

COMMUNICATIONS HANDBOOK



YOUTH DYNAMICS

Last updated July 2020

Why the Standards?

The following standards and guidelines have been developed to assist Youth Dynamics in communicating more effectively to our target audiences. They are designed to ensure a proper level of quality and consistency – both graphically and editorially – so that all of our communication efforts have the greatest impact.

Support Services (and ultimately the President) serves as the monitor for compliance of these guidelines and is available to assist any staff member incorrectly applying these standards.

Goal-Oriented Communications

To achieve effective messaging, all communication should be goal-oriented and delivered from a viewpoint that embraces the Youth Dynamics' Vision, Mission, and Core Values. Here are some key points to consider:

- What is the purpose of the communication? (e.g. cultivation, stewardship, invitation)
- What is the outcome you are trying to accomplish? (e.g. call to action, awareness)
- Who is the target audience? (e.g. current donors, potential donors, churches, students, etc.)

As good stewards of the resources, here are some considerations:

- What are the costs of printing, postage, design and other related fees to develop the communication? (e.g. MailChimp, printed newsletters, letters, postcards)
- Is it written so that the reader can understand? Meaning, is there enough context so the reader can follow? Also, editing out industry jargon that the reader might not know.
- Are there measurements in place to determine if the communication tool was successful or not?

Foundational Standards

Youth Dynamics has several foundational standards upon which this organization – and all of our communications – are built. Our goal is to have consistent communication throughout the entire organization. Our foundational standards include:

Name:

The official name of the organization is Youth Dynamics. When writing external communications (e.g. emails, newsletters, social media, grants, appeal letters) write out the full name: Youth Dynamics. If writing long letters or if you are limited in character spacing, first write out the organization name and then put YD in parentheses. For example, Youth Dynamics (YD).

Mission:

Youth Dynamics' mission is to invite and challenge youth to a lifelong adventure with Christ and His church.

Vision Statement:

Youth Dynamics' vision is to see youth transformed by the power of Christ, integrated into the local church, and impacting their world for Him.

Organizational Objectives:

1. To reach unchurched youth.
2. To assist local churches and other youth ministries to carry out effective ministries of youth evangelism and discipleship through adventure ministry.

Tagline:

LET'S ADVENTURE TOGETHER

Why? It is invitational, it is inspirational, it reflects our brand, it is applicable to everything we do in Youth Dynamics (Adventures, Communities, with our supporters, partners, core ministries).



Brand Essence:

DISCOVER

Why? Everything we do at Youth Dynamics is underscored by the word "discover". Discover your life in Christ, authentic relationships, who you are, Whose you are, your purpose, adventure ministry and all it offers, what you are made of, life skills, leadership qualities, etc.

Brand Position:

Youth Dynamics is a relational adventure ministry that helps youth discover life in Christ through dynamic relationships and challenging experiences.

Brand Promise:

Our main brand promise is we help youth discover life in Christ. We also help our donors and partners discover life in Christ.

Core Values:

YOUTH:

We believe that reaching young people is strategic to impacting the world for Christ.

RELATIONSHIPS

We believe in going beyond programs and investing our lives in relationships with teens.

ADVENTURE-BASED EXPERIENCES

We believe that taking teens beyond their comfort zone and utilizing God's creation creates powerful opportunities for community building and spiritual growth.

THE LOCAL CHURCH

We believe that the local church is the place of lifelong growth and maturity for believers.

SPIRITUAL VITALITY

We believe that spiritual health is critical to our success and longevity.

STAFF AND DONOR CARE

We believe that caring well for our staff and donors is critical to our growth and effectiveness.

Core Ministries:

ADVENTURES: Professionally guided river trips, backcountry trips, mountain and rock climbing, horse camp, summer and winter adventures.

STONEWATER: Adventures, leadership trainings, retreats, and Adventure School.

MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL: Relational adventure ministry with youth from a particular school campus.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH: Relational adventure ministry with youth from a specific community, neighborhood, or location.

