



Handbook

2018

The Youth Alive Handbook is adapted from the Youth Alive Facilitator Manual, copyrighted in 2018.

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YOUTH ALIVE LOGO

LOGO CONCEPT

The flame represents the Holy Spirit, who makes youth fully alive and empowers them to make healthy choices.

The base represents a young person with open arms, affirming that when a young person is fully alive and on fire for God, they will open their arms to the world feeling empowered to live a healthy and happy life of service to God and to others.

LOGO FORMS



LOGO GUIDELINES

The Youth Alive logo can only be used by Youth Alive leaders for Youth Alive-related activities, events and resources. Otherwise the logo cannot be used without the permission of the General Conference Youth Alive Coordinator.

Colors:

Flame: PANTONE 1495 C

Text and Delta: PANTONE 3145 C

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YOUTH ALIVE DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE

What is Youth Alive?

Youth Alive is a youth discipleship program designed to build resilience among adolescents and young adults by inspiring and equipping them to make healthy choices.

What is the purpose for Youth Alive, and Why is it Needed?

Youth Alive invites, involves, invests in, and inspires young people to connect with God, with others, and with their own purpose for living. Based on the foundational belief that Jesus Christ created us, loves us, redeems us, lives in us, and will return for us, our response is to accept both the gift of salvation and the challenge to live for Christ right now in all our thoughts and activities. As such, Youth Alive focuses on nurturing relationships that build resilience against the at-risk behaviors that plague young people today. The ultimate goal is to disciple and empower young people to be leaders with a purpose, enabling them to be active participants in God's mission to reach the world.

Youth Alive is critical to helping young people live a healthy, purpose-driven life by modeling an evidence-based **Positive Peer Prevention Program**.

Positive

The Youth Alive program focuses on positive alternatives in Christ, the highest power, resulting in positive interpersonal relationships with one another. Participants treat one another with Respect, Dignity, and Honor, valuing each person as a child of God with no racism, no prejudice, no put-downs. This attitude promotes a feeling of complete acceptance.

Peer

In this program youth and adults are reaching out to other youth, children, and adults to encourage them to make healthy choices free from addictions. The connectedness among youth and with adults provides a natural sense of satisfaction that increases self-esteem and an uplifting experience through Christ. Thus, the use of drugs or other addictions become less desirable.



Prevention

Youth Alive focuses on the theme “MY CHOICE–FULLY ALIVE,” presented through all components of the program. This encourages commitment to healthy living for all the participants, including those who may have already casually experimented with drugs or other at-risk behaviors.

Program

The program involves various activities and events focusing on the growth and discipling of youth. It is intergenerational. That is, it includes not only youth, but the participation of qualified adult presenters and facilitators. The program components are listed below.

The Youth Alive pledge to be signed is as follows:

I pledge to choose Jesus Christ as my Highest Power
I want to be healthy and happy
I will say NO to alcohol
I will say NO to tobacco
I will say NO to illegal drugs
I will say NO to pornography
I will say NO to compulsive gaming
I will say NO to any unhealthy behavior
I will help my friends to say NO to these things also
I pledge to stand up for what I know is right
My choice, fully alive!

The Youth Alive Motto:

Fully Alive! Healthy Youth Connected for Service!

Program Components

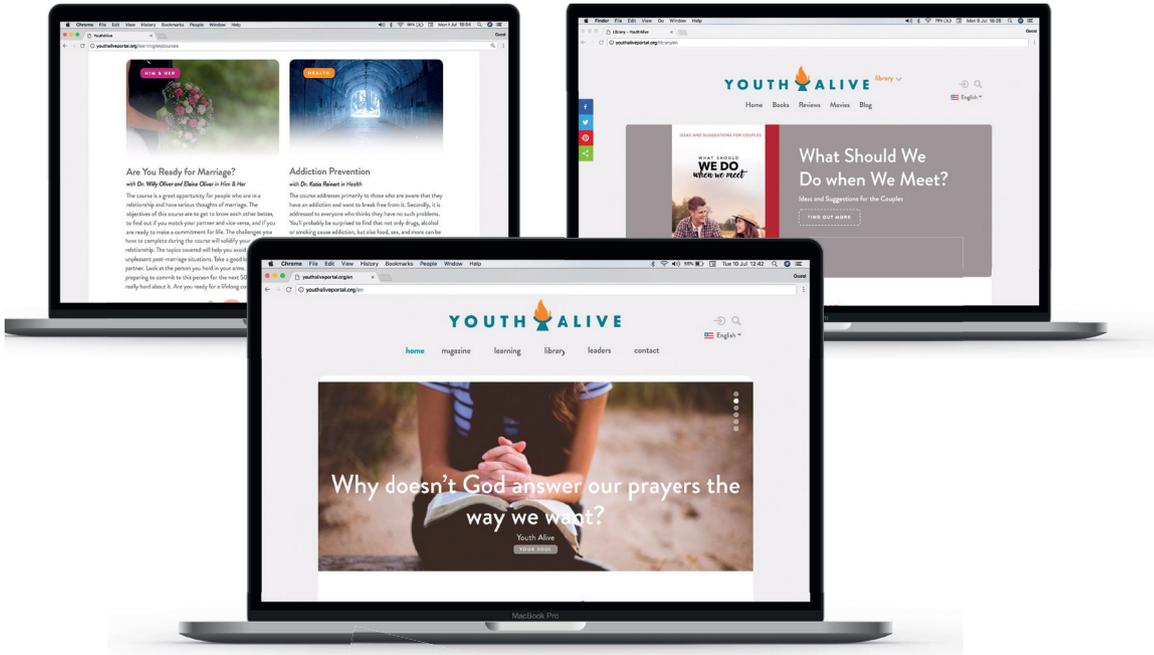
- Facilitator training
- Large Conference/Retreats
- Local Youth Alive Clubs
- Friendship Group Meetings
- Online Portal and App relevant for youth
- Leadership platform for leaders
- Learning opportunities for parents, leaders and youth
- Service outreach activities

Churches, schools, and families play key roles in organizing, supporting, encouraging, and mentoring young people. An important way to equip leaders for mentoring youth is through **Facilitators' Training**. The institutions (churches, schools) and facilitators invite youth (Adventist or not) to attend **large conference gatherings or retreats** to experience Youth Alive intensely. These gatherings often occur at the start of a school year or at another convenient time, such as a school break or holiday.

The Youth Alive program also includes regularly scheduled gatherings through **local clubs** held in the school, at church, or in the neighborhood. Such meetings take place weekly in a small-group setting called **Friendship Groups**, with scheduled breaks periodically. At these weekly meetings the youth gather to learn, share, play, worship, and serve. This proactive initiative promotes youth being fully alive and living an abundant life through healthy lifestyle choices. This can be a challenge in a world that often presents dangerous and misleading images of life and behavior that distract young people.

