

Local Students Headed to Washington, D.C.

Graham County Electric Cooperative is sending four students on a trip of a lifetime

Four area high school juniors have been selected to join an Arizona delegation of 50 students and chaperones attending the 2016 Washington Youth Tour in June. Tevin Broadhead and Aleesha Clonts of Safford High School, along with Brianna McBride and Conner Palmer of Thatcher High School, will represent Graham County Electric Cooperative for a weeklong tour in Washington, D.C.

GCEC's Washington Youth Tour requires students to take a written test and complete a 350-word essay on an assigned topic. This year's topic was, "If you could fix one of the problems facing today's youth, what would the problem and the solution be?"

After scores were tallied, finalists were interviewed by a panel of judges, and the winners selected.

The Arizona delegation will gather with more than 1,700 other high school juniors from across the nation and see Congress in action. Students are taught the importance of our nation's history, the democratic process and how co-ops work.

Tevin Broadhead

Safford High junior Tevin Broadhead is the son of Michele and Jonathan Driver and Lyle and Dayna Broadhead.



Tevin Broadhead



Aleesha Clonts



Brianna McBride



Conner Palmer

In his essay, Tevin says he thinks about combatting the negative effects that technology has on today's youth.

Tevin writes that one solution might be to have schools focus on developing and strengthening social skills and emphasize the correct use of technology. He says having corporate sponsors promote motivational speakers in schools to emphasize what is expected in the workplace may be helpful.

Besides being in National Honor Society, Letterman's

Club, and participating in sports, Tevin loves reading, running, learning new languages, hunting, fishing, riding horses and being outside.

He would like to carry on a family tradition and join the United States Marine Corps with a military occupational specialty in tactical air operations module/air defense technician or infantry.

His recommendation letter states Tevin is observant and comprehends things quickly and is able to teach and lead

his peers.

Tevin says he is a people person who understands how to work with others to achieve a specific goal and appreciates the opportunity to represent GCEC.

Aleesha Clonts

The daughter of Cord and Emily Clonts, Aleesha is involved in many Safford school activities, including Future Business Leaders of America, Interact, Best Buddies, soccer and tennis. She loves playing the piano, baking, beekeeping and baby-sitting.

Aleesha writes in her essay that she believes motivating youth to succeed is a problem facing America today. Some solutions might be to let students with good grades get out early for lunch, give specific students Fridays off or excuse high-achieving students from taking finals.

By helping motivate students now, they will realize learning, working hard and getting good grades really does matter. Students will have a brighter future and can be a positive contribution to society.

Aleesha's recommendation letter says she is committed, focused and is dedicated to extracurricular activities and classes. Aleesha has proven that through hard work and perseverance, she can accomplish tasks in a timely manner and with accuracy.

Aleesha believes she will make a good GCEC representative for the tour because she is honest, curious, cheerful and helpful.

Aleesha would like a career in the medical field, and is leaning toward becoming a veterinarian or a pharmacist.

Brianna McBride

Thatcher student Brianna McBride is the daughter of Bryan and Nadine McBride.

She is involved in the community by raising animals for the Graham County Fair, varsity triathlon, Operation Christmas Child, Make a Difference Day, helping provide Christmas for a family in need, cleaning cemeteries, volunteering at a nursing home, and participating in the Angel Tree Program that provides Christmas gifts for children and adults.

Brianna's essay was about how technology has become a dominant force in everyday life. Youth are becoming so addicted to and reliant on cell phones and social media that they are unable to function without them, writes Brianna in her essay.

Simply put down the phone and spend quality time with people, she writes. Most teenagers do not notice how big of a distraction and problem their cell phones are. Parents need to educate and help their teenagers use their phones wisely.

Brianna's recommendation letter says she is smart and takes school seriously. She is a well-rounded individual, has effectively served in many leadership positions and is a great example.

Brianna plans to graduate from a four-year university and pursue a career in home health.

Conner Palmer

Conner Palmer believes the more educated a person is, the more empowered they become. His parents, Michael and Julie Palmer, along with his teachers, have taught him to be eager to learn.

Conner wrote in his essay that "the problem" isn't the problem; the problem is how you handle the problem. He believes the more technology we have, the less face-to-face time we have. Youth have forgotten how to speak to people face to face. Technology should be mastered and used in a way that will help us reach our full potential as individuals. Limiting our time on devices will give us social opportunities to grow and develop lasting personal relationships with others.

Like the other winners, Conner is involved in many activities, including Boy Scouts of America, church and school choirs, cross-country and track, football, basketball, National Honor Society and is junior class vice president at Thatcher High School.

Conner says he is courteous and kind to those around him and gets along well with people of all ages.

"I'm clean in my appearance, language and conduct and will not lower my standards of living for others," he says.

Conner is looking at the nursing program at Northern Arizona University to become either a nurse anesthetist or anesthesiologist.

"I want to learn and grow," he says. ■