

Holyoke FCCLA parliamentary procedure team top in nation

Written by Holyoke Enterprise

Not only did Holyoke High School's Family, Career and Community Leaders of America parliamentary procedure team bring home a gold medal from the FCCLA National Leadership Conference, but they surpassed all competitors to earn the top score in the nation in the competition.

Taking first in the nation was the icing on the cake for Holyoke, who returned from the July 7-11 national competition at the Gaylord Opryland Resort and Convention Center in Nashville, Tenn. with two gold medals.



Holyoke FCCLA members who attended the National Leadership Conference in Nashville, Tenn. July 7-11 are pictured with their medals, from left, front row, Danielle Brandt, Brenda Hernandez and Rubi Canales; and back row, Erin Vieselmeyer, Ben Martinez, advisor Karen Ortner, sponsor Brian Ortner, Alex Yanez and Molly Brandt.

Members on the parliamentary procedure team included Molly Brandt, president; Ben Martinez, vice president; Erin Vieselmeyer, secretary; Alex Yanez, treasurer; and Danielle Brandt, member.

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To earn a gold medal, an individual or team must score a 90 or higher out of 100 possible points.

This marks the 19th year running that a Holyoke parliamentary procedure team made it to the national conference and came back with a gold medal.

Because of Holyoke's history of parliamentary procedure success, the Holyoke team was asked to perform their project twice, once for judging and once to be videotaped. The video will then be used as a promotional tool to show what the category is and how projects should be put together.

"It was a huge honor and a little intimidating. Because we have done so well, the kids didn't know if they wanted to show other teams how it's done because they are that competitive," Holyoke FCCLA advisor Karen Ortner said.

Focus on Children also earns gold

Brenda Hernandez and Rubi Canales also earned a gold medal for Holyoke in the Focus on Children category with their project "It's a Girl Thing."

The theme for the conference was "Discover Your Voice." The goal is to challenge participants to confront the issues youth are facing today by gaining the necessary skills through leadership development and competition.

More than 7,000 students participated at the National Leadership Conference. Over 3,600 of the students took part in the competitive events.

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All seven of the students from Holyoke also served as either Student STAR event evaluators or room consultants, which Ortner called a great learning experience as they were able to see the creativity of the other projects and learn more about what other projects had to offer.

Those serving as evaluators were Ortner, parliamentary procedures; Molly Brandt, chapter service display; Canales, life event planning; Hernandez, job interview; Martinez, national programs; and Vieselmeyer, teach and train. Those who acted as room consultants were Yanez, chapter service display and Danielle Brandt, chapter showcase manual.

Doc Hendley served as the keynote speaker for the event. Hendley has launched a fund-raising initiative for clean-water projects to bring awareness to the world's freshwater crisis.

Students also enjoyed a few youth session speakers. Mike Smith, an Imperial, Neb. native, spoke on leaving a legacy through leadership.

Members also attended a number of workshops. Some topics covered at these workshops included campaigning to stop texting and driving, seeing the power of the brain and effectiveness of goal-setting and a culinary class centered around biscuits and cornbread.

Holyoke FCCLA members also went on a ride on the General Jackson Showboat, toured Andrew Jackson's Hermitage, saw Carrie Underwood at the Grand Ole Opry, danced at the world famous Wildhorse Saloon, visited Nashville Shores and toured the City of Nashville.

The 2013 National Outreach Project was "No Kid Hungry." With a goal of eliminating hunger amongst children, FCCLA raised over \$85,000 for the cause.

Brian Ortner joined the group on the trip as a sponsor.

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The three Holyoke seniors who attended, Molly Brandt, Martinez and Vieselmeyer, all earned their gold medals for the fourth consecutive year at the National Leadership Conference.

“FCCLA has taught me to be comfortable in front of crowds, hardworking, flexible and able to work with people,” Vieselmeyer said of her time in FCCLA.

Freshman Danielle Brandt said the experience helped her gain confidence while senior Molly Brandt noted FCCLA motivates students to work on projects that they otherwise would not be a part of, such as the service projects.

FCCLA currently has over 200,000 members in nearly 6,500 chapters. Since being established in 1945, members have strived to make a difference in their families, careers and communities by addressing important personal, work and social issues.

Holyoke Enterprise July 18, 2013