Youth Alive offers an online **portal and app** that gives young people free access to information on various issues relevant to living a happy, healthy, and fulfilling life committed to God in mission. Through the Youth Alive portal and Youth Alive app, young people can access free books, articles, and classes on various issues. A **Youth Alive Leaders Platform** connects leaders to various Youth Alive resources, including a calendar of Youth Alive events, discussion boards, media files, and best practices on how to conduct successful Youth Alive programs.

Ongoing learning opportunities are available at the large conferences, local club meetings, Friendship Groups and online, which focus on spiritual growth and empowerment for leadership in mission activities such as church planting.





YOUTH  ALIVE

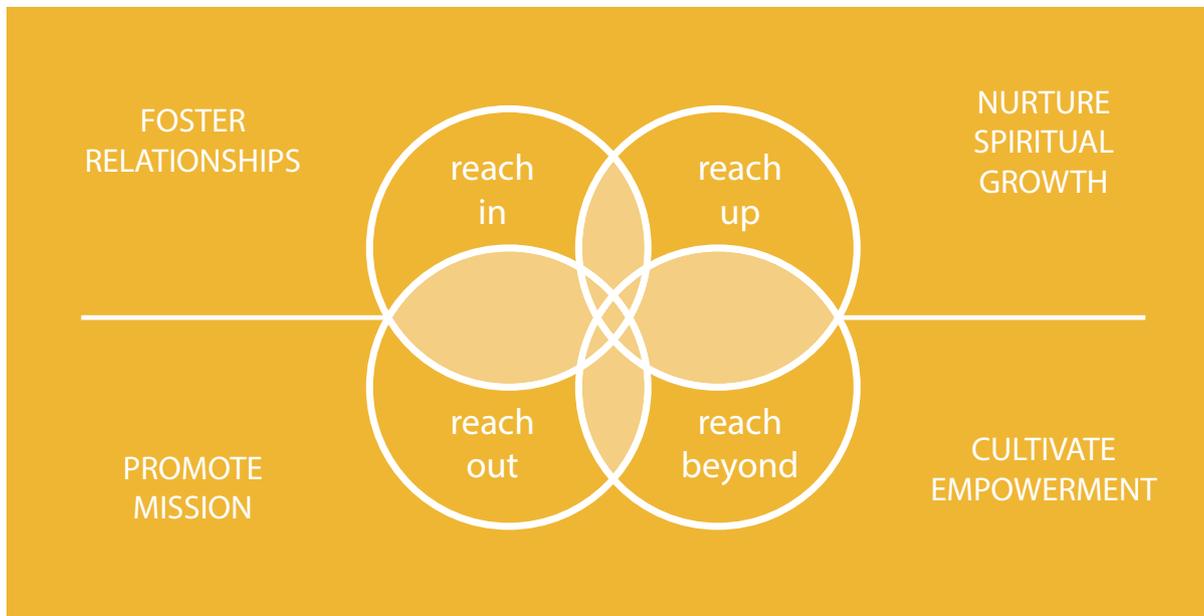
YOUTH ALIVE MODEL



The **Youth Alive** model incorporates four important **iCOR** (Church of Refuge)¹ values for discipling youth as followers of Jesus:

- Reach IN (foster relationships)
- Reach OUT (promote mission)
- Reach UP (nurture spiritual growth)
- Reach BEYOND (cultivate empowerment)

The **Youth Alive** model intentionally includes all four of these **iCOR** values in the large-scale events as well as in the regularly scheduled local gatherings of Youth Alive Friendship Groups and clubs.



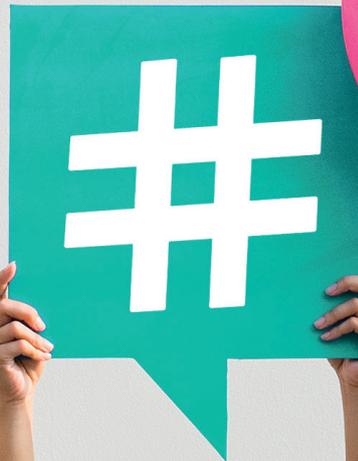
1. <https://icor.church/>

Below are more details about the four components of the Youth Alive Model:

- **Reach IN (foster relationships).** This foundational principle of Youth Alive must be created and cannot be taken for granted. Enthusiasm and high-energy activities might be fun, but this element includes not only action, but also affirmation, interaction, sharing, going deeper, and supporting one another. The Friendship Groups are prime spots where we will take steps to foster relationships with group members, starting with light, get-acquainted activities, and moving toward deeper sharing as the group is able and willing to develop.
- **Reach UP (nurture spiritual growth).** This goes way beyond just “you and me.” “Reach UP” demonstrates that Youth Alive depends on God active presence and power. We rely on God to equip, instill power, provide His promises, and enable us to live for Him. This includes personal spiritual growth and creating or expanding a community of faith. This thought is affirmed during personal time, Friendship Groups, large meetings, and outreach activities. Thus “Reach UP” is a vital part of Youth Alive in your local church, school, and neighborhood as well as worldwide.
- **Reach OUT (promote mission).** With the relational foundation of Reach IN and Reach Up, we must also Reach OUT to continue the flow. Reach OUT includes sharing with others the purpose, activities, relationships, and information from Youth Alive for positive living, unburdened by at-risk behaviors that sometimes tempt teens. Reach OUT means meeting needs in the community. Reach IN builds community; Reach OUT shares and enlarges that community. For the Youth Alive gathering, the staff comprised of teens and adults will Reach OUT to the other teens, in church or outside it, who later come to participate. To continue promoting Youth Alive at home after the training, both teens and adults will Reach IN to continue their group and Reach OUT to share their experiences and invite others.
- **Reach BEYOND (cultivate empowerment).** Because we “Reach UP,” it’s only natural to “Reach BEYOND” what is happening at this moment. We expect more because we serve a big, faithful and powerful God who has also teamed up with others who support one another and trust Him. We expect miracles, faith that grows, forgiveness that changes people, plus new experiences that buck negative trends and break bad addictions, thereby extending the kingdom of God wherever we go.



YOUTH ALIVE



FACILITATORS TRAINING OVERVIEW

The first step in engaging in Youth Alive is to attend a facilitator's training. Right before the Youth Alive Conference begins, a facilitators' training takes place for conference youth leaders, health ministry leaders and other adults leading youth, so that when the youth arrive for the conference the leaders are familiar with the Youth Alive program and process. The facilitator's training takes two days, starting on a Monday evening and continuing through Wednesday noon, at which time the Youth Alive Conference begins. It is important to have a ratio of one adult facilitator and one youth facilitator for every 10 conference participants (creating a Friendship Group with a total of about 12 members). For 200 registered participants, 20 adult and 20 youth facilitators need to be trained in the facilitators' training, so they can lead the groups during the conference and also gain hands-on experience to lead groups once they return home.

