

# **Know Your Government 2009: KYG vs. IGNORANCE You be the Judge**



**February 14-17, 2009**

**Red Lion Hotel Olympia**

**COORDINATOR PACKET**

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# WELCOME TO KNOW YOUR GOVERNMENT

Dear Volunteer KYG Conference Coordinator:

Thank you for becoming part of the Washington State 4-H Know Your Government Conference. This exciting annual event gives 4-H teens an opportunity to go to Olympia and learn first hand how our government operates. Every year the participants tour the Capitol, meet with their legislators, and join in hands-on activities that focus on a particular part of government.

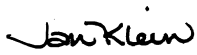
This year's theme is "**KYG vs. Ignorance- You be the Judge!**" It's going to be an exciting topic as youth learn about the judicial system through performing roles in a mock trial. Although delegates will obtain knowledge of how the judicial system work; more importantly we hope they will understand how a citizen can function within it.

Much effort has been put into planning the actual KYG Conference in Olympia in February. I cannot overemphasize the value of your county pre-conference orientations to prepare youth to have the most success at KYG. We have created a Curriculum Packet, which offers ideas and suggestions to help you with this job. It includes plans for **five orientation meetings**. Use the lessons and activities in their entirety or broken into segments that would work best for your group. **The orientation activities are essential to prepare delegates for the State KYG Conference.**

Selection of your county delegates is important, since the 4-H Know Your Government Conference is an intense, four-day experience. Your county can bring as many delegates as you like, but it is important that the **youth are prepared for and able to handle the responsibilities involved in being at a conference. Delegates must be in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade or above.** Younger youth are NOT eligible to attend the conference, but may participate in county orientation/learning sessions and anticipate attending KYG in the future. In conjunction with the County Extension 4-H Youth Educator, County Coordinators will determine the eligibility requirements (i.e., attendance at all orientation meetings, participation in meetings, etc.).

Thank you for choosing to be an integral part of this learning experience. It is our hope that all delegates enjoy and grow from this year's conference.

See you in Olympia!!



Jan Klein  
State 4-H Teen Leadership Coordinator

# A NEWCOMER'S GLIMPSE OF KYG...

Know Your Government (KYG) is a hands-on learning conference focusing on a specific aspect of government. The conference topic and curriculum change yearly, in order to keep it relevant to current events and issues. A Planning Committee, made up of volunteers, takes charge of revising the curriculum and organizing the conference. If you **have any questions** about registration, accommodations, or curriculum, you may contact one of the committee members, who are happy to help.

**In order for a young person to register** for KYG, he/she must contact their county Extension office and complete the required paperwork. There is a cost for registration, and an additional cost for the hotel room, which is paid for by each delegate. Chaperones also pay the registration and hotel room costs. The conference and all related activities take place in and around the Red Lion Hotel Olympia.

In preparation for KYG, youth participate in **county-run orientation sessions**. The Curriculum Packet outlines the learning objectives for each of these orientation sessions. All hand-outs may be photocopied. A Volunteer Coordinator typically manages those orientations, reviewing the activities outlined in the Curriculum Packet. The county determines participation criteria for The Know Your Government Conference. If youth delegates are absent from orientations or do not complete the given tasks and activities, consult your county Extension office for direction regarding whether or not that youth will be included in the county delegation to KYG.

**While at KYG, youth participants are engaged in a series of hands-on activities that generally lead to a large group, culminating product on the final morning. Often, the conference agenda expects youth to assume roles/jobs in order to be fully engaged in their project. You are key to their success through preparation, practice and helping them select carefully their responsibilities.**

The **Legislative Breakfast** is a unique aspect of the conference. All members of the Washington State Legislature are invited to attend and are seated with delegates from their district. This is a time for legislators to learn about 4-H and a time for delegates to ask legislators about issues important to them and their area.

Know Your Government is a time for the delegates to showcase what they have learned during their pre-conference meetings. Therefore the **roles of the coordinators and chaperones** are usually in the background. At times, coordinators and chaperones are asked to sit in on meetings, assist in transporting delegates, supervise activities throughout the agenda, etc. Because this is a youth-managed conference, we have trained youth facilitators who will run the meeting sessions and address participation/behavior issues. We ask you to please be there to support those efforts and be on hand if help is needed.

County Meetings are scheduled to take place as the final meeting for the day, just before delegates go to their own rooms for the night. The purpose of the **County Meetings** is to find out what the delegates did and learned, go over the agenda for the next day, and make sure they get into their own rooms by lights out. The nightly meeting is very laid back and is a way for the delegates to debrief about what happened and maybe discuss things that they may need. You may lead these meetings by prompting questions or by having the delegates take turns facilitating. This may be an

opportunity for members of the Planning Committee to visit your delegation and answer any questions you might have.

Because each year is different, it is **important to review the orientation curriculum** and take note of the specific learning objectives. These identify the skills that delegates will need in order to function effectively and confidently while at KYG. The suggested activities designed are outlined briefly in the curriculum packet. However, the full program description is a work in progress throughout the months leading up to KYG, and is maintained by the Planning Committee.

Thank you for joining the Know Your Government project. This is a long-standing conference, rich in curriculum and learning opportunities. **Please do not hesitate to contact the Planning Committee** for support and/or direction throughout your county orientations. Enjoy this series of activities, and we'll see you in Olympia!

Sincerely,

The Planning Committee

# KYG CORE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Each committee member is responsible for a specific aspect of Know Your Government. If you have any questions, please contact the appropriate committee member.

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# Youth/Adult Partnerships

The 4-H Know Your Government program and its success are dependent on the talent offered by our many coordinators and chaperones throughout the state. Because of this, it is natural that the fostering of youth-adult partnerships is another objective of KYG. The excerpt below is taken from the WSU 4-H Youth Development Volunteer Training Module II: Positive Youth Development (page 217).

**“Understanding youth/adult partnerships, youth empowerment, the benefits of planning with youth as partners, and adult leadership styles are beneficial for all adults that work with youth and who work on projects and events aimed at youth. The success of your 4-H programs will often hinge on the attitudes and beliefs you and your volunteers take towards young people. How you see them – as capable or incapable – will establish a precedent in all that you do in your program. There are many perceptions that adults have about the involvement of young people in programs designed for their benefit. These perceptions influence how we choose to involve them in decision-making processes . . .”**

There are three ways to perceive youth: as objects, as recipients, or as resources. When developing a youth/adult partnership, the most effective way is to view **youth as resources**. This perspective acknowledges that adults and young people can share any leadership and decision-making roles involved. This may mean that both young people and adults need to learn the skills necessary for shared leadership. It may require some change in policy and administrative practice within the organization or perhaps a re-formulation of the organization’s mission statement. One of the key ways we can allow this in 4-H is by considering youth as full partners and resources in our work – **adults and youth working together in all kinds of ways from decision-making to program planning**. We want to view youth as resources to our programs and consider it a part of the youth’s responsibility to participate.

## Adults Are Key

Adults play a key role in supporting youth involvement. This is not an opportunity for us to stand by and watch. We must be involved in creating safe spaces and structures that help youth in the process of becoming full partners.

## How to Partner with Delegates:

- Include the delegates in the implementation of this curriculum allowing them to schedule and plan future meetings
- Ask for their assistance by having them lead discussions and/or facilitate the meetings
- Ask them to contact local speakers, plan a field trip, or develop a list of questions to ask experts
- Try not to simply tell the delegates the point of the activity or lesson; use the “reflect and apply” questions to lead the delegates to discover it for themselves