

Directive

To members and lodges of the Grand Lodge of W. Va., AF & AM:

Earlier in the Masonic year, the Grand Master participated in discussions with some leaders of Masonic youth organizations, which have a long tradition of imparting Masonic principles to the youth of West Virginia. These organizations are led by Freemasons and include the DeMolay International, International Order of the Rainbow for Girls, and Job's Daughters International. The Grand Master was alarmed to learn that there was only one functioning group of Job's Daughters, and further, that the functioning DeMolay chapters within West Virginia had been reduced to two. Also apparent was that, to a significant extent, West Virginia Masonic law has been a restraining and impeding factor for Masonic youth organizations. Our purposes served by the adoption of those laws, regulations, and notes have expired, in light of the changed circumstances facing our youths and their organizations in 2006 and beyond.

As Freemasons, we are aware of a special bond between Freemasonry and the DeMolay, Rainbow Girls, and Job's Daughters. We know that there are other good youth organizations, but we feel more of a kinship with the DeMolay than the Boy Scouts, as one example. Although we never intended any harm, in practice it has happened. Our laws, regulations, and notes had a restrictive tone with respect to Masonic youth organizations and required enforcement by our chartered lodges, which in turn exercised excessive caution. Many of these restrictions no longer promote the interests of Freemasonry. We have almost ignored our Masonic youth organizations to death.

For organizations with such a long tradition of edifying Masonic principles in our young people, West Virginia Masonic law was never intended to be interpreted in such a way as to contribute to their demise. To the extent that our present practices are doing so, our members and lodges are directed to reconsider any present or future involvement with a Masonic youth organization. Our members and lodges are directed to promote the best interests of Freemasonry, mindful of our Ancient Landmarks, as well as to promote the best interests of our youth. Accordingly, with lodge permission, DeMolay may meet in lodge rooms. In addition, the following items are deemed appropriate and are recommended for consideration by our members and lodges.

[Lodge secretaries need not read aloud the numbered lists that follow.]

OPPORTUNITIES TO ENHANCE MASONIC YOUTH IN YOUR MASONIC COMMUNITY

Grand Lodge Officers, District Deputy Grand Masters, officers of subordinate lodges, Masonic leaders and Master Masons, may enhance the future of the youth of America by implementing and pursuing opportunities to support Masonic youths in your Masonic Community by doing these actions or similar actions.

1. Encourage Master Masons to serve as adult youth leaders.
2. Encourage Master Masons to attend meetings of youth groups.
3. Encourage Master Masons to attend installations and induction ceremonies of youth groups.
4. Encourage youth groups to sponsor a Youth Night program while the lodge has been called to refreshment before closing.
5. Invite adult youth leaders to speak at Masonic functions.
6. Invite youth leaders to speak before or after Masonic functions.
7. Invite young people to perform ritual ceremonies at Masonic functions.
8. Invite young people to tell, in their own words, what they like about their organization.
9. Include youth support programs in your plans and priorities for your term as Master.
10. In your visitations, include in your agenda a public recognition of all members present who actively work with youth groups.
11. Present certificates of appreciation to Masonic members who actively work with youth groups.
12. Encourage lodges to invite youth representatives to public activities, such as picnics, family nights, special events, etc.
13. Challenge local youth groups to a competition such as bowling or miniature golf, etc.
14. Ask youth groups to perform a specific service to your members – such as providing a car wash during one of your meetings and then treat the youth to dinner.
15. Survey members of lodges for names of children, grandchildren, and neighbors to refer as potential members of youth groups.
16. Provide Masonic youth groups with publicity through your organizational publications.
17. Encourage lodges to include meeting dates of youth groups in monthly notices.
18. Encourage each lodge to appoint a representative to the local youth groups, to represent the officers at public installations, and to report at meetings about their activities.
19. Designate a month as “Youth Month” encouraging all lodges to hold youth information or promotion meetings as well as honoring the Masonic youth groups in your community.
20. Involve youth groups in service projects at your Masonic facilities.
21. Involve youth groups in fund-raising for various Masonic charities.

