

Hugh O'Brian Youth Maryland



What is HOBY?

HOBY stands for "Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership." It is an organization, founded by the actor Hugh O'Brian, whose mission is to seek out, recognize and develop leadership potential in young people. In 1958, Hugh spent 9 inspiring days in Africa with the Nobel Peace Prize humanitarian Albert Schweitzer. It was this extraordinary experience that inspired Hugh to dedicate his life to this worthwhile cause.

How does HOBY do it?

HOBY implements its purpose in three ways: by providing interactive opportunities for critical thinking; by promoting democracy and America's incentive system, and by encouraging social responsibility among individuals and participating corporations. The cornerstone of HOBY's activities are the Leadership Seminars, which are four-day seminars held in each state and a handful of foreign countries. It is important to not that these seminars are coordinated and run entirely by volunteers. There is one sophomore representing each school at their respective state seminar, so that many arrive and don't know a soul. These seminars, through panel presentations and small group interaction, provide high school students with a unique opportunity to interact with civic and corporate leaders from their area.

What do Facilitators do?

Lots of things! Think of it a bit as being a camp counselor. You're assigned a group of 10 (or so) students, and you're 'in charge' of them for the weekend. This includes basic things such as logistics of knowing their whereabouts, helping to get them where they need to go, and keeping them fed. Much more importantly, however, you'll be guiding them through the more meaningful experiences of the weekend -- encouraging them to ask questions of speakers, encouraging thoughtful discussions within your small groups on the panel topics, and challenging them to take what they've learned home to share with others.

Why be a Facilitator?

Most will tell you that being a facilitator is the best job at the seminar! The rest of the staff is there to help you make certain your students have what they need for a fulfilling weekend. You ask for it, someone brings it to you! You will have the privilege of spending an entire weekend with truly outstanding young people, engaging in intellectual and challenging conversations about important topics (they'll surprise you!), and likely feeling re-energized yourself about certain matters by the end of the weekend!

What is the hardest part about being a Facilitator?

The days are long for the students, and even longer for staff as we have nightly meetings after bed check. The food can almost always be better. Some panelists may not be as entertaining as others. If you're over 30, the music at the dance will be too loud. You'll probably be crying right along with your students when you have to leave them at the end of the weekend (it's okay, we won't tell...). You may walk into your Monday morning meeting and start chanting "To be enthusiastic you must act enthusiastic!"

How can I get a little more information?

Maryland HOBY has an incredibly resourceful website at www.hobymd.org. There you'll find a sample program, a list of our contributors, or link to the HOBY National website. Even if you discover you're not able to be a facilitator but would like to learn more or be involved, we have a number of opportunities to allow you to do so. These include being a day volunteer, speaking on one of our panels, or perhaps buying a table at our corporate luncheon and sharing your life experiences with our students. Please contact Raven Hall, rhall@law.gwu.edu, to find out how to become involved with Maryland HOBY.

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