MY LIFE: Magellan Youth Leaders Inspiring Future Empowerment
Young agents of change

Magellan’s MY LIFE (Magellan Youth Leaders Inspiring Future Empowerment) is leading the way nationally for youth involvement in behavioral health systems. Through regular meetings, performances, special events, social media, and local and national presentations, youth share their stories and support each other in their recovery goals.

A program for youth, by youth
MY LIFE consists of youth between the ages of 13 and 23 who have experience with mental health, substance abuse, juvenile justice and foster care-related issues. Youth who have a family member or friend experiencing these challenges are also encouraged to join. MY LIFE began in Arizona in 2008. Since then, MY LIFE Arizona youth have helped establish four groups in southeastern Pennsylvania, two groups in Louisiana, three groups in Nebraska and a group in Florida.

The group’s activities help develop and hone leadership, advocacy and social skills.

Outreach and engagement
The program actively engages youth through teaching, coaching and mentoring and empowers them to use their voices to inspire and create positive change for themselves and others in their local communities.

Regular meetings are the foundation of the MY LIFE model, providing opportunities for youth to come together to create a community of support, plan activities and initiatives, practice social skills, learn from presenters and provide peer mentoring. More than 400 regular MY LIFE meetings across the country have involved at least 2,500 different youth.

On MY LIFE’s Facebook page, an active national youth community posts messages of support and engages in conversations about the issues affecting them most.

Presentations and workshops
MY LIFE youth have traveled across the U.S., making more than 50 local and national presentations to more than 5,000 youth and adults. At least 50 different youth have represented MY LIFE at conferences and workshops, detention centers, schools, government offices, community events, and Boys and Girls Clubs.

There are many things that make MY LIFE special, but one in particular has been our ability to take the “youth group” concept to a completely different level. Other groups focus on these issues, but none has had such a far-reaching and sustainable effect as MY LIFE.

One main difference is the fact that any youth can be a part of MY LIFE without any special requirements. We are also unique because we believe collaboration with other youth groups is a key to success; thus, we regularly work with other groups on projects locally and nationally.

– Greg Dicharry, Magellan Youth Empowerment Director

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MY LIFE youth thus far have planned and produced 13 MY Fest events that, together, have inspired and educated nearly 40,000 community members and have included more than 500 exhibitors.

MY LIFE leaders speak at meetings of national organizations, such as the Alternatives Conference, sponsored by the National Mental Health Consumers’ Self-Help Clearinghouse and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, and the National Council for Behavioral Health.

MY Fest celebration
The Magellan youth festival MY Fest is a signature event. The one-day community event is organized by MY LIFE to raise awareness and reduce stigma about mental health, substance abuse and foster care issues facing youth and young adults. It features musical acts, dance performances, art exhibits and resources for youth and families.

Youth Day at the Capitol
Each year, Youth Day at the Capitol gives youth a unique opportunity to meet face-to-face with state legislators and government officials to share their concerns and ideas about the issues they feel most affect them. Events have been held in Phoenix, Arizona; Harrisburg, Pennsylvania; Tallahassee, Florida and Baton Rouge, Louisiana with more than 1,000 youth participants.

Select awards and recognition
MY LIFE and MY LIFE youth have been honored by numerous provider and advocacy organizations for youth development, engagement and leadership. Some examples:

- Youth MOVE National “Rock Star” Award
- National Council for Behavioral Health – Program of Distinction
- NAMI Pennsylvania Advocacy and Youth Empowerment Award
- Mental Health America “MPower” Award for Hayley Winterburg, MY LIFE Arizona co-founder

Learn more about MY LIFE and Magellan
MY LIFE and all related activities are presented in partnership with Magellan, our customers, other youth-serving systems and youth groups, and a variety of local youth-serving organizations.

Visit MY LIFE’s Facebook page, www.Facebook.com/MYLIFEyouth or email MYLIFE@MagellanHealth.com.

To find out more about the innovative solutions being employed by Magellan, email BHSales@MagellanHealth.com.