22. Involve youth groups in Grand Lodge public activities such as the Annual Grand Lodge Communication, cornerstone ceremonies, parades, dedications, etc.
23. Establish an education seminar on careers, using Masons as consultants, inviting members of youth groups to come and talk to “professionals” about their careers.
24. Coordinate a Masonic Day at a local professional or semi-pro sports exhibition and involve all of the Masonic family, including the youth groups.
25. Coordinate a Masonic Day at a local major amusement or theme park, and involve entire Masonic family.
26. Include youth participants in local Masonic worship services as ushers, readers, choirs, etc.
27. Establish a local fund-raising campaign to provide financial assistance to youth groups.
28. Include youth participants in social activities and programs that would be acceptable and enjoyable for the youth.
29. Establish a local youth social night in a supervised safe facility, using existing Masonic buildings or property.
30. Provide computer data service to youth groups for mailing labels, financial records, etc.
31. Distribute youth promotion pamphlets at visitations and lodge functions.
32. Send each Mason in your Masonic community a personal letter encouraging their monetary or physical support of youth groups.
33. Conduct or invite a youth leader to coordinate a seminar to educate your lodge officers about the Masonic-related youth organizations.
34. Distribute procedural information or provide contact information of adult leaders on establishing a Masonic youth group in a local community.
35. Provide administrative services such as photocopying or printing services through your lodge to assist adult leaders of the youth groups.
36. Provide information to local youth groups, if available, names of children, grandchildren, relatives of Masons, and their ages, as potential members of their respective organizations.
37. Produce a direct-mail fund solicitation and distribute to all Masons in your Masonic community.
38. Distribute or sell Masonic youth support buttons, pins, stickers, etc. to raise funds for youth program.
39. Establish a youth program speaker’s bureau, registering names and topics of appropriate speakers on the youth program, to be distributed to current and future officers.
40. Coordinate a calendar of events for your Masonic community, including the important convention dates and traditional observances of youth groups.
41. Encourage the sponsoring bodies of youth groups to provide meeting facilities and activities for our Masonic youth at no cost.

42. Sponsor a membership recruitment contest for the youth groups, rewarding those young people who have been responsible for encouraging friends to join. Prizes awarded could be pins, or certificates, a rebate on annual meeting or convention costs, a special trip, etc.
43. Establish a membership referral service by collecting names and addresses of potential members of the youth groups, collecting them to be distributed to the youth group leaders.
44. Sponsor a youth essay or speech contest for a scholarship prize, on a subject such as, "What's right about America?" or "Freemasonry's Role in My Community," and invite the winner to present the topic at a large Masonic community gathering.
45. Include names, addresses, and telephone numbers of jurisdictional, regional or district youth group leaders in your organization's directory and newsletter.
46. Sponsor ritual or athletic tournaments for the youth groups by providing a location, meals, judges, or officials for the contests. Tournament could include team or individual competition.
47. Sponsor trophies or awards for various competitions at annual youth conventions or meetings.
48. Purchase a program advertisement in the youth program's jurisdictional convention or meeting.
49. Sponsor and underwrite expenses for a Masonic youth member to attend a special leadership program or a statewide convention with their youth organization.
50. Underwrite insurance fees that are assessed to a Masonic youth group for liability purposes in support of their fraternal activities.

Positive Actions to Enhance Masonic Youth Groups

You and your lodge can adopt these actions and similar ones to enhance the Masonic youth groups in your community.

1. Sponsor or co-sponsor a local DeMolay chapter, Builders Chapter, Rainbow Assembly or a Bethel of Job's Daughters.
2. Invite a Masonic youth group to give a program at your lodge.
3. Permit a group to serve or help for lodge dinners as a fund-raising event.
4. Inform your child, grandchild, niece, nephew, or neighbor about the Masonic youth groups and encourage them to join.
5. Offer a "scholarship" for attendance at an annual session or other conference.
6. Send cards of congratulation to newly elected youth group officers.
7. Complete training as an advisor for a youth group and be available to volunteer your services.
8. Provide transportation to events.
9. Sponsor the printing of their youth newsletter or other publication.

10. Provide a link on your lodge's website, if available, to the youth groups.
11. Offer to buy a meeting suit, tie, or gown for a youth who cannot afford one.
12. Visit a regular meeting, degree conferral, or installation of officers, and report on it to your lodge.
13. Sign as a Masonic sponsor on a petition for membership.
14. Serve as your lodge's youth representative.
15. Ask a youth representative for information about the local groups and their meetings or needs.
16. Serve on an Advisory Council, Board, or Guardian Council.
17. Help a youth member learn a ritual part. [Their ritual is written, so you need not know the part beforehand.]
18. Provide assistance with costuming, makeup, floor-work, or rehearsal for degree conferrals.
19. Do not just wait for "problems" to communicate with your local group, but send them a note when they do something right ("Thanks for leaving the kitchen so clean after the recent dinner...") Build good rapport.
20. Offer a professional skill or hobby that may be helpful to the group, or offer to teach them to do it themselves.
21. Hold a joint social, athletic, or fund-raising event with a chapter, or start an annual event (e.g. the "Bowling Challenge").
22. Wear a youth group pin, tee shirt, or emblem to show your support, and be prepared to tell people what it is.
23. Sponsor a statewide competition held by one of the youth groups.
24. Offer to sponsor a new piece of ritual equipment or to replace or refurbish old equipment.
25. Put up flyers or brochures for youth groups in your lodge building, or in your place of business, if possible.
26. Include youth group leaders as invited "dignitaries" for public lodge events.
27. Read the Masonic youth publications that are available to be better informed.
28. Contribute to assist Masonic youth with a scholarship fund in furthering their education.
29. Be a mentor to a local youth by taking an active interest in what they do.
30. "Brag" about positive experiences with Masonic youth to other lodge members.
31. Attend a meeting of the advisory board/council for a youth group to get to know the advisors and their needs.
32. Sponsor the making of sports jerseys, jackets, t-shirts, or other "wearable PR" for a local group.
33. Acknowledge youth members by saying hello when they are wearing the youth group emblem and identify your presence as a Mason. Encourage their involvement.

