

THE
AMERICAN
LEGION

BOYS STATE
OF KANSAS

2019

THE WEEK



June 2-7, 2019
Kansas State University
Manhattan, Kansas

A WEEK THAT
Changed
MY LIFE



THE
AMERICAN
LEGION

**BOYS STATE
OF KANSAS**

The week of the American Legion Boys State of Kansas Leadership Academy presents delegates with challenges. It could be something as simple as being away from home for the first time or learning to work with people who are not like you. Either way, it provides an immersive experience to develop self-identity, learn mutual respect and build civic responsibility. It is a platform for you to experiment in exercising leadership on a variety of levels because leadership is an activity and not a position.

The week is bracketed by arrival and departure. You only have so much time in the program, but so much happens between those two points: strangers become lifelong friends; an understanding of democracy develops; growth takes place. The key is to go forth and do good in your world.

This yearbook — The Week — allows you to look back at those moments between the brackets. The hope is your experience was inspirational and truly proved to be a week that changed your life.



[BOYS STATE
OF KANSAS]

2019
THE WEEK

WELCOME TO THE WEEK



Thank you for attending the 2019 session of the American Legion Boys State of Kansas Leadership Academy! You were selected by members of your community as one of the top young men from the state of Kansas and chosen to have the firsthand experience of Boys State.

The mission of the American Legion Boys State of Kansas Leadership Academy is to be a relevant, interactive, problem-solving experience in leadership and teamwork that develops self-identity, promotes mutual respect and instills civic responsibility. I hope during your time at Boys State you were able to experience these attributes and have a little fun in the process.

From the beginning, you were challenged to dive in and get engaged, and not sit on the sideline and watch the week as it goes by. If you took this challenge you inevitably faced failure during the week, and that's OK! The possibility of failure can deter even the most confident men and women from taking a chance, and risking vulnerability. Our failures, as much as our successes, help define who we are as leaders, and as men. Michael Jordan once said, "I can accept failure; everyone fails at something. But I can't accept not trying." I hope that during your time at Boys State you took many opportunities to try.

As you reflect on your time at Boys State, I hope that you can take a step back and appreciate the magnitude of progress that was made. Government entities were formed, city, county and state officials were elected, legislative and court systems created, and the media staff was there to cover it all. You accomplished quite a lot in such a short period of time, and you couldn't have done it alone. The amount of work accomplished took teamwork and cooperation, and everyone had to play their role to ensure success. Individually, we are limited in what we can accomplish, however, when we work together we are able to increase our capabilities exponentially.

When you first arrived you were a single entity — one of more than 400. Leaving Boys State, I hope that you feel a sense of community, and take pride in the communities formed during your time. I hope that you took pride in what you were able to accomplish to move your community forward during your time at Boys State. Civic engagement is a responsibility shared by many and you have a role to play. Exercise your right to vote, stand up for what you believe in and do what you can to improve your community.

As the week went on, you likely became close friends with those around you that shared in your Boys State experience. Now, as an alumnus of the American Legion Boys State of Kansas you are a member of Statesmen's Club, our alumni organization. You join the thousands of Kansas Boys State delegates before you, and those that will follow as some of the best and brightest from the State of Kansas. I hope that you share your Boys State experience with pride and always remember Boys State!

Jake Ellis
Executive Director
American Legion Boys State of Kansas Leadership Academy



“To inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state and nation.” That is the purpose of the American Legion Boys State program. It was organized by the Department of Illinois in 1935. With Charter No. 5, the Department of Kansas was among the first to institute this weeklong government-in-action program.

The American Legion Boys State of Kansas was held in Wichita for 26 years before moving to the University of Kansas in 1963. It stayed there until 1992 when the program moved to its present location on the campus of Kansas State University.

The Boys State program is available to any high school senior-to-be who meets academic criteria and demonstrates leadership potential. American Legion posts, as well as civic and church groups, sponsor delegates to this fine learning-by-doing, youth-in-government program.

Almost 50,000 young men from across Kansas have participated in Boys State and performed nearly every function of city, county and state government. Former delegates, members of the American Legion and Sons of the American Legion return each year to serve as counselors and advisors. Many of them work year-round on ways to improve the curriculum and structure of the program.

At the conclusion of each session, two delegates are chosen by their peers to represent Kansas at the American Legion Boys Nation in Washington, D.C. These two individuals participate in a learning-by-doing program that focuses on our government at the national level.



[WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING]

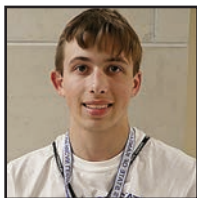
WHY DID YOU COME TO BOYS STATE?



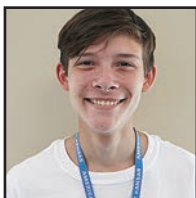
Joseph McCray

"I came to Boys State because of my colonel at Washington High School (Kansas City, Kan.). He said I was one of the (AFJROTC) cadets that was a good fit for it, and I trusted his judgement."

"One of the things I wanted to do was learn how the government works. In the media, I'm hoping to expand my horizons. Each person has their own story. As an ethical journalist, I have to tell that story."



