

NHI Lorenzo de Zavala Youth Legislative Session Frequently Asked Questions for Parents

- Q:** *My child is very shy and doesn't like to speak in front of people? Is this program for him/her? I know he/she won't like it.*
- A:** Most certainly! The LDZ engages students of varying learning preferences and styles. LDZ participants are challenged to not only use their verbal skills but also write effectively and work in groups. Part of the fun of the LDZ is meeting students from different schools and communities. Additionally, students receive no prior training to the program so they all start off together and learn collectively to navigate the game process. Critical thinking, constituency management, creative solution building, persuasive writing, and vision building are all areas tackled by the game-based LDZ program. Even the most shy child excels at the LDZ and comes home a more aggressive, focused, and self-motivated student.
- Q:** *My child is already in speech and debate/mock trial/student government in school. Why does he/she need this program? What will he/she learn in this that he/she isn't already learning there?*
- A:** These events focus on highly research based topics or require students to perform published works. At the LDZ, students are required to be creative and use fresh ideas and their own words to tackle tough questions about the future. While many other leadership experiences teach civics, government, and bring in experts, the LDZ is a hands-on learning experience that forces students to envision the future. Students craft proposals about the world they want to see versus presenting reforms or reacting to existing policy. Students are given the reigns of leadership and role play as the Governor, President, or Chair of a body of young intellectuals and thinkers. Instead of looking to books and websites, we encourage the students to look to each other for ideas.
- Q:** *Isn't this program for students who want to become lawyers or politicians? My child wants to enter medicine, engineering or a scientific field. What does he/she have to gain from this program?*
- A:** While many NHI alumni have gone into the legal and political sector, just as many have become professors, artists, doctors, and engineers. As we live in the "Communications Era," having the ability to think on your feet, create new ideas, and make a sound case for your opinions not only has benefits inside the court room but in obtaining funding for medical research, seeking out investors for new technology, and convincing publishers to promote your book. Overall, the experience prepares anyone to be a leader in any field, position, or community.

- Q:** *About this tuition, what does this cover? Why that amount?*
- A:** NHI tuitions are evaluated and set every year by staff executives and the Board of Trustees. Much like a university, the "cost of education" is higher than the tuition. Through private initiatives and university partnerships NHI is able to offer a reasonable tuition that includes the official t-shirt, personal training, curriculum at 1/3 the actual costs. By relying on trained volunteers and partner universities we are able to reduce our costs significantly. Many schools and districts help offset some costs with funding but also the majority of students seek out some form of sponsorship. This model reduces the LDZ cost from the actual \$3,000.00 value.
- Q:** *Do we have to come up with that tuition right now?*
- A:** No, at this time all that is required is the \$20 application (due 10/31/12) which is part of the total tuition. Once your child is accepted they are given over a month to send in their total tuition. Work closely with NHI reps to stay in contact with us about payment and financing options. You can also send a note to admissions@nhimail.com.
- Q:** *What if we can't afford the tuition? Are there payment plans? How about financial assistance?*
- A:** The first step is to pursue sponsorship through local businesses, community organizations, including family and friends. The majority of NHI participants get some financial support from local sponsors. In fact, upon being accepted, your child will receive a sponsorship letter from NHI's president that they can use to help them. Finally, remain in communication with the NHI Rep who will be able to speak with you individually about payment and financing options.
- Q:** *How about transportation to and from the LDZ? Are we responsible for getting our child there?*
- A:** Transportation is not included in the tuition fee. We try to offer programs in various areas of the U.S. and Latin America to help with costs. Once a child arrives via plane, train, or bus, we make arrangements to get the participant to campus.
- Q:** *How can we be assured that our child will be safe?*
- A:** The Institute's top priority is ensuring the safety, health and well-being of its participants. NHI mobilizes a team of certified and trained staff and alumni who manage the LDZ round the clock. Finally, university security and police departments are briefed and maintain close watch over NHI activities while on campus.