RURAL: Relational adventure ministry with youth from smaller towns.

LEADERSHIP: Training youth to make a difference in their community through leadership development opportunities.

YOUNG ADULTS: Relational adventure ministry with young adults ages 19-25.

Messaging Guidelines:

All communication representing Youth Dynamics including writing, teaching, and speaking, should *not* contradict the foundation standards.

All communications should be honest with clear and simple language (no jargon), be warm and personal, and provide complete, current, and accurate information.

The Overview

Youth Dynamics, founded in 1970, is a Christian ministry serving youth in the Northwest Region through challenging experiences and dynamic relationships. Reaching any and all youth and young adults, ages 11 to 24 years old, regardless of religious affiliation, Youth Dynamics' offers weekly events and clubs, leadership trainings, outdoor adventure trips, and retreats all in an effort to build relationships with youth and help them reach their full potential.

Research is consistent in demonstrating students today are facing pressures and challenges unlike any time in history. More than ever, students need experiences like those offered through Youth Dynamics to help them process life, navigate risk, engage with the outdoors, and create space to learn about themselves and God.

Youth Dynamics reaches youth through relational adventure ministry. Each Youth Dynamics core ministry seeks to create a non-threatening environment where students can meet to have fun while building relationships with caring Christian adult leaders.

Stonewater is our 158-acre camp near Leavenworth, WA. It fulfills the mission of Youth Dynamics through adventures, leadership development, and retreat ministries. All core ministries strive to meet the same mission and vision.

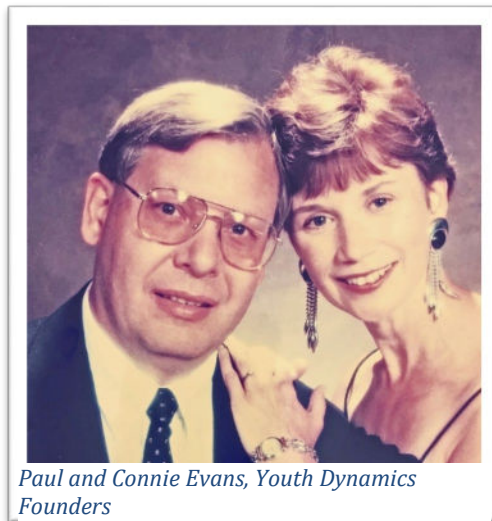
History

Youth Dynamics was founded in 1970 by Paul and Connie Evans.

A TRANSFORMED LIFE: As a life insurance salesman, Paul called a pastor and asked him if he could have a few minutes of his time to sell him life insurance. The pastor chuckled and said, "I'll give you 20 minutes if you give me 10 to sell you my life insurance plan."

This conversation with the 21-year-old salesman, Paul Evans, began a lifelong journey. Paul accepted Christ the day he met that pastor and soon after he felt compelled to share his newfound life with teens at his old high school.

As Paul began to see the immense need for a ministry to rural teens, he felt God calling him to a bold new venture. Paul and his wife, Connie, sensed God was leading them into full-time ministry. In those first few months, Paul saw hundreds of teens come to learn about and accept Jesus. Little did he realize that this was just the beginning of a ministry that would have a broad reach for Christ.



From these humble beginnings, the ministry grew. Youth Dynamics began in Anacortes in 1970 and expanded over the years into new communities. As the years progressed, more programs were added including adolescent counseling, an adventure-based ministry known as Youth Dynamics Adventures, and Stonewater.

Youth Dynamics continues to seek new opportunities to minister to the lives of young people while pursuing the vision God has placed before us, “To see youth transformed by the power of Christ, integrating them into the local church and impacting their world for Him.”

Paul’s and Connie’s heart, vision, and story continues in the lives of current staff with similar vision and calling. Today, Youth Dynamics reaches thousands of students each year through personal relationships and adventure-based experiences. Each interaction is an opportunity to share the love of Jesus in a very tangible way. Our continuing commitment is to make a significant impact for Christ in the lives of young people.