Nicholas Burket



Trenton Wagner

"I came to Boys State because my uncle had been here, and my parents and I thought it would be a good idea. It would help me later in life to know how the government works."

Staters arrive for 2019 session

The 82nd session of the American Legion Boys State of Kansas Leadership Academy started off with delegates arriving at the Kramer Conference Center on the campus of Kansas State University to check-in and get the week started.

According to Boys State Director of Operations Troy Fowler, 404 delegates arrived to be a part of the program.

After going through the check-in process and meeting their counselors and fellow Staters, delegates entered the whirlwind of the first day.

The main event of the day was Opening Ceremonies held at McCain Auditorium. The delegates heard from Executive Director Jake Ellis, Director of Development Thane Chastain, and Program Coordinator John Shively, each sharing more about the week laid out before them.

The keynote speaker was Alejandro Rangel-Lopez, a 2018 Boys State delegate who had a significant impact in his home community of Dodge City.

When he found out the only polling location in his town was being moved outside the city limits, making it difficult for all residents to be able to cast their votes, he took action.

In tandem with the American Civil Liberties Union, he filed a lawsuit against the county in an attempt to increase voting access for all Dodge City citizens.

After going through the lawsuit process, Rangel-Lopez and the ACLU eventually succeeded in having two polling locations opened in the city. The story made national headlines.

Rangel-Lopez attributes his time at Boys State to his civic engagement.

"I had already been involved in some community organizations before I came to Boys State, but I was too scared to speak up," he said. "After I attended Boys State, it was here that I learned I had a voice and my voice was valuable. It meant something to have a young person's voice on issues as important as voting rights or minority rights. I learned a lot here.

I have a lot of people to thank for what I've been able to achieve and for what the future holds."

Ellis said the Opening Ceremonies did a good job of setting the tone for the week.

"Hearing from 2018 Boys State delegate Alejandro Rangel-Lopez and the impact he has had in his community since attending Boys State sends a powerful message that you can leave Boys State and immediately have an impact on your community," he said. "Opening Ceremonies introduces Boys State to the delegates, and from the get-go it becomes clear that Boys State will be unlike any other experience our delegates have ever had at a camp."

Following the events at McCain, the delegates returned to their county areas to sign up for positions such as city council, county commission, media, highway patrol and many others.

The day concluded with program participants working within their assigned positions.

As the delegates began their work within the program, Rangel-Lopez said he hopes the participants have a life-changing experience.

"Utilize what you learned at Boys State. Step out of your comfort zone and speak up for what's right," he said. "As long as you keep moving forward and keep persisting, you'll achieve things you never imagined. That's not just some cheesy thing. It's true. If you give up after the first thing you encounter, it will be very difficult for you to achieve something notable."



Eishenhower County delegates watch Opening Ceremonies.



Executive Director Jake Ellis addresses the delegates at Opening Ceremonies in McCain Auditorium.



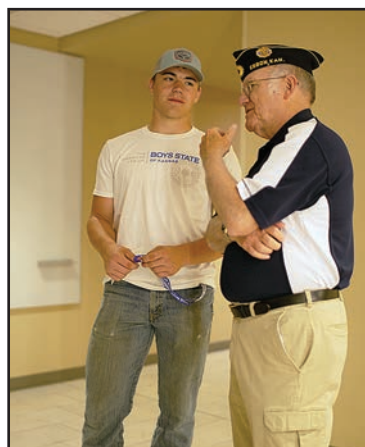
Delegates march to McCain Auditorium for Opening Ceremonies.



The Boys State Color Guard prepares to march to McCain Auditorium for Opening Ceremonies.



Alejandro Rangel-Lopez explains how Boys State allowed him to impact his community.



Legionnaire Glenn Fogo talks with Jensen Riffel in Kennedy County.



County Counselor Max Curtis addresses Pershing County delegates before entering McCain Auditorium.

Numbers exhibit reach

Every delegate who attends Kansas Boys State, by rule, is a junior preparing to enter his senior year of high school. He, along with his parents and a sponsor, have paid a total of \$325 to attend.

These delegates came from 149 schools in 133 towns. As part of the application process, they completed a questionnaire that determined which political party they fit into at Boys State — the Nationalists or the Federalists. Of the 404 delegates, there were 196 Nationalists and 208 Federalists.

To arrive at Boys State, hosted on the campus of Kansas State University in Manhattan, delegates drove a collective 44,321.6 miles.

Assuming the average car gets 23 miles per gallon, and the average cost of gasoline during the week of Boys State was \$1.93, it cost \$3,719.16 beyond the registration cost for

everyone to attend.

Boys State takes a week out of the summer. The average life expectancy of men is 81.2 years, which equates to 4,222.4 weeks. Therefore, Boys State takes 0.023683213338386 percent of a delegate's life.

During the course of the week, delegates spend a collective 50,307 hours at Boys State. That is 2,096.125 days or 5.74 years.

Clearly, being a Boys State delegate is not as simple of a proposition as it might seem upon first glance. Attending the program creates a ripple effect that can reach far and wide.

By looking at the numbers, it should be clear to delegates how important and impactful this program is.

