



**Leaders in Life Youth Conference**  
**A Youth Conference for Teens by Teens**  
[www.leadersinlife.org](http://www.leadersinlife.org)  
**Summary 2011**

- In 1998, local businessman Morgan Clayton approached the Kern County Network for Children about establishing a premier youth conference in Kern County.
- Planning began in the fall of 1999 with about 35 students who brainstormed and developed the first conference held in February 2000.
- In the first eleven years of the conference, approximately 20,000 students and adult chaperones have attended.
- About 620 students have participated on the planning committee in the conference's first eleven years.
- Selected students are invited to also serve on the Executive Committee and receive additional leadership development through the California Association of Student Councils (see [www.casc.net](http://www.casc.net) - a nationally recognized program for training youth leaders for over 60 years).
- Student planners, guided by adult advisors, attend monthly general planning meetings; each student also participates in one of four working subcommittees: Workshops & Speakers, Marketing & Fund Raising, Resource Fair, and Venue & Logistics.
- The Conference has been sustained through the community outreach and the fund raising efforts of Morgan Clayton and the Kern County Superintendent of Schools and by the active involvement of youth on the planning committee.
- Evaluations of the conference have been overwhelmingly positive, with students reporting high praise for the event. We have recently partnered with CSUB Masters in Public Administration program students to conduct an extensive evaluation of the conference from the perspective of attendees and youth planners.

**Leaders in Life Today (2011)**

- The 12<sup>th</sup> annual Leaders in Life Youth Conference will take place on March 16, 2011 at the Rabobank Convention Center in Bakersfield.
- Planning Committee members come from many local junior high and high schools from across Kern County, including private/Christian schools and students from our Community and Continuation schools and local Charter Schools.
- Over the past two years 2009-2010, 2010-2011, the conference planning committee has grown tremendously. Last year approximately 105 students representing over 30 different middle and high schools began planning in October 2009.
- This year we have over 120 students that are directly involved in planning the 2011 Conference. These highly diverse students come from 36 different middle schools and high schools; including three Community School sites, two Charter Schools (Valley Oaks in Bakersfield and Paramount Bard in Delano); represent 12 junior highs and 24 high schools; they come from two school sites in Tehachapi, three schools in Delano, two in Wasco, one school in Arvin; and three private Christian and Catholic schools.
- The students on the General Planning Committee come from a wide range of backgrounds, some are Associated Student Body Officers and others are on formal juvenile Probation. Many of the student planners were selected by school staff because they have leadership potential but need to be challenged to focus on a positive path, and others are highly involved students who are active in their schools and communities in Mock Trial, ASB student leadership roles and local and statewide Leadership roles.

- The conference is open to attendees from middle & high schools in grades 6-12. Planning Committee members self-select a planning sub-committee of their choice from options such as: Marketing and Public Relations; Fundraising (students annually fundraise 90% of the conference budget of \$30,000+); Resource Fair; Speakers and Workshops; Site Venue and Logistics.
- Most attendees come from Kern County, but students from nine other central valley and southern California counties have participated as well.
- Opening and Keynote Speakers will be selected by the students on the planning committee focusing on issues relevant to teens.
- Students will attend workshops addressing topics such as Student Leadership & Advocacy, Issues Faced by Teens, and College & Career Exploration. Students select the workshop titles, recruit youth and adult presenters and organize and facilitate over 30 workshops.
- Students will also visit a Resource Fair with booths by community agencies devoted to Colleges, Youth Activities, Volunteer and Job Opportunities, and Youth Resources.
- The newest workshop strand added by the teens was on Green energy related career exploration (wind and solar powered energy job cluster exploration), this involves a partnership with the Kern Community College District Workforce Development program.
- The students engage in planning two large conferences each year, the Kern County Middle Grades Student Leadership Conference held annually at Bakersfield College in the Fall with over 450 junior high/middle school student body officers and faculty advisors attending, and the Leaders in Life Youth Conference for junior high and high school students.
- Students on the Planning Committee and Youth Executive Board also engage in numerous community projects such as the ***Children Joining Children for Success*** event at RaboBank Arena in December each year that serves over 1500 Foster Youth, and the 24 Hour Relay Challenge for Youth-a prevention focused fundraiser held at BC each Spring for school-based peer helping programs such as Safe School Ambassadors-an anti-bullying program, Peer Conflict Mediators and Friday Night Live Clubs, a student-led, student drive anti-drug and youth leadership program in schools across Kern County.

To learn more about the Leaders in Life Youth Conference, please go to [www.leadersinlife.org](http://www.leadersinlife.org).