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**A GUIDE FOR THE
FIRST YEAR LEADER**

YMCA CENTRAL LEADERS SCHOOL
July 14-20, 2019



WHAT IS YMCA CENTRAL LEADERS SCHOOL???

“Central Leaders School is a week-long school of concentrated activities, courses, and challenges, with many opportunities for sharing feelings and experiences.”

It's something that is hard to put into words, but what makes this week special needs no explanation. By the end of the week you will have the experience that says it all. This is a week to make friends that will last a lifetime and an opportunity to learn what it is to be a member of a very special community. The way you feel at evening vespers is something nobody can describe for you. Central Leaders School is a place of safety where you can just be yourself. Everyone is sad when the week comes to an end, but we all leave better people with skills and memories that remain long after closing ceremonies. Central Leaders School is one of six Leaders Schools in the United States; it is 44 years old and is medium in size. Our Leaders School is a collaborative program of involved YMCAs.

WHERE IS CENTRAL LEADERS SCHOOL???

Central Leaders School spent 13 years at Luther College in Decorah, IA. After spending a year at Wartburg College in Waverly, IA (1989), it moved to Illinois College in Jacksonville, IL. This will be our 30th year in Jacksonville, IL, a town of about 25,000. With the exception of spending one year at MacMurray College (2003; also in Jacksonville), we have spent all remaining years at Illinois College.

WHY GO TO CENTRAL LEADERS SCHOOL???

Teens go to Central Leaders School to receive training and certification that will improve their skills in many different areas. It is an exciting, supportive atmosphere for Leaders to learn about themselves and others. A week at Central Leaders School makes an impact that is felt for many years, both at the local club level as well as on individual's self-image. It is truly a treasured experience for all that attend.

School Motto:

“Come to Learn...

...Return to Serve”

BUT WHAT DO YOU DO FOR A WEEK???

Sunday:

Time for checking-in to your room, unpacking, and being welcomed by the Council and Staff. By the time you are reading this (unless you read it in advance, you eager Leader you), we will have already had an All-School Orientation, followed by icebreakers. Thereafter, all Leaders will participate in a special orientation that is designed just for you, that is, new Leaders will have a New Leader Orientation and returning Leaders will have an orientation customized for them. From there, dinner, Vespers, Values group assignments and your first Values Group meeting, Opening Ceremony, All-School announcements, and Floor Meetings will occur.

Vespers - This is a time for quiet music, poems, and reflection. *Please be considerate of others, listen quietly, whisper, be on time, think, relax, and enjoy!*

Campus Tour – We no longer have a Campus Tour. That said, Leaders, in their assigned Values group, will walk altogether to McGaw (Illinois College arts and theater building) and Staff and Staffs-in-Training will identify College buildings en route wherein you will have classes. Additionally, there is a College map in the folder you were provided in your dorm room.

Opening Ceremony - The official kick-off to Leaders School takes place on Sunday evening in McGaw. It is a time when last year Leaders and Council members will read to you the meaning of the Leaders School symbol.

Meditations (Meds)/Announcements - This is a time for the staff to share a little bit about themselves with us. They do this through talking about a different topic that has to do with our theme for this week.

Meds are inspirational, sometimes religious in nature, and take place right after breakfast in the morning and right before lights out in the evening. This is also a time where announcements are shared with the entire school.

Floor Meetings - These are meetings with the other people rooming on your dorm floor. During these meetings, you will meet your floor Leaders, receive important announcements about floor rules and wake-up/lights-out times, and once again, this is a chance to meet new people.

MONDAY, TUESDAY, THURSDAY, FRIDAY:

Morning Fitness - Early birds get a chance to emphasize the “Body” part of the YMCA triangle and Central Leaders School goals. Willing people get up *every* morning at 7:00 a.m. for 30 minutes of fun, low-impact aerobics. This is a **mandatory** activity on Monday only. Leaders have the option of just dreaming about going to morning fitness the rest of the week. If you attend all five days, however, you will receive a special recognition at the end of the week. One morning, Council prepares an interesting twist on morning fitness. This is an early morning activity where you can really have fun. Wear what you want, look like you want, and have a blast. Breakfast and morning meditations follow morning fitness.



