

COMMUNITY YOUTH GROUP

YOUTH GRADES 6~7~8



Bear Creek Foundation

www.bearcreekfoundation.com

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

The youth group program is sponsored by the Bear Creek Foundation, an affiliate of Bear Creek Community Charter School. Participation is open to any youth, regardless of where they live or go to school. Students in grades 6, 7, and 8 are eligible to participate.

This is a **youth-driven program** incorporating education, peer support, and fun activities. Youth shape the program, support each other in their positive decisions, and determine how they will be positive role models for their peers. Adult advisors facilitate the positive relationships, opportunities, competencies, values and self perceptions that youth need to succeed. The program will provide youth with information that impacts **decision-making skills** and **healthy, positive choices**. The program will focus on personal growth by emphasizing knowledge, good self concept, emotions, and interpersonal skills to establish positive behaviors. Youth will explore personal values and internal decisions regarding making positive choices while building identity and support with one's peer group. They will also be encouraged to develop a positive self-concept through enhancement of **leadership skills**.

The youth group will provide **alternative activities** that are viewed as more rewarding than the high risk activities youth often engage in. The program will organize activities that can change conditions that exist in schools and communities by coordinating positive programs and activities that are initiated by youth.

The youth group will capitalize on the developmental need for peer acceptance by harnessing the powerful influence of peer pressure and transforming it into a positive force that encourages young people to make positive choices. This is achieved in a **supportive, accepting environment** that recognizes young people as positive resources.

MISSION STATEMENT

It is our mission to provide a **safe environment** where youth feel valued and share in **constructive relationships** with their peers, while encouraging the development of positive attributes that prevent involvement in risky behaviors and providing opportunities for them to **meaningfully contribute to their community**.

CORE VALUES

We believe in:

- Empowering youth in a manner in which they feel valued and free of threats to their physical & emotional safety;
- Creating an environment of positive relationships that provide support for youth through material benefits, feedback that strengthens identity, and genuine caring;
- Providing opportunities for youth participants to constructively use their time, assisting in developing pro-social supports and skills, and stimulating positive growth;
- Encouraging a commitment to learning and promoting positive values;
- Providing opportunities for young people to reach their full potential, including the skills and confidence to successfully negotiate the tumultuous adolescent years. Addressing a combination of adolescent issues to provide a comprehensive, multi-faceted approach aimed at building assets and resiliency;
- Setting clear boundaries and expectations along with consequences for deviating from those standards that respond appropriately and consistently to adolescent behavior.

ADULT ADVISORS & VOLUNTEERS

Christine Fazzi will serve as youth group advisor, along with Jim Smith, Tina Sherwood and Sarah Panattieri, as well as responsible parent volunteers as needed. Because of the nature of the program, parent involvement shall be limited.

Primary Contact: Christine Fazzi
Phone: (570) 824-3096
E-mail: *fazziw@aol.com*

Other Contact: Jim Smith
Phone: (570) 820-4070, Ext. 352
E-mail: *jim.smith@bearcreekschool.com*

All advisors and adult volunteers are required to complete a volunteer application and will be required to undergo a Criminal Background Investigation by the Pennsylvania State Police and obtain a Child Abuse History Clearance by the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare. Volunteers who indicate they resided or were employed outside the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for any period of time during the past 15 years will be required to undergo a Criminal Background Investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

YOUTH GROUP MEETINGS

Youth group meetings will be held twice each month, on Friday afternoons from 3:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Generally, meetings will be held in the cafeteria at Bear Creek Community Charter School unless otherwise announced.

A mandatory informational session for all youth interested in participating, along with their parents, will be held on Friday, February 13th from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. in the Cafeteria at Bear Creek Community Charter School. Refreshments will be served. It is important that all completed paperwork be returned either the evening of the parent orientation or the afternoon of the first youth group meeting on March 6th.

New youth members are welcome to join the group at any time. A youth group advisor must meet with a parent or guardian following the first youth group meeting to obtain the appropriate paperwork.

