

OVERVIEW FOR VOLUNTEERS OF THE YOUTH & ADULTS CONFERENCE

NATIONAL DOWN SYNDROME CONGRESS
46TH ANNUAL CONVENTION
JULY 12 – 15, 2018

SHERATON DALLAS HOTEL & CONFERENCE CENTER



Dallas, TX • July 12–15, 2018

The NDSC Youth & Adults Conference is a program for self-advocates (individuals with Down syndrome) age 15 and older to participate in their own convention workshops and activities. This weekend is an opportunity for our self-advocates to reconnect with old friends, make new ones, celebrate one another's accomplishments, and learn a thing or two. Volunteering your time to lead and support self-advocates is a rewarding experience! Volunteers consistently report that they receive much more than they ever give. No one is expecting volunteers to be an instant expert on Down syndrome. Relax, use common sense, and have a great time. We want to create a memorable weekend for everyone!

Y&A Volunteer Schedule

Friday, July 13	12:15 p.m. – 3:15 p.m.
Saturday, July 14	8:30 a.m. – 5:15 p.m.
Sunday, July 15	7:45 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

Types of Y&A Volunteer Assignments

Table Volunteers: Table Volunteers interact directly with self-advocates to ensure that they are engaged with each other and the planned activities. You may be assigned solo to an entire table of 8 very capable self-advocates or you may be partnered with one other volunteer to support 8 self-advocates who require more assistance. You need to know the whereabouts of those at your table at all times. If you want to support a specific self-advocate or be partnered with another volunteer, be sure to indicate this during volunteer registration or contact Janice Troy at janice@ndscenter.org.

Back of House Volunteers: The Back of House Volunteer's job is to monitor the doors, emergency exits, stairs, and elevators to make sure self-advocates do not leave the room or building. They guide self-advocates to the restroom and assist in the movement of groups as they change programming locations. BOH Volunteers also check nametags as self-advocates adjourn, assuring that those who do not have green dots wait for their families and do not leave on their own. They may also support self-advocates who choose to unwind in a less stimulating space outside of the conference room.

What to Do When You Arrive at the Sheraton Dallas Hotel & Conference Center

Make your way to Volunteer Check-in on the second floor of the hotel near the skywalk that connects the hotel and the Conference Center. There will be a check-in line dedicated for Y&A volunteers. At check-in, you will receive your name tag, t-shirt, and table assignment (if you are a Table Volunteer). Take the skywalk over to the Conference Center where the Y&A Conference will be held. On Friday, Y&A will be in the Lone Star Ballroom BC on the 2nd floor of the Conference Center; on Saturday and Sunday, it will be in the Dallas Ballroom on the 1st floor of the Conference Center. On the first day that you are volunteering, Table Volunteers will meet our Y&A Support Team at the back of the ballroom where they will provide training. Volunteers should then go to their assigned table and review the information in the table folder which includes details about each self-advocate at that table, as well as the programming for each day. Back of House Volunteers will gather just outside the ballroom for training by our Back of House leads. **Three-day volunteers do not need to go to the main Volunteer Check-in on Saturday and Sunday. Instead, please check in with one of our lead volunteers at the back of the Dallas Ballroom before going to your assigned table. Your table assignment will remain the same for the entire weekend.**

How We Determine Support Needs and Match Volunteers

People with Down syndrome are unique individuals with varying talents. Some will have graduated from college, live independently in their own home, and drive their own car. Others may have no language, a co-occurring diagnosis, and/or need support to use the restroom. We prepare for these diverse needs by asking self-advocates and

their families in advance to evaluate their level of support need from one to five. One indicates little support needed and five requires one-to-one support for conference participation. Most of those attending will need a support level of 2 or 3. Some information they provide could be medically related, such as a visual or hearing impairment or a medical condition such as diabetes. Information may also refer to behaviors; an example might be “becomes agitated with too much stimulation” or “is non-verbal, please ask only yes or no questions.” Some brief notes can be found on each self-advocate’s nametag, and more detail will be found in the Volunteer Table Folder. Some self-advocates will not have any additional information.

Explanation of Youth & Adults Conference Nametags

Self-advocates attending the conference have varying levels of support needs. The Y&A nametags are different from the general convention nametags as they provide important information to help support each attendee. Each self-advocate’s nametag includes their table assignment, their rotation schedule, as well as a parent or guardian’s cell phone number and any pertinent information related to medical issues or additional support needed. Some self-advocates also have a colored ribbon on their nametag indicating they are first time attendees, speakers, NDSC Board members, and/or Self-Advocate Council members.

