

D.C. Bound



Area students earn free trip to nation's capital

For the first time, Graham County Electric Cooperative will send seven local students, rather than the usual four, to Washington, D.C., in June, all expenses paid.

This was made possible because GCEC formed a nonprofit foundation that uses funds from unclaimed capital credits and Operation Round Up funds to give back to the community in the form of educational trips, scholarships and other community needs.

Students selected for the 2019 trip are Kyler Napier and Vivianna Talgo from Ft. Thomas High School; Levi Thygerson and Morgan Miller from Pima High School; Grace Haller and Katelyn Martin from Thatcher High School; and Ella Peterson from Safford High School.

GCEC requires Washington Youth Tour students to take a written test, complete a 500-word essay and be interviewed by a panel of judges. This year's essay topic was, "What do you think the biggest energy challenges will be for your generation, and how can you and your electric cooperative help meet those challenges?"

GCEC students will team up with 45 other students from Arizona and travel to Washington, D.C., to gather with more than 1,800 other high school juniors from across the nation.

Besides touring the U.S. Capitol, Arlington National Cemetery, the Smithsonian Institute and other museums and memorials, students will see Congress in action. They will be taught the importance of our nation's history, the democratic process and how cooperatives work. It will be a trip of a lifetime.

Kyler Napier

Ft. Thomas High School junior Kyler Napier is the son of Kerri and Sam Napier. In his essay, Kyler says the biggest issue is electricity use and the need for more power and transitioning to more renewable resources. He feels people can do their part by spreading awareness in our communities of the issues.



Kyler is involved in many clubs and organizations that help his community. A Boy Scout, he is working on his Eagle project. His reference letter states he is always willing to work and do whatever is asked of him, and has exemplary values and standards.

Kyler is FFA vice president, a member of the athletic club and a member of Skills USA. He loves his auto and agriculture classes at school, which provides hands-on learning and life skills. His hobbies include working on small gas motors and riding dirt bikes.

Vivianna Talgo

Ft. Thomas High School junior Vivianna Talgo is the daughter of Delvina Irving and granddaughter of Elouise and Harrison Talgo Sr. from Bylas.

Vivianna loves playing basketball and volleyball. She has played three years of varsity volleyball and is in her third year of varsity basketball. She is junior class president, is president of FBLA and president of Skills USA. Vivianna participates as a member of the Native American Cultural Club. She has participated in multiple pageants and was Junior Miss Mt. Turnbull Rodeo Queen in 2016-17. Vivianna has won many sports conference awards.

In her reference letter, Vivianna is described as displaying a high degree of integrity, responsibility and initiative. She would rather be a leader than a follower and can be found going above what is required by giving the extra effort.



Levi Thygerson

Levi, the son of Leann and Troy Thygerson, is a junior at Pima High School.

In his essay, Levi wrote of three energy challenges: abuse or overuse of energy, addiction to technology that uses energy and how uneducated the



public is on the wasting of energy.

“Energy challenges are all around us, and it’s up to us to look for ways to fix them,” he wrote.

His reference letter says Levi is a master of balance. He is an active community participant, holding leadership positions in his church, maintains high scholastic achievement and excels in extracurricular sports.

Levi loves basketball, reading, movies, history, camping, traveling, music and volunteer work. He is a member of the basketball team, National Honor Society, tennis team, FBLA and Gear Up Link crew leader.

Morgan Miller

Morgan Miller, a junior at Pima High School, is the daughter of Brad and Alliene Miller.

Morgan wrote that schools in the valley and the electric co-op should work together to solve energy storage problems, by providing education, including assemblies in the schools, high school classes and STEM days, giving every student the opportunity to recognize their responsibility to assist in finding a solution to our solar storage problem.

Morgan is involved in the community as a youth family history consultant, volunteer for Eastern Arizona College children’s plays, church service projects, church leadership and student council.

Her school activities include drama club, show choir, Link Crew, Acapella and student council. Her career goals are to study musical theater at BYU-Provo and audition for Broadway musicals in New York.

Morgan loves the town of Pima even though she has only lived there a little more than two years.

Grace Haller

Thatcher High School junior Grace Haller is the daughter of Eric and Annie Haller.

Grace enjoys music, sings, and plays the piano and violin. She loves reading, basketball and running.

Her reference letter stated that Grace is a hard worker and always puts forth her best efforts. She is talented and accomplishes hard things because she is willing to push herself. She is a wonderful student and a genuine person who is



kind, giving and honest.

Grace stated in her essay that the world faces many energy challenges today as society is dependent on energy. Looking toward renewable resources can give alternative ways to power energy that is healthier and more affordable without the worry of overconsumption and pollution.

Grace’s career goals are driven by her desire to serve others. She would like to work in education or social work, where she can help individuals, families and especially children.

Katelyn Martin

Katelyn Martin, a junior from Thatcher High School, is the daughter of Courtney and Dustin Hansen.

Katelyn aspires to be a lawyer and help others learn how to optimize their rights. Her hobbies include reading and writing.

“Writing has always been a way for personal expression in small ways such as argument essays or journal entries,” she says.

She is heavily involved in Future Business Leaders of America and has shadowed various leadership members of her chapter. FBLA has helped her learn universal professional standards.

In her reference letter, Katelyn is described as a dedicated student who is working hard to attend a four-year university after high school and is interested in political science.

Ella Peterson

Ella Peterson attends Safford High School and is the daughter of Caryn and Michael Peterson.

Ella’s hobbies include tennis, soccer, traveling, mathematics, reading and singing. She has many school activities, including Great Role Models Initiating Togetherness (GRIT), Future Business Leaders of America, Gear-Up Club secretary/treasurer, sports medicine club member and being an athletic training intern for Safford High School.

Her dedication and ability to juggle her academic and extracurricular activities are extremely admirable qualities and her peers look to her as a role model, her reference letter stated.

Ella plans to enter the police academy. Her love for learning and passion for our country and its history enables her to be prepared for the trip. ■

