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## News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### *Alabama Governor's Youth Leadership Forum provides unique opportunity for students with disabilities*

TROY – Thirty-four students with disabilities from around the state will descend upon Troy University's campus next week for the 19th Alabama Governor's Youth Leadership Forum (YLF).

The five-day annual event, sponsored by the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS) and hosted by Troy University, will take place from June 4-8. The forum helps shape high school students with disabilities through sessions on self-esteem, self-advocacy, career choice, independent living options, and leadership.

Forum delegates are chosen through a statewide search to identify students displaying leadership potential. Selected delegates represent the state's demographics in terms of geography, gender, ethnicity, and types of disabilities. To be eligible, a student must be a junior or senior in high school, be between 17 and 21 years of age, and have a disability.

"YLF provides an opportunity to empower young people with disabilities to fully realize their potential to lead," said Karen Jenkins, YLF coordinator. "We encourage these students to become active and involved in all aspects of society and never place limits on their career or academic goals."

During the forum, delegates will write a Personal Leadership Plan (PLP) to assist them in becoming leaders in their communities. In addition to their other activities at YLF, the group will spend a day in Montgomery touring the Capitol and learning about state government. While in Montgomery, delegates will have an opportunity to visit with and seek guidance from successful adults with disabilities at the Angeline Pinckard Mentor Luncheon.

YLF won't be all work for the delegates. To develop social skills, they will also be treated to a dance, talent show, and an afternoon at Camp Butter and Egg in Troy.

The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services is the state agency whose mission is to enable Alabama's children and adults with disabilities to achieve their maximum potential.

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