# AOA Youth Committee Minutes
# April 13, 2026

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| Committee Members: | Alan Siktberg | Dena Drago (Secretary) |
| | Laurel Shouvlin | Nancy Chapel |
| | Staci Forshee | Dianna Timmerman |
| | Stephanie Glyptis | Bonnie Kittrell (Chair) |
| | Cadence Rearden | |
| Staff Liaison: | Claryssa Sladek | |
| Board Liaison: | Gina Glasscock | |
| Meeting: | Virtual Committee Meeting<br>Monday, January 12, 2026<br>8:00 PM Eastern Time/5:00 PM Pacific Time/7:00 Central | |

**1.0** Call to Order / Opening Remarks **Bonnie**

**Meeting Called to order at 8:12 PM ET**

**2.0** Youth Handler Program Proposal

**2.1** The committee discussed a proposed Certified Youth Handler Program intended to:

1. Provide youth with meaningful responsibility and leadership opportunities at shows, and
2. Help address the need for qualified handlers during halter, walking fleece, and related classes.

**2.2** The committee discussed possible eligibility criteria, including age, size, maturity, prior show experience, and the ability to safely handle alpacas, including showing teeth when necessary. Members generally agreed that demonstrated ability should be emphasized over a strict age-only requirement.

**2.3** Additional ideas included:

1. Pre-show or evening-before training led by a judge
2. Visible identification for approved youth handlers, such as armbands
3. Gradual involvement for less experienced youth, beginning with simpler support roles such as holding animals ringside

**2.4** Committee members shared examples of similar successful youth volunteer/handler models from prior shows.

**2.5** Laurel will draft proposed language describing the purpose, expectations, eligibility considerations, and implementation framework for the Youth Handler Program and distribute it to the committee for review.

**3.0** Youth Invitational Show Outline / Model

**3.1** Bonnie presented a draft outline for a proposed AOA Youth Invitational Show model.The committee agreed the outline could be a useful planning resource for youth leaders and show organizers. Members noted that the document should likely be refined further, especially regarding planning timelines.

**3.2** Action Items: Bonnie will place the draft document in the committee's Google Docs folder for review and suggested edits. Committee members will review and comment on the draft over the next couple of weeks. After review, Bonnie will submit the document to Margie for consideration and possible referral to the SRC.

**4.0** Reference Materials / Graphics

**4.1** A member asked whether graphics from the youth handbook could be enlarged and used for an upcoming skills-related project. Laurel confirmed that the materials are AOA property and may be used. She also offered to send higher-quality source images if needed.

**5.0** Summary & Adjournment **Bonnie**

Next meeting date **May 11, 2026** .