September 2011

Dear Youth Workers,

I greet you in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!
It is once again time to begin preparations for Winter Youth Rally. Please take a few minutes to read this document very carefully so that you will be fully aware of a few changes, as this information is crucial.

OUR THEME THIS YEAR

Our theme is "Is the Yoke On Me?" This is taken from the Gospel of Matthew 11:28-30. The entire three verses read, "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and my burden is light."

WINTER YOUTH RALLY DATES AND LOCATION

Tuesday, December 27- Friday, December 30, 2011
Marriott Century Center, Atlanta, GA

REGISTRATION DATES

a. Registration for **TEAMS** opens September 30th.
b. Registration for **INDIVIDUALS** opens October 14th.
c. ALL REGISTRATION CLOSES NOVEMBER 18th.
d. LATE REGISTRATION OPENS NOVEMBER 19TH – DECEMBER 2ND**. SEE COST AND FEES SECTION FOR LATE REGISTRATION.

TEAMS MUST BE PRE-REGISTERED BEFORE ANY INDIVIDUALS MAY REGISTER.

Lead advisors will be responsible for pre-registering teams using the online registration website (the link will be provided to you via email ahead of time). Carolyn McBride and Kiki Missailidis will contact, via email, the lead advisors and give them a user name and password to access the system. You will assign a name and password to each of your teams (different names for each junior team and each senior team, both basketball and volleyball). You will give that name and password to your participants so when they register they will automatically be placed into the proper teams and lead advisors WILL NOT turn in basketball or volleyball rosters. **AGAIN, NO INDIVIDUALS CAN REGISTER UNTIL YOUR TEAMS ARE PRE-REGISTERED, SO BE SURE TO GET YOUR TEAM REGISTRATION DONE PROMPTLY!**

Only after the teams are pre-registered may individuals (GOYAns, advisors, coaches, priests, and bus drivers) register. Lead Advisors, when you register your teams, your individual registration will be done at the same time for your convenience.

BIBLE BOWL REGISTRATION

Bible Bowl rosters this year will be generated by the online registration system. There will be a box to check if they are participating. Once we gather all the names, we will send the Lead Advisor the list for them to verify and separate into teams. If you have a child who is ONLY playing Bible Bowl, or is not playing a sport and just attending, they may register as an individual beginning October 14th.

BUS DRIVER REGISTRATION

Please reserve a room at your parish's expense at the Marriott Courtyard for your bus driver. He/she needs to register online (name not necessary – just BUS DRIVER as name, parish he/she is serving, and city/state) and no registration fee is required as he/she will not participate in any of the events.

FRIENDS AND FAMILY REGISTRATION

Anyone visiting from out of town who is not a participant or Advisor must stay at the Marriott Courtyard. All reservations are to be made by the individual and all expenses are to be paid by the individual upon check-in. Reservations can be made by calling 1-800-321-2211 or the hotel direct at 404-728-0708 and asking for the Greek Orthodox Church GOYA Tournament Dec2011 block of rooms. The room rate is $99 and includes a complimentary breakfast for up to two people per room.

COACHES REGISTRATION

If a Coach is not serving a dual role (Coach/Advisor), then he/she MUST stay at the Marriott Courtyard. Again, the parish or individual is responsible for reserving their own room and are responsible for their reservation/expenses incurred at the Marriott Courtyard. Reservations can be made by calling 1-800-321-2211 or the hotel directly at 404-728-0708 and asking for the Greek Orthodox Church GOYA Tournament Dec2011 block of rooms. The room rate is $99 and includes a complimentary breakfast for up to two people per room.

Any teams registering between November 19th and December 2nd will be subject to late team registration fees (SEE COSTS AND FEES LISTED BELOW).

