

# National YA Leadership Conference

August 25 – 27

Calwood, Colorado

8000 ft above sea level



# Overview

In attendance were:

- Second ever congregation of YA officers at a National Level
- YA reps and advisors from the 10 regions across the USA along with National YA officers
- Dr. Bill Harvey – Chair, NEC & member of Prashanti Council
- Mr. Jonathan Roof – President, Central Council
- Dr. Hymon Johnson – Advisor, National board for EHV
- Dr Joe Phaneuf – YA Advisor
- Dr. Mayur Pandya – Guest Speaker (from Canada)



# Day 1 – August 25

- Qualities of S~A~I Leader
  - Atmic Vision (Hands in Society – head in forest, Even vision)
  - Constant Integrated Awareness
  - To Be, To Do, To Tell
  - Selfless, Acts for sake of a bigger cause
  - Be the first Servant
- Goals of the conference
  - What is the mission and vision of YA program?
  - How can we be leaders like Swami?
  - What is a YA Group?
  - How to inspire participation of youth?
  - How can YAs support SSE ?
  - What are the responsibilities of YA reps & advisors?
  - How can we make a difference in the community?
  - How to unify our region?
  - How can YA program in USA progress?

# Day 2 – August 26

## Opening Remarks –

### Led by Dr. Bill Harvey

- A chain is no stronger than its weakest link; YA program is a vital link of this Sai Organizational chain.
- The organization is a vehicle for effective & efficient service to society
- Self-transformation – Unity of thought, word & deed
- Spiritual Community service –
  - Do not believe that we can shape the world through our projects
  - Swami says that the world will improve when we improve first
  - Take up projects that can be carried out within our means
  - Must not have a competitive spirit
- Put forth your best effort and don't worry about the outcome. Avoid brooding over what has happened.



# Day 2 – August 26

## Experiences in the Sai Organization

By Jonathan Roof

- Experiences as a YA, adult, Sai leader (Lived as a Sai YA, even though Sai YA program had not existed at that time)
- Introspection (Glimpse of Divinity)

Q. Who is a YA?

A. One who has not set limitations yet for oneself; everyone should be a YA; each one is capable of doing anything with Swami's grace.

Q. What stops people from reaching the goal of liberation?

A. Answer by Swami – The lack of intensity.

Q. How are you going to manifest your divinity? What kind of God are you?

A. That's the question that we should be asking ourselves!



# Day 2 – August 26

## History & Structure of YA program

- Brief history of the YA program
  - Started about 12 years ago to bridge the gap between SSE and the adult program at the Sai Centers.
- Guidelines
- Discussion on Roles and Responsibilities of YA officers.



# Day 2 – August 26

## YA Best Practices – presentation followed by discussion

- Self-Transformation (started 2 years ago)
  - Individual Transformation: Cultivate good habits
  - YAs had successful impact on their personal lives
  - Make an impact in the community
  - Service projects
- Unity in Diversity
  - Eastern/Western cultural integration
  - Tackling a wide range of age groups within YAs
  - Mentoring SSE programs
- Keeping YA membership strong at the centers
  - YAs are given the opportunity to lead center activities: study circle, devotional program, Service, SSE
  - Centers involve YAs in planning as well as execution



# Day 2 – August 26

## Bridging the gap between the SSE and YA programs

- Why is there a gap?
- How can we make the transition from SSE to YAs smooth?
- Swami says – “Only youth can transform youth”

Increasing YA involvement in the SSE program –

- Service activities with YAs
- Study Circle on topics of relevance with YAs
- YAs as SSE group 3 teachers





# Day 3 – August 27

## In the Sunshine of Sai's love

*Dr. Mayur Pandya, Vancouver, Canada*

- Experiences as a student at Swami's institute
- Swami's expectations of His students and youth, in general
  - Constant Introspection and Self Inquiry (Father/Garden)
  - God's grace falls equally on all creation – Magnet and Iron pieces
  - God is longing to be invited into our hearts (Ice Cream and Samosa)
  - Making God your best friend
  - Transformation from “Rowdy” to “Street-Light”



# Day 3 – August 27

## Communication in Leadership workshop

Led by Dr Joe Phaneuf

- Mindset is key – being fully present in the moment; being a learner vs. being a judge
- **First understanding, then adjustment**
- Listening careful
- **Value of silence**
- Avoid “why” questions when possible; ask “how” and “what”
- **Value of non-verbal communication – tone of voice; body language; eye contact**
- Speaking obligingly
- **Keep words simple; be brief;**
- Giving feedback – praise vs. acknowledgement
- **Management of Dissent – avoiding email; face to face meeting; be respectful**



# Day 3 – August 27

## 1. Sai Katrina Relief Presentation

Shiva and Prashanti Paturi from our region

## 2. National Initiatives – Brainstorming session

- Be proactive: Have emergency preparedness training
- Community Involvement
  - Training Sai folk – SSE/YAs in life skills
  - Education/vocational training for youth; job “coaching”
  - Nationally bring one concept to each underserved community
  - Tapping into a community-based need based on a national theme
  - Community theatre (EHV-based skits/plays)
- Forming a national skill database – share talents/skills across the nation



# Day 3- August 27

## Closing Remarks

- SAI – Having a personal connection with Swami
- YA – youth is the determination to do anything!!
- Leadership – Being an example; doing a selfless act; Swami is a perfect example – always giving.



# Day 3- August 27

## Closing Remarks

By Dr. Bill Harvey

### The ABCs of Swami's teachings:

**AVOID**      **BAD**      **COMPANY**

**ALWAYS**      **BE**      **CAREFUL**

**ALWAYS**      **BE**      **CONTENT**

**ALWAYS**      **BE**      **CHEERFUL**

