



## Delegates, Advisors, Parents, Volunteers, and more,

The Oregon YMCA Youth and Government Press Corps is excited to welcome you to the November YAG newsletter. As we get closer to Youth and Gov season, we are looking forward to providing you further updates and sharing stories from program committee members, and delegation presidents, and introducing you to our Press Corps members!

If you have any information you would like included in our next newsletter, please reach out to Sydney Moneke at [sydneymoneke17@gmail.com](mailto:sydneymoneke17@gmail.com) or DM us on Instagram @oryagpress.

## 2023-2024 Youth and Government Schedule

In order to be prepared for the conference, make sure to keep these important dates and events in mind! **December 15th** is the registration deadline. Be sure you are registered to attend pre leg and conference as either a delegate or member of the press corps. You can do so at [this link](#). If you are a delegate, your bill draft is due **January 5th**. Soon after that, **January 13th** is our pre-legislative conference! Please note that Pre-leg this year will be in-person, at West Salem High School. Attendance is highly encouraged and beneficial for everyone, as you will get information about the conference and have the opportunity to revise your bills with fellow delegates. After Pre-leg, you will have two weeks to edit your bill before the final draft is due on **January 29th**. Our state conference this year will take place **February 22-24th** at Willamette University in Salem, Oregon. We are extremely excited for another productive, joyful year of YAG. With registration deadlines only 5 weeks away, please be mindful of these dates and check with your delegation president and advisor to be sure you are meeting these deadlines.

## Member Spotlights: Josh Gwin and Noam Raich

As we get closer to the heart of YAG season with Pre-Leg and Conference, Press Corps is excited to highlight the amazing work of student delegation presidents and program committee members that make Youth and Gov what it is. Josh Gwin, Chair for the Oregon YMCA Youth and Government Program Committee, recently shared his experience serving on the program committee and how he supports YAG delegates throughout the year. On his responsibilities as Program Chair, he stated, "...part of my responsibility is to coordinate and multiply the collective efforts of a volunteer Program Committee...the program is student-led so my job is pretty easy. That said, student leaders can trust that there's a dedicated team meeting throughout the year to ensure the entire year of programming is meaningful, safe, and hopefully fun, too." In relation to his responsibilities at the conference, he noted, "...you can typically find me advising in the Senate, subtly or not-so-subtly encouraging students to speak...and getting really nerdy with the details of bills." A Youth and Government participant since his teen years at McKay High School in Salem, Mr. Gwin's thoughtful attitude and desire to serve all participants are what make him extremely well-loved in the YAG community.

With Pre-Leg only a few short months away, Gwin wanted to emphasize the importance of student voice even in uncertain times. "I get it," he says, "youth voices are constantly left unheard, or heard in poor faith as a novelty or unactionable nicety. Know that this is a supportive community that wants to hear your thoughts, even if another brave youth uses their voice to disagree with you. Once you try that first participation...you'll almost always find you love hearing your voice and feeling that kind of liberating authority." The bottom line is, Gwin and other program committee members, alumni, and delegates are here to amplify your voice. Though it can be intimidating for many, YAG offers the perfect opportunity to share your thoughts without fear of judgment. Be sure to be on the lookout for Mr. Gwin through pre-leg and conference, he is excited to continue serving delegates!

In addition to our wonderful Program Committee, delegation presidents are the leadership at a more local level that keeps YAG functioning. Once again reinforcing the theme and importance of student voice, the student-run nature of individual delegations is highlighted in all corners of the state.

Noam Raich, Crescent Valley delegation president, was kind enough to offer his insight into the role he plays at his delegation and his hopes for the upcoming YAG season.

After being approached by former Youth Governor Caroline Gao in July of last year, he promptly formed a new delegation at Crescent Valley High School which allowed him to combine his passions for legislature, speech, and debate. In relation to his first conference, he said, "Overall...it was a great experience getting to debate so many awesome bills even if there were hiccups with my delegation." Noam and the Crescent Valley team have already made significant steps in recruiting compared to their last year. "We've managed to just about triple in size compared to last year and we hope to continue growing for the conference," he adds. Furthermore, Crescent Valley's speech and debate experience added another dimension to their delegation. When asked about what makes his delegation unique from others in the state, he noted, "About half of the delegates this year have a background in speech and debate and I think that makes our style of public speaking, and parliamentary debating a lot different from other delegations and delegates." Finally, he added, "Our whole delegation is looking forward to the conference and you can expect to see some new faces with brilliant ideas." Despite CV's newness to YAG, the passion Noam and other delegates bring to the table shines through, and they are sure to be a valuable addition at the conference this year.

Thank you to Josh and Noam for their time in answering these questions. Be on the lookout for more program committee and delegation president features in upcoming months.

### **New Press Corps Member: Abigail Curry**

Last year was everyone's first experience with the Press Corps, and this year we are focused on the growth of the press, displayed with the addition of new members like West Salem High School Junior Abigail Curry. In an interview, she explained how like many others, she was first introduced to YAG through her AP Government class. She had many friends already participating and understood that YAG presented an opportunity to be a part of a connected community. Curry has been a part of YAG since last year,

where she spent her time as a delegate. She enjoyed being a part of the action but found that the journalism aspect of the Press Corps fit her best. Curry says, "I value the idea that knowledge is brought to people. With press, we can ensure that others who aren't personally invested in the government get an idea of what's really going on." She sees the importance of learning for herself and spreading information to others. Curry believes that understanding our government before we are out in the world is vital. Overall, Abigail Curry has aspirations to simultaneously grow her knowledge and skills as well as those reached through the press. Our Press Corps is excited to welcome her to the team. Be on the lookout for more new member features in upcoming newsletters!

Thank you to all those involved in Oregon Youth and Government that make the program what it is. Once again, please contact Sydney Moneke at [sydneymoneke17@gmail.org](mailto:sydneymoneke17@gmail.org) or DM us on Instagram @oryagpress with any questions, or if you would like something included in the next edition of this newsletter.

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