

## BRITISH COLUMBIA YOUTH PARLIAMENT BACKGROUNDER

British Columbia Youth Parliament (BCYP) is a youth-driven, non-profit, non-partisan, non-denominational organisation that aims to further the development of the youth of British Columbia. BCYP is composed of 97 British Columbians between the ages of 16 and 21 who come from across the province and from diverse backgrounds to combine their creativity, skills and determination to plan, fundraise for and implement projects that benefit the youth of British Columbia. BCYP is different from all other youth service organizations. We are an organization entirely run by youth who develop, fundraise for and operate projects that few other youth organisations will even attempt.

### *History*

British Columbia Youth Parliament began as the Tuxis Older Boys' Parliament, under the umbrella of the National Tuxis Movement of the United Church of Canada. After the Second World War, the Older Boys Youth Parliament began to expand its membership base and in the 1960's it became independent from the United Church. The organization's mandate has shifted from its religious beginnings to its current motto: "Youth Serving Youth". In 1974, British Columbia Youth Parliament opened its doors to young women and in 2016, the organization celebrated its 88th anniversary.

### *Parliamentary Session*

Between December 27th and 31st, the 97 Members ("Parliamentarians") gather at the Legislature in Victoria for their Parliamentary Session. Members sit as independents and all votes are free; meaning that Members are free to vote according to their consciences. Members learn about the parliamentary process, debate resolutions on local, national and international issues and debate bills that plan the organization's activities for the upcoming year. BCYP is not a "model" or "mock" parliament. The legislation we pass at Session translates into positive action within the community.

### *Camp Phoenix*

Camp Phoenix is the most ambitious and far-reaching project put on by our organization. A weekend long summer camp for children who for social or financial reasons would otherwise be unable attend a summer camp, Camp Phoenix redefines words like "hard work" and "commitment;" but the work is well worth the reward of being able to give 30 to 40 underprivileged children each year an unforgettable camping experience. Camp Phoenix is designed to give children from all regions of the province the opportunity to attend.

### *Regional Youth Parliaments*

We run several Regional Youth Parliaments throughout the province for secondary school students between the ages of 14 and 18 so that they too can partake in the youth parliament experience. BCYP Members organize and staff each Regional Youth Parliament's Parliamentary Session, at which the students learn about the parliamentary process, debate resolutions and debate bills that plan activities of their own for the upcoming year. By running these events and by encouraging the Regional Youth Parliaments to fulfill their legislated activities, we provide a forum for debate and show tomorrow's leaders the importance of community service.

### *Community Service Activities*

In addition to all of our own projects, BCYP participates as a group in numerous projects with other organizations. In previous years, we have volunteered the Variety Club, the Union Gospel Mission, the Multiple Sclerosis Society and the Canadian Cancer Society. Throughout the year, Members also volunteer individually in their hometowns as Scout or Guide leaders, sports coaches, hospital volunteers, volunteer tutors and so on.

### *BCYP's Budget*

With an annual operating budget of approximately \$40,000, we fundraise throughout the year and each Member is responsible for raising at least \$150. We also organize many fundraising activities throughout the year. We also depend on the generous support of private and corporate donors to make our projects feasible. **Our Federal Non-Profit Registration number is 11930 7692 RR0001.**