LEADERSHIP: Paul Evans was the president of Youth Dynamics until 2001 when he had to step down due to health issues (for which he later passed away in 2019). His son Mark Evans followed in his father's footsteps leading the organization to acquire a 158-acre just outside of Leavenworth, Washington, in 2005, now called Stonewater. In 2017, Tom Davis became president and now is leading ministry effectiveness and growth for Youth Dynamics.

STONEWATER: In 2005, Youth Dynamics purchased Stonewater, formerly known as the Alpine Boys Ranch. The two organizations had worked together over the years and because of Youth Dynamics’ mission to serve youth, the Alpine board of directors accepted the proposal of \$600,000 over many other offers. If that wasn’t blessing enough, they immediately donated it back to Youth Dynamics for maintenance repairs and additions needed for ministry purposes. Stonewater is the adventure base in Washington and offers adventures, leadership development, and retreats.

Important Information

Founding Year: 1970 by Paul and Connie Evans in Anacortes, Washington

Current President: Tom Davis since 2017

Youth Dynamics website: www.yd.org.

See website for current staff, locations, and ministry overview.

Contact Information:

Mailing address:

Youth Dynamics
PO Box 486
Burlington, WA 98233

Physical address:

Corporate Office
850 Haggen Drive
Burlington, WA 98233

Logo

VERTICAL



STACKED



HORIZONTAL



Logo Use

The Youth Dynamics logo is the fundamental element of our brand and identity. It is the visual graphic that most simply and broadly represents our values, beliefs, and services. It represents our adventurous spirit with two mountain peaks that point upwards, and includes the letters Y and D. It also has a triangle, which represents the trinity (or some might say a tent!).

Bearing this in mind, it becomes essential that Youth Dynamics manages, protects, and distributes the logo with care and discretion. The goal is that the logo appears consistent and unchanged in all the different mediums, formats, and color limitations imposed upon it.

Visibility is important, and it is critical to have appropriate clear space around the Youth Dynamics logo to ensure the prominence and clarity. It is also important that the Youth Dynamics logo remain free of competing graphics, typography, photography, identities, and taglines.

Logo on various backgrounds:

It is important to showcase the logo when using different backgrounds.

Use the black logo on white or light backgrounds:



Use the white logo on black, dark, or saturated backgrounds:



Using only the emblem:

Due to space, there are times that the emblem by itself will be used versus the full logo. It is important that the use of the emblem is not standard practice. As a rule of thumb, the emblem should be not be smaller than ½”.



Enlarging/reducing the logo:

Always scale to the logo proportionately so the logo remains with the proper proportions.

INCORRECT:



CORRECT:



Using the logo on photography:

When using photography as a background, find a clear area to display the logo. DO NOT display the logo on a highly detailed background or change the logo color (best to keep it black or white).

INCORRECT:



CORRECT:

