

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

Jory Rolf

Ozark Mountain Legacy

Phone: (417) 598-1314

Email: jory@ozarkmountainlegacy.org

Website: www.ozarkmountainlegacy.org



Legacy Youth Institute class of 2014 honored at graduation banquet

Branson, MO – April 24, 2014 – 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.

Over the course of the school year, LYI students from Reeds Spring, Hollister, Bradleyville, Galena, Branson, School of the Ozarks, and Hurley have been equipped to preserve and pass on the legacy values present in Ozark Mountain Country – Family, Faith, Friends, Flag, and a preferred Future. Each LYI session focused on a different value and challenged students to consider how they can champion that value now and in the future.

“The Legacy Youth Institute has been a terrific experience for our students,” said Galena High School Principal Bob Baker. “They have taken the lessons learned at the monthly sessions and have used them to improve the lives of all students in our building.”

As a part of the LYI experience, students from each school were asked to develop and implement an initiative that champions one or more of the legacy values in their schools. These initiatives are designed to encourage fellow students to participate in hands-on opportunities that reinforce the values of the area.

“LYI was an enjoyable experience and, in ways, we all branched out,” said Galena High School student Maegan Hall. “The initiatives we took will make a difference and benefit others.”

The students presented their initiatives at the Graduation Banquet. LYI students from Reeds Spring, Bradleyville, Hollister, and Galena presented unique initiatives that will help position their fellow students to better succeed both now and in the future. The Reeds Spring students plan to develop a peer mentoring program that pairs upper and lower classmen during homeroom time, as well as to begin the school year with an Olympic-style competition that lasts throughout the year, in an effort to help create a stronger sense of community and belonging within the school.

Students from Bradleyville plan to begin their “One Day at a Time” campaign, an effort that utilizes student and community leaders in a variety of ways to encourage students to see that each decision they make now matters for their future. They also plan to hold coat and food drives for students in need.

Hollister LYI students plan to work with fellow student groups, Student Council and the Impact Team, to improve the dress code standards at the school. A primary strategy of this initiative is to engage the student body in the process so that they discover the connection between the way they dress and their levels of self-respect.

Students from Galena—inspired by the success of “Team Bear,” a basketball league for students in the district with special needs—plan to raise funds to send these students to Camp Barnabas. Proceeds from their “Glow Run” on September 13 will support this initiative.

LYI students from School of the Ozarks and Branson focused on initiatives that would support non-profit organizations. The School of the Ozarks students wanted to promote community awareness of local non-profits by asking businesses along the strip to display information about these organizations on their LED marquee. Several business have begun to display the information.

Branson students named their initiative “Operation Next,” an effort to raise \$5000 in support of fellow classmate Riley Banks’ organization, Generation Next, a ministry that serves children in Kenya. The Branson students plan to kick off this fundraising campaign with a walk-a-thon later this spring.

“What a pleasure it has been to work with such a talented and dedicated group of students in the Legacy Youth Institute,” said Barbie Kolb, Branson High School LYI Coordinator. “It is inspiring to see our future leaders working hard to learn, exemplify, and pass on the values of the Ozark Mountain region.”

Banks, a Branson High School senior, spoke to the LYI students about her journey with Generation Next, which began after a visit to Kenya when she was 13. After seeing the great need for simple items such as school supplies and basic hygiene necessities, Banks was determined that she could do something to help. In addition, her organization has funded the opening of a school, and this summer they will open an orphanage.

“When you find something that you are passionate about, you can’t help but get involved,” said Banks to the LYI students. “I encourage you to get involved, make a difference, and leave your legacy.”

The LYI students are committed to shaping the culture around them so that they will leave a positive legacy for their schools and community.

“Give a man a fish; he eats for a day. Teach a man to fish; he eats for a lifetime. Teach a man to teach another man to fish, and a community is transformed,” explained Jory Rolf, LYI Director. “We have encouraged LYI students to not only personally commit to preserving the values of the area, but to teach their peers how to do that too. Our young people are doing this, so we know that the community will be in good hands in the future.”

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

###.

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)

PICTURES from the LYI Graduation Banquet and the LYI Year...



LYI Graduation Class of 2014



LYI Graduation Banquet



Riley Banks, Branson High School Senior, challenges the LYI graduates to “make a difference and leave their Legacy.”



2013-2014 LYI Students – at the Champion Family Day at Silver Dollar City



Pete Herschend challenging LYI students to Champion Family in every area of their lives and community



LYI students participate in Team Building activities at Shepherd of the Hills Homestead during their opening retreat on Championing Faith.



Nikki King, Bradleyville High School Junior, chats with a Veteran during LYI's Champion Flag Day.



Kristy Graber, Branson High School Junior, helps to sort donated food at CAM during LYI's Champion Friends Day.



2013-2014 LYI Class at CofO for Champion Future Day

List of the students that participated this year and their schools:

Bradleyville High School:

Shekinah Clemans
Lauren Combs
Adrian (Nikki) King
Gabriel McCleary

Branson High School:

Kristy Graber
Christopher Haynie

Theresa Ruiz
Justin Silver
Robert Taylor

Galena High School:

Maegan Hall
Dawnelle Lebow
Nadia Prine

Hollister High School:

Andrew Schoenecke
Carter Williams

Hurley High School:

Preston Gamble
MacKenzie Keithley
Makayla Wilson

Reeds Spring High School:

Kaitlyn Daniels
Kaileigh Verheyen
Hunter Verheyen

School of the Ozarks:

Daniel Betzer
Allexous Hunt
Jacob Russell