**Program Committee Meeting 1/14/12**

In attendance: Bev Stewart, Norm Lyster, Heather Amen, Jim Hoops, Junior Weed-Ziegler, Kevin Farrell, Alex Wood, Ruben Gonzales, Miguel Perez, Bill Manning, Doug Armbrust, Rolo Cuadrado, Marion Trummer, Joni Van Sickle and June Boon. Craig Essex joined through conference call.

**The Big Question: What are the objectives?**

Doug began with a brief recap of the history of RYLA and what the objectives were at the beginning.

Jim: The Big Question is really the focus of this committee. What is the end result? What do we want our conferees to learn?

Miguel: My takeaway from big RYLA was “I can be a leader”. I’d like to put that idea in the heads of the 8th graders as well, giving them confidence in their leadership.

Ruben: The biggest takeaway for me is being yourself. At these conferences the conferees become who they want to be, and then they go back to their old lives upon return. I’d like them to continue being themselves

Alex: Specifically for Young RYLA we have the three hoops theme, and I believe that covers all of what we’re saying. The three hoops are Myself, This Team and Our World which really focus the efforts of young RYLA. Realizing your full potential, expressing yourself and realizing you can be yourself, taking that lesson into leadership, then taking those lessons you learn into the real world.

Ruben: The Global Stations activity from last year is being updated this year, but will really look out how to take yourself into the world.

June: I completely agree with them, getting the conferees to realize that they have all the potential in the world, especially those who may not be outspoken orange leaders, that will be a huge accomplishment. That is a common misconception that young students have, the loudest ones are the leaders.

Rolo: We’re also interested in the conferees practicing their own leadership styles during the conference, those who succeed in school are typically one form of a leader, allowing the conferees to discover the other options.

Joni: I like the idea of defining our own leadership style and sculpting themselves into who they want to be.

Jim: Re-read Heather’s statement from the last program meeting about three themes in 2006 personal, compassionate and real-world leadership. Discussion.

Miguel: I think our three-hoop theme is in direct correlation with those statements from 2006.

Jim: Is that too limiting?

Rolo: Not at all! That is such a broad definition and you can put almost any positive leadership experience in that definition.

Heather: I still believe that is what we try to accomplish.

Craig: The year that I was chair Mikaela introduced call to action, and established a theme of core values. We also tried to tie that into the Rotary four way test. Finally, we were interested in the idea of choices and how that came into play. Every year the conference head JCs and Chairs have various new ideas, and I think the program committee can ensure that the changes are still in a positive direction for the organization. I think that is the role of the program committee.

**The Manual**

Doug: The manual used to be a much thicker document with a lot of sayings, stories that people could take back home and inspire them later in life. There used to be 40-50 stories in there. Over the years we pared that down, but I think we have taken a lot of the goodness of that manual and discarded that purpose. I’d like to think about us reinstating it, maybe in a different form online etc. Kevin also reminded us that the manual weren’t passed out until the last day.

Jim: A friend of mine wrote a book on leadership for teens, but I don’t know that it’s any better than what we could write as a takeaway from RYLA or Young RYLA. If you were going to write a book on leadership, what would be in it? A thought to keep in the back of your mind.

Kevin: The way the manual started (the leadership manual, the one that the conferees use) is now an activity manual, rather than a leadership manual. Both are good, but how do you end up with a leadership manual takeaway at the end. What if there is a handout to go in the manual on Friday for them for after the conference?

Rolo: To some degree the afterwards manual has been replaced by facebook groups, where people post notes etc. Maybe we could contribute to that, rather than a written thing? It’s not necessarily one or the other, but a combination of written and electronic could be the answer.

Doug: June talked about how the JC applications did not even talk about leadership. They learned about themselves and made lots of friends, but not necessarily leadership.

Bev: I know a lady who is a RYLA graduate who I have passed to Curt as a speaker, but they understand leadership and work with job forecasting. What did you learn here and how can it be used in your future life?

Bill: Earlier we asked the young RYLA head JCs what they want the students to get out of the conference, and they all answered things like be myself, acceptance, and full potential, which is what we just said we have a problem with.

June: Yes, but this is Young RYLA, at YRYLA we want the conferees to understand that they can be whoever they want, at RYLA it should go beyond that and it doesn’t.

Ruben: There is a going to be a large focus on the three-hoop themes during debrief after each activity so conferees will understand why they did all the different activities.