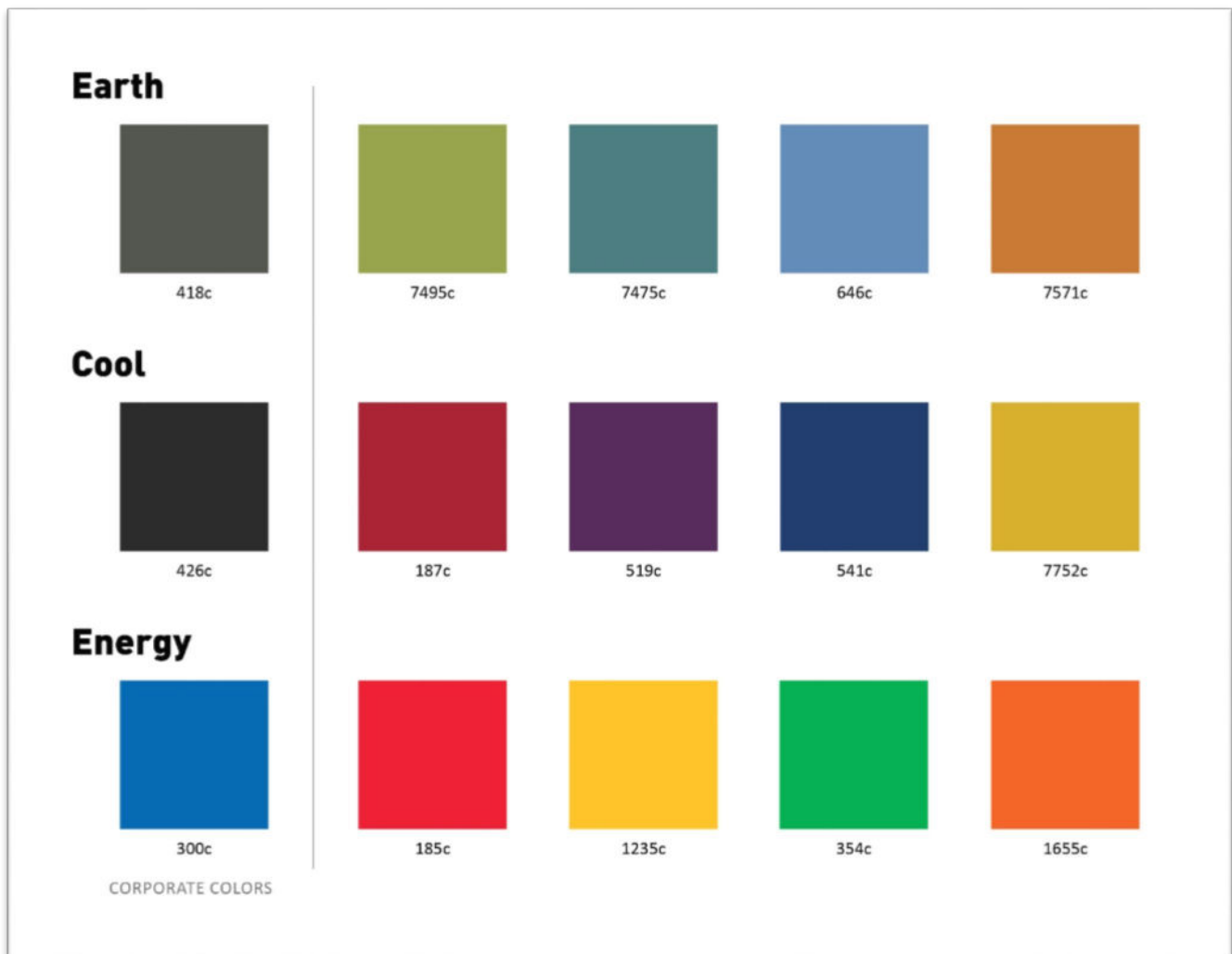


Other things to consider:

- When changing the color of the logo, do not use different colors – if you change one element of the logo, change them all.
- Never substitute fonts in the logo.
- Never alter or change the logo or add graphic elements to the logo.

Youth Dynamics Color Chart

Having various color options is a great way to achieve diversity while still staying consistent with the Youth Dynamics brand and identity. Below are the approved colors for use in three categories: earth, cool, and energy. Corporate colors are Earth Grey (418c), Cool Black (426c), and Energy Blue (300c). These colors are the default colors to use unless an area/base wants to choose a different color. However, it must be a color from the below color chart. Standard black is also an option (not on color chart).



