been working very hard for two days. And I suspect sponsor choices may just not go over that well. I mean, "Dead Man's Party" is a fantastic song, fast,

danceable... but have any youth ever heard of it? Still... dance changes on the horizon. It's hard to dance to old people music. :P

The food was not that great. I know it's a campsite, but I sure as heck won't be eating waffles anytime soon...But the dairy whipped topping was *delicious*.

Hair dying. We had numerous people end up with dye all over their clothes and/or faces (particularly Chris Conkling, who looked like he had just rolled in spaghetti sauce for twenty minutes). I thought Chris was re-enacting "The Texas Chainsaw Massacre..."

More explanation of what each thing on the schedule means. I could go over that during orientation, but first I would have to be told what was going on...

Decide what the workshops will be in advance.

I'm guilty of this one, but co-ordination between a touch group's leader(s) and their groups. Neither I nor my co-leader showed up for the last touch group because we thought the other would cover for us. Turns out that we both slept in too late and were eating breakfast. That wasn't a good feeling when our eyes met at the breakfast table...woops!

Getting there sooner. In the past, I have left school early to get to the meeting spot and left at a reasonable time. It was already well known that the drive from Bellevue, WA to Spokane was going to be a journey, but we still left at 6:30. Even our planned time of a 5:30 departure was too late, in my book. Tell people the bus is leaving at 5 sharp if you are planning to leave at 5:30; that way, they will only be a few minutes late.

Overall, the other things that need to be fixed happen every con, and one of these days we'll get around to fixing them (i.e., getting registration all sorted out BEFORE the last minute, answering everyone's questions AHEAD of time, figuring out the sponsor situation more efficiently, etc.). I think, however, that the thing I am most puzzled by is why, no matter *where* the con is held, it is always a long way for everyone. We should find a place right in the middle of Washington or something next fall, so that everyone can have an equal distance to go. I think it's called "geography." We have a very large district... should we aim for equally inconvenient for everyone? That's what I meant. It's hard to please a large group of people, but it's a heck of a lot easier to tick them all off.

Lastly, I was very impressed at how smoothly the con went. To my knowledge, we had no CACs, and aside from the noise issue on the first night, no problems. I am very proud of the planners, the staff, the sponsors, and the people that attended. We had no problems getting people together, getting the word out about keeping quiet and then staying quiet, and to my knowledge we had nobody break the rules. Thanks to everyone for a great weekend, however short it was!

Other Thoughts about Con:

The talent show was a particular highlight at this con. There were two different youth who thanked the community for their time with cons; they spoke about how much con has meant to them over the years. Beyond that, there were high points both in the acts themselves and the interaction of community. A group of youth got up and sang, "Who's Got the Crack?", to which Host Ben followed up with, "If you've got the crack, come clean, because it's not welcome here." There's really nothing like being told the Boat Story by Nathan in a pink, fuzzy, Panda bear outfit (see below; he spent days making it and stayed up all Friday night sewing it himself). Nick sang a song about being covered in dirt, and at the end had the whole crowd holding the "I'mmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm" note until it turned into one giant "mmmm". When he finished, youth rushed the stage for a group hug. As mentioned above, a good two-thirds of Con learned and danced along to "Crank That" by Soulja Boy, including many sponsors. As they returned, breathless, I said, "How could anyone not want to come to this??"

All of us who attend and support Cons (youth and adults alike) are working very hard to make them a great experience for youth, and to provide boundaries that let youth grow in all kinds of ways while staying safe. It's a tough balancing act. I am, con and con again, floored by how amazing the youth are who come and who return the respect we give them by maintaining those boundaries. It can be both overwhelming and intimidating to see a puppy pile of 40 youth. I know it is scary for DREs, advisors, parents, and others to send their youth off to Con, because I hear their concerns before every Con. One sponsor, who was a youth attending cons in the not-so-distant past, talked about coming home from Con. Her mother would say, "Why do I send you to these? You come home, you don't talk to me, you sleep for two days straight, you don't have your homework done, and I don't get my daughter back for a week." Her reply was, "They make me happy?" **Anyone returning from a con will tell you the exact same thing. This condition is known as "Con Withdrawal," or "Going cold tUUrkey."** Okay, so I made that second one up. But it's clever and I *crack* myself up sometimes. No pun intended, there, either