Even if an individual does not feel their life changed, the cumulative effect is important for society.



Eisenhower County delegates talk with each other during their first county meeting of the week.

Staff donates their time

Boys State functions by staff volunteering to serve the program.

[82]

The number of years Kansas Boys State has existed. The 2019 session was the 28th year at Kansas State University.

[90]

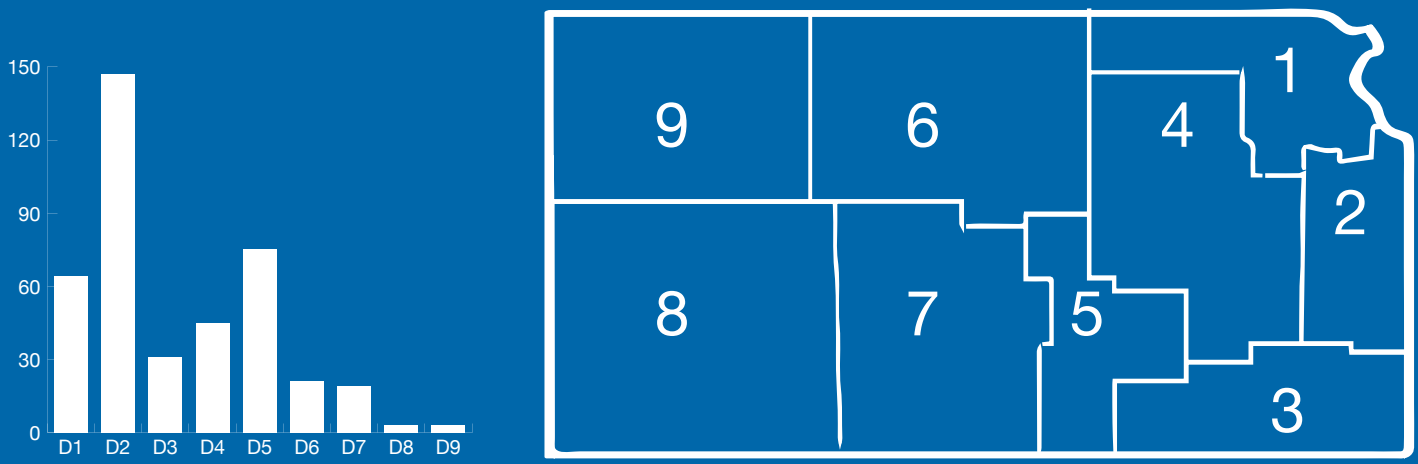
The number of volunteers the 2019 Boys State staff consisted of, serving in counselor, advisor and executive roles.

[950]

The number of collective years of service the 2019 Boys State staff has given to the program and to youth in Kansas.

You came from where?

Delegates represented Legion districts from throughout the state.



You did what to attend?

Delegates traveled from their home towns to spend time at State.

50,307 HOURS
149 SCHOOLS
44,321.6 MILES

*collective stats from all delegates



[WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING]

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE FOOD IN KRAMER DINING?



Louden Schwab

"I really love the pizza. It's home-cooked. You can see the oven and everything. It's really nice. It's my favorite."

"It's got to be the soft serve. I like eggs. It's hard to pick. There's a lot of good food. A lot of good options."



Gabriel Ruder



Hamza Khaliq

"The pizza is pretty good. I was expecting something frozen tasting, but it's actually pretty good. The donuts are good, too."



Legionnaire and Kansas American Legion Commander Chuck Shoemaker addresses the delegates at assembly.



Program Coordinator John Shively gives an interview for WIBW-TV in Topeka.



Powell County listens to a speaker during assembly.



The 15 city mayors get sworn into office by Daylan Williams, 2018 Kansas Boys State attorney general.



Porter Richards and Nikhil Zcharia of Eisenhower County work on a project together.



Legionnaire Rich Senften introduces American Legion leaders at evening retreat.



Work begins as jobs get filled



Pershing County huddles before assembly.

The first full day of Boys State meant delegates had the opportunity to begin working within their assigned roles.

As the group gathered for morning assembly, Program Coordinator John Shively said one thing was clear to him.

“I think the day started off with a lot of enthusiasm from delegates and staff,” he said.

Such engagement is important for the delegates to have a successful week.

“I think Boys State is a challenging experience, and the excitement about the work they are doing keeps delegates focused and driven,” Shively said.

Monday also plays a crucial role in how the program operates. Since Boys State simulates a state government — complete with cities, counties, departments, courts and the legislature — certain positions must be elected. This means a governor and his cabinet from each Boys State political party must run for office.

Whether a candidate is a Federalist or a Nationalist, Monday is his day to make a case for why he should be elected while also doing work within their assigned roles as mayors, department members or even legislators.

“Monday gives delegates a chance to build up their resumes here at Boys State so everyone has some experience they can run for higher office on,” Shively said. “That way, candidates can be evaluated by what they have

done in their short time here instead of solely on what they’ve done at their high schools or in their past.”

Though it is essentially a one-day campaign season, Shively said it provides participants the opportunity to experience more.

