

SIMPSON YOUTH ACADEMY

NEWSLETTER

SUMMER RESIDENCY REPORT

August 2017

The Simpson Youth Academy successfully completed its first Summer Residency from June 24 - July 2, 2017 at Simpson College. The Academy cohort brought together seventeen rising high school juniors and seniors from throughout Iowa, with thirteen of these youth coming from United Methodist Churches. The students joined college-aged mentors, Simpson professors, and guest

teachers from two United Methodist seminaries, for a challenging experience of worship, service, and reflection. They explored the central question of what God might be calling them to do in the world: "Where does my deep joy meet the world's deep need?" The students engaged with twelve churches and social service agencies and learned from sixteen guest practitioners, eight of whom were United Methodist clergy. The students will now

return to their home churches, where they will continue in a mentoring relationship with their pastor or youth pastor, culminating in the students planning and implementing a worship or service project based on their gifts and passions in the spring. If you know a high school student who might benefit from the Simpson Youth Academy, please contact the program

director, Eric Rucker, at eric.rucker@simpson.edu.

**STUDENTS EXPLORED
THE CENTRAL QUESTION:
"WHERE DOES MY DEEP JOY
MEET THE WORLD'S DEEP
NEED?"**

SYA BY THE NUMBERS:

17 PARTICIPANTS

16 FAITH
LEADERS WORKING
WITH STUDENTS

8 UMC CLERGY
LED WORSHIP OR
CLASSES WITH
YOUTH

6
DENOMINATIONS
REPRESENTED

5 ETHNIC
IDENTITIES
REPRESENTED



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SYA STUDENT JOELLE REFLECTS ON THE SUMMER RESIDENCY:

Why were you interested in applying to the Youth Academy?

I wanted to further explore my faith and how we can be leaders as people of faith in our communities to correct injustices in our world. I also wanted to talk with peers about the heavy issues of our

society and openly discuss their views. I went into SYA with questions like, "Does

God see all the injustice in the world and is that part of his plan?" "What am I supposed to do with my life?" and "Are there more kids like me that are this on fire for God?" At SYA my fellow scholars/friends and I explored these questions, and many more.

What were the most important changes that happened to you at the Summer Residency?

"I REALIZED THAT I HAVE WHAT IT TAKES TO BE A LEADER OF FAITH."

I learned a lot at SYA; more than I thought possible in ten days. I realized that I have what it takes to be a leader of faith. I never was one to volunteer to read in Sunday school or pray at youth group. But at SYA I became comfortable in sharing my ideas on scripture and music

for a service. I loved listening to people's life stories and discussing other religions and practices.

SYA made me more confident in being a leader in my faith.

What did you learn about Christian community at the Residency?

I haven't grown up with the most positive association with church. Before SYA I honestly didn't really understand why being part of the community was so important. SYA showed me how I can help people

through my Christian community. I've also learned how nice it is to have people to talk with about my faith.

After experiencing the Residency, what would you say your hope is for the church? And how would you like to see high school students play a role in the church?

I would like to see high school students feel comfortable enough that they can build relationships within the church. With those relationships they learn from each other about



Joelle is a high school senior who lives in Carlisle, IA. She will be working with a mentor from Indianola First United Methodist Church on her project this year.

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life, and God, and they GO build relationships with others. They spread the good news. That is also my hope for the church as a whole. The pastor at my church said the other day in his sermon that there is a statistic that once every 30 years a Methodist brings someone new to church. My hope for the church is that we can bring that number down, not by force, but by simply following what was written and going out. Let's spread love, not hate, because they will know that we are Christians by it.



What are your vocational goals and passions? Any ideas about what your SYA project in your local community will be this year?

I would like to do something in the medical field but I haven't really decided on anything yet. I think I would like to collect hygiene products for my community.

Upcoming dates:

- September 2017: Scholars begin meeting with local mentors
- October 1, 2017: 2018 SYA applications released
- November 11 - 12, 2017 - SYA fall retreat

Explore SYA at:

www.facebook.com/simpsonyouthacademy

Nominate a young person at:

www.simpson.edu/religious-life/simpson-youth-academy