ROOM LIST BREAK DOWN

This is a little different from last year. After registration closes on December 2nd, please have the Lead Advisor send a room list break down (girls and boys - 4 to a room max) to Kiki Missailidis by December 9th and she will assign you a hotel room block. You will then go in the system and place them in the room numbers within the block that Kiki assigns you. Instructions on how to place the children in the rooms assigned by her will follow. As for advisor room assignments, please assign two to a room. If there is only one person left, or if there is a female and male who are not related, then you may put them in separate rooms. **NO EXCEPTIONS!**

Your child will be sleeping with a child of the same sex and similar age (as determined by the parish Lead Advisor). If you desire for your child to have their own bed, an additional fee of $75 (per child) will be added to your registration cost. **In both cases, you must return the parental bed consent form to Carolyn McBride, 2021 Queen Victoria Court, Lawrencevile, GA 30043**. Registrations are not complete and participants will not be allowed to attend if these forms are not received by November 18th (for those that register during Open Registration.) For those that register during Late Registration, they must have their forms in to Carolyn McBride, 2021 Queen Victoria Court, Lawrenceville, GA 30043 by December 5th.

COSTS AND FEES

Our cost this year is $235 per child, with a $10 discount for each additional child. This discount, however, does not apply to advisors, coaches, priests, or bus drivers, as their rooms are more costly (because there are less people per room). While we would love to extend a discount to adults as a thank you for their service, we are unable to do so at this time.

Included in the cost are 3 nights, 4 days at the newly renovated hotel; 3 hearty breakfasts, 3 full dinners, lunch on Thursday (final competition day), snacks, a Semi-Formal Dance, and the first night Mixer. **Please remember** that on the 2 athletic competition days of 12/28 and 12/29 (Wednesday and Thursday), lunch is the responsibility of each individual Parish.

TEAM REGISTRATION FEES

Our team registration fee for basketball and volleyball is **$400** per team, and Bible Bowl at no cost.

LATE REGISTRATION FEES

Any late registrations (from November 19th – December 2nd) will be charged as follows:

Team registrations: $500 (remember that teams must be registered before the individuals can register, so if your teams are late, so are the individual registrations!)
Participant registrations: $285 per child ($10 discount for each additional child still applies)

Cancellations will be refunded as follows:

Before December 2nd- 100% will be refunded
December 3rd -December 10th- 50% will be refunded
December 11th-December 28th- 0% will be refunded

The only exception to the cancellation policy is due to severe illness or hospitalization of a participant or immediate family member and will be handled on a case by case basis.

PAYMENT PLANS

1. Pay in full, by credit, debit, or e-check. We are not responsible for insufficient fund fees.
2. For credit and debit cards only:
   Fifty percent (50%) of total cost will be due at registration and the balance will be automatically charged on November 18th. No payment plan is offered for e-checks.
3. If you are registering between November 18th and December 2nd, no payment plan will be offered, payment will be due in full.

FORMS REQUIRED

This year everyone is required to send in three forms:

A. Metropolis Waiver (attached)
B. Insurance Card (attached)
C. Parental Bed Consent Form (attached)

MEDICAL PROCEDURES

Because we are responsible for the safety of all our participants, and because we are concerned for and love each and every one of them, our medical procedures will be as follows:

ALL Lead advisors must have a copy of the Metropolis Waiver and insurance card forms for all of their participants at ALL times. You are responsible for making and bringing these copies.

ALL coaches must have a copy of the Metropolis Waiver and insurance card forms for all the kids on their teams during the games.

The Metropolis must have a copy of the Metropolis Waiver, insurance card form, and parental bed consent form for all participants—these must be sent to Carolyn McBride @ 2021 Queen Victoria Court, Lawrenceville, GA 30043 by the lead advisor NO LATER than November 18th. Registrations are not considered final and spots will not be reserved until these forms are received. Those registering during late registration (November 19th – December 2nd), must have their forms to Carolyn McBride by December 5th.

During the Rally, we will have at least one nurse on staff. So, should there be a medical emergency, procedures will be as follows:

1. If the emergency is life threatening, and/or if the person has lost consciousness: call 911 immediately, do not delay and follow the instructions given to you by the authorities. Then, call Presbytera Mari (phone number will be provided to you) immediately afterward.

2. If the emergency is NON life-threatening, call Presbytera Mari **immediately**, before going anywhere, and I will coordinate what to do next. I will make arrangements with the nurse and instruct you how and where to go.

PLEASE NOTE: IF THESE EMERGENCY PROCEDURES ARE NOT FOLLOWED, THE TEAM WHO SUSTAINED THE INJURY WILL FORFEIT THEIR GAME.

