

Summer 2022

# A Common Youth Initiative

**The Common Place**



**Program Coordinator**

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## **What is A Common Youth Initiative?**

Founded in 2019, A Common Youth Initiative (ACYI) is a summer immersion experience that focuses on creating an understanding of the plight of the most vulnerable populations in Philadelphia and in other urban areas. Established by The Common Place (TCP), which is a nonprofit that serves children and their families in Southwest Philadelphia through educational programs, social services, and collaborating with others. TCP has been running youth programs for school aged children for over 5 years.

For 8 weeks of the summer, the A Common Youth Initiative immerses youth and adult leaders from around the country into the diverse neighborhoods and communities of Philadelphia. Each day, participants engage in relational service work in different parts of the city in order to identify and confront stereotypes of the city, of urban poverty, and of marginalized communities. A variety of work sites create a rich introduction to Philadelphia and offer context to the intersections of food and housing insecurity, incarceration, race, mental illness, and addiction.

Through daily dialogue at work sites, small discussion groups, and worship, our goal is to develop compelling leaders who are founded in rich biblical, social, and academic understandings of justice. The goal is to spark curiosity, to identify ways in which Holy Scripture calls for justice and love for all, and to stimulate conversations leading to lifelong service and discipleship.

## Summer 2022

Each year ACYI creates programming focused on our core subject of social justice and our sub core themes of Poverty, Food Insecurity, Education, Healthcare and Environmental



Justice. This summer we will continue to look at social justice, the BLM movement, and how to see these injustices through a biblical lens. All week we will take one sub core subject matter and gear our activities, service, and discussion on these topics.

# What to Expect in a Week With A Common Youth Initiative

## Arrival

All groups arrive at The Common Place on Sunday usually between 1:00 and 2:00 PM. Upon arrival, ACYI staff will greet you and show you where you can settle in for your week. After an orientation, icebreakers, an overview of the week ahead, share strategies for staying safe, happy, and healthy, and answer any questions the groups may have, we will eat dinner and engage in worship to help bring the group closer together.

## Daily Schedule

ACYI works with a variety of groups, and people to make your week as productive and educational as possible. Flexibility is an important part of our programming since we must coordinate with many other organizations. So please be mindful that our schedule could change at any time so just “go with the flow”!

A typical schedule is as follows:

7:00am	<u>Wake Up!</u> You will be sleeping on cots in the renovated basement at The Common Place! Males and females will be separated.
7:45am	<u>Morning Devotion.</u> An ACYI staff member will be ready in the sanctuary to lead a morning devotion to spiritually prepare participants for their days of work. Devotions are optional.
8:00am	<u>Breakfast, clean up, and lunch packing.</u> ACYI staff will handle the set up of breakfast and lunch packing stations. Participants pack lunch and eat breakfast each morning. Breakfast could include bagels, cereal, yogurt, and oatmeal. Lunch usually includes a sandwich, fruit, granola bars, and snacks. One group will be responsible for clean-up chores each day.
9:00am	<u>Travel to work sites.</u> Every day your group will be going to a different work site in order to allow for a variety of experiences throughout the week. An effort is made to give groups 4 ½ to 6 hours of work or education per day, so groups may be at two sites in one day or stay all day at one site, depending on the needs of the day.
12:30pm	<u>Lunch.</u> Neighborhood Groups will determine an appropriate time to eat bag lunches at the work sites, depending on the tasks to be completed each day.
3:00 pm	<u>Afternoon Programming.</u> ACYI Staff will lead you in discussion groups, activities and panels to help your group better understand the work they’re participating in throughout their week.

- 6:00pm Dinner Chores. A small group of students will be responsible for setting up dinner each day, guided by ACYI staff.
- 6:30pm Dinner. A delicious and nutritious meal will be provided by our In house culinary expert and kitchen staff. On two nights of the week, the adult leaders will eat together. ACYI staff will facilitate an adult workshop for processing events of the week thus far.
- 7:00pm Dinner Chores. The same group that set up dinner will be responsible for clean up as well.
- 8:00pm Evening Activity. This could include worship, movies and discussion, or games.
- 10:00pm Free Time. Feel free to play group games, or begin getting ready for bed.
- 11:00pm Lights Out! Everyone is expected to be in their beds at lights out.