“It allows delegates to experience every part of the program before they run for higher office so they know what it’s like on the ground level,” he said.

Monday ends with the political parties setting their ballots for the next day’s general election. This happens through a caucus or primary election.

“A caucus is the process by which the parties decide who will represent them in the general election. Here at Boys State, we use a mixture of a caucus and a primary to elect party candidates,” Co-Events Coordinator Trevin Garcia said.

Because a caucus can be a foreign and confusing process, demonstrating how it works is valuable to the program.

“It’s an important experience for Staters to have because of how it can relate to their lives outside of Boys State,” Garcia said. “Most of these delegates will be of voting age within a year, but they won’t necessarily stay in Kansas for their first election. So by giving them a taste of both a primary and caucus processes, we give them experience that will be applicable to them wherever they end up.”



Members of the House of Representatives work on a bill.



The debate committee works on developing questions for the candidates.



Federalist Party members hear from their candidates during the Party Caucus.



Nationalist Party candidates for governor speak during the Party Caucus.

CONNECTING WITH OTHERS

Through experiences, Kasarabada sees importance of finding common ground to address society's issues

At 6-feet-6-inches tall, Karthik Kasarabada hunched over the lectern during the gubernatorial debate Tuesday morning. It was the only way he could speak into the microphone to be heard in his quest to be the 2019 Kansas Boys State governor.

Though his bid for governor as the Nationalist candidate came up short, the connections Kasarabada forged still allowed him to look back at his Boys State experience fondly.

The Olathe North High School student attributes everything he saw and felt during the week to the connections he made.

"At first, it was just making friends and establishing ties with people," he said. "It was awesome for me to go and meet new people and establish even more connections."

From there, his campaign for governor took shape. Even though he didn't win, he said he was grateful for the opportunity.

"The amount of support I got at Boys State was something that I've never seen or experienced before," he said. "It was just kind of amazing, honestly. I totally underestimated this program."

Kasarabada said he felt empowered by Boys State.

"I can gain power, but it's not just me that has that power," he said. "It's everyone. It's a shared power."

The types of people he was able to connect with also seemed to surprise Kasarabada.

"We had brilliant speakers," he said. "That's where that healthy competition comes. Everyone wants to be the best they can while also being there for everyone else. I call that healthy competition."

Kasarabada said the week probably started with some unhealthy competition, though.

"I honestly believe that 90 percent of people attend Boys State for their resumes, but immediately within the first day, 90 percent of people in Boys State forgot about their resumes and started doing this for a much more important or much more significant purpose," he said.

This excited Kasarabada.

"They took this on a more personal level," he said. "They took this to a point where it's indescribable how important this has become to a lot of people. And that's something really amazing to me."

Because of how he saw people coming together, especially across political lines, Kasarabada viewed the election results differently.

"I don't see my loss as a failure," he said. "I see it more as a stepping stone to success."

That next step, Kasarabada said, will involve politics.

"I'm interested in foreign policy, cybersecurity and that sort of thing," he said. "I'm very interested in politics."

At Olathe North, there is the Distinguished Scholars program, which allows students to focus on certain areas of study. Kasarabada is involved in the program's political science track.

"If there's anything I'm going to do, it's going to be working for the government and working for my country," he said. "This is a time for me to really become an effective leader. This is Boys State. I found this is a great opportunity for me to learn more about that and to become a little bit more experienced in that sort of area in terms of serving our country, especially this mock government we created."

The week opened his eyes.

"It really showed me that I have the power and the ability now, and the experience, to really gain support and be a successful person in politics," he said. "The importance of Boys State is beyond just mock government. It's about really learning about the people who partake in it. Learning about their stories. Respecting them for it and making new friends. That's something I really take away from it."

Kasarabada related his experiences to where he lives.

"I'm from Johnson County," he said. "Wyandotte, just north of Johnson County, is literally the worst ranked county in Kansas. Johnson County, on the other hand, is the first ranked in the state. I have experiences with Wyandotte. I play basketball. We have a great basketball team. A great coaching staff. I play with the nicest shoes, the nicest basketballs. And I'm privileged to do that. I go across county lines all the time to play basketball there. They may not have the best coaching, but when they play, they play with enthusiasm. They play with happiness. You know, at that point when I'm playing with them on the same court, we're playing the same game. It doesn't matter if you're black, white or brown. It doesn't matter what your social status is. We're playing the same game. That's the thing. Sports can unite people no matter where they're from. We can be united no matter where we're from. It can be through basketball. It can be through Boys State. It can be through anything."

Creating such connections can lead to change.

"That's exactly what we need," he said, "and that's exactly the solution to a majority of the world's problems."

Because of this, Kasarabada connected with Wednesday's speaker, Adrion Roberson, who is a pastor and founder of the KC United! Youth Sports and Education Initiative that serves metro Kansas City.

"He said Wyandotte could change, and if Wyandotte could change, so can everyone," Kasarabada said.

It's that idea Kasarabada wants to take back to his community and throughout his life. That community can take many forms. For Kasarabada, who is of Indian heritage, it means his community in Johnson County and in India when he travels there to visit family.