Classes - Although they’re fun, they are still classes; it’s called Central Leaders *School* for a reason. The object of these classes is to give you something that you can take back to your YMCA and community. These skills can be a certification, a skill, or a way of thinking. Regardless, one of the key “House Rules” is: You are responsible for your own learning. This means that how much useful knowledge you get out of a class depends on how much you're willing to put into it. In other words: *Participate, ask questions, and be open to new ideas!* Attendance is required at all classes. The 3 types of classes are:

- * Major classes take place for 1 hour and 15 minutes every morning and some contain certification upon completion.
- * Theory classes take place after the major class and often analyze different issues or philosophies.
- * Electives are in the afternoon and normally emphasize a game or skill; they are also considered to be more “fun.”

Values - This is a small group of about seven to ten people of the same age that will meet every day in the afternoon. A Staff Member leads these discussions. This group meets in its own spot and talks about anything the group decides on from the schedule to politics, relationships, or religion. This will become a close group of friends by the end of the week. To get the most of your values group: *Join the discussion, open up, and don't be afraid to have a different opinion.*

R & R - Take a break from the day to just relax after lunch, spend time with your new friends, or just hang out in the cafeteria. You can also take this time to sign messages on other people's door posters or drop a note to your secret pal. Lunch and R&R occur at the same time each day. Please be sure to be stick around where we eat lunch for our mid-day announcements at 12:30

Scheduled Recreation - Utilize some of the college facilities and join in some of the fun activities. Different activities are planned, including swimming, sports, and shopping. You can also use this for your own personal time to listen to music, etc., however, you are *not* allowed to remain in your dorm room during scheduled rec.

Monday Night Speaker – We have a very special speaker from Minnesota joining us this year and he will present for about 90 minutes.

Council Game and Talent Show – On Tuesday night after Vespers, Council provides a special activity for the entire school. It's always fun and gives us a great chance to get to know each other. At the conclusion of the game, we have a Talent Show in McGaw. Finally, Community Service groups will gather to discuss and prepare for their projects the

following day, and the day concludes with an Evening Med and all-school announcements.

Candidate Speeches/Skit Night - The first part of Thursday evening is set aside for election speeches from the candidates for President and Vice-President. Then your skit group will perform their five-minute skit. Your values group will combine with another group early in the week to prepare for your skit. This gives groups a chance to show off their dramatic talents and is normally hilarious comedies that will be sure to give you a laugh.

Picture - On Wednesday morning, the entire school will gather in the Bruner gymnasium, receive their Central Leaders School T-shirt, and get lined up for this year's Leaders School group picture. This picture will then be handed out to all those who attended on the last day.

"I am Somebody" – On Friday night, as part of the dance, everyone is encouraged to sign each other's "I am Somebody" posters. This proves to be a very special time as everyone expresses their true, special feelings for one another, which creates a great keepsake.

Banquet - This is your big chance to get dressed up. Everyone wears their formal wear as we enjoy the beautiful decorations and wonderful meal. Afterwards, awards are given out and every Leader receives a certificate of completion. Recognition is also given for all of the people that make Central Leaders School a success.

Movie/Vespers - After the banquet and closing ceremonies, we will gather in the cafeteria for a movie to celebrate the completion of what will have been an excellent week and a way to relax and spend time with friends after sitting at the banquet. At 11:30 p.m. Council will conclude the movie and lead Vespers, which will be followed by the final Evening Med.

Friday:

No morning fitness. (Augh!) People pack and clean up, we eat breakfast, have morning med, vespers, closing, and then say good-bye.

WHAT HAPPENED TO WEDNESDAY?

The day still starts at 7:00 a.m. and includes morning fitness, breakfast, morning med and the major class. Then we do our community service projects at various sites throughout the Jacksonville area. These projects include volunteering at local nursing homes, day care centers, area parks, and the food pantry.

