

THE WORLD AS IT COULD BE IS WITHIN REACH

A Community-Led Rite of Passage To Welcome, Initiate & Celebrate Youth As Vital Members Of The Community

PLANNING ELEMENTS TO GUIDE DEVELOPMENT OF PROCESS DETAILS

OPTIMAL OUTCOMES OF THE RITE-OF-PASSAGE PROCESS:

- The participating youth will:
 - ♦ Gain greater clarity and understanding of the qualities of a healthy, strong, and vibrant community, and the different dimensions of community, including family, school, surrounding county, region, state, country, global neighbors
 - ♦ Know the history of the UDHR and understand its relevance to their personal lives and the health of their communities
 - ♦ Understand the value of Recreation, Education/Literacy, Arts, Career and Health to a strong, vibrant community
 - ♦ Have a sense of responsibility about contributing to a strong, vibrant community
 - ♦ Have a sense of accomplishment about their efforts
 - ♦ Recognize their importance to their immediate, local, regional and global communities
 - ♦ Have a leadership role in their community, continuing to apply what they learned during the Process
 - ♦ Articulate their own values and sense of self as part of entering and belonging to the community
 - ♦ Grasp that being healthy themselves helps lead to a healthy community
 - ♦ Have grounding in civics, history and the democratic process, and will translate their understanding into accomplishments
 - ♦ Grasp their own stake in having a healthy community
 - ♦ Become leaders to other youth
 - ♦ Embody and act from a human rights framework
 - ♦ Have fun and enjoy the process
 - ♦ Develop positive relationships with their “class”
 - ♦ Think big a la The World As It Could Be
 - ♦ Have the opportunity to exchange stories about their cultures, history and identity
- Families of the participants are fully aware of the Process and have a role to play throughout

DESIRED COMPONENTS OF THE PROCESS:

- Requires effort, critical thinking, problem solving and creativity
- Consistent learning process for each component
- Utilize the creative arts and movement to help deepen understanding of information/experiences and express ideas about what is learned and experienced
- Participating youth have regular check-ins to guide their progress and address any issues that arise
- There are clear acknowledgements/celebrations as each phase is completed
- We utilize political resources available, such as having offices of local, state and federal public officials provide and present Certificates of Commendation at the Culminating Presentation
- Participating youth have social proof – a permanent emblem – of their graduation, such as a certificate.

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- We have clear assessments as part of going through the process, including how to hear from the participating youth about what is and isn't working
 - ♦ We provide a safe environment for the participating youth to push themselves, as well as fail – “love and rigor”
- The adults involved have opportunities to connect, coordinate and commiserate
- A range of activities are available to accommodate different talents and concerns

RITE-OF-PASSAGE PROCESS DETAILS

Youth to participate: Ages 14 – 24

- This range offers something for the younger students to look forward to doing, while also recognizing youth 14 and older are likely to have the maturity to take on the critical thinking content of the process.

Selection Process:

- Have an application open to all school or organization members ages 14-24 that includes questions that help identify such factors as:
 - Why the person is interested in being a participant
 - What the person hopes to learn and accomplish as a result of being a participant
 - The current commitments the applicant has and how these would affect commitment to the Rite of Passage process
 - What the person would like us to know about them to indicate why they ought to be a participant
- Have a process for interviewing the youth, individually and/or as a group, to discuss the Rite of Passage process, expected level of commitment, and to get better acquainted.
- Consider how to address making sure applicants who are not selected are helped to constructively deal with their disappointment or sense of rejection

Study areas to be included:

- Process orientation, Self-reflection, UDHR, including interpersonal skills and qualities such as empathy and compassion, Recreation, Education/Literacy, Arts, Career and Health
- Incorporate opportunities for reflection on what is presented and how the youth can integrate this information into their own personal development and involvement in the community
- Incorporate the arts and movement as vehicles to grasp each study area, including Arts

Questions for the initial self-reflection:

- Who am I – What is my story?
- What communities am I part of?
 - Who has my back?
 - Whose back do I have?
- Where do I see myself 5 – 10 years from now?
- What do I think other people think of me?

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- What are some things people don't know about me?
- What are some things I want to work on for my own growth and development?
- What am I curious about as to my role in community?

Questions to guide the learning and action for each Study Area:

- What is 'the UDHR', 'Recreation', 'Education'...?
- What feelings/words come to mind when you think about this element?
- Where do you "see" this element in the community?
- Where do you "not see" this element in the community?
- Who plays a leadership/prominent role in fostering this element and how?
- Why is this element important to the health of a community?
- Why is this element important to your health and well-being?
- What is your role in having this element be a thriving part of the community?
 - ♦ What are the responsibilities that come with this role?
- What can you do immediately to support this element's strength in the community?
- What can you do on an on-going basis to support this element's strength in the community?
- What do you want others to know about this element and what they ought to do to support its strength in the community?

Proposed Process and Associated Logistics:

- There is a month-long process for each of the following study areas:
 - UDHR, including self-reflection, interpersonal skills and qualities, such as compassion and empathy
 - Recreation
 - Education/Literacy-Library
 - Arts
 - Career/Work
 - Health
 - Contributions to Community/Community Service
- Each month's study will be comprised of:
 - 1.5 to 2 hours of class meeting time, during which healthy snacks and beverages are provide. Include time for the following:
 - Opening ice-breaking, mindfulness, "getting into the class" activities
 - Creative art expressions, that include responding to a writing prompt with a poem, dramatic sketch or visual representation
 - Reflections, appreciations and closing ritual, such as forming a circle, coming up with a word or phrase representative of the discussion, then doing a hand-in-the-middle-of-the-circle-then-raised to loudly chant the word or phrase
 - Arrange for special guests from the community to speak on the topic of the month
 - Arrange for field trips, as possible, to provide enriching connection with exhibits or special events related to the presented topics
 - Organize a community action project based on connecting UDHR Articles with issues observed in the students' school and extended community

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Culminating Presentation:

- The Culminating Presentation provides the opportunity for the youth to present to a community audience what they have learned, so as to inspire their audience to know more about human rights and community health.
 - This experience provides the youth with the opportunity to realize all they have accomplished, and to be celebrated for their efforts by their families and community.
 - This experience is often the catalyst for transformative thinking and acting.
- The program ought to take place between 5:00 and 8:00 pm on the designated day in the last month of the program, at a time that works for working families and community members to attend, while, also, not being too late in the evening.
 - There ought to be a 30-45 minute program featuring the youth presentations
 - Arrange for a Key Note speaker to reflect on the significance of the youth efforts
 - Following the presentation program, have a party that includes food, beverages and music
- The audience ought to include families of the participating youth, staff of the school or organization, members of the local business community and school district, and public officials
 - Arrange for public officials to bring commendation certificates for each participating youth

Post Rite-of-Passage Connection with the Youth:

- There ought to be a final class session following the culminating presentation to:
 - Reflect of the presentation experience, as well as that of the Rite of Passage class
 - Give out Certificates of Completion and other possible gifts, such as class photos, or posters of the created art
 - Have a final closing cheer
- Identify possible ways for the youth to stay involved with their Community Action Project and/or the next Rite of Passage Class:
 - Provide youth with contact information of the public officials with whose offices they could obtain internships
 - Identify topics of interest to the youth they would consider doing further research on, and presenting information about to the next Rite of Passage class
 - Commit to mentoring the next cohort of youth that take part in the rite-of-passage