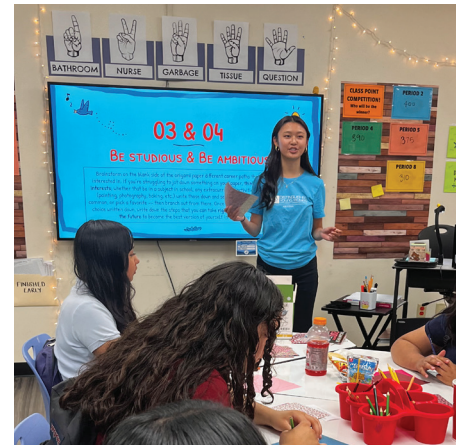
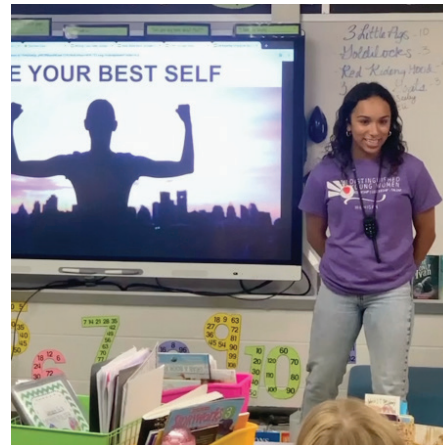


# be your best self

National BYBS Week  
April 20-24, 2026



## 2026 Chairperson Handbook

an outreach program of





## Overview

In 1987, Distinguished Young Women developed and launched the Be Your Best Self (BYBS) program as the organization's national outreach aimed at encouraging boys and girls all over the country to lead successful and productive lives. Through the BYBS program, Distinguished Young Women seeks to give program participants at the local, state and national level a means to make a positive and lasting impact on the world around them.

## Five Elements of the BYBS Program

The five elements of the BYBS program are at the heart of the Distinguished Young Women philosophy, and the program helps to instill those values in others. Be healthy, be involved, be studious, be ambitious and be responsible are the five elements that help define what it truly means to Be Your Best Self. In spreading the BYBS message to young people, we encourage them to choose to personally implement it into their own lives.

### **Be Healthy**

*Care for your physical and mental health*

### **Be Involved**

*Serve your community*

### **Be Studious**

*Stay in school and be a lifelong learner*

### **Be Ambitious**

*Set and achieve goals*

### **Be Responsible**

*Live by moral and ethical principles*



## National Be Your Best Self Week

**The 2026 National BYBS Week will take place April 20-24.** Distinguished Young Women participants across the country will encourage the message of the Be Your Best Self program.

## Chairperson Role for National BYBS Week

As a Program Chairperson, National Headquarters encourages you to take an active role in this year's National BYBS Week. We are counting on you to help spread the word to your 2026 Program Year participants about the Distinguished Outreach Award. You should let them know they are eligible to compete for this award if they choose to participate. In addition, State Chairs should remind the Distinguished Young Woman of their state about the requirements for the BYBS Satellite Award. We ask that you maintain open lines of communication with your participants and support them in their National BYBS Week efforts.



## **BYBS Program Structure**

### **Local Programs**

The BYBS Program is first introduced to participants at the local level. BYBS is one of the three core Life Skills Workshops every program must offer its participants.

Each Local Program is encouraged to involve their participants in delivering the BYBS program in a fun and creative way either in-person or virtually to a group of children in their community either (elementary school class or assembly, Girl Scouts, Boys & Girls Club, YMCA, after school program, etc.) prior to the Local Program production.

All Local Program participants are encouraged to continue sharing the BYBS Program with young people, especially during National BYBS Week.

See “2026 Distinguished Outreach Award” for information on a \$1,000 scholarship opportunity for Distinguished Young Women participants at all levels (excluding state winners).

### **State Programs**

Each State Program should develop requirements for a BYBS scholarship award to be given during the State Program each year. State Program participants will complete a BYBS presentation either in-person or virtually with a group of children in their community (elementary school class or assembly, Girl Scouts, Boys & Girls Club, YMCA, after school program, etc.) to fulfill the requirements of the BYBS award. Each State Program will specify to participants how BYBS presentations should be documented in order to qualify to receive the BYBS award during the State Program.

