



Sponsored by Leadership Seminars of America, Inc.

## Information Summary

### **Contact**

**Organization's Name:** Leadership Seminars of America Inc., sponsor of the Louisiana Youth Seminar

**Date Incorporated as a 501C3:** 1976.

**Executive Director:** Sonja Pruitt; [sonjapruitt@gmail.com](mailto:sonjapruitt@gmail.com); 225-936-8069

**Contact for Board of Directors:** Jo Pease, Founder; [jo.pease@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jo.pease@sbcglobal.net); 713-806-2248  
Vickie Guarisco, Chair; [vickiguar@hotmail.com](mailto:vickiguar@hotmail.com); 985-626-1760

**Address, City, State, Zip:** P. O. Box 17509, Baton Rouge, LA 70893

**Webpage:** [www.louisianayouthseminar.org](http://www.louisianayouthseminar.org)

### **Applicant Organization's Mission**

The Louisiana Youth Seminar is a leadership camp designed for high school juniors and seniors. LYS was founded in 1971 by three college students. It was founded on the belief that if businesses, communities and government are to have effective leaders in the future, we must help our students to develop their core leadership skills such as effective communication, setting and achieving goals, team building, understanding and accepting others, developing self confidence, conducting effective meetings, problem solving skills. LYS is held for one week each summer during the third week of July on the campus of Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge. Approximately 200 students attend from throughout the state.

### **Endorsements**

Given the challenges of the world today, we believe it is so important to invest in developing our youth as future leaders. The most compelling reasons to support LYS come from quotes from past participants and their families. Here are a few:

- "LYS is an experience like no other. I have learned how to formulate a plan to make my dreams come true."
- "The different involvement sessions taught me valuable lessons about working as a team and communicating effectively. LYS is truly a life changing experience."
- From a relative of a student – "I have watched three kids come out of their shells as a result of LYS. You all have such a positive impact on the lives of these teens...it means so much to so many students, and it means a lot to the people that love those students too."

- "It is rewarding to note that the highest standards are being maintained to bring the best possible leadership training to Louisiana's youth through LYS. I can personally say that this program achieves great results." Former US Senator John Breaux, LA
- "My years as a LYS delegate did more towards the development of my character than any other experience I have ever had."
- "Not only have I learned how to communicate, organize and work under pressure, but how to love and accept people in a way I have never experienced before."
- "LYS put me in contact with myself and my dreams. LYS made me realize that no goal is impossible."

### **Financial Overview**

LYS is funded by tuitions paid by students, by donations and by "tuition scholarships" provided by individuals and corporations. It is directed and staffed essentially by volunteers. There is one part time contract staff. A \$395 tuition fee is charged to participants. However, this fee covers only a portion of LYS expenses as the real cost per delegate approaches \$500. The Executive Committee, supported by the Board of Directors has purposefully kept the tuition low in order to make LYS affordable for all students throughout the state. This has been particularly important during the struggles caused by the recent hurricane disasters and the impact on many families.

Almost 60% of the total expense is attributable to food and lodging at LSU for the students and staff during the one-week seminar in July. The remaining expenses cover: supplies and materials, printing and publication, telecommunications, insurance, contract staff and miscellaneous.

In addition to subsidizing tuition, we give almost \$25,000 in "tuition scholarships". Thus, we must raise almost \$50,000 annually to cover operations and provide scholarships.

### **Unique Opportunity**

LYS has been thriving for about 40 years and has developed almost 200 students each summer, totaling approximately 7000 juniors and seniors in high school. This has been accomplished largely by an all-volunteer staff of students who work their way up from delegate to staff to Executive Committee. In the last several years, we have found this all-volunteer model to be particularly challenging; a couple of years ago, we hired a part time contractor to assist us. However, to sustain the program, the Board of Directors believes we need to move to at least a half time Executive Director.

Thus, the Board is considering an Endowment Campaign to raise \$1,000,000. Properly invested, this endowment would assist in meeting a large portion of the annual expenses. The remainder would be covered by tuition and ongoing fundraising.