34. Include youth calendars or flyers in a lodge mailing.
35. Post a schedule of youth events in a prominent area of your lodge building.
36. Offer the youth groups a place for a bulletin board in the lodge building, to display photos and other memorabilia of events. Then keep up with the postings.
37. Hold a testimonial dinner for youth group leaders or members with notable accomplishments.
38. Offer to provide a Masonic education program, or program on your profession or hobby, at a youth group meeting.
39. Offer to bring refreshments for a youth group meeting.
40. Make a financial gift to the operating budget of a local youth group from the lodge.
41. Offer Masonic service opportunities to youth, like odd jobs around the lodge building.
42. Invite youth to go with lodge members to visit shut-in members or widows.
43. Find out special needs in families of local youth, like medical needs, home repairs, etc. – and get your lodge involved in meeting that need.
44. Do you teach or have a specialty subject? Offer tutoring or homework help for youth groups.
45. Offer to teach a special skill, like car maintenance, basic carpentry, etc., as a special youth group activity.
46. “Adopt” a needy family for the holidays, and involve youth in shopping and delivery of gifts.
47. Offer to act as photographer for youth functions.
48. Hold a fund raising event or special fund campaign in your lodge specifically to benefit youth.
49. Provide a new or used computer for a local chapter to use for record keeping and publications.
50. Recommend capable lodge members to youth groups as advisors or volunteers.
51. Buy or donate tickets to a Shrine Circus for a local youth group to use for prospective members.
52. Sponsor a blood drive in your community, and invite youth group members to recruit donors and volunteer at the drive.
53. Have a special presentation at your lodge on the charities of the youth groups. Help support one or more of them.
54. Implement or continue a scholarship fund in your lodge for local youth.
55. Coach a Masonic youth group sports team.
56. Donate a piece of athletic equipment to a local youth group.
57. Waive building rental fees for youth groups, or pay them on their behalf if your lodge does not own the building.
58. Ask a youth group to hold a Masonic “Shadow Night” where lodge officers sit with youth group officers to learn about their work.

59. Sponsor and organize a “career night” in which lodge members provide information to local youth about career options.
60. Include youth groups in publicity opportunities, especially contributions to other youth groups or to schools. Ask that youth groups be mentioned in press coverage.
61. Be prepared to answer questions/concerns about the nature and purpose of Masonic youth groups.
62. Introduce youth group members to your eligible relatives and neighbors to give them the opportunity to recruit.
63. Consider organizing interested Masons to open a new Chapter, Bethel, or Assembly, or to reorganize one that used to exist in your area.
64. Arrange for youth group Road Signs to be posted with your lodge sign in the community.
65. Write an article or make a report on the success of your lodge's youth program, so other lodges can follow your example.
66. Have a special program or dinner to recognize and honor youth group advisors in your area.
67. Sponsor the purchase of one or more books about the youth groups to be placed in a local public or school library. Arrange for a press release with pictures.
68. List area youth groups in your monthly Lodge Trestleboard or other publication in regards to their meeting dates, times and contact information.
69. Form a Lodge Youth Committee.
70. Recognize members of your lodge who have received various honors from the Masonic youth groups.
71. Scottish Rite/York Rite? Do not throw away old costumes or sets. Offer them to DeMolay first.
72. Commandery? Offer to provide an honor guard for special occasions.
73. Put a “DeMolay/Job’s Daughters/Rainbow meets here.” sign on the outside of your lodge building.
74. Start a “Student of the Month/Quarter” program with your local high school or middle school. When an honoree is a member of a youth group, see that the individual is mentioned in the announcement at school. Provide all honorees with literature about the Masonic youth groups.
75. Offer to do a specific job for a youth group’s advisory board: for example, you might be the treasurer, web master, lodge liaison, or legal advisor of the board, even if you cannot regularly make youth group meetings and events.
76. Ask youth groups to make your lodge aware of their “sickness and distress” lists, and send a card or note to sick members.
77. Offer to pay the advisory council registration fee for lodge members who serve a youth group, or give a “discount” in their annual lodge dues.
78. Offer to pay the insurance fee on a yearly basis.

79. Encourage or assign new lodge members to attend local youth group meetings to familiarize themselves with the groups and the opportunities they provide.
80. Have lodge members attend youth group functions on a rotating basis to see that your lodge is always represented there.
81. Host a family dinner or picnic for all the Masonic-related groups in your community, so they can get to know and help one another.
82. Invite local Advisors and Senior DeMolays to participate in degrees when a Senior DeMolay joins your lodge.
83. Make Masonic youth group information part of your ongoing Masonic Education program.
84. Help a local youth group organize a "Prospect Party," "Get Acquainted Night" or other recruiting effort.
85. Sponsor a local youth to a leadership development program.
86. Provide team uniforms for a Masonic youth group to support their spirit of athletic competitions.

It is so ORDERED.

Frank Joseph Haas
Grand Master
Grand Lodge of West Virginia
AF & AM

Date