A tentative schedule for the first half of 2009 is as follows:

Friday, March 6 th	Friday, March 20 th
Friday, April 3 rd	Friday, April 17 th
Friday, May 1 st	Friday, May 15 th
Friday, June 5 th	Friday, June 19 th

All youth gatherings will be supervised by adult advisors and volunteers. Youth participants will not be released at the end of a meeting or program until they are "signed out" by a parent or other authorized adult.

Each month will focus on one of the following "cornerstones" of the program:

Responsibility

Environment

Service

Pride

Education

Character

Tolerance

The first meeting of each month will consist of dinner (pizza, hoagies, etc.), a period of appropriate social activities, and a discussion or group activity associated with the “cornerstone” of that particular month.

The second meeting of each month will consist of dinner (pizza, hoagies, etc.), a period of appropriate social activities, and either a movie or guest speaker associated with the same theme.

The group will also undertake various service projects throughout the year, which will be discussed and chosen by the members of the group.

YOUTH COUNCIL

Youth members of the group will be actively involved in determining activities and “charting the course” to further instill responsibility and leadership skills. Youth members will elect officers to serve on the Youth Council, which will form the governance structure of the group. The group’s advisors will be actively involved in providing support to the Youth Council. Positions will be filled through an electoral process that will occur during the month of February of each year. The Youth Council will consist of the following: President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer. A position description will be created for each, outlining the responsibilities of each elected position.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Youth participants, along with their parents, must complete a Youth & Parent Participation Agreement, which will outline expectations, appropriate behaviors, release of liability, etc. Parents will also be required to submit a completed Health Information & Emergency Contact Information Form, including emergency contact information, instructions, information on allergies, etc.

Students attending Bear Creek Community Charter School will be permitted to stay after school to participate in youth group activities. These students must have a Youth & Parent Participation Agreement signed by a parent/guardian before they will be allowed to stay after school.

Youth group meetings and other activities are considered “lock in” activities. Youth are expected to participate in the entire activity and will not be permitted to leave until the end of the activity and shall be released to a responsible adult.

Regular meetings end at 7:30 p.m. All youth are expected to be picked by 7:40 p.m. Youth will not be released at the end of a meeting or program until they are “signed out” by a parent, guardian or other pre-authorized adult. Youth pick-up information must be on file with the youth group advisor in advance. Under no circumstances will a youth be released unattended or without being “signed out” by an adult.

BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS

There are good reasons why policies and rules have to be established. They create boundaries to help us know what is and is not appropriate. Common sense usually dictates such boundaries. To remain active participants in group activities, the following are common expectations that all youth must agree to follow. Youth participants are expected to:

1. Be honest and truthful and show respect for everyone they come in contact with, by both words and actions;
2. Fully participate in all activities in a positive, obedient and constructive manner and set a positive example through both language and actions;
3. Recognize the leadership and authority of adults and youth leaders and respect those people in leadership roles with their attitude, words and action;
4. Respect the rights, feelings and the property of others. Insults tear us apart rather than bring us together for the positive;
5. Deal peacefully with anger and disagreements;
6. Practice good citizenship, leadership and self-governance;
7. Demonstrate positive sportsmanship and attitudes at all times that is becoming of a leader;
8. Refrain from actions that could result in injury and/or cause damage to property. Vandalism or stealing will not be tolerated. Financial obligations that result from such behavior will be the sole responsibility of the youth and their parent/guardian;
9. Not engage in any inappropriate conduct, intimacy, or sexual harassment and will not possess obscene or inappropriate material during any youth group activity;
10. Not to possess any drugs, tobacco products, alcohol, fireworks, matches, cigarette lighters, knives, or items that would endanger people, pets, wildlife, or property, or any items that are illegal;
11. Dress appropriately. Short shorts or skirts, tank tops, any clothing that has any reference to tobacco or alcohol products, contains inappropriate words or graphics, including insignias or advertisements, are prohibited.
12. Unplug themselves from all electronics while at youth group activities and events. Participating youth agree not use cell phones, iPods, cameras or other personal electronic or entertainment devices during youth group activities and events;
13. Remain present at youth group activities unless they obtain the permission from a group advisor to leave;
14. Accept responsibility for their own behavior and conduct, uphold high standards for the group and accept the consequences for inappropriate behavior;
15. Report any inappropriate conduct to a group advisor if they become aware of such inappropriate behavior.