"As a minority here, I need to establish my identity as an Indian and as an American," he said.

Boys State, Kasarabada said, has helped him realize that.

"This place really cemented that," he said. "I have figured out how to embrace these two identities that I have, and Boys State has really helped me with that."

Part of his identity, now, sees Kasarabada looking beyond himself.

"I'm going to embrace the people around me more than I ever have," he said. "That's what Boys State allowed me to do. I can truly be an effective leader now because I can relate to others. In order for you to truly change, you have to do the work. Be with the situation."

Overall, Kasarabada said he hopes others get the chance to be a part of Boys State.

"This is something I think everyone needs to have the opportunity to come to," he said. "I totally underestimated Boys State. It blew my expectations. I didn't realize how sophisticated this program is."



[Facebook Live stream of the Gubernatorial Debate]

[013]



Karthik Kasarabada speaks during the gubernatorial debate as the Nationalist governor candidate.

[WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING]

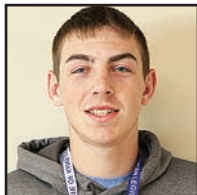
HOW IS YOUR EXPERIENCE AT STATE GOING?



Eric Patterson, Jr.

“It’s going good. My job is media. I’m not a political guru. Media has been a real fun time because you get to interview people and put everything together to get one broad thing.”

“It’s fun. It’s meeting lots of new people. They throw you in, so you have to interact with other people. I’m very glad I came.”



Kaleb Kroenke



Ethan Brown

“I’m having a fantastic week. I’m on the media team, so we get to have that 20,000-foot view. I’m a planner, but I’ve learned to just be flexible and do what the team needs. I’ve felt some growth.”



Federalist governor candidate Dalton White speaks during the gubernatorial debate. White went on to win the election.



Legionnaire Bob Jenkins addresses delegates at the assembly area.



Allen Zhang of Powell County works on the budget with the other elected officials.



Kennedy County stands at attention during assembly.



The Federalist Party primary winners were, from left, Jackson Manske of Eisenhower County, Allen Zhang of Powell County, Dalton White of Patton County, Dominic LiCastro of Pershing County, William Madden of Pershing County and Colin O'Brien of Powell County.



The Nationalist Party primary winners were, from left, Ian Gould of Eisenhower County, Gavin Jones of Kennedy County, CJ Pfanstiel of Kennedy County, Karthik Kasarabada of Eisenhower County, Isaiah Sterling of Pershing County and Michael Kmiec of Powell County.



Christian Graves of Kennedy County practices a traffic stop as part of the Highway Patrol.



Chris Lee of Patton County asks a question during the gubernatorial debate.



William Shropshire of Pershing County plays trumpet at assembly.

Ballots cast on Super Tuesday

Kansas Boys State's Tuesday was Super Tuesday for delegates as elections took place. The day began with the gubernatorial debate.

Representing the Federalist Party was Dalton White of Patton County, and the Nationalist Party candidate was Karthik Kasarabada of Eisenhower County.

The delegates operating Boys State Media, which includes broadcast, print and online platforms, ran the debate.

"For prepping the debate, delegates spend the entirety of the first two days' operations investigating and coming up with questions," Head Media Counselor Dustin Curiel said.

The event streamed online via Facebook so delegates could watch the debate while also working.

Curiel said the debate went well, especially the streaming.

"I think streaming the debate was incredibly successful," he said. "We took these delegates from small towns scattered around Kansas and helped create an environment that matched those of bigger productions."

Streaming the debate was a new endeavor for Boys State, and the results seemed positive.

"I think the delegates enjoyed the debate more this year than in the past few years," Curiel said. "Obviously, we made quite a few changes to the format this session, but I believe it's all helped us move further into the future of the program."

For Curiel, this foray into streaming is a first step.

"I think that live streams like this could become a bigger part of the program than we can currently foresee," he said.

Following the debate, the polls opened. Delegates were able to cast their votes online from their mobile devices.

Boys State information technology staff oversaw the process.

"Both the primary and general elections ran quite smoothly from a framework perspective," Head of IT Staff Pumposh Bhat said.

Bhat said the majority of the delegates participated in the election process.

"In total, over 90 percent of this year's delegates cast their votes, which is the most we've seen. I'm happy that we were successful in utilizing our online election system to the fullest potential."

Once the dust settled, the results showed the Federalist Party had swept the elections as the entire Federalist ticket was ushered into office, which was announced at retreat.

The 2019 Boys State leadership includes the following: Governor White; Lieutenant Governor Dominic LiCasto, Pershing County; Attorney General William Madden, Pershing County; State Treasurer Colin O'Brien, Powell County; Secretary of State Allen Zhang, Powell County; and Commissioner of Insurance Jackson Manske, Kennedy County.

The winners were sworn into office by Program Coordinator John Shively.

The elected officials then worked into the night to prepare a state budget that would be debated and put to the legislature for approval the next day.

State Office Counselor Trey Scarborough worked with the delegates on the budget.

"After the hustle and bustle of the election results, they started to get into the groove," he said. "The energy was high, and they really seemed to be taking the project seriously."