For more information visit <http://www.nhi-net.org>. Contact us at info@nhimail.com or (512) 357-6137.

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Q: *We hear about the bulk of the training being done by undergraduates, how are we assured of the quality of training?*

A: Like many educators will tell you, peer to peer learning is one of the most effective ways to teach students. NHI shares a similar philosophy in that the organization sets out to give youth the opportunity to be in leadership roles early on. Yet, all training is coordinated and managed by an NHI-trained Education Director.

Q: *How will this help our child with getting into college?*

A: Most recruiters will tell you that they look for students who will be active members of their university community. Leadership is one of the main traits they seek out. In addition, by participating in the LDZ your child becomes a lifetime member of NHI which provides your family direct access to the Institute's College Register (www.nhicr.org) a 100+ member organization of partner universities. Also, LDZ skills come in handy in college and financial aid interviews, essay writing, and seeking out letters of recommendation. Several institutions have created partner scholarships specifically for NHI students. 98% of all NHIers attend college and 67%+ attend graduate studies.

Q: *What is there for my child after he completes this program? Are there other programs for sophomores and juniors? How about opportunities to volunteer?*

A: We always remind our families that NHI is not a "one shot deal". NHI has opportunities for leadership development from 9th grade into college. The LDZ is traditionally followed by the high school capstone experience – the Collegiate World Series. At the CWS, students not only get an edge on college admissions and financial aid but they also conduct more indepth training on social entrepreneurship and inquiry based learning. The Collegiate Leadership Network is the college organization for undergraduates. Volunteer opportunities are endless and extend beyond college.

Q: *My child's GPA is below 3.2/88%, does he/she still have a chance of being accepted into the program?*

A: Yes, there is! Your child will be given probationary acceptance and asked to send a new report card at the end of the quarter. Also, you are asked to visit closely with the area NHI Rep who will be available meet with your family face to face.

Q: *Where are the Great Debates held?*

A: NHI Great Debate programs are held on in multiple states – Colorado, Texas, Illinois, New York, and Panama. For dates and exact locations visit www.nhi-net.org.

Q: *Where is NHI located?*

A: NHI's headquarters are located on a 46-acre ranch in a small community called Maxwell in Central Texas. The "ranch" is home to an old 100-year old Victorian mansion that is the home to our alumni center and museum. Our staff operates out of Esther Hall and behind the tree line is a retreat homestead for training sessions and guests. Maxwell is about 35 miles south of Austin and about 50 miles north of San Antonio.

Q: *Where is/was Lorenzo de Zavala?*

A: "LDZ" was the first provisional vice-president of the Republic of Texas. A scholar and political leader, he was instrumental to democratic movements in Mexico, Texas, and other areas. The President and Founder, Ernesto Nieto's parents used to manage a local park in Houston called "De Zavala Park", the name is a homage to their work as well.

Q: *Who funds NHI's work?*

A: NHI is a Texas private nonprofit corporation established in 1979. NHI is not grant dependent and instead marshals resources from local communities and alumni for support. NHI rarely receives any support from public entities but does work closely with school leaders to help offset family tuition costs. Talk to your local school board or principal about a partial sponsorship for your child.

Q: *What is "Celebracion"? How does my child qualify?*

A: Celebración is the annual NHI gathering of top award recipients, alumni, and outstanding participants nominated by the organization's summer Education Directors. Over 1,000 top youth participants and several hundred alumni gather for 4 days in the fall for a global conference of exchanging ideas, elevating the competition, and showcasing the community's top talent.

Q: *How do I get family members or a school/community involved?*

A: NHI has grown significantly from a small cohort of 90 students in Austin, Texas in 1981. We are always happy to connect with community leaders, parents, and school leadership groups that want to nominate their youth to participate. Our goal is to provide the future community with a highly developed cohort of talent – we are happy to expand our services to new communities.

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