

**Overview, Timeline and Guidelines for 2022 Palmer Grant – ABHMS Cycle**  
**Virginia and Gordon Palmer Jr. Trust of the American Baptist Foundation**

The application period is June 1, 2022 – July 15, 2022, 11:59pm EDT.

THEME: “Thriving Youth and Young Adults: Faith and Hope for a Lifetime”

For you, O Lord, are my hope, my trust, O Lord, from my youth. — Psalm 71:5

FOCUS: Projects that focus on children, youth and young adults (CYYA) and create space for them to participate in the development of the project.

ABHMS will be looking to fund projects that focus on working with younger persons in our communities to 1) nurture their mental health; 2) positively develop their identity; 3) generate safe spaces for their growth; and 4) foster racial healing that honors diversity as a gift from God. Projects that bring together people who are economically, culturally and/or generationally diverse are encouraged. ABHMS will be looking for collaborations that help us to better understand and support the children, youth and young adults among us—whether they are part of our faith communities or outside of them—and celebrate the gifts and strengths they possess.

We welcome applications from congregations, camps, community ministries and college campuses that are partnering with others, preparing the way for, investing resources in, and attending to the faith development needs of persons under age 30.

**Proposals may be for existing or pilot projects. For any of these areas, applicants may choose to focus on one, two or all three of the target populations of children (infants–11) youth (12-17) or young adults (18-29). Please include plans for parental/guardian consent, proper screening and training of staff in accordance with state recommendations for children and youth safety.**

List some examples of the type of projects you are seeking.

**1) Mental Health with CYYA**

Awareness about mental health has risen as information about trauma, stress, depression and anxiety among young people is more accessible. These challenges are realities for churched and unchurched youth. We all need to practice consideration for the mental health of ourselves and others. The younger we can begin to develop that consideration, the better for our well-being.

Selected proposals will help CYYA and their caregivers to understand what CYYA need for their mental health and develop healthy coping skills and resiliency for their mental wellness. We encourage the partnership with mental health professionals.

**Examples**

- A) Via a 12-month program, middle and high school youth will participate in an art-based program (visual and performing) to safely share about their experiences in the past two years. We will meet virtually and in-person each month on Sunday afternoons. Staff will include a certified art therapist. All staff will have necessary training prior to program implementation.

- B) Recognizing that family wellness is a contributing factor to congregation wellness, we will provide training to develop healthy coping skills and resiliency for mental wellness. There will be two cohorts 1) elementary-age children with parent(s)/guardian(s); 2) middle school youth with parent(s)/guardian(s). This six-month program will utilize a pedagogy of family systems that includes age-based curriculum led by a trained facilitator.
- C) One of the ways God provides healing is through connection with creation. We will sponsor six guided intergenerational outdoor experiences (either day hikes or three- to four-day backpacking trips) based on interest and ability that help participants get connected with God, themselves and others. This project includes engagement before and after each outdoor experience to prepare and reflect on the experiences and their possible effect on our mental health.

#### Resources for Ideas

[Christianity Today's articles on mental health](#)

Pathways to Promise [www.pathways2promise.org](http://www.pathways2promise.org)

Wilderness Journeys <https://www.wildernessjourneys.org/> (includes consideration of differently-abled persons)

Mental Health Ministries <http://www.mentalhealthministries.net/resources/articles.html>

## 2) Identity Development with CYYA

Knowing, celebrating and nurturing “who I am and who God says I am” alongside others is an important part of healthy development for CYYA. Throughout our lives, we are bombarded with media messages that attempt to label us and define what should be important to us.

Selected proposals will help children, youth and young adults generate a healthy sense of self that builds self-esteem and also respects the identity of others. Project participants will recognize how their identity or self-understanding may show up and impact family, peer and employment relationships. They will be able to confidently answer the question “Who am I?”

### Examples

- A) Knowing that social media is here to stay, this project will explore how young adults can develop life-long health engagement with it. We will identify and practice five ways social media can be harnessed for good, build positive community and foster relationships of significance. We will also practice safe boundaries to minimize negative and harmful experiences with social media and avoid unintended negative consequences.
- B) Our project will focus on building self-esteem and cultural respect among middle school youth. Studies have shown that many children and youth of color grow up with low self-esteem in part because they do not hear enough about their history. This project will engage youth in positive cultural engagements/experiences to learn about and celebrate their history and culture and help develop identity within their race/ethnicity. It will also facilitate cross-cultural experiences of youth of various ethnic and racial background.
- C) We are a predominantly Chin-American congregation with first-generation American children who are trying to understand what it means to be American. This project will host 12 conversations and experiences through 12 months to explore the bridge between two cultures—

one of our native languages, cultures and practices and one of our American culture. There are cultural and generational challenges and hopes that our faith invites us to address, heal and explore, together. We will then offer our learnings to others.

D) This project will walk with youth ages 12-17 who are trying to develop their identity. *Three Big Questions That Change Every Teenager*, written by staff at Fuller Seminary, shares the findings of extensive research. Today's teenagers are searching for answers to these questions:

1. Who Am I?
2. Where do I fit? and
3. What difference can I make?

Through weekly conversations and a curriculum, we will explore these questions in a safe, caring environment where the youth are valued for who they are the unique gifts they bring. We will focus on affirming each participant as a beloved child of God with God-given gifts to bless the world. We will foster the development of positive images and self-esteem and discernment for building healthy relationships within home, school and community environments.