Bill: What we’re really trying to do (according to Kevin) is break down the barriers that are inhibiting this person becoming a leader. “To know that you’ve done your best to become the best that you’re capable of becoming.” You don’t teach leadership, so you don’t learn leadership, but you are developing what is inside the conferees to make them the best they can be. I prefer this to the academic approach to leadership, I’m giving you the chance to bring it out yourself.

Jim: We need to make sure that they are connecting the dots. I was so excited when Stan at the board meeting said that was a major focus this year. They say that they broke down their barriers and learned, but they are missing the understanding that it is leadership.

Marion: Can we give all this information to the new and old SCs.

Doug: I remember one year Mat Matson opening shed tears saying “I now remember what I missed this summer” and that is the way I feel about RYLA.

Marion: I had a great experience in which for my first year Scotty told me everything I needed to know about being an SC. I don’t think my experience would have been the same without him.

Craig: I had a similar experience with Mikaela, and it was wonderful. I would like to recommend that everyone reads Karen Loeb’s document and that all SCs and JCs should be required to read it

Rolo: It seems that our discussion about leadership versus love-in comes from some Rotarians complaining that the conferees come back and only talk about having a great time. I think it is our first and foremost goal that they have a wonderful experience. It is our fault if we do not lead the conferees to be able to present to the Rotary Clubs in the way that the Rotary Clubs expect.

Joni: I have to throw in that my kids this last year who I watched present were fantastic. I’m not willing to take love out of the equation.

Jim: Nothing is ever learned for future use without an emotion attached to it.

Bill: If you warm their hearts you can stir their minds. If you get the conferees invested they will then be able to connect the leadership lessons they learn, and they also are going to trust their teammates if they are connected emotionally. The conferee starting an Interact club is the stir their mind part.

Norm: We watched a kid talk at one of the Greeley clubs, and afterwards a parent asked to speak as well and blew us away. I think we make a mistake when we don’t give the parents the time to share. That is to some degree up to the club reps to encourage that opportunity. When a RYLArian is identified, they and their parents are invited to the club even before they go to RYLA to feel comfortable about it, and it has also recruited some Rotarians.

Rolo: Bill brings up a good point that belongs in the development committee meeting talking about training our club reps.

Doug: When the Greeley clubs do interviews of the applicants we bring in the JCs to do the interviews with us, it helps with training the JCs but also gives us a different perspective on the applicants.

**Maturity of the Counselors**

Bill: Young RYLA has a cool thing because there is an age difference between the counselors and conferees, and at RYLA that can be a bit of an issue. I am in favor of in general finding JCs for RYLA who are at least a year removed, but that comes with the understanding that some of the best JCs I’ve worked with were young.

June: The students who attend RYLA are already the cream of the crop, and a leader who is their same age who is also a great leader, there may not be much that the JC can offer them. I think you’re slighting the great conferees who could be better with an older leader.

Jim: If we look at the counselor as being a role model, then we shouldn’t have seniors as counselors. But I believe they also have a responsibility to pull leadership out of others around them, which may not be a factor of maturity.

Ruben: I think it all starts with the tone of the chairs and head JCs from the get go. We came across a note from Mikaela that was sent out to all of the counselors before they were accepted as JCs. Her note said “This position demands maturity and excellent leadership and is not to re-live the RYLA experience”. I think setting that expectation made a huge difference.

June: I truly believe that the seniors belong at Young RYLA. They still have a place.

Ruben: We did not really talk about age as a factor for being a JC, it was more important that they had the qualities we were looking for.

Heather: So are we talking about taking seniors for young RYLA and then maybe going to be a RYLA JC the next year? Or are they only young RYLA?

Bill: Where we left it is that preference would be given, all other things being equal, to older JCs.

Doug: I would like to approach it as a Rotarian. If I’m looking at a girl going into her senior year and we take her, she can come back and truly affect her community. When we started we had 6 college kids as counselors, and they were all smoking and drinking every night. I made rules against that my year, and the college students did not want to come back, so we delved into high school kids. So now, I sure like to have a mixture.

June: I think you could say that they were a great JC, but how do you know that the conferees they led had a truly wonderful experience?

Jim: Would the college kid have done any better?

Patricia: I’m just wondering, have we gone over programming for the two conferences? Is the program committee the place to discuss who should be a JC?

**Refocusing the discussion:**

1) Objectives of RYLA and evaluation.

2) Framework for the ideas of the Chair and Head JCs along with deliverable outcomes and job descriptions.

3) What is the role of the JC and SC?