Furthermore, for the protection and safety of all participants, acts of violence, harassment or bullying of any kind will not be tolerated. Violence and harassment includes, but is not limited to, fighting, physical or verbal aggression, assault or abuse, ethnic insults, profane or obscene language, gestures or actions.

Public display of affection with your significant other while participating in youth group activities is inappropriate and distracts from our purpose as we meet together. For the safety and well being of all, every meeting, activity and event will have physical boundaries. Participants are expected to stay within those boundaries.

Rule Breakers

We will always try to show respect in disciplining youth. Most of the time a youth will be dealt with privately rather than in front of others. Parents will be informed of the youth's behavior depending on the severity or repetition of the offense. In a case where a youth's behavior disrupts the learning or enjoyment of others or endangers them in any way, the offending youth will be removed. We will take seriously matters of the law. We will not hesitate to contact law enforcement authorities when warranted. In such cases, parents will be notified as soon as possible after appropriate intervention has taken place. Just for clarification: if a youth does something illegal, we will call the police first and then the parents.

Acceptance

Complete acceptance and agreement with these behavior expectations are a requirement of any youth who elects to participate in the program, as well as their parent or legal guardian. Youth and their parents/guardian acknowledge that if they do not abide by these rules, they may lose the privilege of attending a scheduled activity or may be sent home at the discretion of a group advisor. Youth and their parents/guardian will be responsible for all consequences of youth behavior.

Consequences

First Occurrence: The youth will receive a verbal warning from a group advisor.

Second Occurrence: The youth will be removed from the activity by a group advisor and will participate in a discussion that is meant to resolve the issue in a positive and productive manner and allow the youth to return to the activity.

Third Occurrence: The youth will be removed from the activity by a group advisor and will be required to notify their parent or guardian. Resolution to the issue will be affected by the youth, parent/guardian, and the advisor.

Fourth Occurrence: The youth will be suspended from participating in future youth group activities.

Final authority for determining disruptive or unsafe behavior, along with the consequences of such behavior, will rest with a youth group advisor.

IMPORTANT NOTE: *Parents of youth participants must agree to the Behavior Expectations and other rules and guidelines set by the youth group advisors prior to a youth's participation in any activities or events.*

Youth Group

YOUTH & PARENT PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT

Youth Participant: _____

Grade: _____

Acknowledgment of Behavior Expectations & Consequences

By signing this Agreement, I have read and understand the Youth Group Program Guide that has been provided to me. I have read and understand the Behavior Expectations that are attached and have discussed them in detail with my son, daughter, or youth in my custody. I understand that these Behavior Expectations will be taken seriously and strictly enforced by the adult advisors and youth leaders. Further, I understand the consequences for failure to comply with these Behavior Expectations, including removal from the youth group, and agree to consistently reinforce appropriate behavior and good decision making with the youth participant whose name appears above.

← *Parent's Initials*

Permission to Stay After School (Bear Creek Community Charter School)

The youth participant named above currently attends Bear Creek Community Charter School and I grant permission for them to remain after normal school hours to participate in youth group activities.

← *Parent's Initials*

Photography Release

I grant permission for myself/my child to be photographed, and/or videotaped while participating in the youth group activities for the purposes of publicity, staff training, and/or promotion. I consent to the use of any video images, photographs, audio recording, or any other visual or audio reproduction that may be taken subject to this release during the activity/event to be used, distributed or shown as the Bear Creek Foundation and/or the youth group advisor determines.

← *Parents Initials*

Youth Pickup & Release

I grant permission to the youth group advisors and representatives of the Bear Creek Foundation to release the youth participant named on this form to the individuals indicated below. I understand that youth participating in youth group activities must be picked up within 15 minutes of the conclusion of the activity. Only those individuals indicated below will be permitted to pick up the youth participant, and positive photo identification (driver's license) will be required.

