

AIS YOUTH REPORT

FALL 2015

Youth membership averages between 300 and 350 annually. The majority of the youth members are entered into Classroom Iris Programs in Regions 14, 15 and 18.

One of our CIPs was affected greatly by the wildfires in northern California. The area around the school was burned, making the school start two weeks later than scheduled. Some of the families and the teacher lost their homes. The irises in the school garden seemed to like the ash that was blown into the area and they are doing well. The program will get going again soon, but at the moment it is on the back burner. Enthusiasm remains high with all the youth members in our CIPs.

Our annual Coloring Contest had 82 entries this year. The winning entries are being notified as we meet and their prizes have been sent. All youth members entering the annual Coloring Contest receive a cash prize (\$1) just for entering, then the entries winning their age group receive prizes as well.

Thanks go to the Portland Iris Society Convention Committee for shipping irises to all the AIS Youth members. Boxes were sent to either the RVPs or the Youth Advisors for distribution to the kids. This is an annual tradition going back more than a decade, and it is much appreciated by our young members. I get notes and pictures of their irises when they bloom the next year.

Fleur de Lis Gardens (Riley and Shirley Probst) have volunteered to send irises to every AIS youth member entering the Ackerman Essay Contest in 2016. This is just another way that caring adults help our youth to have newer irises to grow in their gardens and maintain their enthusiasm for our favorite flower.

I am working on some additions to the Youth Handbook, specifically in the Species section. I will be adding a world map and intend to show where irises grow in the wild all over the world. Many adults (myself included) are terribly ignorant when it comes to Species iris and the Youth Handbook contains nothing about them. The Handbook is just a guide and could contain much more substance which I hope to expand in the near future.

Our brightest stars are these young people. Mentoring them is a joy, not a chore. Please spend time sharing your love of irises with a youth member. You will be so glad you did.

Cheryl Deaton, AIS Youth Chair