

The Hugh O’Brian Youth Leadership Award—known simply as HOBY and pronounced “hoe bee”—is recognized as one of the world’s most prominent organizations focused on youth leadership and is an eye-catching addition to any college application.

What is HOBY?

HOBY is a youth leadership organization that identifies the leadership abilities of high schoolers and helps them apply those skills to their communities and the world. HOBY hosts numerous events that explore and develop topics related to leadership throughout the year, including:

State Leadership Seminars: three- to four-day events for sophomores hosted by a university.

World Leadership Congress: HOBY members in grades 10-12 gather with their peers from around the globe to learn how to make positive changes in their communities and become better global citizens.

HOBY Leadership Principles

HOBY recognizes that everyone is different and does not try to impart any particular attribute to participants—encouraging self-knowledge, uniqueness, and authenticity. The organization does provide guiding principles for students to incorporate into their lives in their own unique way. Those principles include:

Turn values, beliefs, and emotions into action

- Show generosity and honesty to others
- Demonstrate personal commitment
- Empower others
- Work together
- Maintain civility
- Think critically about societal issues
- Provide service to the community

Through these principles, HOBY has helped young people become catalysts for positive change in their home, school, workplace, and community.

The History of HOBY

HOBY was founded in 1958, by the actor Hugh O’Brian, after spending nine inspirational days in Africa working and volunteering with the Nobel Prize winner Dr. Albert Schweitzer. Early on, the organization was focused on young men in the Los Angeles, California, area, but the success of the program saw it expand nationally after a decade. In 1972, HOBY welcomed young women to join the organization.

Today, more than 7,200 high schools are represented at HOBY—with more than 12,000 students from across the United States attending a HOBY leadership seminar—and the organization remains focused on its original mission: to inspire and develop a community dedicated to a life of leadership, service, and innovation. Over four million volunteer hours have been logged by Hugh O’Brian Youth Leadership Award alumni.

How Do You Get Selected for HOBY?

All high school sophomores are encouraged to apply for a Hugh O’Brian Youth Leadership Award and the selection process varies from school to school—it can include anything from writing an essay to attending an in-person interview. Following the selection process, the school’s HOBY contact will choose one or two students to serve as HOBY ambassadors.

Complete the application, and return it to Mrs. Prothro by 11-11-2022.