

# YOUTH POWER!

## INFORMATION SHEET

### Mission

YOUTH POWER! is the New York State network of young people who have been labeled and are seeking change. Together, we have decided to speak up about our experiences because no one knows what it is like for us better than we do. Through peer-to-peer mentoring, we empower young people to be active citizens, aware of government operations, their rights and the ability to use their voices to influence policies, practices, regulation and law. We are young people helping other people, ensuring availability of self-help and peer support while changing systems so that young people get the support they need with the respect and dignity they deserve.



**NOTHING ABOUT US  
WITHOUT US!**



### MEMBERSHIP

Membership means you support our mission and you give as much of your time to us as you want. If you are a member you get all the latest information about YOUTH POWER!. This includes Action Alerts, which let you know about things you may want to speak up about as well as opportunities for advocacy and input. As a member, you can help us grow our movement, speak out about things that need to change in the system and in our communities and serve on our Board or Workgroups. Our voting membership is limited to young people ages 12-28 who live in New York State and have been labeled in a state system with something such as having a disability or mental health issue, being a foster care youth, substance abuser or juvenile offender. To become a member you must fill out our membership form. Please visit our website or contact us for a copy if you need one.

### LEADERSHIP & STRUCTURE

#### The Board:

The YOUTH POWER! Board is the guiding force behind all of the network's work and activities. All of The Board members are young adults with disabilities who may also have experience in New York State public systems. They meet regularly through conference calls and in person meetings. The Board also facilitates three workgroups.

#### Action Group – Speak Out!

This workgroup leads our advocacy and activism. We have a lot to say and this group makes sure our members are heard.

#### Outreach

This workgroup creates ways to grow the YP! network and strengthen its voice. The printed member newsletter is developed by this group.

## Special Events

This workgroup takes the lead in planning our YP! major events such as the Families Together in NYS Annual Conference youth track and our University of YOUTH POWER!.

## Staff of YOUTH POWER!

We pride ourselves on being a peer run network. YOUTH POWER! employs youth and young adults with disabilities and/or cross-systems experiences. Employees operate as official representatives of YP!, mentor young leaders and coordinate network activities.

### **YOUTH LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES:**

YOUTH POWER! works to bring the voices of youth to government officials through persistent advocacy. We provide regular leadership opportunities to the young people in our network.

**TRAININGS:** YOUTH POWER! offers a variety of trainings on youth leadership, advocacy and engagement. Trainings for youth and adult partners are available.

**EVENTS:** We have designed a variety of empowering and educational events for both youth and adults. Some examples of events we have organized are statewide & regional youth forums, educational sessions with staff in inpatient and residential centers, conference youth tracks, youth empowerment sessions, youth speak outs, leadership dinners, and round table discussions.

**TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT:** We offer our expertise, strategies and support to help existing or newly forming youth led groups. This assistance includes strategies for development, structure, engagement, sustainability and other technical assistance needs groups may have.



**READY TO ACHIEVE MENTORING PROGRAM:** RAMP is a high tech career-focused mentoring program for young people with disabilities who are involved with, or at-risk of becoming involved with the juvenile justice system. Annually, thirty young people from Albany county will participate in weekly career preparation focused group meetings, including peer-supported goal setting and exploration of careers in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM).



**REGIONAL YOUTH PARTNERS:** YP! employs five full-time regional organizers. These young adults have personal experience in state systems and are charged with connecting local youth led groups, increasing youth inclusion in government work and strengthening YP! network activities on a regional and local level.

#### **Contact Your Regional Youth Partner:**

**New York City,** Phone: 347-880-2735

**Long Island,** Phone: 631-245-5289

**Central,** Phone: 315-679-1476

**Western,** Phone: 585-314-2452

**Hudson River,** Phone: 518-322-2096

#### **YOUTH POWER!**

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