



Robert Bentley
GOVERNOR

Alabama Department of
REHABILITATION SERVICES



Cary F. Boswell
COMMISSIONER

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News Release

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Contact: Karen Jenkins
334-546-9077

Students with disabilities participate in Alabama Governor's Youth Leadership Forum

TROY – The 16th annual Alabama Governor's Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) will be June 1 - 5 on the campus of Troy University.

Thirty-seven students with disabilities are expected to participate in this year's forum, which is sponsored by the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services and hosted by Troy University. YLF delegates are selected through a statewide competition that seeks students with disabilities who have leadership potential. The group reflects the state's demographic makeup in terms of geography, gender, ethnicity, and types of disabilities. To be eligible to participate, students must be a junior or senior in high school, be between 17 and 21 years of age, and have a disability.

Each year, the five-day event helps shape high school students with disabilities through sessions on self-esteem, self-advocacy, career choice, independent living options, and leadership.

"YLF provides an opportunity unlike any other for young people with disabilities," said Karen Jenkins, YLF coordinator. "Witnessing the transformation these delegates undergo in a matter of days is such a positive experience. We empower youth to become involved in all aspects of society."

During the forum, delegates will write a Personal Leadership Plan (PLP) to assist them in becoming leaders in their communities. In addition to their other activities, the group will spend a day in Montgomery, where they will tour the Capitol, learn about state government, and interact with and seek advice from successful adults with disabilities at the Angeline Pinckard Mentor Luncheon.

YLF is a program of the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS). Troy University partners with ADRS to house the event. Additional funding for this year's forum is being provided by the Alabama Department of Education, the Alabama Department of Mental Health, the Alabama Council on Developmental Disabilities, and the Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation.

The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services is the state agency whose mission is to enable Alabama's children and adults with disabilities to achieve their maximum potential.

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PROVIDING SERVICES TO ALABAMIANS WITH DISABILITIES