

INTRODUCTION

The Youth Director works to engage young members by providing interesting activities and educational programming to nurture an excitement about Sons of Norway and Norwegian culture and heritage that will hopefully last a lifetime. A vibrant youth program can make a valuable contribution to the lodge by helping retain current members and attracting new members, particularly those with children.

INFORMATION ON YOUTH MEMBERSHIP

Children ages 15 and under who have a least one family member who is a current member of Sons of Norway can qualify for a free Heritage membership. Youth 16 and older can join as part of a family membership if they utilize the same address, or they can join as an individual member for the full adult dues rate. Youth over 15 years of age do not receive a discounted rate.

Heritage members cannot vote, nor can they hold a lodge office. They are not counted to determine representation for either the District or International Convention. Their years as a Heritage member are not counted towards anniversary recognition as an adult member. They do qualify for a youth recognition program.

Members who are at least 16 years of age can vote on lodge matters, hold office and be a delegate to both the District and International Conventions. They are counted to determine convention representation.

PROGRAM PLANNING

The major responsibility of the Youth Director is to coordinate events and programs throughout the year that enhance youth's understanding of, and appreciation for Norwegian and Norwegian-North American culture, along with helping them develop a connection to Sons of Norway. To assist in program planning, consider:

- A. Utilizing a Youth Committee.
Tapping into lodge members who share a passion for both Norwegian culture and youth involvement can be a great asset. This committee can be a source for ideas, experience and connections to people and organizations in the community, as well as assist with the detail work associated with planning and executing a program or event.
- B. Coordinating closely with lodge Social, Cultural and Sports Directors.

Since these positions share the focus on lodge programming, activities and events, there may be opportunities to incorporate a youth component into their programming. Alternately, there may be modifications that can be done to make a program appropriate for a younger participant.

Consider utilizing Cultural Skills (both the 5 youth units, as well as aspects of the adult units) and Sports Medal program, along with developing youth specific social, recreational and cultural activities.

C. Coordinating with the Foundation Director

A significant benefit of Sons of Norway membership is access to numerous and varied scholarship opportunities. Work with the Foundation Director to make youth and their parents/guardians aware of scholarship opportunities and encourage their applications. Make prospective members aware of this benefit of membership.

CONCLUSION

Engaging Sons of Norway youth is critical to the future of the organization. Today's Heritage members and family members are tomorrow's active adult members and leaders.

The importance of providing a solid foundation for future involvement cannot be emphasized enough. Providing and supporting vibrant and exciting youth programming is a great way for a lodge to attract and retain families, as well as to provide opportunities for all members to explore Norwegian culture and heritage together.