

### **Creating Effective Youth Leadership in the Local Group**

Youth are welcome in Mensa, and local group leadership often makes a critical impact on youths' decisions to remain in Mensa as they transition to adulthood.

Keep in mind: parents are most often the deciders about youth membership, so when serving youth, you are simultaneously serving parents.

Because different local groups have differing levels of resources, below please find four different levels, or tiers, of leadership and service local groups can provide youth and families.

#### **Tier I Leadership**

- LocSec or Membership Officer undergo background check in order to obtain YM Report.
- Publish News & Notes in local group newsletter as provided by national office.
- ExComm familiarized with what Mensa offers youth (view slidedeck at <http://bit.ly/mensabenefits>).
- Have a youth section on the website that provides links with descriptive text as follows:

If you are interested in what Mensa offers youth or are searching for resources, here are some places to start:

Explore the Mensa website to find out information about youth in Mensa -

<http://us.mensa.org/learn/gifted-youth>

Explore resources for youth, parents and educators - <http://mensaforkids.org>

Join the Bright Kids Facebook Group to connect with other parents of bright children -

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/MensaBrightKids>

Learn how your child can become a part of American Mensa -

<http://www.us.mensa.org/join/gifted-youth-admission>

If you're a teen member of Mensa (ages 13 - 17), send a message at

<https://www.facebook.com/Mensa18> to join the International Teen Facebook Group

Find information on the latest contest for youth - <http://us.mensa.org/gycontests>

Apply to the Mensa Honor Society (ages 10 & up) - <http://us.mensa.org/honorsociety>

If you have questions about youth in Mensa, please email [GiftedYouth@americanmensa.org](mailto:GiftedYouth@americanmensa.org).

## **Tier 2 Leadership**

In addition to all of Tier 1:

- Appoint and obtain approval for a Gifted Youth Coordinator. This position must be filled by a current member of Mensa who is willing to serve for a period of three years and undergo the background check procedure and process.
- Programs person and GYC work together to identify youth/family-friendly local group activities.
- Add local group information to content for newsletter (in addition to the News & Notes). This may include local resources or events appropriate for gifted youth, local group scholarship information, or information on regional gatherings.

## **Tier 3 Leadership**

In addition to all of Tiers 1 & 2:

- Local group's GYC holds quarterly activities for youth.
- Local group actively promotes Mensa offerings for youth in the newsletter and on the website, to include both evergreen and short-term events, activities and programs.
- Families of youth are contacted via email or other communication tool (Facebook, etc.) at least once per quarter.
- One or more parent volunteers may be approved to assist the GYC.

## **Tier 4 Leadership**

In addition to all of Tiers 1, 2 and 3:

- The local group's GYC works closely with the ExComm and families to identify and include Mensan parents with children who may not yet be members and include those families in the youth program.
- Frequent communication is shared through use of email or other method.
- Multiple parent volunteers allow for age- or geography-based activities and connection.
- The local group's website is frequently updated with current information about youth in Mensa and local group activities with youth.

### Tips for recruiting a GYC

- 1) Be honest about your need. YMs are one of the fastest growing areas of Mensa membership, and that will grow even faster if we have strong youth programs. A committed GYC is essential to that, so share with your local group that there is a need for someone who would be willing to make an investment of time and energy in a worthwhile cause.
- 2) Who is your target audience to recruit? The parents of the YMs are the first place to look. Other good candidates include teachers, homeschoolers (whether the children are YMs or not), and people in other service occupations (they make a good fit frequently). Don't forget your members who are just out of YM status themselves. We have twenty-year-old GYCs doing a good job.
- 3) Divide and conquer. If no one nibbles, consider dividing the job. There can be more than one GYC. Maybe someone would be willing to do the newsletter, someone else run activities once a quarter, and someone else run an activity once a quarter. Asking for a specific task to be done will sometimes yield a better result than a global request.
- 4) Test to train. Consider working backwards. Maybe someone in the group knows of a "dry Mensan" (someone who's a Mensan but hasn't been dunked in testing yet!) who would be terrific at it. Get them tested, and get them in! Sometimes people don't join because they don't see a need. If they see that they are needed, they may be more interested.
- 5) Desperate circumstances call for desperate measures. If you can't find anyone willing to take the reins, you may need to drive the cart yourself for a while, calling on individuals to help you. This often leads to one of your helpers being willing to take over when they see that the job can be expanded or contracted to fit the needs of the group or individual. If the program just disappears for lack of a GYC, it becomes that much more difficult to start it again. Keeping it going yourself will save you time and energy in the long run.

Here is some wording you can use in your newsletters to try to recruit a GYC:

### **Your presence is the greatest present of all.**

Were you a child once?

Could you have benefited from associating with kids who thought like you?

Mensa is intellectual sanctuary for our kids, too!

Our Local Group is in need of a Gifted Youth Coordinator. The pay is low (okay, nonexistent), but the rewards are high. The job can be as big or as small as you want to make it. If you care about Young Mensans and have a couple of hours a month to spare (really!), you can make a huge difference in the lives of the YMs in our group. If you are interested in learning more, call \_\_\_\_\_ or email \_\_\_\_\_.

If you haven't time to respond to a tug at your pants leg,  
your schedule is too crowded. ~Robert Brault