States are encouraged to involve their participants in delivering the BYBS Program in a fun and creative way to a local group of children during the week(s) prior to the State Program.

All State Program participants are encouraged to continue sharing the BYBS Program with young people, especially during National BYBS Week.

See “2026 Distinguished Outreach Award” for information on a \$1,000 scholarship opportunity for Distinguished Young Women participants at all levels (excluding state winners).

### **National Finals**

Participants competing in the 69th Distinguished Young Women National Finals will be eligible for two \$1,250 BYBS satellite scholarships. Class of 2026 State Representatives should refer to the most recent BYBS Handbook they received for updated guidelines on applying for this scholarship.

In June, participants will take part in BYBS Day while in Mobile, AL, for National Finals. They will deliver the BYBS program to community groups and further educate young people on what it means to Be Your Best Self.



## **Step By Step for Program Chairperson:**

### **Step 1: Contact your 2026 program year participants**

Contact your 2026 program year participants to tell them about National BYBS Week. You can easily export a list of your participants by logging into the Distinguished Young Women website and selecting your program. Make sure to mention the Distinguished Outreach Award to all local and state participants from the 2026 Program Year and the BYBS Satellite Award to state representatives who will be competing in National Finals this June. National Headquarters will communicate with all of the 2026 program year participants via email to provide them with their BYBS participant handbook and other important National BYBS Week information.

### **Step 2: Encourage participation**

Encourage your 2026 program year participants to participate in this year's National BYBS Week. Direct them to the BYBS participant handbooks for step-by-step information on how to prepare for National BYBS Week. The participant handbooks can be found at [www.DistinguishedYW.org/Be-Your-Best-Self](http://www.DistinguishedYW.org/Be-Your-Best-Self)

### **Step 3: Be available for questions**

Be accessible to your participants for any questions they may have while planning and preparing for their National BYBS Week presentations.

### **Step 4: Attract attention**

Create an event and/or posts on your Program's Facebook page with the dates for National BYBS Week. Encourage your participants to post about BYBS and their presentation on Facebook or other social networks leading up to National BYBS Week. Use the hashtags #BYBS2026 and #DYW in all of your posts. Utilize any other social media platforms to generate "buzz" about National BYBS Week.

### **Step 5: Celebrate National BYBS Week!**

Post items (links, status updates, etc.) to your Program's Facebook page announcing that it is National BYBS Week. Link back to the Distinguished Young Women website whenever possible. Encourage your participants to do the same on their personal Facebook page, Instagram account and/or Twitter account.

### **Step 6: Follow-up**

After the presentation, remind your participants of the requirements and deadlines for the Distinguished Outreach Award. State Chairs should also remind their Distinguished Young Woman of the requirements and deadlines for the BYBS Satellite Award given at National Finals. Encourage all participants to submit their materials on time!

### **Step 7: Continue the relationship**

Encourage your participants to continue their relationship with the children by sending cards and letters, and if possible, stopping by to visit. If the group or organization has a bulletin board, have your participants post the BYBS poster, which may remain year-round, to promote the five elements of the BYBS program. Sending an autographed group photo may also be a nice way to thank the group or organization for helping make the event successful.



## Scholarship Opportunities

### 2026 Distinguished Outreach Award

Eligible Participants: all local or state level program participants, (excluding state winners) who will graduate from high school in **2026**.

The winner of the \$1,000 Distinguished Outreach Award will be announced at National Finals in June 2026 in Mobile, AL. Participants must fulfill ALL requirements listed below to be considered for the Distinguished Outreach Award.

- Complete a BYBS presentation(s) either in-person or virtually with a group of children during National BYBS Week (April 20-24). It is strongly preferred that presentations be made to an audience of both boys and girls.
- Write a two-page report describing your BYBS presentation and experience. The report should be in essay format. A participant's submission may not exceed two pages, and photos should NOT be included directly in the report. The report is not limited to the National BYBS Week presentation(s) and should include any and all BYBS activities, presentations or projects in which the participant has been involved.
- Submit your best five photos from your presentations as separate attachments -NOT in the body of your essay document- via email, Google Drive, or Dropbox.
- Submit all required materials no later than May 15, 2026, to [BYBS@DistinguishedYW.org](mailto:BYBS@DistinguishedYW.org)
  - Two-page report, labeled with name, program, & program year
  - Five photos
  - Completed National BYBS Week Presentation Evaluation Form

### Be Your Best Self Satellite Award

Eligible Participants: State Representatives Only

Distinguished Young Women will award two \$1,250 scholarships for the Be Your Best Self Award at National Finals in June. Participation in National BYBS Week along with submission of the required materials for the BYBS Satellite Award is a requirement of the role as the Distinguished Young Woman of each state.

