

# **USPC National Youth Congress -**

## *What It Is and Why It's Important!*

### **What is National Youth Congress?**

The USPC National Youth Congress (NYC) was established in 1998 in order to recognize outstanding Pony Club members and build on the leadership skills they've developed throughout the years. The NYC provides intensive leadership training to 18-23 year-old Pony Club members who have attained a National Certification (H-B, C+, C-3, B, H-HM, H, H-A or A). Members are challenged to apply their Pony Club experience to make meaningful contributions to the larger world and think about how they can continue to use the leadership skills developed through Pony Club in their school and future careers.

The National Youth Congress experience includes mentoring and networking with members of the USPC Academy of Achievement, Pony Club alumni from all over the country who are current leaders in a variety of fields and members of the USPC Board of Governors.

### **When is the National Youth Congress Held?**

NYC coincides with the USPC Equine Symposium and Convention each year. This event traditionally takes place in late January/early February. The location rotates each year. In 2021 it will be a virtual event that will coincide with the USPC Equine Symposium and Convention.

### **Why is NYC Only Open to Pony Club Members Ages 18-23?**

The program is geared towards young adults who are getting ready to make critical decisions regarding their careers and paths in life. The NYC brings these members together for a series of workshops and discussions intended to expand their awareness both of themselves and of the rapidly changing external world into which they will soon graduate. The NYC provides opportunities for youth delegates to think about their own strengths and weaknesses and to examine ways to overcome obstacles that may face them in the future. It enables them to share ideas with their peers from around the country through group discussions, role simulations, and other interactive activities, thus expanding their awareness of the "wider world" around them. Additionally, the event does not include chaperones, so only Pony Club members who have attained the age of 18 are permitted to participate.

## **What about the requirement of a National certification? Why is that included?**

The experience of going through a national-level certification serves as a bond that all participants share. Pony Club experiences vary throughout the country, but the standards and experience of national-level test are fairly universal and play a role in the discussions and experience-related activities that help to make up NYC.

## **How Do I Get Nominated to Participate in National Youth Congress?**

Clubs and centers should select nominees based on the above criteria. Each club or center may recommend to their Regional Supervisor one or more Pony Club members. The DC or CA will need to complete the nomination form and submit to the Regional Supervisor. The form is [available at this link](#). If you are interested in participating, please be ready to help your DC or CA fill out the form.

## **Who Pays for National Youth Congress?**

USPC's National Youth Congress Committee has a fund which covers most of the costs for NYC. For the Virtual 2021 NYC Congress a Symposium registration fee is required and may be purchased by the region.

## **Who are the Alumni Whom Participate in this Event?**

Each year several USPC alumni are inducted into the Alumni Academy of Achievement, and join the delegates during the 2 day Congress. Alumni are nominated by individuals based on their post-Pony Club experiences in a variety of aspects of life. Some have had careers in the equine industry, but many have gone on to use their Pony Club skills in other professions and community roles.

The alumni honorees play a vital role at NYC because they bring the voice of experience into the discussions, sharing lessons learned and career experiences and advice. They listen, encourage, laugh, and commiserate with NYC participants, and share personal stories of success and failure. The intent is to help the youth delegates to recognize that life is filled with the unexpected and that flexibility and a sense of humor can be as important as well planned goals.

## **What Happens During the NYC Meeting?**

NYC is all about the participants and their development. Over 2 days NYC participants get to know each other, hear from Academy of Achievement Alumni about their careers and lessons, and work through different leadership development skill building exercises. There are small group activities, large group discussions, and projects for the participants to work on and apply new skills all of which will depend on the new format for Virtual NYC 2021.

## **Ultimately, Why Should I Participate in NYC?**

In addition to the above opportunities, one of the critical takeaways from NYC is the expansion of your personal network with professionals in a variety of career fields and with other delegates who will be part of your nationwide peer group as you move forward with your personal and professional goals.