Original
Spot Color

Process Color
Formula

Screen / Web Color
Formula

Earth

	Pantone #	C	M	Y	K	R	G	B	HEX
1	418c	59	48	58	44	81	83	74	#51534A
2	749c	33	10	83	21	143	153	62	#8F993E
3	7475c	70	25	36	21	71	122	123	#477A7B
4	646c	65	34	2	1	94	138	180	#5E8AB4
5	7571c	2	49	87	15	198	125	48	#C67D30

Cool

	Pantone #	C	M	Y	K	R	G	B	HEX
1	426 c	81	67	55	83	37	40	42	#25282A
2	187c	0	100	74	26	166	25	46	#A6192E
3	519c	62	92	6	34	89	49	95	#59315F
4	541c	100	61	0	43	0	60	113	#003C71
5	7752c	7	16	91	10	207	176	35	#CFB023

Energy

	Pantone #	C	M	Y	K	R	G	B	HEX
1	300c	100	56	0	0	0	94	184	#005EB8
2	185c	0	100	89	0	228	0	43	#E4002B
3	1235c	0	25	94	0	255	184	28	#FFB81C
4	354 c	85	0	98	0	0	177	64	#00B140
5	1655c	0	77	100	0	252	76	2	#FC4C02

Youth Dynamics – Style Standards

Typesetting Standards

The corporate font for the logo and motto is DIN. The standard corporate font for body copy is Calibri. This is to be used for all formal or public communications (correspondence/main corporate brochures/etc.). For headlines, subheads, etc. please use DIN. If DIN is not available to you, use Calibri bold.

- Headlines are recommended to be set in DIN Black at 18 or 24 pt. with sub-heads set at 14 or 16 pt. in DIN Medium.
- Body copy should be set in Calibri at 12 point. For older audiences, body copy should be set between 12-14 points.
- Block style for paragraphs should be used, not the indented paragraph.
- Avoid the use of ALL CAPS for the bulk of text. Use sparingly when highlighting or calling out specific text.
- Do not use underlining to emphasize a word or group of words. Instead use bold or italics, however, avoid overuse of bold and italic typefaces.
- Fonts should be limited to no more than three on any one page.
- Use exclamation points sparingly!

Additional Style Standards

Youth Dynamics uses The Gregg Reference Manual as its style handbook for editing purposes. In addition, the following are some specific style standards used by Youth Dynamics:

Capitalize these theological terms:

- Bible
- the Word or God’s Word
- Scripture
- the Gospel
- God’s Truth
- Christian
- Heaven
- He, Him, His (when referring to the Triune God)

Use lower case for these theological terms:

- believer, nonbeliever, non-Christian, sojourner
- biblical
- scriptural

General Usage Standards

- Italicize and capitalize first letters in titles of books, plays, poems, paintings (except for a, an, and, the—unless it is the first word of a title). Example: *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*.
- Numbers indicating ages may be a number (i.e. 20-month-old, 14-year-olds).
- Numbers indicating grade levels may be a number (i.e. 1st Grade; 12th Grade)

Punctuation

- A comma is placed before and, but, or, and nor in compound sentences. Also, use a comma before the last and in a series (This is called the Oxford Comma).
- Use only one space after a colon (:) and a period (.).

Abbreviations

- Do not abbreviate days of the week or months.
- Do not abbreviate foreign countries.

Readability Standards

Readability is the ease with which a reader can understand a written text. Easy reading helps learning and enjoyment, so what is written should be easily understood. In an effort to appeal to a broad audience, writing at the 6th-8th grade level is recommended—7th grade is ideal. While the targeted audience can read at higher levels, research shows that they prefer to read at this level.

Those using MS Word can utilize the automated feature to define the readability index of any Word document. Depending on your version of MS Word, it is usually an option under preferences and located under the spelling check/grammar check section (or under Tools/Options) – to have Word show readability statistics after it is done with a grammar check.

We also recommend checking out Grammarly (www.grammarly.com) and Hemingway Editor (www.hemingwayapp.com). These tools check your written work for difficult passages, run-on sentences, etc. It is best practice to have someone edit your work prior to sending out. This is a great way to use supporters who have these gifts.

