

Preparation

Initial preparation for the Youth Action Course began in mid-December, upon confirmation of funding from the Centre for Foreign Policy Development. Preparations focused on the following areas:

Logistics

Several potential sites were assessed for the Course, and the Merrywood Easter Seal Camp was chosen for its accessibility, layout and comfort. A contract was signed with the caretakers to provide food and lodging for the Course. Arrangements were also made with a local bus company to provide transportation from Ottawa to the site on Thursday, and from the Camp back to Ottawa on Sunday. Necessary materials and supplies were bought in the week prior to the Course, and the facility was set-up and prepared on a preliminary visit to the site by the coordinators on Tuesday, March 14th.

Website Development

A website was immediately set-up to promote the goals of the Course and offer information on registering as a participant (www.unac.org/events/rights2000/index.html). This site is in the process of being modified to reflect the outcomes of the Course and to provide the opportunity for participants to maintain contact. As well, two of the participants have volunteered to develop an Action Website to facilitate communication and follow-up activities.

Recruitment of Speakers

Once the topics of the sessions were confirmed, the recruitment of speakers began. Care was taken in approaching speakers to ensure that they reflected a diversity of viewpoints (governmental, non-governmental, and academic) and were appropriate to the age group. In some cases, the themes of the sessions were modified slightly to accommodate particularly well-suited presenters. A Presenter's Package was sent to each speaker, subsequent to an initial confirmation (please see Appendix for sample). Follow-up phone calls and e-mails were made to each speaker in order to confirm participation and answer any questions on the given topic. Each presenter was required to make his/her own travel arrangements to the site and was offered a \$300 honorarium for his/her contribution.

Recruitment of Participants

Recruitment of the target twenty-five participants began almost immediately through a variety of methods. World issues and social studies teachers at a number of high schools were contacted and sent information and registration forms to distribute to interested students. Teacher advisors to all high school Amnesty International and Social Justice clubs in the Eastern Ontario area were also contacted. Information was distributed at student conferences in the Ottawa region and via SchoolNet (see Appendix) and UNA-Canada's website. The conditions for accepting participants were twofold: first, it was required that they had an interest in learning about the UN, human security and human rights, and, second, that they had registered of their own will. Once a Registration Form was received, a Participant's Package was sent out to each student (please see Appendix for sample). Follow-up phone calls and e-mails ensued to confirm participation.