



Yesterday's journeys. Today's technology.
Tomorrow's leaders.

THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD PROJECT

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What if I have questions that aren't answered here?

A: For more information, contact CONNECTIONS Underground Railroad Project senior staff at connections@carolina.rr.com or **704.999.1180**.

Q: What are the most important upcoming dates for the program?

A: The most important upcoming date to remember is **Tuesday, September 8, 2009**, which is the last date for turning in completed program applications. **Applications should be mailed to P.O. Box 480871, Charlotte, NC 28269**. Also put **Sunday, August 30, 2009** on your calendar, which is the date of our program kick-off event, which is open to the public and will be held at the **Charlotte Museum of History, 3500 Shamrock Road, Charlotte, 28215 from 3:00pm-5:00pm**. For students selected for the program, there will be a mandatory orientation meeting for them and their parents/guardians on **Sunday, September 27, 2009**. If selected for the program, students will receive orientation meeting details with their acceptance package.

Q: Are there minimum academic requirements to participate in the program?

A: To be eligible for the program, a teen must only be a student in good standing in grades 7-10 (and must be no younger than 12 and no older than 16 by the application deadline date) in a public school or an independent school, or demonstrate basic verification of satisfying this criteria in a home schooling program.

Q: What criteria are used to select program participants?

A: Individually, students will be selected based on a mix of criteria, including but not limited to their demonstrated leadership skills, their potential for developing as a leader, their demonstrated or potential ability to overcome adversity, and their level of enthusiasm about participating in the program. We're also committed to putting together a very diverse group, with boys and girls from a variety of racial, ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Q: When and where are program sessions held?

A: The 9 program sessions will take place monthly at various locations around Mecklenburg County, including Imagination and the Levine Museum of the New South. The first session

is an overnight stay on October 3-4, 2009 at Copperhead Island, which is part of the Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation Department's McDowell Nature Preserve, adjacent to the Catawba River in southwestern Mecklenburg County. If your child is selected for the program, you will receive a full schedule and many other details prior to and at the program orientation on September 27, 2009.

Q: What is the attendance policy for the program sessions?

A: Program participants with more than one unexcused absence from one of the 9 program sessions, or more than 2 excused absences, will be subject to removal from the program. To be excused, a student must notify designated program staff in person, in writing or by phone prior to the start of the session they will have to miss.

Q: What is the cost of the program?

A: If your teen is selected for the program, your family will need to pay a \$50 registration fee on or before the program orientation meeting on September 27, 2009. There will be additional program fees due throughout the next 9 months: (a) \$50 will be due on or before February 1, 2010; (b) \$50 will be due on or before April 1, 2010; (c) a \$100 Travel Camp fee will be due no less than 15 days prior to the beginning of the Travel Camp, which will take place in late June or early July of 2010. **The fees for each teen amount to less than 5% of the cost for that young person to participate in this program.** In addition, except for the \$50 registration fee, our program staff will support the teens in raising funds as a group, in order to reduce the amount that each young person's family will have to pay. **In other words, the more successfully the teens work together in their fundraising, the less each family will need to pay.**

Q: How will program staff, especially chaperones for the initial overnight session and travel camp counselors, be screened and trained?

A: All program staff who will supervise the teens during overnight or traveling activities will undergo full criminal background checks, detailed interviews with senior program staff, and thorough training by professionals. In addition, the teen supervision team will always include at least 2 individuals who have basic first aid and CPR training.

Q: For the overnight session and the travel camp, what arrangements are in place for teens with special physical or medical concerns, or dietary needs?

A: If your teen is selected for the program, you will receive forms allowing you to provide us with any physical or medical concerns, or dietary needs. We will then work with you to appropriately address those needs and concerns.