Youth Dynamics – Online Publishing

Online Publishing

Because of the information that can be passed along via social networking, blogging, online forums, etc., there's incredible potential to connect with students and ministry partners in new ways that fit well into the culture. As representatives of Christ and professionals, we must be aware of the negative impact of this information sharing and online communications. Communications that are posted online are subject to the same legal ramifications of journalism, meaning that there is no room for libel, copyright infringement, harassment, or student privacy violations. Online communications are both an incredible opportunity and a significant risk management concern to us organizationally. Treat online posting/blogging with the same attention to risk management and student privacy as we do in the field, on campus, or in our interactions with key stakeholders.

Before posting a photo, video or text entry on any online media, please check our [Photo and Video Guidelines](#), and ask yourself these quick reference questions:

- Is this photo/text a good representation of Christ and Christians? Of Youth Dynamics?
- Does this photo/text violate any copyrights or plagiarize any photo/text owned by another person or organization?
- Does this photo or text present best practices for risk management?
- Does this photo or text uphold internal organizational commitments to “Healthy Conflict Resolution” and to “Professionalism and Excellence?”
- Was any student confidentiality compromised in publishing this text or photo?

Listed below are guidelines that Youth Dynamics Staff are expected to uphold in online communications. Please follow these policies and uphold these guidelines for online publishing.

Online Publishing Guidelines

1. **APPROPRIATELY MANAGE RISKS.** Refrain from engaging in any online discourse in a way that can open you or Youth Dynamics up to close calls or liability. This could include discussing incidents resulting in injury, online conflict with a group leader or ministry partner, a lack of discretion in posting photos, or posting about sensitive personnel situations, etc.
2. **OBEY COPYRIGHT, FAIR USE, AND FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE LAWS.** For Youth Dynamics' protection, as well as your own, it is critical that you show proper respect for the laws governing copyright and fair use of copyrighted material owned by others. You should never quote more than short excerpts of someone else's work without permission. Any quoted work must be cited

properly. You should also never post a graphic online that you found at another online site without permission unless it is listed as “free” or “public domain.” This also applies to posting copyrighted videos, copyrighted music, or videos with copyrighted music or images.

3. **PROTECT CONFIDENTIAL OR INTERNAL INFORMATION.** If you are unclear about whether a piece of information is appropriate for publication, ask your supervisor or Support Services. This material would include risk management documents, confidential financial information, internal evaluation and planning documents, leadership meetings, personnel situations, and internal trainings and policies.
4. **SAFEGUARD THE PRIVACY OF OTHERS.** Not everyone we work with wishes to have their photo or story published online. Please strive to be sensitive to the privacy of others. It is recommended that anytime you reference a student, ministry partner, or stakeholder directly, you do so with their approval. In the case of student stories, it is always recommended to change the student’s name (denoting *name changed) and key details of the story or leave out the name and key details. In particularly sensitive situations, we recommend you create composite students that are a hybrid of many different students’ lives so they are no longer recognizable as a single person. In these situations, do not associate any photos of that student with the story, and do not associate a student in an identifiable way to reveal medical diagnoses, situations of abuse, or family background.
5. **KNOW AND FOLLOW YOUTH DYNAMICS’ OUTLINE FOR PERSONAL CONDUCT.** (See Employee Handbook, Section 7).

Best Practices for Online Communication

TRY TO ADD VALUE. Provide worthwhile information and perspective. If it helps you, your coworkers, your students, or your donors in any way that builds up the Lord, the building of these relationships, and Youth Dynamics, then it is adding value. Personal information is appropriate when it may be helpful in establishing a relationship between you and your readers.

WRITE IN THE FIRST PERSON SINGULAR OR PLURAL. If you are updating your personal blog or social media, use your own voice. Make it clear that you are speaking for yourself, not on behalf of all of Youth Dynamics (I or me). If you are updating a Youth Dynamics social media page or blog, using the voice of the organization, use first-person plural (we or us).