BASKETBALL & VOLLEYBALL RULES: **(WILL BE SENT AT A LATER DATE VIA EMAIL)**

BIBLE BOWL

The books of the Bible from which our competition will be taken this year are The Gospel of Mark and the book of Exodus. Please be aware that there are no study questions for either topic this year. If you have any questions, please contact Fr. Grigorios Tatsis at ierokyrix@atlmetropolis.org.

GENERAL INFORMATION YOU NEED TO KNOW

*** Please provide lanyards for every WYR participant with nametags that state clearly every participant's name in BIG BOLD PRINT, with the Community name on the front, and the Advisor's name and cell phone number on the back.**

* Check-in to the Atlanta Marriott Century Center as early as 1 p.m.– OFFICIAL start of the Rally is 6 pm.

Please be cognizant of getting there in plenty of time to get settled before the start of the Rally. Please go to www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/atlne-atlanta-marriott-century-center for directions.

* Every Parish is expected to have a Youth Worker present at all times, chaperoning their GOYAns. One adult for every 5-7 GOYAns.

*Participants will be allowed to go to their room and other floors during free time (between and after events) as long as there is a chaperone/advisor with them. All doors must remain open. One security guard will be placed on every floor as well.

* Under no circumstances is any WYR GOYAn allowed to drive anywhere or to ride with anyone except with their assigned chaperone. As well, they must always be in groups of three(even in the car), one of whom is the assigned chaperone. They may not drive to and from the opening or closing of the Rally.

* Food for Winter Youth Rally is graciously prepared for us by the kind gentlemen of the Atlanta Chapter 1 Mother Lodge of AHEPA. Out of respect for their generous hard work, and acknowledging that prior to your arrival, your food has already been paid for, we ask that all parishes eat the meals provided at the Marriott Century Center by AHEPA and not go out for meals. While Winter Youth Rally is a sporting event, sports are not the only reason for attending. Most importantly is the love and fellowship of being together. Meals are a great opportunity for GOYAns from each parish to meet each other. Please remember this and be present at dinner each night.

* Unless otherwise specified or approved by Presbytera Mari Mars, Fr. Thomas Newlin, Fr. Elias Stephens, Kiki Missailidis, or Carolyn McBride, all parishes are expected to be present at each event scheduled.

*__All Coaches__: It is __MANDATORY__ to attend the Coaches Meeting on the first evening of the Rally. If you are unable to attend for any reason, you must notify Nicko Papadopoulos ahead of time and let him know who will be attending in your place. Each sport that your parish is participating in must be represented at the meeting.

*** All decisions and calls by referees are final.** We welcome suggestions for the future of Winter Youth Rally based on your experiences. However, because of the time restrictions inherent in a 3 day tournament, we cannot reverse decisions and calls made by referees or re-wind the tournament.

***** While we appreciate that sports tournaments can be spirited and exciting, and that everyone works hard to prepare for Winter Youth Rally, we must remember as Christians that we are called to behave in a way that reflects Christ to our brothers and sisters at all times. **For this reason, bad sportsmanship, foul language, and disrespectful conduct of any kind toward any person at the Winter Youth Rally will not be tolerated by children or adults. Any such behavior can result in disciplinary action up to forfeiture of the tournament by the offending team or expulsion from Winter Youth Rally of any offending persons.**

We are looking forward to this year's Winter Youth Rally and pray that you are too! You will be receiving more information via email in the coming weeks. In the meantime, thank you, as always, for your continued efforts, dedication, and leadership in serving our Metropolis and your parish youth. Though our Rally is a sporting event, the overarching lesson to be learned by our children is how to come together in faith for fellowship and Christian Competition. It is we, the youth workers, who are teaching that lesson by our words and actions. Setting an example is the best and most important way of teaching our children about their faith. Your example of sacrifice and service in the Church is one that the children will remember and learn from. We are grateful to our Lord for granting our Church such dedicated and hardworking people to teach and guide our youth. This is a wonderful event for just such an opportunity, and again, we are looking forward to a great year!

Once more, please don't hesitate to email or call using the information given below, if you have questions or suggestions. On behalf of His Eminence Metropolitan ALEXIOS, myself, Fr. Thomas Newlin, Fr. Elias Stevens, Kiki Missailidis, Carolyn McBride, and all the volunteers at Winter Youth Rally, we can't wait to see you all!

In Christ's Service,

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