

What is the WAVE Leadership Association?

The WAVE Leadership Association is a youth-run, staff managed, peer affiliation structure that provides unique opportunities for its members to learn and develop knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for success in the twenty-first century.

The WAVE Leadership Association provides youth members, or Associates, with motives and incentives to be more competent, feel more confident, and become more successful in areas including education, work, living skills, and personal development.

The WAVE Leadership Association taps into the natural motivating drives of youth by offering a safe environment that accepts and supports all members; provides positive recognition for achievement; and promotes active involvement within the program and in the community.

The WAVE Leadership Association is experiential learning at it best. The Associates plan and implement meaningful activities and projects that serve a concrete purpose and help hone essential skills. They elect their own leaders, select various projects and activities to perform, experience the dynamics of teamwork and consensus-seeking, and evaluate their own work.

The key elements of the WAVE Leadership Association include the following – all of which WAVE helps adult program facilitators develop- are:

- Having an effective staff advisor
- Developing a well planned program of work
- Providing relevant life skill training
- Offering meaningful career activities
- Implementing leadership development
- Facilitating community service projects led by youth
- Orchestrating fund raisers (optional)
- Creating and maintaining an effective recognition system

Above all, the WAVE Leadership Association is a powerful youth development component of the WAVE program. Participating youth are energized when their ideas direct the activities of their Association. In addition, staff advisors become equally excited with the Leadership Association as it allows them to break away from the tradition roles of teacher, creator, and doer to those of coach, facilitator, and supporter.