Participants must fulfill ALL of the requirements listed below to be considered for the Be Your Best Self Satellite Award.

- Complete a BYBS presentation(s) either in-person or virtually with a group of children during National BYBS Week (April 20-24). It is strongly preferred that presentations be made to an audience of both boys and girls.
- Write a two-page report describing your BYBS presentation and experience. The report should be in essay format. A participant's submission may not exceed two pages, and photos should NOT be included directly in the report. The report is not limited to the National BYBS Week presentation(s) and should include any and all BYBS activities, presentations or projects in which the participant has been involved.
- Submit your best five photos from your presentations as separate attachments -NOT in the body of your essay document- via email, Google Drive, or Dropbox.
- Submit all required materials no later than May 15, 2026, to [Valerie@DistinguishedYW.org](mailto:Valerie@DistinguishedYW.org)
  - Two-page report, labeled with name, program, & program year
  - Five photos
  - Completed National BYBS Week Presentation Evaluation Form



an outreach program of



**DISTINGUISHED  
YOUNG WOMEN**  
SCHOLARSHIP | LEADERSHIP | TALENT

## **Important Dates to Remember**

### **April 20-24, 2026**

National Be Your Best Self Week. Talk about the BYBS program and message on social media sites!

### **May 15, 2026**

Deadline to submit your essay to [BYBS@DistinguishedYW.org](mailto:BYBS@DistinguishedYW.org) (participant) or [Valerie@DistinguishedYW.org](mailto:Valerie@DistinguishedYW.org) (state representatives).

## **Have Questions? Contact us!**

Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions you may have about the Be Your Best Self program or National Be Your Best Self Week.

Valerie Mothershed

Operations Director

Office: 251-438-3621

[BYBS@DistinguishedYW.org](mailto:BYBS@DistinguishedYW.org) (Participant contact)

[Valerie@DistinguishedYW.org](mailto:Valerie@DistinguishedYW.org) (State Representative contact)

*\*This handbook, along with all of the documents, forms and resources mentioned can also be found in your website library.*



**National BYBS Week Presentation Evaluation Form**

Participant Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Program Name & Year: \_\_\_\_\_

High School: \_\_\_\_\_

Expected Year of Graduation: \_\_\_\_\_

Presentation Location (elementary school, Boys & Girls Club, YMCA, etc.):

\_\_\_\_\_  
Presentation Location Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date & time of presentation: \_\_\_\_\_

Summarize the presentation: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How many participants attended the presentation: \_\_\_\_\_

# of boys: \_\_\_\_\_ # of girls: \_\_\_\_\_ Age range: \_\_\_\_\_

Ethnicities represented (please circle):

Hispanic/Latino American

Indian/Alaska Native

Asian

Black/African American

Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander

White

Please list any TV stations, newspapers or other media outlets in your area: (this will help us ensure your local media is notified of your presentation if a press release is sent)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Note: Participants may make presentations to multiple groups.

**Please complete a separate form for each presentation.**

\*Please return this form via mail, email, or fax no later than May 15, 2026.



## Photography Release for Minor Child or Children

I hereby authorize Distinguished Young Women, hereafter referred to as “DYW,” to publish photographs taken during National Be Your Best Self Week, April 20-24, 2026, of myself and/or the minor child or children listed below, and our names and likenesses, for use in the DYW print, online and video-based marketing materials, as well as other DYW publications.

I hereby release and hold harmless DYW from any reasonable expectation of privacy or confidentiality for myself and for the minor child and children listed below associated with the images specified above. Further, I attest that I am the parent or legal guardian of the child or children listed below and that I have full authority to consent and authorize DYW to use their likenesses and names.