In addition, the front and back of each nametag has a colored dot indicating whether the self-advocate is permitted to independently leave programming and if there are significant medical and/or support needs. The dots are an at-a-glance alert for volunteers.

GREEN DOT (pass)

A green dot means the self-advocate can leave the conference on his or her own at the end of the day. All others must wait for a family member to meet them in order to be dismissed.

ORANGE STRIPE (Flex Pass)

An orange stripe at the bottom of the name tag indicates the parents have given the self-advocate permission to leave Y&A programming as they wish, though they have been asked to let their table volunteer know when they leave. Y&A staff and volunteers are not responsible for them once they leave Y&A programming. All self-advocates with a Flex Pass will also have a Green Dot.

YELLOW DOT (caution)

A yellow dot indicates the self-advocate has a medical condition such as seizures, asthma, diabetes, food allergies, etc. Information about the condition is on the nametag and in the table folder. Be alert to the needs of those with diabetes and gluten issues at your table.

NOTE:

For all self-advocates, any additional information and other less-critical medical conditions that have been disclosed by the family will be listed in the table folder.

Safety Is Our First Concern; Fun Is Our Second

The Youth & Adults Conference is a celebration! We want everyone to feel important, valued, and have a great, safe time. The majority of self-advocates will remain with you until their parents arrive at the end of Y&A programming. There are a few exceptions:

- Self-advocates with a green dot and/or orange stripe on their nametag as described above.
- Self-advocates who are presenting at the General Convention or a Y&A Workshop may leave when necessary with their support person.

Medical Emergencies

Notify one of the Y&A Support Team members. Several health care providers are on site. Family contact numbers and relevant medical information can be found on the self-advocate’s nametag and in the table folders.

Overview of the Program

Self-advocates are assigned a table number which is their table for the entire weekend. They will begin and end programming at this table every day. All volunteers and self-advocates at a table have the same rotation schedule and will travel together to their workshops and other programming. Each table has a Volunteer Table Folder which includes a workshop rotation schedule and times for all program pieces.

Friday

Friday's Kick Off Party is a time for attendees to get to know their tablemates and volunteers while participating in various activities. Please help facilitate introductions among self-advocates at your table and continually encourage the self-advocates to be engaged in the programming.

Voting for the NDSC Board of Directors Self-Advocate position will take place. After nomination speeches are heard, table attendees vote by paper ballot. Volunteers help self-advocates place their vote and gather the ballots for collection.

Saturday

Saturday's programming consists of spotlight presentations and workshops presented by self-advocates. All volunteers and attendees will begin and end their day at their assigned table, then rotate as a group through six sessions of workshops and spotlight presentations. It is a dynamic day in which self-advocates require the most support. Your active participation will keep things moving. There will be times when you will help facilitate discussion, prompt self-advocates to move to another location, and encourage them to be engaged.

Snack, Lunch, and Breaks – Encourage your table members to get up and stretch during breaks or engage in table activities provided in the table folders. Snacks and lunch will be provided for all volunteers and self-advocates. If a self-advocate needs to use the restroom or needs some down time, guide them to our Back of House Volunteers who will be available in the hallways to assist you.

Evaluations – During the final 30 minutes of the afternoon, survey self-advocates at your table and complete workshop and session evaluations with their input.

Sunday

Talent Show – Sunday is all about the Talent Show! This is a wonderful event providing an opportunity for self-advocates to shine. Individuals must have pre-registered at the time of convention registration to perform. Each participant is assigned a time period to perform and this will be indicated on a color-coded card located on the table. They will be directed to line up near the stage as their time approaches. Please applaud like crazy and assist talent show volunteers as they get acts on and off the stage. The talent show is broken in two parts separated by a snack which will be served to all volunteers and self-advocates.

Workshops – During the convention registration process, some self-advocates will have chosen to participate in optional workshops rather than a portion of the Talent Show. These self-advocates will be directed to the workshops at the appropriate time with guidance from the Back of House volunteers. If the majority of the self-advocates at your table are attending a workshop, we ask that a volunteer accompany that group, with one volunteer remaining at the table to support those staying for the Talent Show.

Dances

We host two dances during the convention weekend and you are welcome to join us! Though you will not be providing support for our self-advocates, you are guaranteed to have a great time!

Friday 8:00 – 10:00 pm: 321 Dance! A western-themed dance in the Dallas Ballroom, 1st floor of the Conference Center.

Saturday 8:00 – 10 pm: Lone Star Ballroom A, 2nd floor of the Conference Center