Wednesday Day Trip - After our community service and lunch back at the college, we will spend the rest of the day at Knights Action Park in Springfield, Illinois. There, you can enjoy the park upon arrival and we will end our time with a BBQ dinner. Activities include baseball batting cages*, bumper boats*, paddle boats*, arcades*, a giant 3 flume waterside 5 stories high, golf driving range*, go karts*, lazy river float, and an 18 hole miniature golf course*.

*These activities have an additional cost.

Upon returning to campus, we clean up, get ready for the theme dance, go to vespers, and then finish with evening meds.

Theme Dance - This year the dance is “Hollywood.” Everybody is encouraged to dress according to the theme.

The week seems long on paper but it comes to an end quickly, with sad departures on the way home. Everyone is excited and everybody knows the meaning of “Come to learn, Return to serve.”

OTHER LEADERS SCHOOL STUFF

Awards – Leaders have the opportunity to nominate people for several awards. The Staff then decides who should receive these awards from those nominated:

- * Spirit Leader Award - This award is given to the Leader who exemplifies the spirit of this year's Leaders School. It is given to someone who will do almost anything (which includes wearing underwear on their head) to add fun and enthusiasm to others.
- * Honor Leader Award - This award is given to a Leader who exemplifies the qualities of an ideal Leader: responsibility, integrity, maturity, and sensitivity.
- * Rookie Honor Leader Award - This award is given to a first year Leader who fits the same criteria as the Honor Leader.

Big Brother/Sister - All first year Leaders are paired with an older Leader. Veteran Leaders will help first year Leaders throughout the week if they have any problems. Further, our School is divided into four "houses" (think *Harry Potter*) based on notable people in YMCA history.

Constitution - The by-laws of our school are contained in the notebook that you receive on the first day of Central Leaders School. The incoming Council members review it annually and make any necessary changes.

Korny Ear - This is the official Central Leaders School Newspaper. This daily paper is made solely from contributions of Leaders and staff. That's a hint: contribute, contribute, contribute.

Council – This group of Leaders meets at the rallies and on the phone throughout the year to plan Central Leaders School for the coming year. They represent various ages and come from different states. *Elections* for Council will take place during Values on Thursday. One person is elected from each Values group. Council will break any tie votes. Any Leader who is elected to Council for two consecutive years receives an automatic position on Council, referred to as Honorary Council. Anyone (except last year Leaders) may run for a spot on the Council.

Floor Leaders - Floor Leaders are chosen for their leadership in past years. They have a special training session on Sunday afternoon and are responsible for daily wake-up calls, evening bed checks at lights out, directing floor meetings, and promoting school spirit.

Morning Fitness - may be the scariest part of your day. Everybody just woke up and looks horrible, so you don't have to worry about how you look. This is required on Monday, optional Tuesday through Friday, but if you come all week, you will be honored at the banquet.

Secret Pals - You are assigned to be someone's anonymous friend. You can leave poems under their door, send them a card, leave messages for them on their doors, or have somebody give them a hug. It is important you don't forget your secret pal during the week. How would you feel if your secret pal forgot you? You do not have to spend any money on your secret pal, but PLEASE make sure they get lots of attention throughout the week.

Staff - Led by Dan Schulze and Dr. Jason Rehfeldt, the Leaders School Directors and staff teach various classes and do a lot of behind-the-scenes work to make Central Leaders School a success.

Staff-in-Training (Staff-I.T.'s) - Are past Leaders who have returned and are learning about the role of staff at Leaders School.

CENTRAL LEADERS SCHOOL HOUSE RULES:

- Be responsible for your own learning
- Avoid put-downs
- Be open to new experiences
- You have the right to pass
- Speak for yourself, not for others
- Expect unfinished business
- Accept and be considerate of others
- Open up, meet new people

After your first Leaders School, you will always want to come back because of all the bonds you have made with new friends. Returning year after year also gives you the chance to further develop your leadership potential.

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YMCA CENTRAL LEADERS SCHOOL
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