Scarborough said the process ran long, but the delegates worked well together as they attempted to complete the task of developing the budget.

"There was not really any tension since all members are the same party," he said.

Despite the lack of sleep, the delegates seemed to enjoy the work.

"They thought this was a great example of how our leaders do their jobs, and they said they would hate to see the real budget," Scarborough said.

The governor and his team failed to have the budget ready to propose to the legislature at the start of Wednesday morning, leading to a temporary government shutdown.

[WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING]

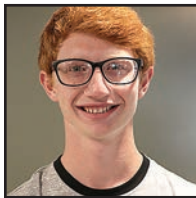
WHAT WAS YOUR FAVORITE TALENT SHOW ACT?



Christian Brautigam

"I believe it was a John Lennon song on piano. It was amazing. Also, the pirate chanty. I can't decide now. They were both fantastic. The pirate shanty caught everyone off guard."

"I'd have to say my roommate Willy. He played the piano. He came in and went hard. It was nice. Overall, it was very energetic. It was everyone coming together as one Boys State."



Taj Bailey



Eli Graham

"The last person to play piano. That was really good. Overall, I thought it was really good. I'm sure the magic show was impressive up close, but it was hard to see from a distance."

Elected officials shut state down

The budget process spilled over into Wednesday as the the governor and his team quickly finished the proposal and sent it to a joint session of the legislature.

However, the House of Representatives and the Senate failed to pass it before the 3 p.m. deadline, which sent Kansas Boys State into a government shutdown.

Concerned delegates protested outside of the House chambers as the deadline passed.

Legislative Advisor Matt Brandt said the budget narrowly failed, missing the required two-thirds majority by three votes.

"At this point, it's definitely uncharted territory," he said. "I've not ever been in this position before where I have a legislature that is completely halted and hasn't passed the budget."

Justin Watkins, head Senate counselor, said the impasse was caused by a dispute over a provision added to the budget relating to a made-up holiday and subsequent monuments.

It was a contentious addition causing a fissure that fractured the vote just enough to prevent passage.

"The ramifications of not passing the budget are that there won't be any funding going to the departments," he said. "Which in turn means city and county governments won't be able to continue working on projects they had hoped for. There are going to be a lot of people angry with them and protesting."

Protests can be a good thing, though, Brandt said.

"It gives a real-world feel of individuals who are able to voice their opinions to their legislators," he said. "It makes them feel like their voices are heard."

Nathan Lipinski, Head House Counselor, said he thought the bill would pass early in the next joint session of the House and Senate.

Brandt and Watkins agreed, and passing the budget is a necessary step for the delegate's work to move forward.

"Passing the budget allows them to continue on with more pressing matters," Brandt said. "The very next session, whatever was on the docket to be done, will be put aside until the budget is passed."



Dalton White, the 2019 Kansas Boys State Governor, delivers his inaugural address to the delegates in McCain Auditorium prior to the talent show.



Adrion Roberson, a pastor and founder of the KC United! Youth Sports and Education Initiative, speaks to the delegates in McCain Auditorium prior to the talent show.



[Wednesday's *The Delegate* broadcast]

[017]



Delegates silently protest outside of the House of Representatives as the budget is debated.



Colonel Roger D. Murdock, Kansas Army National Guard, speaks to the delegates at assembly.



The color guard prepares to lead the counties through Pass in Review at retreat.



Lee Urban, associate general counsel for Commerce Bank in Kansas City, Mo., speaks to the delegates working in the court system.



Eric Patterson Jr. goes up for a lay up during recreation.



The Boys State legislature debates the budget in a joint committee meeting.

TALENT SHOW [THE ENTERTAINING DAY OF THE WEEK]



Hayden Honomichl of Eisenhower County sings "Wait for It" from the Broadway musical "Hamilton."



Peyton Montgomery of Powell County performs magic tricks between Talent Show acts.



Nathan Paukstelis of Kennedy County sings "Falcon in the Dive" from "The Scarlet Pimpernel."

Delegates take stage, perform

A perennial high point of the Kansas Boys State experiment took place Wednesday night at McCain Auditorium as delegates demonstrated their abilities in the Talent Show.

A total of 17 delegates performed a range of instrumental, vocal and other acts.

Scott Bley, Eisenhower County mentor, helped organize the event with help from Associate Director Jared Meitler and Advisor Jeff Schrag.

"It was really great," Bley said. "The kids did a good job. I was impressed by how they all stepped up."

In some years, delegates who want to be a part of the show don't make the final slate of performers. However, this year everyone who wanted to be in the show was able to take part because they all had what it took.

In fact, Bley said, the 2019 acts included

one performance that had been done at the International Thespian Festival. This was Malachi Watson's rendition of "Waving Through a Window" from the Broadway musical "Dear Evan Hansen."

"It's incredible the level of talent we are able to attract to a leadership and government camp," Bley said.

Overall, Bley said the delegates were pleased with the event.

"They were all really happy with everything," he said.

Bley said the Talent Show plays a key role in the week.

"It is a break from all the work," he said. "It's important we take time to just have fun and relax."

It does more than that, though.

"It gives Staters a chance to see one another in a different light," Bley said.