### Free Afternoon

Once during the week, we shorten your workday to allow for free time to explore the exciting attractions of Philadelphia on your own. For your free day, plan to have about 5-6 hours free in the city to do as you wish with your group. We will give you more information about timing and expectations as we move closer to the summer.

### Departure

Plan your departure from TCP to be no later than 9:30 AM on Friday. Before leaving, your group is responsible for sweeping and cleaning up the room you occupied to ensure its cleanliness for the group that is coming in after you. ACYI will provide an on-the-go breakfast (fruit, granola bars, etc.) as you are packing up before you leave.

# PACKING LIST

In addition to the obvious clothing and toiletry items, please have each participant pack:

- ☐ Sleeping bag/sheets/blankets and a pillow
- ☐ Water bottle! You will be asked to use this instead of paper cups to reduce waste
- ☐ Some spending money for your free afternoon
- ☐ Sunscreen, bug spray, and hat for outdoor work sites
- ☐ Shower shoes
- ☐ Shower kit (including a bag for carrying shower supplies to and from shower sites)
- ☐ Bath towel
- ☐ Clothes to work and get dirty in
- ☐ Closed toe shoes
- ☐ Long pants (some sites require long pants, which you can carry with you to change when you arrive to work)
- ☐ Lunch box
- ☐ Modest and appropriate clothing
  - ! Many sites have a policy about the length of shorts. When arms are resting at your sides, shorts should be at least middle fingertip length. We also do not recommend spandex or tight-fitting bottoms for males or females. If the staff feels that any clothing is inappropriate for work sites, participants may be asked to change.

What not to pack:

- ☐ Drugs, alcohol, tobacco, fireworks, or weapons of any kind
- ☐ Gaming devices and video players
- ☐ Air mattresses! We have cots.

# A Note About Solidarity and Relational Engagement

A Common Youth Initiative expects that all participants – adults and youth alike – live simply and act in solidarity with the vulnerable populations with whom you will be engaging. You can do this in a variety of ways.

## Work on Consumerism

First, you can work to reduce your consumerism. As an act of solidarity with those members of our community who may not be able to spend a frivolous \$5 on snacks, coffee, or soft drinks, your group is expected to dissuade yourselves from extraneous purchases. ACYI is ready and able to provide all food, drink, and supplies you should require during your time with us. Additionally, it is important to keep in mind that not all participants attending ACYI will have the income to spontaneously buy treats. Our rule of solidarity allows us to be in relationship with one another rather than in relationship with our money and material possessions.

## Live in Solidarity

Another component of solidarity is our sleeping and showering accommodations. ACYI is housed in a church that is over 100 years old, and while we do not have the modern convenience of beds or central air in our building, we do guarantee cots each night and access to showers throughout the week. Take your time with us as a chance to live in solidarity, despite any mental and physical discomfort, with those whom you are serving.

## Limit Use of Cell Phones and Technology

Finally, we limit the use of cell phones and technology to free time hours only. During all work hours, meal hours, and programming hours, all cell phones (for youth, adults, and ACYI staff) should be out of sight unless in the case of emergency, to communicate with other groups, or when it is an appropriate time for taking photos. We limit the use of cell phones and technology in order to promote relationship building and community among people who are physically present. Participants are more than welcome to call home and to use their phones during the designated free times.



## 2022 Summer A Common Youth Initiative

Summer 2022

We will be hosting seven sessions of A Common Youth Initiative programming in 2022:

- Session 1: Sunday, June 26 – Friday, July 1
- Session 2: Tuesday, July 5 – Friday, July 8\*
- Session 3: Sunday, July 10– Friday, July 15
- Session 4: Sunday, July 17 – Friday, July 22
- Session 5: Sunday, July 24 – Friday, July 29
- Session 6: Sunday, July 31 – Friday, August 5



If you are interested in registering, contact ([acyi@thecommonplacephilly.org](mailto:acyi@thecommonplacephilly.org) or 267-275-8238) to check availability and to receive our Registration Form and Participation Contract!