4) Goal of including more people currently involved in RYLA.

Jim: What would you like to discuss Patricia?

Patricia: I would like to discuss the evolution of the programs for the conferences and figuring out how to work with them.

Heather: I think it would be appropriate for us as a program committee to decide and agree on the outcomes of young RYLA for this year, and ask the head JCs and conference chairs to place to discuss their specific program components at the next meeting.

Doug: I hope this has been helpful today to encourage all the head JCs and conference chairs to work on their programs and make sure that your program components are accomplishing the objectives you think they are. We are in support of you!

Bill: In the list from the last meeting we had the role of the JCs and SCs as a discussion point, would we like to talk about that?

Heather: I believe that belongs in the governance committee, rather than programming.

Patricia: What is our role?

Jim: According to our last minutes our objectives are:

1) Identify the objectives of RYLA and Young YRLA.

2) Ensure the conference leadership understands the purpose of the conferences.

3) Provide institutional knowledge and a forum for discussion for program components.

4) Assist in the communication between RYLA and Young RYLA.

Rolo: How should the head JCs and chair determine when to seek the advice of the program committee? If the goal of the committee is to provide a forum and their support, how do they do that?

Patricia: My year, once the head JCs and I figured out what we wanted to accomplish, a report was given the board at that time and Jim and Junior and I discussed all the various pieces.

Kevin: I would suggest that this year and potentially next year as they are transition years there is a bottoms-up approach.

Patricia: Then maybe the right time to bring in the program committee is when the conferences have programs and are ready to review them.

Doug: Kimra’s line is “show me what good looks like”. I think that is what you are asking the chairs to prepare, so then we can help them.

Patricia: Maybe it would be helpful if the program committee could identify the objectives of RYLA and Young RYLA and share those with the chairs and head JCs.

June: I think I am pretty clear on what those objectives are for Young RYLA. The three hoop theme is crucial, as well as giving the conferees the idea that they can be leaders. Our goal is not written down, but it could be.

Doug: If we could ask Rolo and June to write down the goals and submit them to us, and maybe we as a committee could do the same thing and see if they match.

Patricia: I think we all need to work together on this. Then in terms of the institutional knowledge being available to the teams, I think that will happen during the conversations.

Bill: I think it is our job to just make sure that the program is accomplishing the objectives.

Craig: I’m not sure we want to be a compliance committee, but we’re making sure that the objectives of RYLA are clear and that we have some way of determining how well we’re doing. We are ready to talk about the program whenever there is a desire to share that information.

Rolo: Not oversight, but maybe a bank of ideas.

Patricia: This is a committee that loves RYLA and wants to make sure it works. It’s about collaboration and communication and being resources to each other.

Jim: I don’t like the word accountability, but then how do you raise the bar?

Kevin: I thought the idea of the program committee came from some time ago, if you look at the two conferences, Young RYLA seemed to be connecting the dots well, and that maybe the same was not quite true at RYLA. There might have been a migration away from leadership, and that was the idea of the program committee.

Heather: We are talking in circles. My suggestion is for the committee to approve the outcomes of Young RYLA this year that have been identified. The next meeting will begin to focus on program components and talking with RYLA about their objectives.

Craig: I would like to talk with Patricia to discuss how to go about all of this.

Patricia: Let’s have a next meeting fairly soon. When is your timeline June and Rolo?

Rolo: It has been ongoing since October. The head JCs have already been soliciting input from me, the SCs, the second year JCs and anyone else.

Patricia: Would it be helpful for you to have a brainstorming meeting before the March 15th meeting?

Alex: Not really. We will not have much ready before then.

Heather: Feel free to just discuss what you’re thinking of changing, not like you have to come to the committee with a full out plan of what will be done.

Doug: Based on my experiences, Young RYLA is doing great right now, and RYLA may not have been defining the activities quite as well.

Bill: When did that change? Is it really changing the program or changing the leadership philosophy? It is important to recognize that each program element should have a purpose, but doesn’t have to reach every single conferee.

Jim: We need to make sure they can explain what happened.

Patricia: One of the objectives of RYLA is to have enough diversity in the program so every conferee gets something. It’s important to recognize that while understanding that overall we will reach the objectives.

Jim: When is the next meeting?

Alex: I would suggest a meeting in March for Young RYLA and another meeting for RYLA in February.

Patricia: I would like to talk with Craig and schedule a meeting with Curt and RYLA and then a meeting in March with Young RYLA and/or both.