Declan Carter of Powell County sings "You've Lost that Lovin' Feelin'" from the film "Top Gun" to close the Talent Show.



Gabe Wolff of Patton County tells jokes as the emcee of the Talent Show.



Kaden Counts and Jacob Williams of Kennedy County perform "Sweet Home Alabama."



[Facebook Live stream of the Talent Show]



William Jiang of Powell County plays Beethoven's "Tempest Sonata."



Matthew Brandenburger of Eisenhower County, Reid Plinsky of Patton County and Trent Ediger of Eisenhower County perform a pirate chanty.



Malachi Watson of Kennedy County sings "Waving Through a Window" from the Broadway musical "Dear Evan Hansen."



Cooper Koestel of Patton County plays drums to open the show.



Britton Beggs of Pershing County plays "All of Me" by John Schmidt on the piano.



Drew Bellamy of Kennedy County performs "My Way" on the piano.



Zachary "Chuck" Wash of Powell County plays the guitar.

[WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING]

HOW DID THE FLAG RETIREMENT IMPACT YOU?



Chase Martin

“I thought it was interesting. From what I saw, I liked it. I admired the respect they showed the flag. Even though it was worn out, they still gave it a proper disposal.”

“That was like a really cool thing. It was a pretty interesting event. I didn’t know what they did with retired flags or that they could be retired.”



Juan Salinas



Reed Krewson

“I thought the veterans doing it had a much more profound impact. It had more weight to it ceremonially.”



Delegates enjoy a meal in the Kramer Dining Center.



Gabriel Deng of Patton County works in the House of Representatives.



Members of the Boys State band perform for the delegates in McCain Auditorium.



Boys Nation candidates take center stage in McCain Auditorium after giving their speeches outlining why they should be chosen to represent Kansas Boys State in Washington D.C.



Trase McQueen and Benjamin Anderson of Powell County play ping pong in the K-State Student Union.



Holden Woodward of Eisenhower County shoots pool in the K-State Student Union.



Kenneth Mupendwa of Kennedy County sings a solo during the Boys State Choir performance in McCain Auditorium.



Samuel Baldwin of Kennedy County visits the Wichita State University booth at the college fair.



Jordan Barth of Eisenhower County plays pickleball during recreation.

Full day ends with Union fun

Shortly after the start of operations Thursday, the Kansas Boys State Legislature passed the budget. This allowed the government to reopen and work to restart, setting the stage for a successful final full day of Boys State.

A flurry of activity ensued. The Supreme Court heard cases, departments took steps to complete projects and local governments worked to further develop infrastructure.

“Thursday is the day in which delegates often find themselves in the midst of multiple leadership challenges,” Curriculum Coordinator Ryan Fullerton said. “Externally, they often face a simulated natural disaster in addition to their typical projects, and this year, the state government was forced to respond to a government shutdown.”

There are also internal issues. “Internally, delegates must begin to manage themselves as leaders more as they become frustrated with the conflicting values of other Staters and as they become more tired following several days of Boys State,” Fullerton said. “The goal of these challenges is to push delegates to continue learning about their own identities as leaders, especially in consideration to how they manage themselves in difficult leadership situations. These challenges also help speak to our program’s mission of instilling civic responsibility because it helps them realize both how tough leading civic change can be, but also how capable they are of leading that change.”

Delegates also had the opportunity to speak with representatives from 11 colleges and three branches of the military during the annual college fair.

In lieu of an evening retreat, delegates marched to McCain Auditorium and gathered outside around the World War II memorial. There they got to watch a flag retirement ceremony be performed by legionnaires from Manhattan’s Pearce-Keller Post No. 17 of the American Legion.

Dean of Counselors Shane Wilson said the ceremony is important within the program.

“The historical context is that we asked

the local American Legion post to retire the flag as a demonstration on Flag Day, which is when this type of ceremony is traditionally held,” he said. “We still do it to give the delegates a unique experience that honors our flag. The first time you witness it, it’s a very touching moment. It’s a serious enough situation that demands everyone’s attention and respect. The delegates find it to be a truly moving experience.”

Following the ceremony, delegates filed into McCain to watch performances by the Boys State band and choir. Then, they heard from Boys Nation candidates.

“Boys Nation is a simulated Senate comprised of two delegates from 49 of the 50 states where senators write and debate legislation, convene in party conventions, run for office, meet in joint committees and also tour our nation’s capital,” said Associate Director Jared Meitler, who was a Boys Nation delegate in 2002. “It is one of the premiere youth programs in our country and the premiere program sponsored by the American Legion.”

Kansas Boys State determines its representatives differently than most Boys State programs.

“Our selection process is completely democratic,” Meitler said. “Delegates are nominated at the city and county level before 10 candidates speak on a policy question in front of the entire Boys State program. After which, all Boys State delegates elect two individuals to attend the Boys Nation program. Most Boys State programs use a combination of counselor and delegate or just counselor nominations and selection.”

Meitler said being chosen is a privilege. “By being selected to attend Boys Nation, delegates are in the top half percent of the Boys State program,” he said. “Knowing that Boys State is already comprised of some of the brightest minds across the state, it’s an incredible honor.”

