

# SYTA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

AUGUST 21-24, 2026  
PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA



## Hello SYTA Community,

As Summer overtakes Spring, the excitement is building for Annual Conference! The next two months are sure to fly by. Schedules are starting to come together and we're already facing some **important deadlines** to make the most of your time.

There's plenty to pad your itinerary with, and more to come! Check out the **highlights of our first day** together to kick Conference off with a bang, and review our **education, tours, and evening events** to keep the fun going until the very end.

[REGISTER FOR CONFERENCE](#)

## Meet Our Travel Talk Sponsors & Sessions

Don't miss **Travel Talks** on **Sunday, August 23**. This exclusive event kicks off with a **Tour Operator Only Breakfast** from 7:45 AM to 8:30 AM in Rooms 401/402, followed by destination breakouts from 8:45 AM to 9:30 AM. Operators will split up to join interactive, high-energy sessions: face off in a game show format during the *Alabama Feud*, join Virginia Tourism and ten partners for a *Share the LOVE* trivia challenge, or test your regional expertise to win a prize package with *Valley Forge & Montgomery County, PA*. Pick the destination you want to hit, dive into the friendly competition, and get connected!



### Sweet Home Alabama

- **Location:** Meeting Room 404
- **Session:** *Alabama Feud*
- **What to Expect:** Get ready for some high-energy, friendly competition! Alabama Tourism is bringing the excitement of a classic game show format to your Sunday morning. Survey says: you will walk away with fantastic destination insights, a closer look at what makes Alabama an exceptional student tour choice, and plenty of laughs to kickstart your day.

### Virginia is For Lovers



- **Location:** Meeting Room 405
- **Session:** *Education + Fun + LOVE = The Ingredients of a Great Student Tour*
- **What to Expect:** Join Virginia Tourism and ten of their premier destination partners for a fun-filled *Share the LOVE* presentation. Discover the latest updates on new attractions, student-centric experiences, and developments that keep Virginia ranked as a Top 10 destination for student groups. Afterward, put your knowledge to the test with an interactive trivia challenge for a chance to win gift cards, iconic *Virginia is for Lovers* swag, and other great prizes!

### Valley Forge Tourism & Convention Board



- **Location:** Meeting Room 403
  - **Session:** *So you think you know Valley Forge & Montgomery County, PA?*
  - **What to Expect:** Test your expertise in a fun, interactive challenge that uncovers hidden regional gems and tackles trivia that trips up even lifelong locals. Expect friendly competition, plenty of entertainment, and your chance to take home an exclusive Valley Forge destination prize package!
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# GLOBIES

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The student travel industry produces remarkable marketing every day—inspiring videos, compelling stories, and content that moves students to pack a bag and go. For the first time, we're recognizing it.

SYTA is thrilled to introduce **The Globies**—the inaugural Global Student Travel Marketing Awards. Taking place on the last full day of the SYTA Annual Conference in Pittsburgh, this exciting awards breakfast kicks off at 8:00 AM on Monday, August 24, 2026. It's your platform to cheer for your friends and potentially take home a trophy for your organization.

This is your moment. Submit your own campaigns, nominate a peer whose content stopped you mid-scroll, and help us spotlight your finest work.

Submission takes about four minutes. **Deadline: July 24, 2026.**

[SUBMIT YOUR ENTRY](#)

[SIGN UP](#)

## Mentor/Mentee Virtual Meet-Up #2

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 17 | 2:00PM ET

Signed up to be a **Conference Mentor** or **Mentee**? Make sure you register for our [Mentor/Mentee Virtual Meet-Up #2](#)! This is your opportunity to ask all of your questions, learn the ins and outs of Conference, and meet other Conference attendees.

[SIGN-UP](#)

## Thought Leader Sessions

**GROW · LEARN · IMPROVE YOUR BUSINESS**

This year's Annual Conference features an exceptional lineup of education sessions led by industry thought leaders. In each Conference eNews, we'll be highlighting sessions you won't want to miss, but there isn't time to attend every

one, so be sure to find the sessions that speak most to you and add it to your schedule!



#### THOUGHT LEADER SESSION

### Beyond the Room Night: Measuring and Communicating the True Impact of Group Travel

DONALD LILLEY | [VISIT BALTIMORE](#)

In this session, Donald Lilley explores how destinations can move beyond standard reporting to more effectively measure and communicate the full economic and community impact of group and student travel.



#### THOUGHT LEADER SESSION

### Number Don't Lie, But They Do Hide: Own Your Financials, Not Just Your Business

ANDREA ROSS | [CULTIVATE ADVISORS](#)

In this session, Andrea Ross teaches business owners how to understand the numbers actually driving the business and feel confident in the business decisions you're making.

View these sessions, along with others, on the [Education webpage](#), and keep an eye out for future session spotlights in upcoming Conference eNews updates. Plus, don't forget, educational sessions will be taking place Friday through Monday at Annual Conference.

[SEE THE FULL EDUCATION LINEUP](#)

#### FRIDAY FEATURE

### Four Can't Miss Activities on Opening Day

The first day of Annual Conference is exciting, overwhelming, and energizing all at once. Don't get lost in the fray—plan early for these activities you won't want to miss.