It's hard to look at Con from a distance and get it. When someone comes home cranky and uncommunicative, it's hard to imagine this is a good thing. But when you're there, and you see what Con means to our youth, it's a

glorious effort. If you have fears about Con, I invite you: allay your fears by supporting your youth and coming to Con. The dates of the next con are listed at the end of this newsletter in the sidebar. Come be your youths' sponsor for the next Con (or the one after that!). Come see what kind of community is being created. These youth **absolutely** deserve your support. The adults who come consistently – Clancy Kelly, Ward Ramsdell, Jim Bushnell, Rich Brainerd, Diane Brooks, Chris Conkling, to name several – have all helped provide consistency for and boundaries to these events, for sponsors and youth. The Internet has helped us connect to one another and form connections between cons, and have easier access to information ([you really should watch us dance to “Crank That” on YouTube](#)). The district has done a phenomenal job of supporting youth programming, developing a deep well of youth leadership who are the backbone and the safety net of this community. All of these elements are helping to make Con both a positive and powerful experience for you. We need to encourage our hopes, not our fears, and continue to support our youth and our youth Cons. [Look at it this way: Con is just a really big, extended version of Youth Group. We're so busy having fun, there isn't enough time in the day to get into trouble. And, like Anne-Marie said, it's built off of trust. I asked 5 veterans from previous Cons about this issue, and we all agreed on the same message: nobody feels the need to get in trouble at Con; we're all having too much fun to even think about that sort of thing. We're surrounded by people that we've known forever and we're all having a great time. Nobody wants to do anything that would ruin that feeling for everyone.](#)

[Who needs trouble? We've got SCRABBLE!](#)

UUA YOUTH OFFICE RESOURCES

Synapse: Free continental YRUU newspaper edited and published twice a year by the UUA Youth Office

Youth Advisory: Free newsletter for advisors, written by advisors and published by the UUA Youth Office

From YACs to SACs: A handbook for creating district youth organizations, available from the UUA Bookstore at 1-800-215-9076

Local Youth Group Program Handbook: Helpful resource for local youth groups, covering organization, fundraising, games, and worship. Available online at <http://www.uua.org/YRUU>

How To Be a Con Artist: Continental planning guide for conferences, available from the UUA Bookstore at 1-800-215-9076

Youth Advisor's Handbook: A guide for advisors, addressing the many facets of the adult's unique role in working with youth. Available from the UUA Bookstore (phone above)

REACH packet: Sent twice a year to every congregation for free, this resource contains religious education ideas and materials for all ages, including a section on youth programs prepared by the UUA Youth Office

Curricula: Several curricula are available from the UUA Bookstore aimed at youth programming. Topics include spirituality, sexuality, peace and justice, and other issues facing youth.

Advisor Training and Leadership Development Conferences: Leaders trained by the Youth Office are available for a fee to facilitate Youth Advisor trainings or Leadership Development Conferences in your district. Contact the Youth Office for more information.

National Social Justice Conference: Held every February in Washington, DC, this event for high-school aged youth focuses on putting hands and feet on the UU Principle by learning about political and social issues and how to bring about change.

Youth Caucus at General Assembly: Each year at the UUA General Assembly, the youth contingent gathers daily to caucus, discuss issues, and have fun. Contact the Youth Office for more information.

Youth Council: The annual business meeting of YRUU, where the direction of YRUU is decided and evaluated and official policy and positions are stated.

Online Resources: *The YRUU-L*, *Advisor-L*, and *YRUUSJ* are email listserves for the discussion of YRUU issues. The UUA website has directions for signing up for any listserve.

The YRUU Website is an online YRUU resource. The website lists all Youth Office resources, current information on district and continental programming, online issues of *Synapse*, and more. Find it at <http://www.uua.org/YRUU>