I further acknowledge that participation is voluntary and that neither I, the minor child, or minor children will receive financial compensation of any type associated with the taking or publication of these photographs or participation in Organization marketing materials or other Organization publications. I acknowledge and agree that publication of said photos confers no rights of ownership or royalties whatsoever.

I hereby release DYW, its contractors, its employees and any third parties involved in the creation or publication of Organization publications, from liability for any claims by me or any third party in connection with my participation or the participation of the minor children listed below.

### Authorization:

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to Children: \_\_\_\_\_

### Names and Ages of Minor Children:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_



## The Five Be's - Definitions & Examples

To make your presentations relatable and easy to comprehend, switch up your examples depending on the age of the kids you're speaking with!



### Be healthy.

Care for your physical and mental health

*Examples: move your body / talk about how you're feeling / get plenty of sleep*

### Be involved.

Serve your community

*Examples: join clubs and organizations / be a good teammate / volunteer in your neighborhood*



### Be studious.

Stay in school and be a lifelong learner

*Examples: complete assignments on-time / explore museums / join a study group*

### Be ambitious.

Set and achieve goals

*Examples: try out new hobbies / set long-term and short-term goals / dream big*



### Be responsible.

Live by moral and ethical principles

*Examples: hold yourself accountable / recycle / be a good friend*

## Be healthy.

*Care for your physical and mental health*

## Be involved.

*Serve your community*

## Be studious.

*Stay in school and be a lifelong learner*

## Be ambitious.

*Set and achieve goals*

## Be responsible.

*Live by moral and ethical principles*

**be your best self** ★

an outreach program of



## Be healthy.

*Care for your physical and mental health*

## Be involved.

*Serve your community*

## Be studious.

*Stay in school and be a lifelong learner*

## Be ambitious.

*Set and achieve goals*

## Be responsible.

*Live by moral and ethical principles*

**be your best self** ★

an outreach program of



## Be healthy.

*Care for your physical and mental health*

## Be involved.

*Serve your community*

## Be studious.

*Stay in school and be a lifelong learner*

## Be ambitious.

*Set and achieve goals*

## Be responsible.

*Live by moral and ethical principles*

**be your best self** ★

an outreach program of



## Be healthy.

*Care for your physical and mental health*

## Be involved.

*Serve your community*

## Be studious.

*Stay in school and be a lifelong learner*

## Be ambitious.

*Set and achieve goals*

## Be responsible.

*Live by moral and ethical principles*

**be your best self** ★

an outreach program of



I can be my best self by:

Be healthy

\_\_\_\_\_

Be involved

\_\_\_\_\_

Be studious

\_\_\_\_\_

Be ambitious

\_\_\_\_\_

Be responsible

\_\_\_\_\_

*I, \_\_\_\_\_, pledge to be my best self by implementing each of the elements of the Be Your Best Self Program into my own life.*

\_\_\_\_\_

(sign here)

\_\_\_\_\_

(date here)

I can be my best self by:

Be healthy

\_\_\_\_\_

Be involved

\_\_\_\_\_

Be studious

\_\_\_\_\_

Be ambitious

\_\_\_\_\_

Be responsible

\_\_\_\_\_

*I, \_\_\_\_\_, pledge to be my best self by implementing each of the elements of the Be Your Best Self Program into my own life.*

\_\_\_\_\_

(sign here)

\_\_\_\_\_

(date here)

I can be my best self by:

Be healthy

\_\_\_\_\_

Be involved

\_\_\_\_\_

Be studious

\_\_\_\_\_

Be ambitious

\_\_\_\_\_

Be responsible

\_\_\_\_\_

*I, \_\_\_\_\_, pledge to be my best self by implementing each of the elements of the Be Your Best Self Program into my own life.*

\_\_\_\_\_

(sign here)

\_\_\_\_\_

(date here)

I can be my best self by:

Be healthy

\_\_\_\_\_

Be involved

\_\_\_\_\_

Be studious

\_\_\_\_\_

Be ambitious

\_\_\_\_\_

Be responsible

\_\_\_\_\_

*I, \_\_\_\_\_, pledge to be my best self by implementing each of the elements of the Be Your Best Self Program into my own life.*

\_\_\_\_\_

(sign here)

\_\_\_\_\_

(date here)