The Role of Adult Facilitators

The success of the Youth Alive program is grounded in the adults who empower and support the youth and also who work behind the scenes to help orchestrate the Youth Alive conference and Youth Alive Clubs at home. Adult Youth Alive facilitators are key in supporting and empowering youth in leadership. Thus, before a Youth Alive conference begins, it is important to include a facilitators' training of adult youth leaders, and leaders from the various collaborative departments (health, youth, education, family, global mission, public campus ministries, etc.)

The single most influential factor of the Youth Alive program is that of nurturing meaningful relationships. Success comes from relationships that are alive, ones in which you



proactively demonstrate concern, compassion, and involvement. By investing time in young people, you demonstrate a willingness to become involved in their lives and shows that young people matter. Instead of assuming that all young people are the same, you take a personal interest in what makes each young person unique. This recognition makes a difference in the lives of teens. This is key to preventing at-risk behaviors and restoring young people who have become involved in at-risk behaviors.

Failure to reduce at-risk behaviors points to the lack of a connectedness with one another. Lack of care for others, believing stereotypes, showing personal insecurity, or being too busy separate youth and adults. As young people become their own person, they sometimes choose to differentiate themselves from adults by trying to be different in how they dress, do their hair, select their music, converse, and choose causes they want to be part of. For some youth, behavior and choices have roots in their low self-worth resulting from trauma, neglect, or growing up in a dysfunctional family. Rebellion against established authority is a way young people sometimes prove they are their own person. Some seek to experiment with what might be considered adult behaviors without considering whether or not such behaviors are actually good or worthwhile. We believe that instead of separating young people from adults, both groups benefit by creating new relationships characterized by mutual respect, interest, and appreciation.

Facilitator Qualifications

Caring. Are you ready to create new relationships? If you are, the first step is to really care about another person. Caring about others and caring for others is foundational to Youth Alive. People who are invited to be part of the leadership team must show that they care deeply for young people. Ask yourself, “Do I really, really care?” If you do, you have the foundation to be an adult or youth facilitator. If you are willing to be involved, God’s Spirit can give you a heart for young people. We can build on that foundation. If you don’t care, then the training provided will not be as effective. Sometimes it takes time to learn to care, and God alone can work in us the desire to care. Are you willing to allow God to give you a heart for young people? If you do, the next step is to become fully engaged and attend a facilitators training.

Becoming engaged. For you to be a facilitator in Youth Alive, you must become fully engaged. For adults, this means returning to the enthusiasm and liveliness you had—or wish you had had—when



you were a teen. You may need to lighten up or loosen up. Maybe it's time for you to lose your title and your tie, your worries and cares about your life responsibilities. As a believer in God, this is your chance to fully trust God to take care of all those responsibilities, so you can give your undivided attention to the young people around you. It means meeting them on their level. This means expending lots of energy, trying some crazy things, taking risks, moving out of your comfort zone, forgetting about your image and focusing on others. It may require that you "let the child out" and become a teen instead of a suppressed or stressed adult.

Jesus provides a good example for us. When He came to earth, He came and joined people where they were. In fact, some people didn't believe He was God because He seemed too human. And children loved to be around Him, so He must have known how to play. You're invited to be like Jesus and take on the role of being one who understands and embraces teens. Here are some helpful tips to engage with the teens, and for the teens to engage with the adults (please note it is important to contextualize this to the appropriate cultural setting):

1. Discard any age-related barriers such as titles, hierarchies, or expected deference when culturally appropriate.
2. Wear relaxed clothes, smile more, forget the mortgage, the bills, or the broken car.
3. Concentrate on being available to these teens as a confidant, friend, and facilitator.
4. Practice your best listening skills.
5. Take risks and choose to engage, engage, engage.
6. Take an interest in one another, appreciating the uniqueness of each person.
7. Release expectations and stereotypes so you can start relationships as equals.





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This may mean throwing out your tie for now and discarding your title (whether you are the conference president or the school principal). Just let the youth get to know you as someone who deeply cares for them. This also means teens can let go of trying to be cool and not worry about being seen with someone twice their age.

Spiritual commitment and focus on Jesus. Youth Alive is an Adventist initiative. As such, we place Jesus at the center, with the rest of us all around him. That puts us on equal footing, side-by-side, with our focus on Jesus. When tempted to put yourself in the middle, remember that's where Jesus belongs. We'll keep our focus on Jesus rather than on one of us. This puts us together. And that's exactly what Jesus did with those who followed Him—He put them together. Sometimes they were in groups of two; at other times it was just the 12. He had a group of 70, another group of 120, and there were the vast throngs that came to Him as well. During Youth Alive conference that follows the facilitator training, time is dedicated for small groups called Friendship Groups, not unlike Christ's gathering of the 12 disciples. In these settings, there is both a youth and an adult who function as co-facilitators. One is not above the other. Both will maintain a focus on the teens. All adults are invited to join the teens where they are, which is exactly what Jesus does with each of us.

Creating a Safe Environment | The principles youth alive live by are:

1. Respect
2. Dignity
3. Honor
4. Involvement
5. Growth

Youth Alive creates a welcoming environment in which people feel safe to be themselves, to take risks, and to grow. A safe environment means acceptance, openness, support, and confidentiality. Insecure people often feel a need to put down others and to elevate themselves. In contrast, Youth Alive seeks to build up others and not allow put-downs. We also do not criticize someone who might forget this. Games and group-building activities have been carefully selected to promote acceptance, encourage participation, develop trust, and invite expression. The Youth Alive conference fosters connectedness with one another, where we demonstrate Christian principles of love, compassion, tolerance support, and high expectations. Because of this, we discourage negative or demeaning talk.

Mentoring and Leadership Development

Adult facilitators can sense the success of this program when the youth begin to own and manage the



program. Youth can run and lead so much of the Youth Alive activities. The adult facilitator role is to support the young people in their leadership and help the youth facilitate the ongoing organizational and logistical support of the program. Most of the adults who are involved have experience because other adults mentored them as teens and gave them opportunities to lead. We expect that to be repeated here. Adults, you have a role to play—it's to help the youth succeed in leading and following for the benefit of all who come to Youth Alive.