# Fees and Registration Information

## Participation Fees

All groups participating in A Common Youth Initiative programming will need to pay a \$200 nonrefundable registration fee plus a participation fee (per participant) as follows:

- For ACYI (Sunday to Friday): \$500 per person

The participation fee includes: all meals during your time here (except free afternoon); program supplies; public transportation to/from work sites; staffing; accommodations.

## How to Register

1. Contact [acyi@thecommonplacephilly.org](mailto:acyi@thecommonplacephilly.org) to check availability for the dates in which you are interested. Once availability is confirmed, you will be sent the Registration Form and Participation Contract.
2. Complete the online Registration Form and Participation Contract and send in your \$200.00 Registration Fee. This Registration Fee is non-refundable and holds the dates for your group. See below for how to make a payment.
3. Finalize your group numbers, and begin paying your Total Amount Due in installments, as scheduled below:

For A Common Youth Initiative Week:

- \$200 registration fee upon registration Plus estimate of Roster numbers
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Installment (50% of total amount due) by March 12, 2022
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Installment (50% of remainder due) by May 16, 2022
4. Calculate your Total Amount Due as follows:
    - $\$200 \text{ (registration fee)} + (\# \text{ participants} \times \$500) = \text{Total Amount Due}$

***NOTE: As soon as you begin paying your installments, the number of participants for whom you are paying cannot be lowered. If your group size increases, however, we may be able to adjust accordingly if available space allows.***

## How to Make a Payment

Please make checks payable to The Common Place. Indicate "ACYI (SESSION DATE) - Installment #\_\_\_" on the memo line.

Checks should be mailed to:

The Common Place ATTN: ACYI  
5736 Chester Ave  
Philadelphia, PA 19143

## Necessary Forms

At the end of this packet, you will find a Medical History/Release Form for youth and adult participants. Please have each member of your group complete a Medical History/Release Form, and bring one copy of each form to hand to the Coordinator of ACYI upon arrival at TCP.

You will need to complete the Participant Roster found at the end of this packet and submit it by June 1. If you submit your roster late, we cannot guarantee our ability to accommodate any dietary restrictions.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What are adult leaders responsible for?

Group leaders and adults are responsible for assisting ACYI staff in ensuring that all participants are safe, healthy, and upholding our commitments to each other for the week. Leaders are also responsible for assisting ACYI staff and site volunteer coordinators in managing participants as they complete their work tasks and participate in evening and overnight activities.

While ACYI staff lead the small group discussions and work projects, adult leaders are responsible for helping to keep youth engaged in the conversation and maintaining a positive, motivated work ethic. Adult leaders know their youth better than we do, so our staff relies on their presence and support in creating a deep and meaningful experience for all the youth! Finally, adult leaders are responsible for supervision of youth during any free time during the day, evening and overnight hours.

Trust ACYI staff to ensure that all details of your experience are taken care of so that you can engage in meaningful ways with your group! If you would like to meet with your group, let us know, and we can work with you to allow time for that.

Time with A Common Youth Initiative can prove to be a challenging week spiritually and physically; all participants should be healthy enough in mind and body to endure long (but not too long!) work hours and considerable amounts of walking. Please keep these responsibilities in mind while selecting your group leaders! **Each evening, all group leaders will have the opportunity to meet with the Coordinators of A Common Youth Initiative to bring up any joys, concerns, or questions.**

### What if someone in our group has a dietary restriction?

Both of our kitchens are fully capable of accommodating any dietary needs. The most important thing is to let us know well in advance of any special accommodations we may need to make. Complete and submit the Participant Roster by June 1 to ensure that we can accommodate any dietary restrictions or special needs.

### Do we need vehicles?

You don't have to drive to get to us, but you do need access to cars throughout the week to get from place to place. In addition to transporting your own students, you'll need at least two extra seats for ACYI staff. The Common Place has a parking lot that locks at night, so your vehicle will always be safe. There will be some days that we take public transportation, and others where driving makes more sense.

## Will we be safe?

We visit all corners of Philadelphia throughout our week together. While some may see the neighborhoods we visit as the “rough parts” or “dangerous parts” of the city, we see these neighborhoods as being stereotypically misunderstood and often misrepresented. ACYI has longstanding relationships and presence with each of the work sites and communities we visit. While we cannot control extraordinary circumstances, we ensure that your group will be housed in a safe neighborhood but with easy access to the variety of neighborhoods that exist in Philadelphia. Furthermore, the Coordinators of ACYI are in constant communication with work sites to assess current safety concerns of the areas participants visit.