← *Parents Initials*

Name of Person Authorized to Pick Up Youth Participant

Relationship

Informed Consent & Permission for Emergency Transportation/Treatment

As the parent or legal guardian of the youth participant whose name appears above, I hereby give consent and/or authorization for the youth participant to be examined by medical or dental personnel, as dutifully licensed to practice under the laws of the Commonwealth; and to provide necessary treatment and/or hospitalization that in their professional opinion is necessary to maintain the life, health, or well being of the individual. I understand it is my responsibility to provide accident and health insurance coverage for the youth participant and I will be financially responsible for all charges and fees for emergency medical treatment and/or transportation, regardless of whether my medical insurance covers such charges and fees. I have examined the information contained in this packet and find that all information is correct

I understand that I will be notified if the youth participant becomes injured and/or ill while attending youth group activities. I agree that upon notification of the youth participant’s injury and/or illness, I will have her/him picked up immediately. In case of an emergency or when I cannot be reached, I hereby give authorization to the youth group advisor or other authorized representatives of the Bear Creek Foundation to contact other parents, legal guardians and/or emergency contact people listed on this form. If no one listed on this form can be reached, then I hereby give authorization to the youth group advisor, agents, and the treating physician to obtain or provide whatever medical treatment and/or transportation deemed necessary for the immediate welfare of the youth participant.

By signing this agreement, it is my intention that the youth group advisor or other authorized representatives of the Bear Creek Foundation be treated as acting *in loco parentis*, and be treated as personal representatives for the purposes of disclosing protected health information pursuant to the privacy regulations of the Health Insurance Privacy and Portability Act (HIPPA) of 1996. I agree to disclosure of protected health information to youth group representatives of the youth participant as necessary: (1) to provide relevant information to youth group representatives related to the person’s ability to participate in youth group activities; (2) to provide relevant information to youth group representatives to keep me informed of the youth participant’s health status.

← **Parents Initials**

AGREEMENT & RELEASE

1. In consideration of my child’s participation in activities of the Bear Creek Foundation, including the youth group program (the “Activity”), and intending to be legally bound, each of the undersigned agrees to assume full responsibility for any injuries or damages which may occur to my child as a result of, in connection with, or arising out of my child’s participation in the Activity, and agrees that the Bear Creek Foundation (the “Foundation”), the Bear Creek Community Charter School (the “School”), and its officers, board members, employees, agents, volunteers, chaperones and sponsors (“Released Parties”) will not be liable to the undersigned or my heirs, executors, administrators or assigns, for any injuries or damages of any nature whatsoever, whether or not resulting from the prior or contemporaneous negligence of the Released Parties, or any other person or persons whose actions or omissions to act may be imputed to the Foundation and/or School, and does hereby fully and forever release and discharge the Released Parties or any other person or persons whose actions or omissions to act may be imputed to the Foundation and/or School from any and all claims, demands, injuries, damages, rights of action, or causes of action, present or future, whether known, anticipated or unanticipated, resulting from or arising out of my child’s participation in the Activity, and agrees to indemnify and hold harmless the Released Parties or any other person or persons whose actions or omissions to act may be imputed to the Foundation and/or School from any and all claims, demands, injuries, damages, rights of action, or causes of action which in any manner result from or arise out of my child’s participation in the Activity, including overnight travel.

2. Each of the undersigned represents to the Foundation and School that my child is in good health and sound physical condition and that I have no knowledge of any physical conditions which would render my child unable to participate in the Activity, including overnight travel.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, and intending to be legally bound hereby, the undersigned has signed this Agreement and Release.

Date

Parent/Guardian

Date

Parent/Guardian

Name of Youth Participant

HEALTH INFORMATION & EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

Name of Youth: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Parent/Guardian Names: _____

Parent/Guardian Cell Phone Number: _____ Work Number: _____

Emergency Contact Information (in the event we cannot contact a parent or guardian)

Name: _____ Relation: _____ Phone Number(s): _____

Name: _____ Relation: _____ Phone Number(s): _____

Physician's Name: _____ Phone Number: _____

Medical Insurance Provider: _____ Policy Number: _____

Important Health Information (If Yes, please provide an explanation by writing on the back of this page).

