



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Legacy Youth Institute class of 2017 presents initiatives at graduation banquet**

Branson, MO – April 17, 2017 – Students participating in this year’s Legacy Youth Institute (LYI), a six-session leadership and mentoring program designed to equip student leaders to pass on the area’s “Ozark Mountain Spirit” to future generations, celebrated their completion of the program at a graduation banquet held at the Best Western Inn and Conference Center in Branson West.

LYI students from Branson, Galena, Hollister, Reeds Spring and School of the Ozarks presented their legacy initiatives, which are designed to champion one or more of the legacy values—Family, Faith, Friends, Flag and Future—in their schools and communities.

“We want these LYI students to realize that even though they are young, they have an important role to fulfill in preserving the legacy of our community,” said Jory Rolf, Ozark Mountain Legacy. “We have encouraged them to not only personally commit to preserving the values of the area, but also to model for their peers how to do that. These school initiatives are a great way for them to practice being legacy leaders right now.”

Hollister students were so inspired by the LYI “Championing Friends” session, at which they got to meet representatives from and volunteer at various local non-profit organizations, that they plan to coordinate school-wide volunteer days where their fellow students will have the opportunity to give back to the community.

Students from Galena reported that last year’s LYI students from their school have successfully raised the total scholarship money to send two students per year to Camp Barnabas, for the next seven years, far exceeding their initial initiative goal. Camp Barnabas is a Christian camp for kids and teens who have life-threatening illnesses and disabilities.

This year’s LYI students from Galena organized hygiene and school supply drives to support Generation Next, a local ministry that supports students in Kenya. As seniors, the Galena LYI students plan to raise money to purchase “life straws,” simple water purification devices, for Generation Next.

Students from School of the Ozarks are planning a worship / game night on May 12 at their school to raise money to donate to a local food bank.

The LYI students from Reeds Spring got involved in an existing freshmen mentorship program at their school called H.Y.P.E. (Helping Young People Excel), which is designed to ease the transition for students entering high school and to provide support and encouragement from older students.

Branson LYI students asked areas businesses to donate toward “staycation” packages that included vouchers for lodging, food, and attractions for three district families. The LYI students were able to present one of the staycation packages to a family.

2015 LYI graduates Madi Bagg from Reeds Spring and Kyle Kapella from Hollister delivered remarks to the current LYI students. Bagg discussed how her experience in LYI shaped her ability to be a leader with her peers.

Kapella encouraged the LYI students to adopt “an initiative mindset” that allows them to see the needs around them and to choose to make a difference. He explained that area leaders want to support young people because an “investment in them is an investment in the community” and encouraged the LYI students to take advantage of this support.

“We have been so impressed with the passion and enthusiasm of the now 135 students who have gone through the LYI program,” said Rolf. “They understand the importance of preserving and passing on the values of their communities, and I believe our future is in good hands.”

For more information about the Legacy Youth Institute, please contact Ozark Mountain Legacy at (417) 598-1314, or visit [www.LegacyYouthInstitute.org](http://www.LegacyYouthInstitute.org) or [www.ozarkmountainlegacy.org](http://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](http://www.ozarkmountainlegacy.org))



2016-2017 LYI Students – Graduation Banquet



LYI Students from Branson High School sharing their LYI initiative via video



LYI Students from Reeds Spring sharing the impact of their initiative



LYI Students from School of the Ozarks sharing their plans for their LYI Initiative



LYI Students from Galena High School sharing their LYI Initiative



Hollister High School LYI Initiative



2017 LYI Graduation Banquet



The Rolf Family of "Family Anthem" – sharing Dinner Entertainment



2017 LYI Graduation Banquet



2017 LYI Graduation Banquet



Jory Rolf, founder of Legacy Youth Institute, challenging the 2017 LYI Class