

The YAG Mag is a student written and edited magazine. The articles and topics are selected by our press students. The opinions reflected in this magazine are those of the participating students and not reflective of the Y, its staff, or the program itself.

## Youth and Government's Sister Program - Model United Nations

By: Zayn Jaber, Monroe Delegation

Many students join the Youth and Government program to expand their civic engagement and public speaking skills, while getting to meet many new friends and hear different perspectives on issues they discuss. Although Youth and Government provides a unique opportunity for delegates to experience a simulation of the real New Jersey government, did you know that it is not the only YMCA civic engagement program?

That's right, YAG has a "sister" program called Model United Nations which allows delegates to represent countries in a simulation of the actual United Nations. Like YAG, participants are divided into a range of committees focusing on different topics or regions. Instead of writing bills on relevant issues on a state level, MUN delegates write resolutions, or proposed solutions, that address issues from a global standpoint.

MUN committees come in all different sizes and can focus on specific issues pertaining to certain topics such as finance or the environment, or focus on issues pertaining to a specific region, such as Africa or Asia-Pacific. Other committees provide unique opportunities to go back in time and re-examine major historical events to discuss alternate courses of action to solve past conflicts diplomatically. The same way Youth and Government has a branch for courts, Model UN also has a group of court committees with two groups writing briefs and presenting arguments for different cases to be deliberated on.

Occurring in the beginning of January, the three-day Model UN conference took place at the Hershey Lodge in PA. If you're interested in next year's MUN conference, ask your school delegation for more registration information. Our sister program is another perfect way to empower delegates, advocate for global issues, and develop their debate and research skills all while fostering permanent connections and friendships.

Stay tuned for a more detailed recap of this year's MUN Conference!

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# YAG Bill Resources Guide

By: Nidhi Reddy, Hunterdon Central Delegation

"Empower Ideas. Ignite Impact. Dive into the YAG Bill Resource Guide, where the fuel for change is in your hands!"

The 2024 YAG Experiential subcommittee has dedicated its efforts to crafting the first-ever Bill Resources Guide. This interactive and accessible tool is designed to assist delegates in formulating bills that align with their passions. The primary objective is to provide delegates with the necessary resources to transform their interests into well-informed and compelling bills and foster more engaging debates.

## OUR GOAL:

Our overarching goal is to give delegates a resource that empowers them to create bills connected to their interests. We offer the essential tools and information to elevate the quality of bill debates, ensuring that authors are not only highly motivated but also well-versed with their bills. This initiative is crafted to empower our delegates and their ideas.

## BILL RESOURCE GUIDE:

The carefully assembled spreadsheet covers a diverse array of frequent topics and categories, including the environment, education, healthcare, safety, transportation, and energy. Diving deeper, we break down these topics into sub-topics, shedding light on vital aspects of each subject. This in-depth breakdown is followed by the exploration of specific issues within these sub-topics. To supplement delegate research, we provide an ample set of links to develop a thorough understanding of the chosen issues.

We hope that our Bill Resource Guide proves to be an invaluable asset for delegates. Countless hours of brainstorming, research, and dedication have been invested in creating this guide to support and inspire delegates' ideas.

## The Effect of the Israel-Hamas War on Colleges

By: DJ Jain, West-Windsor Plainsboro Delegation

The war between Israel and Palestine has rippled into college campuses worldwide, redefining the dynamics of free speech and safety. There have been several prominent debates led by the Biden administration towards college presidents like Harvard, MIT, and even UPenn's president, M. Elizabeth Magill, who ended up resigning. This turmoil continues within NJ as a group of students attending Rutgers were handed suspensions due to their responses regarding the Israel-Hamas conflict which disrupted classes and compromised student safety. These examples are just several which showcase the effects of the war regarding free speech on college campuses.

Fears of retribution stifle the dialogue of several students. At the same time, the ignorance of hate speech can end up fostering violence, seen through the recent arson of a Jewish student's dorm attending Drexel on October 10th. How can universities protect their students AND honor free expression?

Yet, initiatives such as the ones found in Dartmouth where staff hold seminars and encourage students of all viewpoints to have a free, civil discussion result in a decrease in hate speeches and crimes.

Political intervention, notably Biden's call for concern towards the university presidents, reflects the gravity of the issue, spilling into broader educational discussions. As universities grapple with safety and dialogue, they face the test of nurturing young minds and shaping constructive global discourse amid times of escalating division.

## Outreach Subcommittee Recap

By: Alexis Chen, Hunterdon Central Delagation

For many YAG delegates, the conclusion of the annual Model UN conference in January signals the commencement of the Youth and Government season. However, for your 2024 Officer Corps, such excitement has been brewing since September 30. On that same day, the Outreach subcommittee came together for the first time and began devising goals for the year. Since then, the 7-member team has been diligently devising goals and strategies for the year.

One of their primary objectives is to reach out to legislators with a particular emphasis on promoting diversity. In a few weeks, the team compiled a comprehensive list of 40 state senators, 80 assembly members, 15 New Jersey Congresspeople, and 14 other government officials, including Lieutenant Governor Tahesha Way (D-NJ) and the Mayor of Montgomery. The list includes their contact information, representative districts, and party affiliations for diversity. From this, they created a "Top 20" list of people who they'd like to have as keynote speakers, including Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ), Representative Andy Kim (D-NJ-3), former governor, Christine Todd Whitman (I-NJ), and many others.

In addition to highlighting politicians, the subcommittee aims to spotlight YAG delegates by organizing a student panel consisting of selected delegates with unique experiences, roles, or qualities to share in front of the conference.

Members of the outreach sub-com compiled a list of over 100 civic engagement organizations, categorizing them into the different YAG Legislative Committees based on each committee's specific area of focus. During the last week of December, they divided up the organizations and began reaching out to put together a Civic Engagement Fair during conference.

Additionally, they've also been working to help create more delegations by reaching out to friends from non-delegation schools, YMCAs, and organizations to see if they had any interest in starting their own groups. In order to recruit more delegates, they also hosted a booth at Model UN (MUN) to encourage those that do MUN, but not YAG, to join!

The Outreach Subcommittee will continue to work hard to ensure that this year's conference is special for each delegate by amplifying the idea of equity, inclusivity, and collaboration within the CE community.

## CONTACT US

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