

Youth Center for North America (YCNA)
2021 annual report



Vision - *A united world where fraternity is lived among all people.*

Mission - *YCNA inspires and mobilizes young people from all backgrounds to live for a more united world.*

Civic Engagement

March 28, [Civic Engagement, a virtual conference.](#)

The webinar on civic engagement provided a space to discuss methods and experience of active participation in the civic arena. Emphasis was given to communities working together or individuals working alone in both political and non-political actions to protect public values or make a change in a community.



The session's special guest speakers:

1) Quyen Ngo-Metzger, MD, MPH (Kaiser Permanente School of Medicine)

Topic: Life and Faith during a Pandemic

2) John Scianimanico

John spoke about choosing to run Pete Buttiege's campaign, restoring faith in the political system when people say they won't vote because they don't like either candidate or because they don't feel they make a difference and the steps our generation can take to learn how to become more active citizens in order to make positive changes in our communities.

Merchandise business

A business startup was created in 2021 with the intention of allowing visitors to take a part of the Mariapolis Luminosa experience home with them. The initial phase brought the team to research, learn and understand the experience people have when they participate in activities in Luminosa. When asked "What does Luminosa provide you with?", answers came back such as "A space and time to recollect myself, grow spiritually, grow in unity with others, celebrate special events for the Focolare family."

To the question "What do you miss about Luminosa?" someone replied: "I miss the atmosphere and the people. Miss the whole thing and vibe. The vibes come from the people there and the nature, no city noise."

Q: "If Luminosa had a motto, what would you say it would be?"

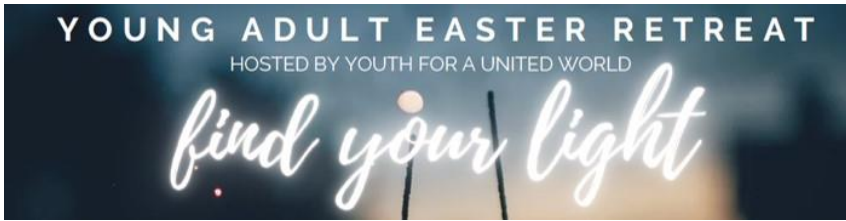
A: "A place to grow humanly, spiritually, and holistically."

With this awareness the next phases brought us to look for business identity, branding, and designs. The team is made up of Mina Barsoum, Maggie James, Joe Vazquez, Gustavo Lopez, Tim Schachner guided by Nick Sanna, Mike Morse and team lead Willie Murra.

Easter retreat

An Easter Retreat was hosted in April by the Youth for a United World in California with the theme "Find Your Light". As we approach two years of living with this pandemic many people have faced various obstacles





in their everyday lives. We chose this theme in hopes that we would be able to find the light in the darkest of situations. Whether it be through our own spiritual growth by finding the

light within our communities like this one, we hope our activities will be a source of encouragement to continue living each day with the light that comes from the Love of God and Love of Neighbors.

Dare to care: a year in review (webinar)

United World Week 2021 held in May was the conclusion of the year's specific campaign that focused on Active Citizenship and Politics for Unity with the slogan Dare to Care. This webinar took the audience on a journey through the year of Dare to Care where, through learning, acting, and sharing, we worked at answering the question *How can we bring care into every aspect of all our social interactions?* We heard stories from a family from Pennsylvania, a young adult from Houston and 2 members of the men's Focolare house in Harlem and how they opened their doors and helped a homeless lady.

[Video recording.](#)

The Color of Hope Project

The Color of Hope project was inspired by the crushing economic and public safety crises many Central American migrants were facing in 2021. They continued to abandon their homes to embark upon treacherous 1,600-mile journeys northward, to the US borders of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California.

To assist them, a campaign began last May to write **personal letters** and give **small gifts** as a reassuring sign that love and the warmth of friendship are still alive. Gestures of kindness and love help mend feelings of abandonment, build trust and give birth to HOPE. Letters, cards, coloring books, crayons and donations were collected and delivered to personnel directly serving south Texas border migrant children and minors who have been temporarily transferred to Corpus Christi, Texas.

Gen 2 Congress

The Gen 2 congress is an annual retreat for the gen in North America. The congress last June entitled "...and carry on" was an opportunity to go in depth in the spirituality and specific aspects of their gen life. After presenting themselves and a summary of gen unit/community life of the past year, they took time to discuss the following themes:

1) Sociological approach to diversity/ Pluralism with a focus on the challenges that can arise from loving people who are different from us and living the spirituality with one another given our diversity.

2) Three aspects of Evangelical Counsels: Poverty, Chastity and Obedience.





3) Presentations: “the realities of what a post-covid world looks like” and “going out to console/comfort people that are suffering/ lonely”.

Some gen also shared experiences on how they lived during the pandemic.

