

On The Call:

Carrie Greenwood (KS), Sukie Glick (GA), Von Maul (WY), Emily (KS Alumni guest), Chris (KS Alumni guest), Melissa Santora (AZ), Kara White (VA), Cassie Lokker (WI), Dawn Evans (MO),

 **Opening / Introduction:** Opening ice breaker completed. Introductions and a Melissa (AZ) volunteered to take notes.

 **Approval of February Meeting Minutes:** Dawn asked for corrections to the minutes of August 2014. None were noted and minutes stand approved. Kara will have minutes posted to the website.

 **Old Business:** Dawn reported that AYLF is receiving more photos for the AYLF website. Please continue to send to Kara. Dawn continues to collect summaries for the AYLF newsletter. Kara asked that summaries be descriptive by including details that might benefit other YLF's. Dawn encouraged YLF's to send summaries to her and to notify her if details would like to be added to the articles already submitted.

Dawn mentioned a few other changes that are needed on the website. She will forward to Kara, who will have them posted. Dawn asked others to review information on the website and send changes to Kara by 9/22/14.

Kara and Dawn discussed the need to follow up to ensure the webmaster has been paid. Kara will do so, and report findings to Dawn.

 **Financials:** Jenifer reported that there have been no changes to the financial report, noting that the current balance is \$4270.17.

Dawn opened discussion of implementation of dues, as has been done in the past. It is her recollection that dues used to be \$300. Kara stated that there have been no dues for 4 to 5 years, and commented that if dues are reinstated AYLF needs to be able to tell people how those funds will be used. Dawn agreed and indicated that she will consult the by-laws and report back.

 **Topic:** Alumni Follow-up, Opportunities, and Community Involvement

Dawn introduced Carrie Greenwood from Kansas Youth Empowerment Academy (KYEA). Carrie is a 2001 YLF alumna. The Kansas YLF is operated by KYEA, a nonprofit created following the 5th Kansas YLF, when it was clearly recognized that alumni needed more

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support after returning to their home communities. This nonprofit provides the follow up piece, with 3 full and 1 part time staff.

Carrie indicated that the ways in which Kansas keeps alumni involved:

- Participation on the Board of Directors
- Office Internships
- Participation in programs:
 - o Participation in YLF Delegate recruitment interviews (1 alumnus in every region participates)
 - o Alumni serve as core of recruitment team, doing local presentations
 - o Assist with newsletters/outreach efforts
 - o Return to YLF as volunteers
 - o Kansas is creating a new program, “Faces of Change” which is the next leadership step for alumni
 - o Alumni participation with CIL’s and other agencies, such as VR are encouraged.
 - o Encourages/helps facilitate participation at conferences and events
 - o Keeps alumni informed via newsletter and social media
 - o Hold a reunion every 5 years.
 - o Provides ongoing support with goals:
 - Stay in contact with alumni
 - Review personal leadership plans
 - Alumni contact staff for assistance as needed
 - Help with advocacy at IEP meeting
 - Assist with empowerment planning, help reframing goals
 - Celebrate when alumni achieve goals

Carrie asked two Kansas YLF Alumni to introduce themselves:

Chris completed the Kansas YLF in 2008, and Emily completed the Kansas YLF in 2011.

Carrie facilitated the following discussion:

- Carrie asked how each alumnus remains involved with Kansas YLF?
 - o Emily indicated that she is involved with the summer youth program, and is part of the recruitment team.
 - o Chris described his involvement with legislation in Kansas that led to increased Disability History and Awareness in Kansas. Chris assists the YLF facilitator, does Disability History and Awareness presentations, and serves on the recruitment team.
- Carrie asked why each stays involved:
 - o Chris indicated that when he first came to YLF he wasn’t confident that he should have been a leader, but that YLF awoke that in him. He stated that it prompted self-advocacy, which led to systems advocacy. He sees himself as one part of a big circle and has to do his part to help others who have disabilities.
 - o Emily described being a hesitant delegate, and indicated that YLF literally transformed her life. She wishes for her story to inspire others to know that there

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are resources and supports and people who want to help you out there, and to seek them out.

- Carrie asked how Kansas YLF helped shape their goals:
 - o Emily responded that YLF helped her realize that she needs to be proud of who she is, and gave her skills to be honest and up front about her disability, and what she needs. YLF was the beginning of her self-advocacy. Emily changed her field of study to human services because she now knows she is supposed to help people.
 - o Like Emily, Chris also changed his mind about working on motorcycles to working with people in Special Education.
- Carrie opened the discussion up for questions:
 - o Dawn asked if anyone thought there would be benefit to holding an alumni conference call, similar to this call. There were positive comments, particularly from the alumni.
 - o Kara asked how Kansas handles transportation? Carrie indicated that transportation is always an issue. She stated that they do many of their activities locally and in nearby cities. They have found it easier to go to the youth, rather than to try to get the youth to them. They also partner with CILs to provide transportation and have some funds to reimburse mileage.
 - o Dawn asked if alumni would participate in YLF fundraisers? Both Chris and Emily said yes, and speculated that others would also become involved.
 - o Vaughn commented that Wyoming YLF recently collaborated with People First in a successful golf tournament. Each team was inclusive, and YLF alumni were present to share their YLF experience with golf teams.
 - o Kara inquired about holding a nationwide YLF fundraiser. Dawn suggested that perhaps we implement a fundraising committee.
 - o Jenifer asked the alumni what they would tell other alumni are reasons to stay involved? Emily indicated that she would tell other alumni that they are always going to be needed, and not to be complacent. Chris concurred with the statements made by Emily.
 - o Jenifer asked if anyone implements a contract of commitment after YLF? Vaughn indicated that Wyoming requires 2 letters of recommendation and an essay explaining why they want to attend, but no contract for afterward. No one else does this either. Melissa indicated that Arizona has a 1 year mentoring component and the expectation of participation in mentoring is clear in all recruitment materials. In addition, opportunities and ongoing activities are discussed throughout the forum and are highlighted during discussion of electing a Leadership Team.

 **Other Business / Closing:** Dawn thanked everyone for their participation, and especially those from Kansas for sharing their insights. She reminded callers to review the website for any changes and to send photos for the website to Kara. She also reminded callers to send YLF summaries for the newsletter to her.

Next Meeting: Thursday, October 16, 2014 at 2:00pm Eastern.

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