

You've Got A Friend In Me: The Minnesotan Delegation

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Model Assembly. Model United Nations. Training Retreat. School Dances. Movies. Sleepovers. Corny YMCA Banquets. The 26 hour bus-ride. The Minnesota Delegation spends a lot of time together for a group of kids who are scattered across the state – even some across state borders.

In fact, Minnesota delegates were baffled to find out that delegates from other states meet each other just prior to CONA and don't see each other until the next official Youth in Government function. Although the vast majority of the Minnesota delegation met one another at YIG and wouldn't know each other otherwise; there is a distinctly unique bond between them.

This bond is initially perpetuated by the many meetings held for various groups of YIG participants throughout the entire year. Youth in Government head honchos and legends Orville Lindquist and Matt Lasure would never think twice about sending out an email or Facebook message calling for a meeting at their beloved state office. Once there, it is not unusual to find students finishing sentences of Orville's or knowing the details of Matt's dream '80s camp. They truly make Minnesota Youth in Government more of a lifestyle than merely an activity.

Most schools have their band geeks, theater junkies, and hard-core gamers, but there is an increasing phenomenon in Minnesota of large groups of YIG nerds. Not only do Minnesota delegates drive hours to attend frequent 4 hour meetings, but they traverse the Minnesotan countryside to attend completely unrelated activities.

Honestly, how many delegations can say they had an all-YIG prom group from all over the state? Or all-YIG kid sections sitting at any given person's graduation party? Abii Sheldon explained, "I've run out of room in the YIG group on my phone!" Scary enough as it is, Minnesota delegates have had sections roped off at concerts, sleepover parties just a couple days after CONA, and random appearances at each other's houses. We just can't get enough of each other.

This all seems silly and ridiculous, but ask any Minnesota delegate, and they'll tell you that they can't imagine life without it. This bond is more important than many of us realize. We don't go home from CONA or any other YIG function and forget about what we've experienced and learned. We refuse to accept that the conversations held at YIG can only happen there. We know that the bonds created by a life-changing, shared experience such as CONA are worth preserving and strengthening. We can only hope that everyone can realize what great friends those YIG nerds make and how much can be added to any program by some quality together time.