



**ARIZONA YOUTH LEADERSHIP FORUM**  
**For Students Who Have Disabilities**  
**AZYLf: A to Z... It's YOUR Life!**

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Check us out on Facebook: Arizona Youth Leadership Forum

Melissa Ann Santora

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Arizona Youth Leadership Forum (AZYLf) For Students Who Have Disabilities is an innovative, 6 day educational event, for students and transitioning youth who have disabilities. Designed to foster personal growth through self-discovery, AZYLf provides experiential learning opportunities to assist each individual as they identify and embrace their strengths and gifts, in conjunction with planning for their future.

This dynamic program focuses on leadership development, career exploration, effective advocacy, and empowers through heightened awareness of disability history and culture. Although purposeful and relevant, the true value of AZYLf is not found in a workbook or in the words of an accomplished presenter, it is found in the climate of trust, mutual respect, and absolute acceptance, which allow youth to be themselves, to be heard, and to be changed.

AZYLf invests in our most precious resource, the youth who will transform our tomorrows.

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AZYLf brings together youth who have disabilities from across Arizona. The program includes structured small and large group activities, field trips, a formal graduation ceremony and dance, and a tour of the State Capitol.

AZYLf provides educational programs on topics such as: positive self-concept, options after high school, the history of disability as a culture, and leadership responsibilities. Presenters who engage with students include disability community leaders, advocates, and role models.

Youth are assisted in developing a Personal Leadership Plan which includes specific action items for them when they return to their communities.

Youth develop and share their voices to inform the Arizona State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL).

Youth are assigned a mentor for on-going support for one year after completing AZYLf.

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Engagement, Empowerment, and Opportunity, Oh My!

**Anya Carrillo**  
**Audra Paletta**  
**Steven Cano-Wells**

**AZYL Alumni Association**  
 Nothing About Us, Without Us!

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**Goal:**

Participants will gain insights and strategies for engaging youth who have disabilities into their existing and expanding service models.

**Learning Objectives:**

1. Develop an appreciation for the myriad of possibilities the youth perspective brings to services intended to assist them.
2. Discover strategies to incorporate youth into the fabric of your program or platform.
3. Define a goal to work toward achieving, in regard to enhancement of youth engagement in your organization, school, or community.

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ADVANTAGES OF YOUTH INVOLVEMENT



DISADVANTAGES OF YOUTH INVOLVEMENT

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WHY YOUTH???

WHY NOW???

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WHY NOT?!!

NOW HOW?!!

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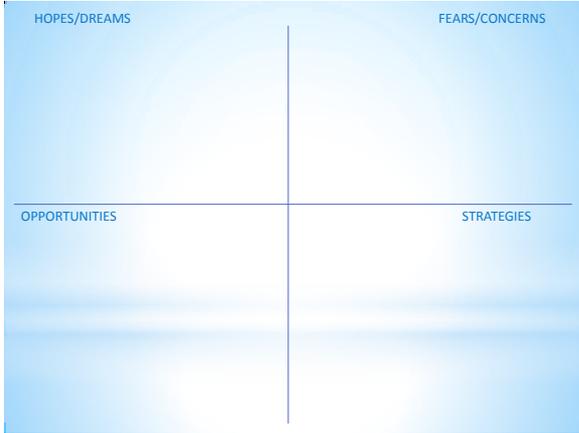
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### 2015 Youth Engagement Goal

**Goal Statement:**

**Objective:**

**Objective:**

**Objective:**

**Goal:** a broad statement about a long-term desired outcome.  
**Objective:** a measurable result that will be achieved in a specific timeframe to help accomplish a desired goal.

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**Potential is limitless**

"Change is the law of life and those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future."  
*(John F. Kennedy)*

"The greatest good we can do for others is not just to share our riches with them, but to reveal theirs."  
*(Dag Hammarskjöld)*

"If you can't feed a hundred people, then feed just one."  
*(Mother Teresa)*

"You miss 100 percent of the shots you never take."  
*(Wayne Gretzky)*

"No pessimist ever discovered the secret of the stars or sailed an uncharted land, or opened a new doorway for the human spirit."  
*(Heisen Keiler)*

"All life is an experiment. The more experiments you make, the better."  
*(Ralph Waldo Emerson)*

Human progress is neither automatic nor inevitable... Every step toward the goal of justice requires sacrifice, suffering, and struggle; the tireless exertions and passionate concern of dedicated individuals.  
*(Martin Luther King, Jr.)*

"Whether you think you can or you think you can't, you're right."  
*(Henry Ford)*

"You must be the change you wish to see in the world."  
*(Mahatma Gandhi)*

"Fear is not real. It is a product of thoughts you create."  
*(Will Smith in After Earth)*

"It's not about what it is, it's about what it can become."  
*(Dr. Seuss)*

"Do the right thing, and then do the next right thing, and that will lead you to the next right thing after that."  
*(Nicholas Fou)*

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."  
*(Margaret Mead)*

"He who is not courageous enough to take risks will accomplish nothing in life."  
*(Muhammad Ali)*

"Storms make trees take deeper roots."  
*(Dolly Parton)*

"The great thing in this world is not so much where we stand, as in what direction we are moving."  
*(Oliver Wendell Holmes)*

"Nothing will work unless you do."  
*(Maya Angelou)*

People are always looking for the single magic bullet that will totally change everything. There is no single magic bullet.  
*(Temple Grandin)*

"Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure."  
*(Marianne Williamson)*

Words have power, choose them wisely

"Imagination is everything. It is the preview of life's coming attractions."  
*(Albert Einstein)*

**Change doesn't happen until you change something**

**Productivity is a product of activity**

The bamboo that bends is stronger than the oak that resists.  
*(Japanese Proverb)*

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