#### Sightseeing Tours

Experience the ever-evolving and must-see medley of all that Pittsburgh has to offer! From river cruises to vibrant local art, you can't be bored in the "Burgh." Tours are included with registration, and booking instructions are on our website. Take a look at your options and start planning your perfect day.

[PICK YOUR TOURS](#)

### New Attendee Get Together & Orientation

First time attending the Annual Conference? We want to welcome you to the SYTA family! Join us for our New Attendee Get Together and Orientation from 6:00 PM to 7:00 PM. It is the perfect opportunity to meet peers, ask questions, map out your week, and kick off your experience.

### Education

Take your pick between two exceptional Thought Leader Sessions happening on opening day from 3:30 PM to 4:30 PM. Each presentation contains highly valuable industry insights and actionable strategies. It is a fantastic way to hit the ground running with all the great education you will receive this week!

**PICK YOUR SESSION**

## Welcome Reception at Shorty's Pins x Pints

Kick off the conference with an energetic Welcome Reception hosted by the Conference Committee and proudly sponsored by Visit Savannah. Join fellow attendees from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM at Shorty's Pins x Pints for a social evening of interactive games, great drinks, and plenty of fun networking opportunities.

**INTEREST FORM**

## THE SYTA YOUTH FOUNDATION NEEDS YOU



Have you been looking for a way to help support the Foundation? Here are a few different ways to choose from!

### **Donate to the Live Auction**

Help us make this year's **SYTA Youth Foundation Auction** a memorable and successful event! This auction is a meaningful opportunity to support the Foundation and help create life-changing travel opportunities for youth through scholarships and programs.

Interested in donating an item? Contact [info@sytayouthfoundation.org](mailto:info@sytayouthfoundation.org) for more information. And don't wait long to show your support and get your brand in front of attendees—all donations must be submitted by **July 24, 2026**.

[MAKE A DONATION](#)

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### **Furry Friends Calendar**

Friends of the Foundation are wagging their tails with excitement to launch the **"Furry Friends" Calendar Fundraiser!** Check out how you can feature your pet in the Calendar or simply purchase one while directly supporting student travel. It's a 'woof-woof' for everyone!

[LEARN MORE](#)

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### **Run/Walk/Slumber Registration**

The **Run/Walk/Slumber** is back—and registration is open! Every step, stride, or even “slumber in bed” helps support an incredible cause. Don't miss your chance to be part of this impactful, fun conference experience!

[REGISTER](#)

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS!**

**Upcoming Dates and Deadlines**

# JUNE

**17** Mentor/Mentee Virtual Meet-Up #2

# JULY

**1** Registration Fee deadline

**8** Business Appointment portal closes

**22** Business appointment schedules released

**23** "Know Before You Go" All-Attendee Webinar

**24** SYTA Youth Foundation auction items due

**29** Hotel block deadline for discounted room rates  
Final deadline for name changes & substitutions  
Sightseeing tour sign up deadline

**31** Mobile app launches (subject to change)

# AUGUST

**6** Volunteer Orientation Webinar

**17** SYTA Youth Foundation auction opens

**21** SYTA Annual Conference begins!

**STAY ON TRACK**

## Partner with us for the 2026 Annual Conference!

A special welcome to our newest sponsors! See the full list and learn more about partnership opportunities.

- Pittsburgh & Its Countryside
- Universal Orlando
- Charlottesville Albemarle CVB
- HHM Hotels
- Datafy



## Sponsor in Pittsburgh!

Sponsorships for the 2026 Annual Conference are getting exciting! Don't miss your chance to make a splash this year and connect with **Reed Warner** at [rwarner@syta.org](mailto:rwarner@syta.org) to lock in your spot.

[VIEW 2026 SPONSORS](#)

[SPONSORSHIP CATALOG](#)

### MORE WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

## Pre-Conference Webinars

Want more ways to prepare for Conference? Check out our upcoming and recorded Virtual Education sessions where we discuss everything you need to know!

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WED

### Appointment Webinar

2:00 PM EST | 11:00 AM PST

Learn what to expect during your business appointments and prepare for a successful session.

[WATCH](#)

JUNE

17

WED

### Mentor/Mentee Virtual Meet-Up #2

2:00 PM EST | 11:00 AM PST

Join the group of mentors and mentees to get your questions answered and learn the ins and outs of SYTA's Annual Conference!

[REGISTER](#)

JULY

23

THURS

### Know Before You Go

2:00 PM EST | 11:00 AM PST

We can't wait to see you for the 2026 Annual Conference! Learn everything you need to know for Pittsburgh.

[REGISTER](#)

*If you aren't attending Annual Conference, be sure to keep up with SYTA via your eSYTA news and social for upcoming education and events details!*

[HOTEL & TRAVEL](#)

[REGISTRATION](#)

[SPONSORSHIP](#)

[MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS](#)

SEE YOU IN PITTSBURGH

August 21-24, 2026



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Already registered? Share the excitement on social—and don't forget to use your [virtual attendee badge](#)!

**#2026SYTA**

