

YOUTH REPORT, FALL 2012
by Cheryl Deaton, AIS Youth Chair

This year 8 young people attended the AIS National Convention, two of them from Australia. We had a wonderful time exploring the gardens and getting to know the different customs from both countries. Each youth member was mailed an iris from the 2012 Convention gardens, and I have received thank you notes and emails from a few of the kids. Since region 17 has quite a few youth members (23), and includes the past 2 Cosgrove winners gardens, I hope the attendance at Dallas will be even better.

Currently there are 228 youth members, down 4 from the same period last year. There are 3 active CIPs in Region 18, plus one with 2 girls that is not very active at this time. One of the CIPs, City Academy with 17 students, is in transition and may not continue, but never fear, Jean Morris has started another CIP at Churchill Center and School with 17 students, so the numbers remain the same. (technically we have 245 youth members). I think the cancellation of many of the iris shows all over the country led to a drop in new membership. Typically we get most of our registrations in May/June.

A new CIP may be starting in Region 14 at Coarsegold Elementary Afterschool Program. I am in contact with Carolyn Hoover regarding this possibility. I have been approached by a teacher in Region 15 near San Fernando Valley Iris Society about beardless iris, so we are communicating and I hope we can get the students enrolled into a CIP there as well. SFVIS can donate Spuria and Louisiana iris to this project.

The CIP at Mercer Island High School (Region 13) is not being sponsored by their local iris club, King County Iris Society, so they are looking for a sponsor to pay the dues for the 12 to 15 students in the horticulture program. They have expanded their iris garden to include bearded iris as well as the beardless that they began with. They are enthusiastic and I will work hard to keep them in our program.

I am working with Carol Warner of the AIS Foundation for the Ackerman Essay Contest. This year's topic has been decided (John C. Wister wrote "The iris is the mainstay of the hardy garden". **What makes irises an outstanding garden plant and why do you like growing them?**) and will be announced in my column in the January issue of IRISES. Deadline is March 31, 2013.

The annual Coloring Contest is ongoing. Deadline for entries is November 10th this year. It is always interesting to see the creativity displayed by the youth members in the different age groups. They can use any media they want, and one year there was an entry that used colored glue.

We had a wonderful participation of youth in the AIS Photo Contest this year, with a new member, Edvinas Misiukevicius of Lithuania winning in many of the categories. He is 17 and I have been told that he hybridizes. I hope to hear from him soon about his

irises.

Postage is the largest expense I have for the youth program, so I am planning on purchasing multiple rolls of Forever stamps before the price increases in January. And I am considering a revision of the Youth Handbook to cut it down from 20 pages which will help with the printing and postage. I am always enthusiastic about our young people and encourage you to go out and recruit a youth member. You will be so glad you did!