

FALL 2009 YOUTH REPORT

AIS Youth, like the rest of the membership, is declining. Currently there are 150 youth members. There is only one remaining Classroom Iris Project, and that is in Salem, Oregon. The large City Academy CIP in St. Louis, MO has shut down temporarily, but has hopes of starting up again with new students and teachers. The CIP in King Co. Iris Society, Mercer Island, WA has also shut down temporarily with the intention of renewing membership soon.

The most active, growing regions with strong youth programs are Region 1 and Region 7. I believe this is due to the enthusiasm of the adult members in those regions, particularly Linda Ridlon of Region 1 and Claire Honkanen of Region 7.

A huge “THANK YOU!” to the Kansas City Convention Committee and all the gardens who contributed irises to the youth members of AIS. Every youth member received recent introductions from the Convention gardens, and in addition, each entrant in the Ackerman Essay Contest received a newer introduction.

In late August, many people received a letter from Roberta Paolo, executive director of Granny’s Garden School in Loveland, Ohio. I personally did not receive any type of communication from Roberta. After explaining a little about her program, which works with first through fourth grade students, she requested donations of irises. I know that affiliates in Regions 14, 15 and 21 sent more than 500 irises to this program. Thank you to all the generous people who cared enough to encourage youth in growing/appreciating irises.

The AIS Youth Website is currently ‘under construction’, but I am hoping it comes back stronger and better than ever. Thank you to Nancy Price for all her hard work in making the youth website so successful.

I constantly receive inquiries about CIPs and continue to send out information, but for one reason or another, most never travel further than the initial contact. I had one person ask just what the kids got for their dues of \$5, and when I explained about the Youth Handbook, two issues of the newsletter-The Iris Fan, the coloring contest, the Ackerman Essay contest, and the photo contest, her reply was, “That’s all?”. What can you do?

I continue to be an enthusiastic advocate of the AIS Youth Program and am available for any help, suggestions, or ideas.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl Deaton, AIS Youth Chair

