



NATIONAL YOUNG SCHOLARS PROGRAM

## *Carpe Diem!*

# Making the Most of the NYSP Experience

## A Guide for Parents & Guardians

At the National Young Scholars Program (NYSP), we make every effort to keep your scholar active and engaged. NYSP is an exciting program that has a lot to offer your student. We want your scholar to make the most of his/her time at the Program and have the best experience they can. As it is many scholars' first time away from home in new surroundings, some students may experience some discomfort and miss home. The initial adjustment may seem overwhelming, and NYSP wants to make the scholars as comfortable as possible from the beginning. Below are some tips on how to prepare your scholar, as well as how to deal with homesickness, before and during NYSP, so that your scholar can make the most of the Program.

### **What Parents Can Do to Prepare Young Scholars to Get the Most Out of NYSP**

- Address any and all concerns your student might have about attending NYSP. Remind her that homesickness and anxiety are both normal and that many students will be feeling the same way.
- Discuss with your scholar another new or challenging situation that he has gone through, and remind him of his strengths that helped in that experience.
- Develop a plan ahead of time for dealing with potential homesickness. Talk with your scholar about your own experiences with homesickness and how you dealt with it. Additionally, encourage your scholar to talk to her friends who have been away from home about their experiences.
- Have your scholar plan to take a favorite stuffed animal or picture and set up times for calling based on your scholar's schedule (mornings and evenings). Knowing that he will be able to talk to family at a given time can help to ease possible anxiety.
- Be prepared for the possibility that your student might be more irritable or anxious right before leaving; be sure to give extra attention, support and reminders that you love her.<sup>1</sup>
- Encourage your scholar to spend nights or weekends with friends or family to help him adjust to being away from home.
- Always be upbeat and speak positively about your scholar's upcoming experience at NYSP; show her the materials and the web site to familiarize her with the program. Knowing what to expect can reduce your scholar's anxiety and increase excitement.
- Remind your scholar how proud you are of him for his achievements thus far and how excited you are for him to attend NYSP.

## **What Parents Should Not Do When Preparing for NYSP**

- Do not make a deal with your student offering to pick her up if she feels homesick. Often such deals worsen the situation because the student focuses on going home, rather than participating in activities and making new friends.<sup>2</sup>
- Do not let your student see your own anxiety about him leaving. Students can and will perceive their parents' worries, only furthering the students' own concerns.<sup>3</sup>

## **While at NYSP...**

- Your scholar should make every effort to meet people and make new friends. She could be making friends for life.
- Suggest that your scholar talk to one of the program's Eagles (returning scholars) as they have been through the experience and serve as a great resource!
- Encourage your scholar to take pictures of his new friends or of the sights he is seeing. He can also keep a journal documenting the new things he has learned. Both will prevent any downtime that can bring on homesickness. Writing postcards to family or friends is another great way to keep your student focused on the Program.
- Scholars often need time to adjust, so do not be dismayed if your scholar wants to come home on the first night. Suggest that she talk with fellow students or do one of the aforementioned activities. Talking with other students and sharing feelings is often a bonding experience that cements friendship and prevents homesickness. However, please encourage your student to talk with someone if her homesickness does not subside.
- You will receive nightly e-mail updates about your scholar's experience. Reference these to allow your scholar to talk about his day.
- Remind your scholar to utilize the Scholar Relations Team Members. They are available 24/7 for your scholar's safety and well-being. They can be reached via cell phone at any time. They are there to help.
- NYSP is a great experience for everyone involved. Recommend that your scholar seize these opportunities and make memories for a lifetime!

Research has shown that students ages eight through ten are gravitating towards independence and discovering their role outside of the family. They begin to socialize often, spending more time than ever with their peers.<sup>4</sup> NYSP is a great experience to further enhance your child's development. Being prepared to deal with homesickness helps your scholar to get the most out of his time at NYSP.

**We look forward to seeing you on arrival day!**

<sup>1</sup>Linn, Susan. "Talking About Homesickness." Family Education. <<http://www.familyeducation.com/article/0,1120,20-7515,00.html>>. Accessed 22 September 2005

<sup>2</sup>Media Center. American Camp Association. <[http://www.acacamps.org/media\\_center/how\\_to\\_choose/homesickness.php](http://www.acacamps.org/media_center/how_to_choose/homesickness.php)>. Accessed 22 September 2005.

<sup>3</sup>Gabriel, Paul and Robin F. Goodman. "Help for Homesick Campers." NYU Child Study Center. <<http://www.aboutourkids.org/aboutour/articles/homesick.html>>. Accessed 22 September 2005.

<sup>4</sup>"Middle Childhood—Ages 8 to 10." <<http://www.campparents.org/8-10.php>>. Accessed 23 September 2005.