When asked “What did you learn during this period of Covid-19?” some answered: “It’s better to live in the present moment, because we never know what tomorrow will bring, so it’s better to enjoy that moment. And lots of patience”, “how much good can come out of difficult moments”, “I learned not to judge other people for their choices... at least I’m trying not to judge”, “Importance of friendship”, “I learned how to be productive within my daily and spiritual life from the comfort of my own home. Now, I am about to take what I learned and share that to the people who I will be seeing in the future and in-person after two years!”, “how to be a better friend.”

Blessed Chiara Luce Badano event

Blessed Chiara Luce Badano would have turned 50 last year 2021 so to celebrate her life, many came together last October 28th to hear her story through testimonies, art, and interactive games.

She died when she was only 18 and yet today her life, lived to the fullest, continues to deeply touch people throughout the world – especially young people – who are transformed by her light. [The celebration](#) was a moment to come together to get to know Blessed Chiara Luce and celebrate her 50th birthday.





Course on the spirituality

Together on the Journey: Gifted with a Spirituality.

This is an 8-week introductory course on the main points of the spirituality of unity which allows young people to follow a spiritual journey and explore ways to integrate their spiritual nature with their personal gifts. Two sessions of the course were held in the fall of 2021 for about 12 youth. Emphasis is put on the journey that leads to happiness and making a

difference in the society around them. Course content is inspired by the experience and insights of Focolare founder, Chiara Lubich.

Gen in Luminosa



Even though the Luminosa Youth School was closed in 2021 due to Covid-19, 5 gen came from Canada, California, Texas and New York to spend time in Mariapolis Luminosa to enjoy the city and live life with its citizens. Young people are always welcomed in Luminosa. But when the pandemic hit and the doors had to be closed, there were many questions the world had. We too wondered when it would end, how long would we have to wait. When these 5 gen asked to come, they were told there are no youth here, but if you are ok to live in the house by yourself and maybe quarantine a few days and be vaccinated, they said they still want to come. Although no group of young people was present, they still found something that benefited them. We understood that numbers didn't matter, what mattered was the life in the people they found, the community, the closeness, the joy. After he left, one gen wrote: "Luminosa was a wonderful experience. I was able to find peace there, being in a serene forest environment. It was also a joyous couple of weeks where I met new people, saw old friends, and got to know others. I also experienced the love of every person in the beautiful Mariapolis while also trying my hand at reciprocating that love at any time. I am thankful for my stay at Luminosa; it was an amazing experience."

The inhabitants of Luminosa were thrilled to have them here and continue to welcome the young people.

New for 2022

Leadership Workshop: "Adjusting the Sails."

Leadership inspired by the spirituality of unity prepares participants to lead and journey towards building a more fraternal and united world. Leadership is motivating a group of people and maximizing their efforts towards the achievement of that common goal. A workshop will be hosted June 12 to 18, 2022 in Mariapolis Luminosa for young adults ages 18 to 30.

The program fosters developing a holistic approach where participants integrate their character and values into their leadership while bringing their whole selves to the role: body, mind and spirit.

In a 3-part program, participants will explore and understand key elements of person-centered leadership, engage in specific tracks enabling participants to take a deeper look into leadership skills that are pertinent to the areas of Business, Service & Dialogue.



Green pathway

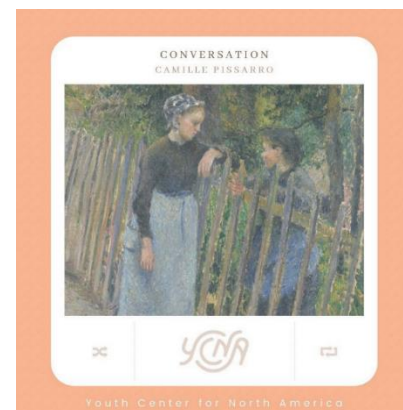
We are creating a toolkit with concrete steps to learn, act, share, and reflect about ecology and sustainability. There are many resources and links tailored for all age groups and

environments, from schools, to work, to faith communities, and more. Our goal is to urge individuals to take action, change their lifestyle for the better, inspire others, and remain constantly committed to the green pathway.

Social media - Instagram and Facebook

Social media is the public image of any organization, thus it is crucial that it reflects the goals and ideals of our group. In order to do this, we are pushing for a more modern and consistent post schedule, account organization, and publication format. Implementing these new design objectives allows for a clearer, more direct, and more visually appealing source of content.

The plan is straightforward yet progressive. Each month a color and topic theme: Pink - Dialogue for January 2022, Green - Love for February, for instance. Every week three posts are compiled and pushed out on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.



Key terms

Gen - young adults who feel called to live Focolare spirituality in a deeper way. They are called Gen 2, for “second generation.” Like others in the movement, Gen 2 regularly get together in smaller groups to share, support and encourage each other as they live Focolare spirituality in their daily lives.

Keep in touch through...

Website: www.ycna.focolare.us

Email: youthcna@focolare.us

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/ycna.official>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/youthcenter.na>

Linktree: <https://linktr.ee/ycna>

Youtube: Youth Center North America

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TO CARE**