The Facilitator Training has two primary purposes related to mentoring and leadership development:

- 1.** Prepare the adult and youth facilitators for the Youth Alive Conference that takes place immediately following the training. The leaders will model what they learned as the youth attendees come for the conference. With this hands-on experience, facilitators will be equipped to lead groups during the conference. When the official Youth Alive conference begins, trained leaders simply continue what they have already started.
- 2.** Equipping both adult and youth co-facilitators to continue Youth Alive clubs at the conference or church level, after people go back home. This can be done in your church or in your school or even in your neighborhood. We recommend that a youth and an adult team together as co-leaders for a Youth Alive club when you get back home. For example, Friendship Group co-leaders (one youth and one adult) might be the team that starts the Youth Alive club. Keep this in mind during this training as well as during the conference.

After the training, youth should lead and continue to develop their leadership skills. Adults should mentor and support the youth in their developing leadership. Sometimes you can serve as co-leaders or co-facilitators. As youth are able, they should take more and more of the lead while the adults continue to follow publicly and provide feedback privately. The goal is that the youth attending the training will be the leaders and facilitators when they return home while the adults stand by to offer guidance when needed.



YOUTH  ALIVE





LARGE CONFERENCE GATHERING



Major purposes of the Youth Alive Conference:

- To inspire, motivate, educate and recruit new people into the Youth Alive movement
- To develop leadership skills, especially for youth facilitators
- To provide a positive, large-group experience that will motivate leaders to begin and continue an ongoing local Youth Alive program with a club back home
- Share information through plenary and workshop presentations taught by qualified professionals

Teaching Content

Evidence-based presentations are shared by qualified presenters from Health Ministries, Youth Ministries, Education, Family Ministries and Global Mission through general sessions as well as workshops. The plenary sessions are shared in an engaging interactive style. The workshops cover relevant topics that teens and young adults can relate to and find helpful (see list below).

The Youth Alive Conference gathering program begins with activities that facilitate getting to know one another (Reach IN). These activities are inclusive and involve everyone. By example we show others that we take positive, calculated risks without feeling silly or strange. Our acceptance by God is mirrored by others in the group. The leaders demonstrate it and expect it of others with a spirit of respect, dignity, and honor for one another.

The cooperative games played during the conference assist the participants in taking

small risks to get to know one another—which is what most young people want to do if given the opportunity. Games start on a light and fun level and move to deeper experiences as participants are ready to move deeper due to increased trust within the group. It may take more than one group gathering to build this kind of trust for the Youth Alive conference.

Youth Alive goes for 100 percent participation—no spectators. Nobody is “too cool” or “too uncool,” nor is anyone “too athletic” or “too uncoordinated” to be part of the group. We can make adjustments to the activities—and we do if needed. Being inclusive is the opposite of being exclusive. We welcome people into the group rather than try to keep people out. For those who like to be argumentative, or for those who sense a need to categorize each person as being either “right” or “wrong,” we’re in a different game, and we invite them to experience a new focus with us.

In our movement to create acceptance and a sense of community, we don’t go into doctrinal debates. As followers of Jesus, we reach out to others rather than draw lines of separation. We aren’t denying the reality of truth versus error, but that isn’t our primary focus in Youth Alive. Our focus is on life, and we believe only God can give it. As we experience this life, we offer it freely to others. Because God has been so gracious to us, we treat others graciously.

Humans so often create totem poles or hierarchies and then place people either above or below themselves. In contrast, Youth Alive sees Jesus above all others. And all others are simply at the foot of the cross of Christ. Instead of trying to place people in different positions and judging whether their position is better or whether we have the upper hand, we’re simply grateful to be at the cross. With Jesus as our hero and role model, we don’t have to make comparisons with others. Our comparison is with Christ. He died for us, so we can live for Him. We do so with a spirit of gratitude. And we look at all other people the way we consider ourselves—people with a bent to selfishness, but people for whom Jesus died. So instead of placing judgments on how people may be different from us because of age, size, intelligence, money, or talent, we celebrate the differences as part of God’s creative wonder. We are amazed that Christ can stretch far enough to reach out to everyone. That’s a flowery way to say, our focus on Jesus brings us together; a focus on self or making comparisons with others tears us apart. We choose to focus on Jesus and to come together under His banner.



Fostering Relationships

In practical and concrete ways, the Youth Alive facilitator can foster relationships by:

- Learning people's names through practice, starting with Friendship Groups
- Following a progression of activities that moves from shallow and fun to deeper and more intense
- Posting short bursts of affirmation for individuals on the "Shout Out" board
- Giving verbal affirmation to others freely and frequently
- Leading (the youth); actively supporting a youth leader (the adult)
- Praying for individuals by name
- Actively reaching out to those they don't know
- Resisting the tendency to just hang with the people they already know
- Being on the lookout to engage those who aren't yet engaged with the program
- Engage, engage, engage!

Suggestions for Community Outreach Activities at Youth Alive Events

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Sabbath sofa | 7. Refugee shelter/camps |
| 2. Puppet ministry | 8. Prayer walking |
| 3. Sunshine band in hospitals/
nursing homes/orphanages | 9. Feeding the homeless |
| 4. Jail visitation | 10. Blood drive/donation |
| 5. Clown ministries at children's
hospital or orphanages | 11. Health expo |
| 6. Women's and children's shelters | 12. Health parade/march |
| | 13. GLOW tract or mission book
distribution |
| | 14. GLOW tract or mission book
distribution |



My Choice, Fully Alive



Suggested Topics for The Youth Alive Workshops

Adults

1. Understanding teens/millennials
2. Adult and youth communication
3. Parent/child dynamics
4. Youth sex education
5. Dealing with youth temperaments
6. Mental health first aid for youth
7. Peer counseling
8. Leading Youth Alive back home
9. Mentoring
10. Friendship Group facilitation
11. Youth Alive discipleship model
12. Starting new worship group
13. Youth empowerment
14. Teen suicide prevention
15. Addiction—root causes/recovery
16. Behavioral addictions
such as gaming/porn
17. Codependence
18. Parenting skills

2. <http://unhooked.hopetv.org/>

Youth

1. Personal development
2. Dealing with peer pressure
3. Conflict resolution
4. How to relate to parents
5. Fun and clean parties
6. Am I really in love?
7. Dating violence/abuse
8. Emotional healing
9. Improving emotional intelligence
10. AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)
11. Study habits to excel
12. CELEBRATIONS (health principles)
13. Starting a Youth Alive club
14. Leading a Friendship Group back home
15. Learning about the addiction cycle
16. Breaking free from gaming and pornography
17. Collection of straight talks from real teens
on addictions (unhooked series)
18. Healthy sexuality



Planning for Launching a Youth Alive Training and Conference

The first step in starting a Youth Alive program at a Division, Union, or Conference is to contact the Youth Alive coordinator at the General Conference or Division for more information. Next, establish a Youth Alive Advisory Board that can coordinate the Youth Alive activities. This Advisory Board is co-chaired by the Youth Ministries and Health Ministries department at the Division, Union, and Conference levels. Other members of the Advisory Board include representatives for Family Ministries, Education, Global Mission, Public Campus Ministries, ADRA or other relevant ministries. Then, sign up at the online portal for Youth Alive leaders to access the materials.

