



Dear Vocational Rehabilitation Professionals:

Each summer, the National Association of the Deaf (NAD) hosts a Youth Leadership Camp (YLC) at Camp Taloali in Stayton, Oregon. This NAD YLC is an intensive educational four-week summer program for deaf and hard of hearing high school students. This program provides training to deaf and hard of hearing youth to develop their scholarship, leadership, and citizenship qualities in an outdoors environment. These deaf and hard of hearing students experience self-discovery and self-identity, and acquire confidence, self-esteem and self-advocacy skills.

Established in 1880, the NAD is the oldest civil rights organization in the USA. The NAD realized that a leadership training program was needed for deaf and hard of hearing youth and began the YLC in 1969.

Today, the NAD selects 64 deaf and hard of hearing students showing leadership promise from all over the United States. The YLC program is designed to provide deaf high school students with the training and educational opportunities necessary to transition to opportunities in higher education, meaningful employment, and leadership development. The following activities are part of our specialized program to identify and promote each deaf and hard of hearing student's self-advocacy and leadership skills:

- Analyze and evaluate each student's leadership style, team-building skills, and communication and interpersonal skills through evaluations as well as observing their ability to work with peers and staff members.
- Provide training in outdoor activities, including a Discovery low ropes course, to engender teamwork, self-confidence and communication skills.
- Conduct daily workshops on topics of self-advocacy, peer mentoring, communication, media, career exploration, personal discovery, leadership development, and disability rights.
- Bring Deaf professionals and role models to provide leadership seminars and teach the students about education, vocational, and leadership opportunities available after graduation from high school.
- Promote improved literacy skills by instructing students to develop written content for the camp newsletter, *Daily Drum*, as well as social media video content in the program's media class.
- Instruct the students to gain a better understanding of Deaf Culture and history, as well as their disability and civil rights to prepare them for life after high school.
- Introduce students to different options for post-secondary education and training opportunities.
- Provide hands-on trainings and opportunities to use self-advocacy skills through various activities.

Our YLC program emphasizes interactive activities that offer deaf and hard of hearing youth the opportunity to fully absorb and understand leadership lesson plans through 'learning by doing,' and adopting the old Chinese proverb: "Tell me, and I'll forget. Show me, and I'll remember. Involve me, and I'll learn." This dynamic program builds character, positive interpersonal skills, optimal conflict resolution development, and informed decision-making skills.



The NAD YLC program meets the goals of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) program in the following areas:

- Students receive career exploration.
- Students are required to engage in community service.
- Students receive information on career and post-secondary educational opportunities.
- Students learn self-advocacy skills through team-building activities, leadership seminars, workshops, and group activities.
- Students receive full mentoring opportunities that encompass the full range including peer mentoring, disability mentoring, and group mentoring.
- Students learn about personal rights and responsibilities.
- Students develop social and independent living skills.

As each student completes the NAD YLC program, we will provide VR professionals with:

- Assessments of students' leadership skills at the start of the program.
- Each student's self-evaluations and leadership assessment, conducted at the end of the program.
- Completed state VR evaluations or assessments (both pre and post, if applicable).

The NAD YLC program is highly popular and competitive, and has graduated over 3,000 alumni in its 52 years of existence. Throughout these five decades, our program has proven to be an excellent preparation program for deaf and hard of hearing students to attend postsecondary educational programs. This, in turn, contributes to a network of successful alumni. Many of these alumni have become successful leaders and advocates for the deaf and hard of hearing community, including teachers, professors, lawyers, doctors, business professionals, entrepreneurs, artists, and much more. Among many deaf and hard of hearing youth, the NAD YLC is a 'once in a lifetime' opportunity.

The NAD YLC tuition is \$2,900. This fee includes more than three weeks of lodging, meals, activities and various transportation expenses during camp, and does not include airfare or travel costs to Oregon. Travel arrangements and costs for students to arrive at Portland, Oregon or to Camp Taloali, Oregon are not part of the tuition.

There are not enough opportunities for deaf and hard of hearing youth to acquire leadership and training to become successful tax-paying citizens of the future. The NAD YLC program is a proven system that ensures this transition. For more information about our program, please visit youth.nad.org/ylc. If you have questions or wish to discuss any aspect of the YLC program, please contact me at chanel.bonheyo@nad.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Chanel D Bonheyo". The signature is written in black ink on a white background.

Chanel Gleicher Bonheyo
NAD Director of Youth Programs