

Organizing a County Youth Program

There is a tremendous value in having an organized youth program on a Pomona level. A few of the benefits are:

- Allows youth to meet regularly and solidify friendships that could last them a lifetime
- Gives the youth a united, stronger voice in their Pomona to direct their program
- Strengthens the youth interest in our fraternity and ideally will cement their membership/participation into the future
- The committee decisions will reflect the broad interests of the youth which should stimulate their involvement
- Increased activity, publicity and new membership within the Pomona as the youth are spreading the word about what they do in the Grange
- The Pomona can hold youth accountable for their program/activities if the youth are making decisions on where their program travels and how it evolves

There is no right or wrong way to organize a Pomona youth program. However, the program must have structure and the Pomona Grange needs to be on board agreeing to its structure. There are two avenues available in calling for a Pomona Youth program:

- The consensus of the Pomona could be found in the form of a **resolution**. The resolution would call for its formation, structure and accountability. The resolution would also serve as a record of the decisions made.
- Another avenue to framing a youth program would be to make a **motion** at a Pomona business meeting to form an organized youth program. The motion would also direct an appointed committee to report back at the next meeting with a proposed outline for the program.

Following are some criteria that should be considered while discussing how the program would work in your Pomona.

- Goal or purpose in the formation of the Pomona committee (there can be more than a singular purpose)
 - Build an active youth program in the county
 - Provide the youth autonomy in directing their program

- Provide opportunities of fellowship, fun, community service for youth
- Support activities/events of the Pomona grange
- Gain leadership skills
- Mentor junior grangers
- How many people will form the committee?
 - Chairperson only
 - Co-Chairperson's
 - Chair person (co-chair-person's) appointed and each subordinate chairperson is a member of the Pomona committee
 - Do you want a committee secretary to take/distribute minutes or will that be the implied responsibility of chairperson
- Where will meetings be held
 - Meeting will rotate around county with Subordinate Granges hosting
 - What will be expected of Granges? Solely open the door and turn on heat or will they provide snacks
 - Meet at a restaurant that can accommodate large groups
 - Youth committee members will host at their residence
 - Pomona business meetings; before/after meeting, during lunch
- Will the program have its own fund account?
 - Separate bank account or in general fund and tracked separately
 - Will the Pomona provide any seed money for the fund
 - Fundraising responsibility solely that of youth or will Pomona assist with an annual fundraiser dedicated as youth funds
 - Restrictions or parameters for spending youth funds
 - County activities only
 - Support youth for state/regional /national programs
 - Any use that youth decide with the caveat use of monies will be included in the youth report which Pomona has to accept
- How often will Pomona youth committee meet for planning purposes?
 - Quarterly, Semi-Annual or another time frame?
- How will the Pomona youth committee meeting date/time/location be communicated to all subordinate granges within the Pomona
 - The next meeting to be contained in the report to Pomona
 - eMail communication to all subordinate youth chairs, masters and/or secretaries
 - Pomona Newsletter
 - Facebook

- Posted on Pomona(county) or state website
 - Minimum notification period will be 30 days (or period of choice) prior to meeting
- How are committee minutes to be distributed to all subordinate granges?
(Can be singly or a combination of the following)
 - Committee Report at Pomona business meeting
 - As a courtesy, a written report should be provided to the Pomona Secretary for inclusion in their minutes
 - Written report distributed to all subordinate granges
 - Minutes eMailed to all subordinate youth chairs, masters and/or secretaries (to be read as communications)
- Configuration of activities in the parameter of time established for each business planning meeting
 - IE each quarter or semi-annually following activities can be planned
 - Fun activity
 - Community Service activity
 - Pomona event supported by youth
 - Encourage participation at State event
 - Fundraiser for each quarter/semi annual

The program needs to be well rounded so it offers something for all youth. The committee needs to plan meaningful activities with different goals. The components of a successful program include a combination of the following:

**fellowship, leadership, fun, activities, service,
recognition & membership**

Following are offered as ideas to stimulate the creativity of activities youth can participate in that will focus on the above components

Fun Activities

- Movie night at a subordinate grange
- Cosmic bowling
- Visiting haunted houses at Halloween or creating a haunted house and charge admission
- Swimming party in the summer

- Host a scavenger hunt (hand out grange info while hunting and you support the grange)
- Summer picnic at the river

Community Service

- Build day with Habitat for Humanity
- Serving at soup kitchen
- Volunteering a day at animal shelter
- Sponsoring a pumpkin patch for grade school kids (have pumpkins tagged acknowledging grange as donor ... include contact info)
- Caroling at retirement homes at Christmas (can be combined with something fun, such as pizza, afterwards)
- Man a coffee stop at a rest area (have grange literature available if permissible)

Supporting Grange at all levels

- Working at a Pomona fundraiser
- If county fair has grange booths, put in a county youth booth as a recruiting effort (have contact info in booth that can be taken by youth)
- Participating at county degree days as officers or any other capacity requested
- If Pomona has an evening fifth degree exemplification, serve dinner before the degrees for a small cost such as \$5
- Presenting a lecturer program in October for Grange Youth Month
- Participate at the OSG Legislative Day at the Capitol and put a younger face on the grange when legislators visit
- Create a brochure to promote the youth program in your county
- Participate at Ag Fest, the Log Cabin during the state fair
- Support and encourage each other to work to earn Achievement Award seals from National

Some random thoughts

- Consider appointing co-chairs instead of a single chairperson. This allows some down time for leadership as one individual is not responsible for every activity, meeting etc. A thriving youth program can be time intensive if done correctly. One possible structure for is for the co-chairs to take the lead alternating quarters ... this makes them basically responsible for one quarter and the next quarter they get to breathe as

the other co-chair is responsible for activities that quarter. A structure such as this can alleviate the opportunity for burn out to set in.

- Consider comprising the committee of both youth (age 14-35) and at least one older member willing to attend consistently and mentor the youth
- To encourage leadership development, encourage the decisions, activities, planning, communications etc to be accomplished by youth age individuals
- Consider establishing a day/time for a quarterly business meeting (i.e. the first Sunday at 6pm in the first month of each quarter). While the location will need to be communicated for each meeting, youth and interested will be able to pencil the meeting into their date books well into the future. This established meeting date can be changed if the dynamics of the youth change in the county.
- Be conscious of continually stressing that youth and anyone interested in the youth program, regardless of age, are invited to the committee planning meetings. The enthusiasm of the youth can re-invigorate the young at heart to work for and support the grange. Also many youth contests/programs are for all ages ... this is a bridge that fosters communication and good will among all ages.

It is the State Teams hope that we have provided the basics for you to consider to create a Pomona youth program. Don't let our suggestions limit your imagination in forming your program, each Pomona is unique and as such, while each program will have common denominators, each program should be unique and reflect the needs and interests of their area.

The State Team wishes you success in your endeavors to create a structured youth program in your Pomona. Please consider the State Director or your District Chairman as a resource and feel free to contact us as the need arises.