If you are planning for a Youth Alive gathering at a Conference level, local school or community setting, the Advisory Board is advised to follow the steps below. All events must be officially recorded and voted to ensure that Adventist Risk Management insurances applies.



Timeline:

12 months ahead:

Schedule your Youth Alive conference time during the beginning of the school year or during a school break. Avoid conflict with other school or church events in your area.

6-10 months ahead:

Reserve location. Appoint conference steering committee with all four department directors and staff of local educational institution where the Youth Alive conference will be held, to appoint members to serve on the following committees:

- Program Planning
- Finance
- Registration and Promotion
- Accommodation
- Transportation
- Platform
- Food
- Recreation
- First Aid
- Security
- Music
- Audio visual equipment
- Decoration
- Workshop
- Photography
- Facilities
- Gifts

Two to three months ahead:

Advertise and announce your program to appropriate leadership. Develop attractive mail posters. Design this that runs from Tuesday to Wednesday morning before the conference begins. Be sure that posters go to all locations where youth are likely to see them (schools, churches, etc.).

One month ahead:

Process pre-registration and photocopy sufficient facilitators' and participants' manuals to be used in the conference. Purchase all the conference supplies early. Arrange for your speakers' transportation and accommodation. Make signs for directions to each site.





YOUTH ALIVE LOCAL CLUBS



At-risk behavior isn't something that attracts people only once a year. It is a daily choice. The ongoing Youth Alive club in the local church, school, or community is probably more important for long-term impact than the large conference gathering. When adults try to do everything, the programming does not work. If young people don't include adults as part of their support team, it won't last long. The youth and the adults who work together at the facilitator training will be the key people to make this happen when returning home from the conference. The goal is for attendees to take this experience with the large group at Youth Alive training and conference and do it on a smaller scale on a regular basis back home.

In order to ensure sustainability at the local level, it is important to organize a Youth Alive advisory board voted by the church board and composed of representatives from Youth Ministries, Health Ministries, Family Ministries, and the Mission Outreach coordinator/pastor or elder. The board's role is to advise the Youth Alive Club leadership team on objectives and activities planned and offer support as needed. The board is co-chaired by the Youth Ministries director and another adult leader from one of the ministries in the board. The director for the Youth Alive Club is ideally the Youth Ministries director. The remaining leading team can be chosen at the discretion of the director in consultation with the Advisory board and the pastor. The club leadership coordinates all the activities of the Youth Alive and the Friendship Groups.

Once the local Youth Alive advisory board and local club are established, there is no limit to the various activities one can do for in reach and outreach. Some examples are: Health-expo, alcohol awareness week, stop smoking day or World No Tobacco Day, Breathe-Free stop smoking program, World AIDS Day, Instep4Life fitness program or Let's Move day, addiction recovery ministries, EnditNow awareness day, mental health week, etc.

What makes these activities unique for the Youth Alive clubs is being youth-led and adult-supported. This means leaders not only establish, support, and remind participants of the foundational principles of respect, dignity, honor, and growth, but they take steps to plan and follow through for the activities to be fun and focused and have Friendship Groups as the foundation for the activities. Leaders can also include their own ideas and by getting input from other teens. One can tailor-make the local Youth Alive club to draw in the youth in the area for the benefit of the entire community.

Youth Alive means more than avoiding at-risk behaviors. It includes being proactive in doing positive things, such as fixing up an old car, painting a building that needs it, playing with kids, repairing a TV or computer, woodworking or metal work, plumbing, needlecraft, cooking, or anything that interests the youth. In many cases, the relationships within the group and with those we help will actually be more important than the service we provide. A connection with a person or a group that is trustworthy, confidential, supportive, and understanding creates a horizontal relationship that completes the vertical relationship God wants to have with us.

So many of the youth of today have grown up in broken homes, with few positive role models. They feel alone, alienated and suspicious. The local Youth Alive club helps teens connect with one another on a regular basis where they live, finding an environment of unconditional love and acceptance.

The key human ingredients for a Youth Alive club/Friendship Group are:

1. Co-leaders (one youth and one adult) who both take initiative and work together.
2. A core group of at least three to five people committed to be part of the club.
3. A good time and a good place to meet each week for about an hour.

The key divine ingredient is for God to be present, active, acknowledged, and relied upon for the success and purpose of the club.

Youth Alive provides a Facilitator and Participant Manual with detailed information about leading Youth Alive at the Conference level as well as at the local church. A series of step-by-step topic discussions and session models are provided for the YA club leader to use at the Youth Alive



Friendship Group in a church, school, or neighborhood. Among these are:

- a 10-session model based in iCOR (Church of Refuge) focusing on Youth Alive core values.
- a 12-session model exploring principles of healthy living called CELEBRATIONS.
- a session on emotional healing.
- a two-hour seminar for parents or adult facilitators on parenting skills.
- Various other PowerPoint presentations to be used in workshops and seminars during the Youth Alive events.

These materials can be used on weekly Friendship Group meetings throughout the year.



YOUTH  ALIVE

FRIENDSHIP GROUPS (FC)

During the large conference or back home at the local clubs, Friendship Groups are key to fostering connectedness. Through Friendship Groups, youth learn, play, serve, worship and lead.

What are Friendship Groups?

Friendship Groups are the most important activity in the program of Youth Alive. A Friendship Group is a small group that gathers frequently, giving time for youth as well as adults to relax and connect with one another. Some youth come from unhappy backgrounds, so the Friendship Group, especially in a local Youth Alive club, can truly become a positive peer support. It is a place where the participants connect with one another. These groups are vital for a large gathering in order to provide interaction and intimacy for participants. These groups also form the glue for a Youth Alive Club back home following the conference.

Friendship Group Goals

- Facilitate spiritual growth/development
- Learn the names of group members
- Set ground rules in a way that the group has ownership and commitment to them
- Offer opportunity to discuss issues and personal concerns
- Help everyone participate
- Discuss what participants are learning
- Provide leadership opportunities and empower youth to lead
- Nurture mission and service as the primary purpose in one's life
- Explore ways the group can become a new church plant in an unreached area
- Create a safe place for friendship
- Build connection through teamwork
- Promote play and collaborate games
- Foster emotional healing and healthy relationships

Here is how Friendship Groups incorporate the Youth Alive Model, derived from iCOR.



Reach In (Positive Relationship)

Friendship develops when people get to know one another in a setting of respect, involvement, and fun. Instead of “one-upping” another person, participants support one another. A team of co-leaders facilitates the Friendship Group through a flexible plan of activities. Friendship Groups meet multiple times during at the Youth Alive conference and weekly (ideally) at the local clubs. In Friendship Groups there are “no put-downs.” Each person is valued as a child of God.

