

Youth Events Coordinator August 2020-August 2021

This year we were faced with many new challenges that the youth chose to view as an opportunity to change the way we connect and come together. The first major change for the Y.O.U. came when we decided not to have an election for two Regional Officers, but rather create new officers positions that allowed four fantastic Y.O.U.ers to grow in a leadership position, and so “The Officers of Community Outreach,” was created. The purpose of their position was to “serve in a leadership role that holds the space and consciousness of community, love, purpose, and togetherness for the Great Lakes Youth of Unity Region.” Together the four officers worked with myself to create monthly online Sunday Services, instead of having in person events.

The monthly lessons were created to keep the Great Lakes Youth community together with the purpose of connection, community, spirituality, and a safe space to feel seen and heard. The lessons varied with different topics that included mediation, art projects, small zoom breakout groups, games, discussion, and prayer. We also opened the lessons 30 minutes early for those who just wanted to catch up, hang out, play games, or show everyone their pets. It was important to create a sense of normalcy in strange times. The Sunday Lessons were originally just for the Y.O.U., but we opened them to the Uniteens for the Thanksgiving Lesson and decided to keep inviting and including them for all of the lessons there after.

As the Youth Events Coordinator I met monthly with the four Officers of Community Outreach through zoom, to discuss how we could keep connections alive through technology. We created a “discord” account for the youth, an app that allows for easy communication, has discussion boards, announcement sections, a place to share art, a place to virtually play games with each other, and more. We also continued with fun and inclusive posts on our Facebook and Instagram page. During our meetings we would assign 1-2 officers for the next monthly lesson. From there I would typically meet twice more with the officers who would be leading our lessons, to support them in their lesson creations. Here are the themes from the Sunday Virtual Lessons:

- “Co-Existing Through Perspective.”
- “The Energy of Change.”
- “Feeling It,” a discovery of what emotions are coming up during these difficult times.
- “The Spirit Within: Exploring Our Chakras”
- The Thanksgiving Lesson, “Gratitude in Spirit.”
- The Holiday Lesson “Community and Coming Together.”
- The New Years Lesson “Learning to Create Resolutions.”

- “What The Heck Are The Love Languages?” An exploration of the love languages and how to use them in a virtual world.
- “What Are You Muting In Your Life?” A look into what part of us are we shutting down and why, and how to speak up for our needs and wants.
- “Game Night,” this lesson was to simply have fun!

We concluded the Virtual Sunday Lessons with a Wings Ceremony, “I Am.” In this lesson we explored what it means to say “I am my past, I am my present, and I am my future.” The Wings Ceremony also allowed space for us to honor our graduates and welcome our new Regional Officers. As luck would have it, the two WONDERFUL Y.O.U.ers interested in holding the officer positions were both from Chicago, where I live as well. One of our past regionals is also from Chicago, and the one from Ohio drove in so the five of us could be together in person and have an installation ceremony.

Next up, myself and the two new Y.O.U. Regional Officers are going to have an in person (if all covid test come back negative) planning meeting in early September. Together we will create a mission statement for the year, along with a plan for the year and how we will proceed with events and keep a loving, sacred, spiritual, inclusive youth community alive.