USE A DISCLAIMER. On your own blog, you need to include the following standard legal disclaimer language: “The postings on this site are my own and do not necessarily represent Youth Dynamics’ positions, strategies, or opinions.” Always assume your donors, team members and key stakeholders will read your writings. This standard disclaimer does not by itself exempt Youth Dynamics staff from a

special responsibility when blogging. By virtue of your position, you must consider whether personal thoughts they publish may be misunderstood as expressing Youth Dynamics' positions.

RESPECT YOUR AUDIENCE AND COWORKERS. This includes the obvious (ethnic slurs, personal insults, obscenity, religious slams, mental health comments, etc.) Show proper respect for topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory. Remember Youth Dynamics' place in the Greater Body: "Youth Dynamics does not seek to take stances on controversial tenets of the Christian faith" (Employee Handbook, p3).

ENGAGE IN HEALTHY WRITTEN CONFLICT. It is advisable to not write/post about areas of conflict. If you choose to write about areas of conflict, please do so with a commitment to healthy conflict resolution and a respect of the facts. Once you have written it online, it is subject to being prosecuted as libel, so you must ensure you are respectful and factual. Healthy conflict also applies to staff who might disagree with the posted perspective of another staff member. You need to first approach the individual to deal with it one-on-one.

BE THE FIRST TO CORRECT YOUR OWN MISTAKES. If you make an error, be upfront about your mistake and correct it quickly. If you choose to modify an earlier post, denote that you have done so. It is best to print a retraction in a later blog and/or denote deletions or corrections.

USE YOUR BEST JUDGMENT. Remember that there are always consequences to what you write. If you are about to post something that makes you even the slightest bit uncomfortable, review the suggestions above and think about why that is. If you are still unsure, feel free to discuss the proposed post with your supervisor. Ultimately, you carry the responsibility for what you choose to post to your blog.

Website

Youth Dynamics has a professional presence on the internet (www.yd.org) that is well maintained and kept current.

Personal page(s) on the website:

- A feature on the Youth Dynamics website is a personal page for staff that features a photo, short bio, a donation link, and a link to their personal e-newsletters (if desired).
- Each Youth Dynamics area/base has at least one page dedicated to their unique ministry and is the responsibility of each director to ensure that the information related to their area of ministry is kept current and professional.

Youth Dynamics – Communications

Staff Newsletters:

Staff newsletters are a vital link between Youth Dynamics and the donors who support our staff. The primary purpose is to share ministry updates and give donors a picture of what God is doing through their support. The content should focus on illustrating ministry fruit and students' lives that have been impacted or changed in a significant way. Stay away from discussing operational details, staffing concerns, or office details.

It is important to be professional, both in quality and content. A brief family update is appropriate. Staff newsletters should not be used for financial appeals or complaints about financial issues. Contact the MPD Coaching Director or Support Services if you have questions.

Staff is to use the newsletter templates provided. Any deviations from the templates must be approved by Support Services.

Reflections:

Reflections is a ministry-wide newsletter that is mailed to every donor to communicate the amazing ways God is working throughout the entire organization. It is used to encourage, inspire, and to educate donors about the breadth of the organization. Each edition will have a primary message that needs to be supported by each article or story. Deadlines and content guidelines must be met and are the responsibility of the director from each location.

Brochures:

Youth Dynamics works diligently to keep current with quality printed materials. It is important for the public to have a ministry-wide view of Youth Dynamics, and brochures are available for local area use. Brochures and promotional flyers can be created, however, please be sure to include proper use of logo, local contact information, and website.

Letterhead and Envelopes:

In addition to the corporate Youth Dynamics letterhead, each location is provided an electronic template for official letters only. For printed letters, Youth Dynamics #10 envelopes will be made available (without specific location) and a ream of "letterhead" blank paper will be available to order from the main office. Contact Communications Director with questions.

Pledge Cards and Business Cards:

All pledge cards and business cards must be ordered from Support Services. Contact the Office Administrator to place an order. Both cards are in a template format and unique information is entered at the time of order. Staff will approve prior to printing. Staff are not to create a different version of pledge cards or business cards without prior approval from the Support Services.