By playing cooperatively, calling participants by positive adjectives, and fellowshipping with one another—whether in the dining room eating together or while working together to perform their Friendship Group gifts in the form of songs, cultural dances or skits—they will get to know one another better and will recognize the positive aspects of the members of their group. Then they will be ready to send “shout out” notes to others and post them on the “Shout Out Board,” the post office of Youth Alive. As the participants abide by the “Respect, Dignity, Honor, Growth” philosophy, a positive social environment is developed that makes the connectedness among the group easier. We focus on positive social activities rather than meaningless that often turn out to be destructive.

Reach Up (Spiritual Growth)

Participants work toward Reaching Up through group devotionals and Friendship Groups consisting of 10-12 members, where activities nurture reflection on their spiritual journey and the participants’ spiritual growth.

Reach Beyond (Leadership Training and Empowerment)

At a Youth Alive Conference, each Friendship Group has two co-leaders—a youth and an adult. The youth facilitators are expected to lead out while the adult facilitators support them. Ideally this team of co-leaders will also be the ones who start and lead a

Youth Alive Club back home following the Youth Alive Conference. Various topics can be discussed at a local club Friendship Group meeting that can foster leadership skills. (See list on page 8 for ideas.)

Reach Out (Mission and Environmental Change)

During a large Conference, Friendship Groups participate in community outreach. At Youth Alive local clubs, youth promote healthy living in the community and foster environmental change by meeting community needs.

PREVENTING AT RISK BEHAVIORS AMONG YOUTH

The Youth Alive conference is designed to empower youth with tools to avoid at-risk behaviors. Some young people are following good leaders, and some are following bad leaders when it comes to at-risk behaviors such as substance abuse, sexual experimentation, addictions, obsessive or compulsive behavior, or angry acting out. The use of alcohol, tobacco, other drugs, or compulsive behaviors has created alarming problems around the world. For instance, alcohol use has been linked to more than half of all violent crimes (murders, armed assaults, rapes), more than half of all traffic fatalities, 70 percent of all drownings, and at least two-thirds of all suicides.

While drug abuse often seems like the worst at-risk behavior, more than ten times as many people die each year from alcohol-related causes than die from all illicit drugs combined. More than 20 times as many deaths are related to smoking. Alcohol and other drugs cost years of quality life and huge amounts of money. In the United States, alcohol and drug use was estimated to cost about \$200 billion or \$800 a year for every man, woman, or child, regardless of whether they used these substances.



Unfortunately, Seventh-day Adventists are not exempt from these problems. Decades of research by the Institute for the Prevention of Addictions at Andrews University has shown that students at Adventist Schools use harmful substances, though at much lower rates than students in non-faith-based colleges. There is a concept called cultural diffusion that effects Adventist youth. This means that general culture impacts everyone, including Adventist youth. About 10 percent of students at Adventist schools were drunk in the last year and over one-quarter can be considered current users of alcohol with almost 10 percent current users of marijuana. The higher rates of drug and alcohol use in the general population will continue to exert a powerful influence on our youth. The following data is for use in the last year:

Substance used by youth	Use among Adventist youth attending SDA colleges	Use among non-Adventist youth attending public schools
Alcohol	27%	78%
Tobacco	6%	233%
Marijuana	9%	36%
Cocaine	<1%	3.5%
Opiates (not heroin)	<1%	4%
Drunk in the last year	<10%	60%

Substance used by youth	Adventist youth using drugs/alcohol before 18 years old
Alcohol	49%
Tobacco	57%
Marijuana	42%
Cocaine	38%

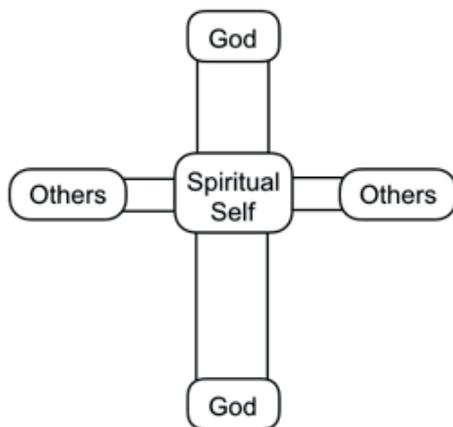
Adventist youth and sexual experience by 22 (SDA colleges)
40 3%

http://www.monitoringthefuture.org/pubs/monographs/mtf-vol2_2016.pdf

Most drugs were not created for evil purposes. People produced them from plants created by God, and many of these plants are important and therapeutic. The problem comes when they are misused. The devil seeks to misuse these plants to destroy lives, bring pain and cause early death.

Cigarettes are among the most addictive and dangerous drug in the world. Addicts who try to quit alcohol, cocaine, marijuana, opiates, or any illegal drug have a better chance of quitting than people who try to quit smoking cigarettes. We can shake our heads or point fingers or shame people who make bad choices when it comes to following or leading, but tragically, giving people “the right answer” doesn’t mean they will make the right choices. In the data above, we note that 40.3% youth of Adventists in Adventist colleges reported having engaged in at least one sexual experience by age 22. While that number is high, it is nowhere near the 80 percent of students attending non-Adventist schools. Then what are we to do in order to really help youth live their faith and be truly alive? A key Youth Alive spiritual principle is based on what is considered “the greatest commandment in the law”—the most important principle for a good life:

Jesus said to him, “‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself’” (Matthew 22:37-39, NKJV). This provides not only the right answer, but also the motivation and power to actually do it. A strong and healthy relationship with God (a vertical relationship) will produce a strong and healthy relationship with other people (horizontal relationships) as diagrammed:





All About Connectedness

How can we prevent youth from getting involved in drugs and other at-risk behaviors?

The National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (ADD Health) originally published in 1997 involved 90,000 teenagers and 18,000 parents across the United States. An update was published in the *Journal of Adolescent Health* in 2004. Over the two decades of data collection two vital factors that protect children and youth from getting involved in high risk behaviors were identified. They are: Being connected with God and being connected with one another.

- ***Connecting with God***

When religion and prayer are important to an adolescent, they are less likely to smoke, drink or become involved in premarital sexual activity.

Many people use drugs because it makes them feel better than they have ever felt in their lives. Removing the power of the drug will make them feel “lost” unless it is replaced with something else as powerful or more powerful than the drug itself. The only power stronger than the effect of a drug is the power of Jesus Christ (a healthy vertical relationship). This is biblically supported. Philippians 4:13 says, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

- ***Connecting with one another***

Independent of race, ethnicity, family structure, and poverty status, adolescents who are connected to their parents, to other family members, and to their school community (a healthy horizontal relationship) are protected from many at-risk behaviors such as sex, violence, emotional distress, suicidal attempts, and drug use.