Does the youth participant have a pre-existing medical condition? Yes No

Is the youth participant currently taking any drugs or medications? Yes No

Does the youth participant have heart conditions? Yes No

Does the youth participant have high blood pressure? Yes No

Has the youth participant been diagnosed with diabetes? Yes No

Has the youth participant been diagnosed with asthma? Yes No

Has the youth participant been diagnosed with mononucleosis in the past 12 months? Yes No

Does the youth participant experience fainting or motion sickness? Yes No

Does the youth participant have any allergies (food, bees, insects, medicines)? Yes No

Do you foresee any problem with the youth participating in physical activities? Yes No

Is the youth participant restricted from eating certain foods or participating in certain activities? Yes No

Has the youth participant had any recent injury, illness or infectious disease? Yes No

Does the youth participant wear glasses, contacts or protective eye wear? Yes No

Is the youth restricted from eating certain foods or participating in certain activities? Yes No

Does the youth have a disability (physical, intellectual, emotional)? Yes No

* If yes, use the back of this page to indicate the functional implications and any concerns about participation related to the disability.

Please use the reverse side of this two page form to include any additional information related to the youth participant's health, special restrictions or considerations the youth advisors may need to be aware to assist us in providing safe and healthy activities for all children.

Medications Being Taken

Please list ALL medications (including over-the-counter or nonprescription drugs) taken routinely. Any medications the participating youth must take during a youth group activity must be included on this form. The youth participant must provide the medication to the youth group advisor at the beginning of the activity in its original container, identifying the prescribing physician (if a prescription drug), the name of the medication, the dosage, and the frequency of administration. The youth group advisor will retain custody of the medication until which time the youth notifies the advisor, at which the youth will be permitted to take the medication. Whenever a question regarding medication arises, the youth participant’s parent/guardian will be notified.

Please identify any and all medication the youth participant, the dosage and the schedule for which it should be taken:

<u>Medication</u>	<u>Dosage</u>	<u>Schedule</u>

I give my permission for the youth participant to be provided the following using manufacturer’s instructions:

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------|--|----------------------------|--|
| Acetaminophen (Tylenol) | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | Diphenhydramine (Benadryl) | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | Antacid (Rolaids, Tums) | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Topical Antibiotic Ointment | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No | Sunblock/Solarcaine | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |

Parent/Guardian Acknowledgment & Consent

I acknowledge that there is the possibility of bodily injury whenever youth travel and participate in recreational activities. To the best of my knowledge, the above named youth participant is in good health and capable of extended physical activities. I have read and understand the information in the Youth Group Program Guide, including the Health Information & Emergency Contact Information Form, and understand all the information it contains. I further agree to notify the youth group advisors in writing if I become aware of any of the above permissions or information about my son, daughter or child in my custody has changed. I understand that engaging in any youth group activity is a personal choice and completely voluntary, and I authorize the person whose name appears above to participate in youth group activities.

Parent/Guardian’s Signature

Parent/Guardian Name (Please Print)

Date

Youth Participant’s Acknowledgment

I have chosen to participate in youth group activities and I have read and understand the Youth Group Program Guide that has been given to me, including the Behavior Expectations. I agree to follow the rules that are listed in this Guide. I understand that the rules and expectations will be taken seriously and strictly enforced by the adult advisors and youth leaders. Further, I understand the consequences for not following the rules or meeting the expectations of the youth group. I understand that I may be not participate in youth group activities if I do not follow the rules.

Youth Participant’s Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Acknowledgment

I acknowledge that I am the parent or legal guardian of a youth who has elected to participate in youth group activities. I hereby give my son, daughter or youth in my custody permission to participate in the youth group and youth group activities.

By signing this Agreement, I have read and understand the Youth Group Program Guide that has been provided to me. I have read and understand the Behavior Expectations that are attached and have discussed them in detail with my son, daughter, or youth in my custody. I understand that these Behavior Expectations will be taken seriously and strictly enforced by the adult advisors and youth leaders. Further, I understand the consequences for failure to comply with these Behavior Expectations, including removal from the youth group, and agree to consistently reinforce appropriate behavior and good decision making with my son, daughter, or youth in my custody.

As a condition of elective participation in youth group activities, I understand that I am required to complete and return a signed Participation Agreement, Agreement & Release, along with emergency contact information, permission to treat my child in the event of an emergency, and pick-up & release approval.

Parent/Guardian’s Signature

Parent/Guardian Name (Please Print)

Date