#### Resource

Social Media and Mental Health <https://nami.org/Your-Journey/Kids-Teens-and-Young-Adults/Teens/Social-Media-and-Mental-Health>

### **3) Addressing Racism for Racial Healing with CYYA**

As our world is becoming more racially diverse, racial hostility is also increasing. Racism dominates the news and continues to permeate our society. While God values all life equally, people struggle to honor others who are different from themselves and struggle to distribute access, resources and respect with equity. Racism is toxic for everyone—those who inflict it and those who are victims of it. Racism causes all of us to be less than who God created us to be. Children youth and young adults experience racism and also are among our best agents to address racism now and as they become presidents, CEOs, educators, elected officials and parents in the future.

Selected proposals will work with children, youth and/or young adults to provide education about the existence and consequences of racism, provide and practice resources for overcoming racism and provide positive cultural images and messages that celebrate the breadth of gifts/skills contributed by all races in the United States and Puerto Rico. We encourage partnership with professionals with cultural competency/humility.

#### **Examples**

A) This project focuses on developing positive racial identity that builds self-esteem and cross-cultural celebration. High school youth will lead the congregation in six Bible studies through the year that offer passages where God affirms diversity, e.g. Exodus 12:38; Acts 2; Ephesians 2 and Revelation 7. We will provide positive cultural images and historic and current messages about the breadth of contributions of all races and ethnicities in our nation and how race impacts a variety of experiences within the United States.

B) This project is a continuation of one we began in 2020 to raise awareness and action for racial healing, but this phase of the project will focus on middle school and high school youth. Persons

of faith, trained in cultural competency, will lead trainings and healthy dialogues about race with age-appropriate strategies to cope with discrimination in the school or the workplace and offer educational materials around respect and unconscious biases.

- C) This project facilitates intergenerational dialogues that focus on storytelling of racial experiences. We will invite older persons from the community of different races and ethnicities to speak about past and current experiences and travel to the communities where they were raised. We will incorporate virtual and in-person visits to history museums of different cultures. Young persons will share their understanding of past (or present) experiences and observations. As a community of faith, we will consider positive action that can advance racial reconciliation.

#### Resources for Ideas

The Kaleidoscope Group — <https://kgdiversity.com/>

New Baptist Covenant — <https://newbaptistcovenant.org/>

Be the Bridge — a book and initiative by Latasha Morrison <https://bethebridge.com/>  
<https://bethebridge.com/introducing-building-bridges-discussion-guide/>

#### 4) Safe Places for CYYA

The environments in which we live and grow have a significant impact on our development. Safe places provide nutrition, room for creativity, comfort and well-being. Safe places are free of physical, verbal and emotional abuse and violence. Safe places are also free of contaminated water and soil, pollution and other elements that are harmful to the earth and health of CYYA.

Selected proposals will give special attention to places where CYYA live and gather to foster growth and belonging and where there will be will not be exposure to discrimination, criticism, harassment or any other emotional or physical harm.

#### Examples

- A) The number of unsheltered/houseless young adults is increasing in our community. Six times a year, we will host a day-long outreach to provide a safe place for a good meal, shower, clothing, hair care, health care and connection to community services. We will also provide a photographer for those who would like a photo of themselves and offer them to join us in our worship services. During the other months we will offer warm meals and a safe place to hang out and receive spiritual care and support.
- B) This grant will supplement our summer and after-school enrichment program. In partnership with two other churches in our community, this project will expand our program for children ages 5-17. Youth participate in academic, recreation and artistic experiences three days each week during 11 months of the year.
- C) This project facilitates a safe place for youth ages 12-17 to be transparent and have difficult conversations about being Jesus followers in present day and practice the disciplines that nurture faith for a lifetime. We will invite youth in our congregation and community to participate in conversations. We will also invite parent(s)/guardian(s) to sessions where they can learn and practice good communication with their children that deepen their relationships with each other and with God.

- D) This is a community garden initiative led by three young adults to rebuild pride in our community, increase green space, decrease vandalism and violence and rebuild community. We will plant this garden in a vacant lot. Youth from the community will be invited to participate and plant vegetables or flowers. Working with a horticultural organization, participants will learn how to make a garden, plant seeds and care for the vegetables and flowers as they grow. Participants will also learn about cooking healthy meals from the garden harvest.

#### Resources for Ideas

Creation Justice Ministries <https://www.creationjustice.org/>

#### Questions to consider as you develop your proposal

1. How does the proposed project align with the theme, narrative and the focus area you selected (i.e., Mental Health; Identity Development; Addressing Racism for Racial Healing; and Safe Places)?
2. In what ways is the proposed project creative, interactive and address concerns within our current cultural context? Your project should include SMART metrics—Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timely.
3. What measures will be in place to ensure parental/guardian consent and state-regulated safety practices for working with children and youth for the duration of this project?
4. Describe how you will extend your care and nurture of the CYYA you will work with, beyond the scope of this specific project. In other words, when the project comes to a close, how will you tend to the relationships you've cultivated with the CYYA toward their continued spiritual formation and thriving?
5. Who is the target audience for the project? Identify diverse (geographic, cultural, age, etc.) community audiences being served.
6. How will your project nurture children, youth, and/or young adults in their journey of Christian discipleship?
7. What personal (individual life), corporate (church life) and public (outward-facing presence) impact do you expect to make through this project?

#### **HISTORY**

This grant opportunity is made possible because of the generosity of Virginia and Gordon Palmer Jr. – two lifelong Baptists. Virginia came from what she termed a “very poor family.” A speech pathologist and educator, she helped to develop the speech and hearing clinic at Temple University, Philadelphia. Gordon, an electrical engineer and a founder of an electronics component company, was a son of Gordon Palmer Sr., an American Baptist pastor who later served as president of what is now known as Palmer Theological Seminary, Wynnewood, Pa.

A trust was created in 1999 as a permanent endowment to the American Baptist Foundation. The trust is administered by the foundation in accordance with established guidelines and principles.