### **History**

The Louisiana Youth Seminar was established in 1971 as a unique and progressive leadership learning experience for high school students. Every year the Seminar is held at Louisiana State University for one week in July. During this week, students participate in many activities which focus on leadership skills, such as effective communication skills, setting and achieving goals, team building, understand and accepting others, developing self confidence, conducting effective meetings, problem solving skills.

The goal of LYS is to develop students' raw leadership potential into skills that will help them to succeed in life. LYS delegates meet interesting people from across the state, learn how to achieve life goals, and compete in good-natured yet challenging games.

LYS is a non-profit organization that has been providing the highest caliber of leadership training for many years. We welcome all high school incoming juniors and seniors throughout the state of Louisiana. Students come to LYS via a variety of ways: selected by their schools, sent by their parents, recruited by past LYS delegates and by LYS friends and family. The goal of LYS is to attract students of all talents, interests and backgrounds. LYS enhances the leadership potential in each individual and provides leadership opportunities to its delegates through hands-on experience.

LYS is organized, staffed and directed by young professionals and college students who volunteer their time every summer. Each staff member has participated in the seminar as a student delegate and therefore understands the inner workings of the program. The staff is young, positive, and progressive and can easily identify with the hopes, feelings and trends of Louisiana's youth. Each staff member has participated in LYS as a student delegate and therefore understands the inner workings of the program. The staff move up within the program, taking on more responsibilities as they grow personally and professionally. The staff moves from active summer program staff to being Vice Presidents of the nonprofit organization, LSA, Inc. The various Vice Presidents have responsibilities which contribute to the overall achievement of the organization and result in getting everything ready for the summer program staff. Again, all are volunteers, except for the part time Executive Director who is paid a small stipend.

The total cost of LYS is slightly under \$100,000. We have no offices as we have a virtual organization. The largest single expense is for food and lodging at LSU for the delegates during the leadership camp.

Since inception, LYS has impacted almost 7000 high school students, many of whom are currently leaders in the state: in government, in corporations, in nonprofit organizations.

## **Board of Directors**

The 2008-2009 Board of Directors includes:

Adrian Baudoin, term ends 2009. Management, Computer Systems. Lafayette.  
Scott Daigre, term ends 2010. Owner, small business. Los Angeles.  
Vickie Guzzino Guarisco, Chair, term ends 2011. Community volunteer. Mandeville  
D'Ann Morris, term ends 2010. Chancellor's Office, LSU. Baton Rouge.  
Mary Langely Hernandez, term ends 2010. Former Recruitment Lead, UL – Lafayette.  
Amy Allums Lee, term ends 2011. Attorney. Lafayette  
Pattie Kitchen, term ends 2009. Pastor, Presbyterian Church. Denver.  
Wendy Walker Stanford, term ends 2011. Community volunteer. Baton Rouge

## **Advisory Board**

Barbara Jo Pease, founder  
Valsin Marmillion, founder  
Karl White, founder

Lisa Zaccaria Barnett  
Anne Sonnier Calhoun  
Tom Calvert  
Kyle France  
Stephanie Sonnier Calhoun

Donald Cravins  
Jeanne Hebert Fisher  
Yvette Vezina LaCour  
Jerry Luke LeBlanc  
Amy Young Maniscalco  
Norma Jane Sabiston  
Melinda Landrieu Seiter  
Rowland Stalter  
Barbara Stott  
Brother Henry Werner

### **Past Supporters**

In the past, LYS has received support largely from individuals connected with LYS including past staff and their families, friends and colleagues. In recent years, LYS has also been supported by corporations with critical operations within Louisiana, including: Shell Oil Company, Shell Chemical Company, Shell Exploration and Production Company, Blue Cross/Blue Shield, CenturyTel, Freeport McMoran, Dominion Resources, and LA Education Loan Authority. LYS has just begun approaching foundations; support has been received from: Pat Taylor Foundation, The Community Advancement Fund, the Dale Brown Foundation and the P&C Carroll Foundation.