

NASIMCO Youth Leadership Retreat – "Thinking Outside the Box"

Vision:

Youths are the future leaders of our community that will enrich our community's future and increase the potential of our Youth to serve the community and humanity.

Retreat Mission

To create a forum for dialogue to enhance the ability of the participants to think outside the box, engage in self-reflection, become socially conscious and have the confidence to act upon it in their local and global communities.



Retreat Goals & Objectives

- To enable participants to explore assumptions, beliefs and attitudes about themselves, and the environments in which they operate
- To develop the capacity for social and political leadership amongst the youth
- To facilitate the spiritual and social upliftment of youth in North America
- To enable the youth to realize their full potential
- Provide networking opportunity for youths from across North America to come together to share ideas, best practices and challenges.
- Provide a safe and supportive inclusive environment for youths to be introspective about their potential
- Discuss issues and ideas they are passionate about and present on how to implement the solutions in their local communities

The 2016 Retreat

The 7th Annual NASIMCO Youth Leadership Retreat was held in Eustice, Florida at the Warren Williis Camp site through the 2nd-5th of September, 2016.

25 participants, 5 mentors & 5 facilitators came from across North America and took part in an intensive weekend designed to facilitate youth to 'Think outside the Box'.

The location was ideal to encourage spiritual reflection and ensure complete focus on the outcomes of the, which are:



- Gain tools to think outside the box
- Build communication skills to implement change
- Greater understanding of self, potential and engage in self-reflection
- Provide basic effective leadership tools to ignite change
- Greater understanding of various political and social norms and its effects in the perspective of the community

Each participant had the opportunity to discuss relevant themes and issues in a safe & inclusive environment.

The retreat is broken down into three step process:

1. Individual (to look within)
2. Interpersonal (your interactions with others')
3. Community and Society

The first night is dedicated to understanding oneself and their connections with others. Interactive activities helped the participants become comfortable to engage each other in dialogue and discussion. Participants are asked to share their ideas and experiences about their involvement within their communities, as well as the specific challenges they have faced. The primary question of the weekend was, "Are you in the box?" When we enter "the box", it limits our perspective. Our hearts become at war. Leading the participants through the philosophy of "self-deception and the box" allowing participants to unlock their minds and reconsider their perspective.

Participants identified issues and topics that they were passionate about solving and working with. The topics discussed included:

- Mental health and our community; resources and stigma
- Building a welcoming atmosphere in communities, and creating a strong brotherhood and sisterhood.
- Growing up as a strong Muslim in the West, and resisting the pressures in society.



Implementing skills acquired into team building activities



Opportunity for intellectual growth

The final part of the retreat is dedicated to building an action plan for change. Participants work with their peers to develop action plans for their respective communities. The presentations of these action plans eloquently integrated all the principles and theories discussed throughout the weekend. This part

of the retreat served to provide the much-needed inspiration for the participants to go home and do their part to ignite meaningful change.

Next Steps

The theme “Thinking outside the Box’ clearly resonates with the participants As a whole, the curriculum, activities, facilitators and location serve to rejuvenate youth from across North America to reinvest their time, energy and ideas back into their local communities. We wish to continue this throughout the years to come, the bonds created throughout these retreats last a lifetime, it’s wonderful to see how one weekend brings communities nationwide together so closely, each year.

This year, the retreat will take a similar approach.



Encouraging healthy environments to bond and grow as communities, together.

What can you do?

Specifically, individual communities are requested to demonstrate their support by:

- Promote the event in your Jamaat
- Actively encouraging 2-4 youth to attend the next retreat as their local representatives
- Providing financial sponsorship for attendees (e.g. camp fees, flights) as an incentive
- Identifying how the communities will support the youth in implementing any ideas when they return home

For more information, please contact the NASIMCO Youth Leadership Team at: retreat@nasimco.org, and follow us on our Instagram page @nasimco_retreat