No man is an island. We all long to be accepted and connected with one another for support and encouragement (horizontal relationship). This is biblically supported. Romans 14:7 “For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself.”

Therefore, we make sure these two important factors are integrated into the Youth Alive program, namely making Jesus Christ the highest power, at the center of all their activities, and allowing the connectedness to take place among youth with other youth and adults. These key perspectives and actions will have the greatest impact in protecting the youth from at-risk behaviors. Otherwise, the program might be merely fun and entertaining, but it would not be successful in the goal of preventing at-risk and addictive behaviors.

As individuals connect with God, they value others as children of God, making it easier for them to connect with other youth and adults.

IMPLEMENTING YOUTH ALIVE IN SCHOOLS

When to Launch a Youth Alive Conference

With this great positive impact of the Youth Alive program, it is highly recommended that we launch the Youth Alive conference in schools, keeping in mind a follow-up Youth Alive club to be conducted in local schools, churches, or neighborhoods following the Youth Alive conference. Schedule the Youth Alive conference:

- At the beginning of the school year (the most effective time is when it is done at the orientation program), and the Youth Alive clubs can then continue through the school year.
- During the school break, and the Youth Alive Clubs can start following the break.
- Late in the school year (so there is ample time to plan activities for the following year, including the Youth Alive clubs.)



Contributing Factors Affecting Youth Today

Many youth face changes in our society today that contribute to changes in youth behaviors and risks. Some documented factors are: working parents, home environment, single parent struggling to generate sufficient income, TV influence, political and civil unrest, and school changes.

Working parents:

- In richer and more industrialized countries both parents may work, resulting in their children spending fewer hours per day with a parent. They now rely more on their peers in decision making, these often being vitally critical decisions that impact the rest of their lives.

Home environment:

- Some students come from homes where the environment is less than ideal. Some kids come from awful home situations. Teachers are often asked to correct the bad behavior from the home where there has been poor parenting, a chore that teachers may find difficult, if not impossible, to execute.
- Other students come from homes where a single parent struggles to generate sufficient income to support and educate the children, leaving the parent in a disadvantaged position to give the children sufficient time for meaningful relationships. The children may often be unattended after school, which is the time of day when youth are at most risk for participating in risky behaviors.

Media influence:

- Children have more screen-time now than in years past. In the typical American home, a teen has more than seven hours per day of screen-time exposure (TV, cell phone, iPads, computers). While only about one third of American parents talk to their children about sex, the media does it constantly with sexual images and suggestions appearing about 14,000 times per year. Past research has shown that by the age of 18 years, youth have watched TV almost twice as long (22,000 hours) as they have been in school (12,000 hours). The television is therefore the primary sex educator of most youth. In addition, recent research has shown that youth are exposed to increasing amounts of sexually explicit media, and that exposure is related to poorer mental and physical health.³

School changes:

• Schools around the world require less physical education and gymnastics classes than in the past. The combination of a girl's decreasing age for her first menstrual period and lesser physical education, results in the following disadvantages:

- Less physical exertion
- Youth are not kept busy

• Youth have less exposure to adult authority and supervision. Activities such as gymnastics or other sports are often taught by adults after regular school hours. Students who don't take part in after-school activities may have more time at home alone before the parents get home from work. Students who go home to an empty home after school are referred to as "latchkey kids." Research shows that when children and teens are left alone without adult supervision a wide variety of health risk behaviors are more likely to occur including substance use and pregnancy.⁴

It would be easy to feel overwhelmed with gloom and doom. Some adults feel powerless to do anything about the rapid changes that have occurred since their own youth. But in spite of the many changes, some things have remained the same:

- The need for relationships (with peers and with adult mentors)
- The desire for connection with God (it may look different, but it needs to be personal)
- The search for values (what really matters, and can I count on it?)
- The joy of having fun (from childhood we have a desire to play; do you still have it?)



ADDITIONAL RESEARCH FINDINGS

Recent research reported that a low level of physical activity among high school students was associated with increased cigarette smoking, marijuana use, lower fruit and vegetable consumption, greater television watching, failure to wear a seat belt, and even a lower value on academic performance when compared to highly active students.⁵

Reason for Using or Trading Drugs:

We see devastating results of drug use every day, whether it is in our own environment, in the news, or on the internet. Despite their devastating effects, people continue to use drugs for a variety of reasons:

- People often wake up in the morning feeling depressed, defeated, lacking confidence and motivation, and in need of something of substance in their lives to make them feel good. Many turn to drugs. Drug usage goes as far back as history. No culture or civilization is exempt from searching for and finding substances that are effective in altering their moods, feelings, or thoughts; alleviating pain and anxiety; producing feelings of relaxation; increasing strength or work tolerance; providing a relief from boredom, and providing a temporary distortion of reality.
- As transportation improved, people started taking their drugs to other cultures and/or countries. Every drug that has ever been discovered in the history of the world is still available. Drugs were on the move. Wars have been fought over drugs, as it inspires passion due to the large amount of money associated with their use and trade.

Impact of Drugs:

- Alcohol and other drugs remain a major contributor to rising global medical costs and are clearly associated with transmission of the HIV/AIDS virus and other sexually transmitted infections, violence in school and home, child abuse, automobile fatalities, unemployment, reduced work productivity, and other antisocial behaviors.⁶



- Law enforcement works hard to get drugs off of the streets and out of the hands of those who manufacture, distribute, and use them. If history is an accurate teacher, attempts to stop drug distribution is not going to succeed. The focus of the drug problem should be on prevention and the underlying causes of drug use.

Global society in general and educators in particular have responded to these concerns of drug usage among young people by designing and implementing programs to discourage entry into these potentially dangerous behaviors. Classes are being taught, informing students of the dangers of drug usage. Nevertheless, students continue to use drugs and engage in sexual intercourse before marriage. These attempts to eliminate the issues apparently are not effective.

Promising Research:

Recent drug research has revealed that drug treatment and prevention programs succeed better when they contain a “values” component. Research has shown that students who have a religious affiliation and who embrace spiritual values are much less likely to use drugs. These values are essential in promoting a drug-free society. Therefore, we need to treat the underlying cause of drug use such as hopelessness, depression, worthlessness, feelings of separation, or any other emotion that might cause negative self-esteem issues. Coming into the arms of the Lord and promoting Christian values are a great place to start.

