The Florida Youth Leadership Academy

**Mission:**
To inspire young leaders through building healthy relationships, exploring leadership development, and actively engaging them within their communities.

**Background:**
The Florida Youth Leadership Academy (FYLA) kicked off its first class in December 2007 in Orlando, Florida. What initiated as a professional development project under the direction of Florida’s Department of Children and Families’ Child Welfare Leadership Program and Connected by 25, grew into a statewide mentorship and leadership program for youth involved in the child welfare system.

**Specifics:**
FYLA is for youth involved with Florida's child welfare system who meet the eligibility criteria. The 20 FYLA mentees that make up the Class of 2019 are between the ages of 15 and 18 and are paired with an adult mentor who works in child welfare. Throughout the program year, FYLA youth and their mentors meet regularly in their local areas to focus on specific learning objectives, including networking, public speaking, resume-building, and interviewing skills. Additionally, mentors assist their youth in achieving their individualized goals that they set at the beginning of the year. The FYLA group travels four times throughout the program year to engage in several educational and leadership activities, including touring the State Capitol, Supreme Court, and college campuses across Florida. Each FYLA class concludes with a graduation ceremony during the annual Child Protection Summit.

**Web Links:**
http://centervideo.forest.usf.edu/video/summit18/generalsession3/start.html

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