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Legacy Youth Institute begins fifth year by championing faith and family

Branson, MO – October 25, 2016 – Legacy Youth Institute (LYI), a leadership and mentoring program for high school juniors, began its fifth year this fall. Students from 6 Taney and Stone County high schools are participating in this six-session program designed to equip young leaders to shape the culture of our areas by preserving and passing on our “Ozark Mountain Spirit”—a deep respect for Faith, Family, Friends, Flag, and ensuring a preferred Future.

“We want to equip and empower our youth to take a leadership role in influencing the future of Ozark Mountain Country,” said Jory Rolf, Director of the LYI program. “LYI challenges students to see themselves as a vital part of preserving the legacy of our area. The program gives them opportunities to learn from community leaders, but also to practice living out these values in a way that influences those around them.”

The September LYI session—Championing Faith—was held at Shepherd of the Hills and focused on how faith has and continues to impact Ozark Mountain Country. Students heard presentations from long-time resident Edd Akers on the history and heritage of the area and Branson Bible Church Pastor Jeff Griffis on what it means to have a biblical worldview.

“This session has given me the opportunity to learn more about the area and realize how grateful I am to live here,” said Hollister student Colton Haefeker.

“After today, I am excited to hear from other community leaders and to keep building relationships with the other students in the program,” said Branson student Haley Johnson.

In last week’s LYI session held at Silver Dollar City, students heard from Jack Herschend, co-founder of Herschend Family Entertainment, about championing family within business, discovering what you are called to do and doing it with all of your heart.

“It was nice to see someone [Mr. Herschend] who has been so successful be so humble and encouraging to others,” said Reeds Spring student Sarah Bishop. “He is genuinely concerned with others’ best.”

“It was encouraging to see a large company like Silver Dollar City that wants to see people succeed and encourages people to make a difference,” said Galena student Jonathan Martin.

LYI students were challenged and encouraged by Mary Kellogg, owner of the Titanic Museum, on the importance of working together as a team and the value of good character in students’ lives.

“I was inspired by Ms. Kellogg’s resilience and ability to manage people in a kind and caring way,” said S of O student Faith Wilson.

Later in the day, Jim Brawner, President of Team Barnabas, taught students how to improve their interpersonal skills and leadership potential, starting in their families, based on their personality types. Brawner emphasized that learning to maximize their personality strengths and to minimize their personality weaknesses enables them to treat others the way they would like to be treated.

“I liked how Mr. Brawner talked about personalities and helped us understand more about why we act the way we act,” said Reeds Spring student Austin Bradfield. “Learning to apply what we’ve heard today will not only help us now with our families and friends, but also in the future.”

Each of LYI’s six sessions explores a different core value of Ozark Mountain Country—Faith, Family, Friends, Flag, and ensuring a preferred Future. The next session - Championing Flag - will be held on Wednesday, November 9. For more information about the Legacy Youth Institute, please contact Ozark Mountain Legacy at (417) 598-1314, or visit www.ozarkmountainlegacy.org.

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Ozark Mountain Legacy is our area’s non-profit organization dedicated to preserving, promoting, and championing our core values of Family, Faith, Friends, Flag, and Future to ensure the continued success of our Ozark Mountain Spirit as we Pass It On to future generations. (www.ozarkmountainlegacy.org)

Please Contact us for higher resolution pictures:



Legacy Youth Institute Students – Class of 2016-2017



Students from the LYI Class of 2016-2017



LYI Students take an in-depth tour of the Glassblowers shop at SDC



Jeff Griffis, Pastor of Branson Bible Church and former missionary, shares on the importance of having a Biblical Worldview



Jack Herschend, Herschend Family Entertainment, shares with LYI Students at SDC



Edd Akers shares the history and heritage of our area at Shepherd of the Hills Homestead



Mary Kellogg, owner of the Titanic Museum, shares with LYI Students at SDC



LYI Students learn from the SDC Blacksmith