Resiliency

Behavioral research typically explores what puts young people at risk for their involvement in at-risk behaviors. The concept of resiliency is a powerful paradigm that has inspired hope among researchers, including educators. Resilience is the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or significant sources of stress such as family and relationship problems, serious health problems, or workplace and financial stressors. It means “bouncing back” from difficult experiences.”⁷

Resilient individuals have a number of characteristics:

- They are often people of deep religious faith.⁸
- Researchers explain resilience in terms of hardiness and suggested that resilient individuals have a strong commitment to self and/or their God and are willing to take action and deal with problems.
- Resilient individuals have positive attitudes toward their environment, hold a strong sense of purpose, and develop a strong internal locus of control that enables them to see life's obstacles as challenges that can be overcome.⁹
- Resilient youth appear to have a strong commitment to helping others.¹⁰
- Resiliency seems to be all about hope; it is the sense that adversity can be overcome, that there is life beyond the obstacles of today.
- Rather than focus on the shortcomings of students such as academic failure, drug use, or other at-risk behaviors, the resilient construct attempts to identify factors that account for success.¹¹

It is known that children who are sexually or physically abused and raised in homes where the parents are alcoholics face severe hardship during their developmental years and are at great risk for poor social and/or academic outcomes. They are also more at risk for chronic diseases in adulthood, suicide and addictive behaviors. However, not all of these young people emerge scathed. Some do well.

Resilience research identifies some factors associated with resilient kids which include the following:¹²

Individual Attributes:

- Easygoing temperament or disposition
- Intellectual capabilities, especially verbal and communication skills
- Realistic appraisal of the environment
- Self-efficacy (confidence that one's internal and external worlds are predictable, controllable, and hopeful)
- Social skills
- Sense of direction or mission, such as evidence of a special talent, passion, faith, or strong interest
- Capacity to understand and respond to others' feelings
- Humor



- Adaptive distancing, such as the ability to think and act separately from troubled caretakers

Family Protective Factors:

- Consistent, warm, positive relationship with a caring adult
 - Positive family environment and bonding
 - High but realistic parental expectations
 - Family responsibilities and household tasks
 - Positive parental modeling of resilience and coping skills
 - Extended support networks, including family and friends
 - Opportunities for involvement in school decision making
 - High but realistic expectations for students' performance
 - Caring, supportive school atmosphere
- School Protective Factors:
- Opportunities for involvement in school decision making
 - High but realistic expectations for students' performance
- Community Protective Factors:
- Positive community norms, such as a sense of caring, commitment, mutual protection, non-drug use, and opportunity for involvement in community life
 - Community resources for children and families such as child care, nutrition, health programs, and drug-free recreational resources

Relationships

A careful review of much of the available research designed to identify what it is that fosters resiliency among young people, one factor emerges over and over again, that is valuable, sincere, and enduring relationships.

- Supportive older adults or mentors from teachers to clergy may contribute to resilience among youth.¹
- Studies conducted around the world identified a number of factors that enable children of misfortune to beat the heavy odds against them. One factor turns out to be the presence in their lives of a charismatic adult, a person with whom they identify and from whom they gather strength.¹⁴
- Relationships with individuals who provide care, warmth, and unconditional love appear to provide young people with a sense that the odds faced in life can be over-

come. These relationships appear to provide youngsters with self-esteem and a sense of self-worth which makes successful coping more likely.¹⁵

- In one particular study it was found that “resilient young people all had at least one person in their lives who accepted them unconditionally, regardless of temperamental idiosyncrasies, physical attractiveness, or intelligence.¹⁶
- Resiliency to the stressors of life such as drug-abusing peers, violence on TV and/or videos, or the influence of a less-than-ideal home appears to come through supportive relationships.

What Can Be Done?

School as a community

- School-based research suggests that the effects of the less-than-ideal home or social environment can be moderated by creating an environment at school that is a refuge for students. “Resilient kids have the uncanny ability to make school a refuge from society’s ill.¹⁷
- Research reported when students sense that their school is a “community,” a place characterized by supportive and caring relationships, where opportunities are provided to participate in school activities and decision making, and a place where norms are shared, students will enjoy school more and be more academically motivated, less absent, engage in less disruptive behavior, have higher academic achievement, use drugs less, and participate in less delinquent behavior.¹⁸
- Other research revealed that a student who has a subjective appraisal of their school environment is associated with greater school interest.¹⁹
- Research conducted to measure why some Mexican-American students who come from very poor environments do very well in school, reports that a supportive academic environment and a sense of belonging to the school were predictors of resilience.²⁰

Important Adult Roles:

- Know youth by name
- Be involved in the lives of youth
- Establish sincere and enduring relationships with youth.
- Don’t expect perfection
- Be there when they fail; just be there to support them
- Work to create a warm accepting environment in the school community
- Be a mentor

WHAT PEOPLE SAY ABOUT YOUTH ALIVE

Wherever the program using the Youth Alive principles has been launched, a vast majority has reported feeling very positive about it. Representatives have come from a variety of cultures, such as: American, Romanian, Russian, Czech, German, Korean, Chinese, Japanese, Indian, Malaysian, Indonesian, Filipino, African, French, Italian, Norwegian, Spanish and more. Indeed, transporting the positive heavenly atmosphere based on the “Respect, Dignity, Honor, Growth” philosophy, valuing each other as children of God, is accepted in all cultures.

A glimpse of responses from various Seventh-day Adventist participants:

- “This is one thing that the Adventist church needs to really adopt and get serious about throughout the Adventist church and throughout the world. I believe if every single person in the world could attend this program, there’d be no drugs. I mean this influenced me that much.” (Asian)
- “I know that I did drugs because of a lack of security and a lack of love and a need to belong. And I found that in my druggie circle, but it wasn’t what I was really looking for. What I was lacking was God and support. And that’s exactly what you get at the Youth Alive program.” (American)
- “It was such a fine and pleasant learning experience for me to be a part of this Youth Alive program. We are serious about starting a Youth Alive club right away.” (Indian)
- “Fantastic! Unforgettable! We will start a Youth Alive program in our home church.” (Romanian)
- “One thing is to read the manuals, but another thing is to have a living experience together with the young people. My expectations were surpassed. I strongly encourage every Adventist boy and girl to have a personal experience of the Youth Alive program.” (German)

- “This Youth Alive program is the best financial investment that our church can make.” (Canada)

A glimpse of responses from the non-Seventh-day Adventist participants follows:

- “No words can describe the gratitude we feel for your accommodating us here and accepting us as your own.” (Catholic group in the Philippines)
- “We feel so accepted by the group. If we had attended a program like this, we would most probably not have become addicts.” (A group of youth from Shanti-Sadan Center of Addiction Recovery, India)
- “I’m a Catholic and I personally feel that there was a big change in my life ever since I have been here. I pray to the Lord that religious discrimination would be gone to the society, respect one another and help one another. I learned a lot from this Adventist affair and it is not impossible for me to be converted to your religion. Thank you very much.” (Philippines)

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