

The CVEA Community Foundation Helps Shape Tomorrows Leaders



Left to right, Gerek Chmielowski, Leah Johnson, Kelsey Pascua, Brian Ducek, Timothy Kimble, and Jon Scott

The CVEA Community Foundation is committed to enriching the educational experience of our local students and supporting future members of the Cooperative. Each year, CVEA participates in the Alaska Power Association Youth Leadership Program; providing students in the Copper Basin and Valdez life changing opportunities.

2016 Idaho Youth Rally

This year, CVEA awarded three students the opportunity to attend the 2016 Idaho Youth Rally hosted by the Idaho Consumer-Owned Utility Association (ICUA).

The Youth Rally provides a one-week rural electric-leadership program to high school sophomores and juniors. It is six days filled with fun and learning about consumer-owned electric utilities, developing leadership skills and self-esteem, meeting area students and building lasting relationships with other students

from Alaska and the Pacific Northwest.

Sharon Crisp, of CVEA, chaperoned six Alaskan students; two from Homer Electric, one from Kodiak Electric, and three from CVEA including Timothy Kimble from Valdez, and Gerek Chmielowski and Jon Scott from the Copper Basin. These students joined roughly 85 other students from Idaho, Wyoming, Washington, and Oregon.

The week was packed full of activities that included educational sessions on the electric industry, motivational speakers, and fun.

The students learned the basics of electricity and utility career opportunities and heard from industry leaders on important industry issues. They also had a session on grassroots training from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) where they simulated all aspects of running for office, including giving campaign speeches. Students toured the Idaho State Capitol

building and saw a very powerful safety demonstration.

One afternoon was spent learning about teambuilding by completing a cooperative course of activities, demonstrating how much more successful teams can be if they work together.

The students listened to a solemn drug awareness panel, hearing from inmates who told their stories, how bad choices regarding drugs have affected their lives, and what they are going through now trying to make their lives better. This session demonstrates the sad reality of drugs and how easy it is for one or two bad choices to have a detrimental effect on their lives and the lives of everyone around them.

Students also heard from Monty Stiles, a federal prosecutor and US attorney who supervised the Organized Crime/Drug Enforcement Task Force, who talked to the kids about drugs. Instead of the typical don't do drugs message, he shows students actual real-life photos and tells them true stories that exemplify the drug problem in America. He connects the dots and shows them the circle of people it affects whenever someone buys drugs; from the person using, to their family, the dealers, the dealer's family, to the children and innocent bystanders who are harmed, all the way to the American who pays taxes and medical costs that are used to fund medical needs of users and babies born addicted to drugs. His powerful message is always captivating.

A motivational message was given from world champion and Olympic wrestler Ben Kjar, who defied significant odds to finally learn who he was, his strengths, and what it takes to be successful. He encouraged kids to be themselves, to know their value, and to always strive



to be their best self.

Along with learning, there was plenty of time for fun. Students went bowling, spent an evening at a roller rink and an entire afternoon at Roaring Springs Water Park where they enjoyed water roller coasters, lazy rivers and wave pools, car races, mini golf, bumper boats, laser tag, and a huge arcade. They also had two dances, bbqs, and an ice cream social.

Finally, students demonstrated their talents and creativity during the annual talent show. Alaska performed a great skit about tourism in Alaska and Idaho and CVEA's Timothy Kimble sang and played piano to a song he had written and composed himself.

Overall, CVEA's students did well throughout the week. Top honors went to Brian Ducek, of Homer Electric, who received a \$500 educational scholarship and a spot on the NRECA Youth Leadership Council. All of our students commented on the exceptional value of this opportunity. According to Timothy, this trip was probably the best trip of his life.

Applications for the 2017 Idaho Youth Rally will be available in December. If you have questions on the Rally or any



of the CVEA Community Foundation programs, please contact Sharon Crisp, CVEA Director of Communications, at crisp@cvea.org. ■

Top left, CVEA representatives at the Idaho State Capitol
 Top right, Alaska delegates posing for a group picture on picture day
 Left, CVEA's Timothy Kimble singing and playing piano at the talent show
 Above, a live safety demonstration given by line men from Raft River Electric Cooperative