Primary goals of ACYI include breaking down social barriers, engaging with communities different from our own, and acting with compassion towards all of God’s creation. Doing so requires us to step outside of our comfort zone, but we will never do so if there is a direct threat to the safety and well-being of our participants.

**COVID Response:** Our facility has taken several precautions to ensure the safety of our participants and to mitigate exposure to COVID. ***All participants must be cleared of COVID 19 by taking a test 7 days prior to attending the program.*** Vaccination for participants is required. Each group leader must verify and present the results from their group members at the time of their visit. All participants should wear masks throughout the day and practice social distancing at their respective worksites and in the facility.

## May we bring any donations?

Yes, please! If you are driving and have extra room, we welcome clothing and personal care/hygiene items. For a current list of what our particular needs are, please ask and we can guide you in how you can be most helpful! We also welcome and encourage monetary donations in the form of a Sunday worship offering as well as additional financial contributions as you are able. The work of ACYI is important and requires a great deal of resources to serve the needs of our most vulnerable brothers and sisters.

## What are the appropriate age groups for A Common Youth Initiative?

Our activities are primarily designated for high school-aged youth, preferably 14 years of age or older. Each year, however, we also accommodate a number of mature middle school-aged youth (not younger than 11 years of age) and have the capacity to blend them into high school groups as appropriate.

## What is the weather going to be like?

Although Philadelphia’s summer temperature average remains in the mid-80s, it can range from the mid-70s to upper-90s. Especially during July and August, we often see high levels of humidity—and consequently, a high heat index. Our building is not air conditioned, and many of our worksites are outdoors. We will assess the heat index

each day and have excessive heat plans ready to ensure the health and safety of all participants. All worksites have access to fresh water to refill water bottles.

### Where will we be working?

An effort is made for your group to work at sites addressing a variety of social justice concerns. We work to balance the number of outdoor sites and indoor sites, food-related sites, sites working with children, and other factors to foster the most holistic experience possible. Some sites include:

## Waiver and Release of Liability

In consideration of my participation in A Common Youth Initiative, I hereby waive and release any and all causes of action, claims, suits, damages, and judgments, in any form whatsoever, arising from or by reason of any and all known or unknown, foreseen or unforeseen bodily or personal injuries (including death), property damage, theft, or loss resulting from my participation in A Common Youth Initiative and related **activities, against and their employees, contractors, board of directors, volunteers, and agents, whether caused by my own negligence, another person's negligence or otherwise.**

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, and intending to be legally bound, we have executed this document below.

SIGNATURE of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

PRINT Name of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE of Witness: \_\_\_\_\_

PRINT Name of Witness: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Media Release

I understand, accept and agree that participation in A Common Youth Initiative (ACYI) may result in publicity for educational or promotional purposes. Therefore, I irrevocably authorize ACYI to use and publicize my name, for any publication, promotion, trade or business use, or for any other purpose related to ACYI. I give my permission for ACYI to distribute, now or in the future, any filmed or recorded material involving me. Said material may be distributed to anyone, for any purpose, including the general public, magazines, newspapers, television, or radio stations. I specifically authorize ACYI, now or at any time in the future, to publicize my name, and forever discharge ACYI from and against any and all claims, of any type, which arise from, or are related to, ACYI's use, distribution, or disclosure of any photographs, films, videotapes, electronic recordings or other information, regarding myself and ACYI. I waive the right to inspect publications or products that include me prior to their release.

SIGNATURE of Participant:

\_\_\_\_\_

## Summer Youth Immersion Participant Roster

Please list your final participant list here. This will be used to create work groups and prepare for dietary restrictions. We cannot guarantee that we can accommodate dietary restrictions without advance notice.

Church/Group: \_\_\_\_\_

Dates Attending: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

PARTICIPANT NAME	Youth or Adult?	If Youth, Age?	Gender	Dietary Restrictions?
1.				
10.				
20.				