To cap off the evening, delegates bowled, shot pool and played video games, among other activities, at the K-State Student Union.

[WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING]

HOW DID THIS WEEK CHANGE YOUR LIFE?



Jacob Donaldson

“It’s given me a lot of leadership skills. It’s all been pretty interesting. It’s not something I’m used to really.”

“To socialize with more people and take on that role as a leader. People taking risks. It’s speaking up knowing you’re part of something. You have a voice. You can contribute to something.”



Sitivi Wong-Mageo

“It very much has changed my life. It changed my attitude. I want to take that back to my school. Recreating myself, I want to change my perspectives. I love what this program is doing.”



Zachary Barnes

Week of Boys State wraps up

The final day of the week focused on closing out the Boys State of Kansas experience.

Morning operations provided a final time for delegates to meet with their peers and counselors within the scope of their daily duties of the county commission, city council, legislature, departments or other groups.

After a quick brunch, it was time for Closing Ceremonies, the capstone of the week, in McCain Auditorium.

The media team played a large role in this year’s program, led by Head Media Counselor Dustin Curiel. They produced a handful of videos showcasing the week, and they did it all between Sunday and Friday morning.

“I think closing ceremonies was as high quality of a product as we could produce given the time constraints we were handed,” Curiel said. “Capturing all the video for Closing Ceremonies is one of the hardest parts because no matter how many times you go over what you need to get you still come back at the end of the day needing something else.”

Curiel and his team took a unique approach to Closing Ceremonies.

“In the past, Closing Ceremonies has followed a format that essentially gave a recap of each day,” he said, “so this year we switched to uploading recaps onto Instagram and instead focused on three things: government in action, recreation, and the talent show/band/chorus.”

This switch was intentional on the part of the videographers, who also included Jose Moreno and Issac Stark.

“I think we find ourselves gravitating to these areas of state for video coverage because each and every delegate should find themselves empowered in one or more of those areas,” Curiel said.

And that’s the point for the event — to help delegates see themselves and reflect on the experience they had.

“For Closing Ceremonies we were hoping to convey the energy found during the week in a way that made everyone excited about Boys State, not just those in the program,”

Curiel said. “At the end of the week delegates definitely like seeing themselves and their accomplishments flash across screen, so, if Closing Ceremonies are for nothing else, they’re 100 percent for the delegates to remember their week and be recognized. Anything that leaves delegates feeling accomplished at the end of the session is incredibly important.”

Besides the videos, Closing Ceremonies was also a time to announce awards, such as outstanding citizens from each city and special recognition for legislators and judges. Most importantly, though, the winners of the Boys Nation election were announced.

The 2019 Boys Nation senators representing Kansas were Ian Gould and Zachary Wash. Selected as alternates who fill in should either senator be unable to perform his duties in Washington, D.C., were Benjamin Brake and Gabe Wolff.

After Closing Ceremonies and all the delegates had said their final goodbyes before heading back home to their communities, a final staff meeting was held. The 2019 New Counselor and Experienced Counselor of the Year were announced. The New Counselor of the Year was Jacob Casey, and the Experienced Counselor of the Year was Curiel.

“Being named counselor of the year for the 2019 session feels absolutely unreal,” Curiel said. “Every year when I’m at State I put in my all to produce the best content I possibly can for the organization, and being recognized for that shows that everyone else at the camp truly understands the work those working on media put in during the session.”

Winning the award was also special to Curiel because of the impact the program had on him when he was a delegate in 2014.

“When I came to State as a delegate, I had a very loose idea of what I wanted my future to look like, but by the end of the week I was pretty sure I wanted to work some type of video production,” he said. “I keep coming back year after year because I hope to help future delegates find their niche, whether it be media related or not.”



[Facebook Live stream of Closing Ceremonies]

[023]



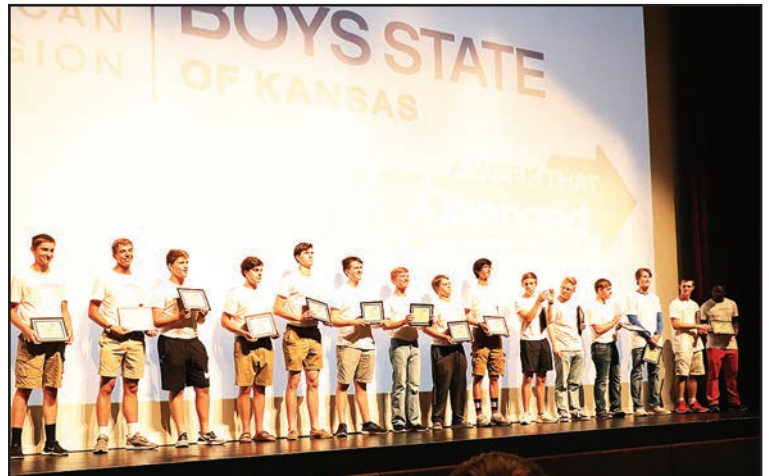
Counties assemble for the final time.



Program Coordinator John Shively addresses the delegates for the final time in the assembly area.



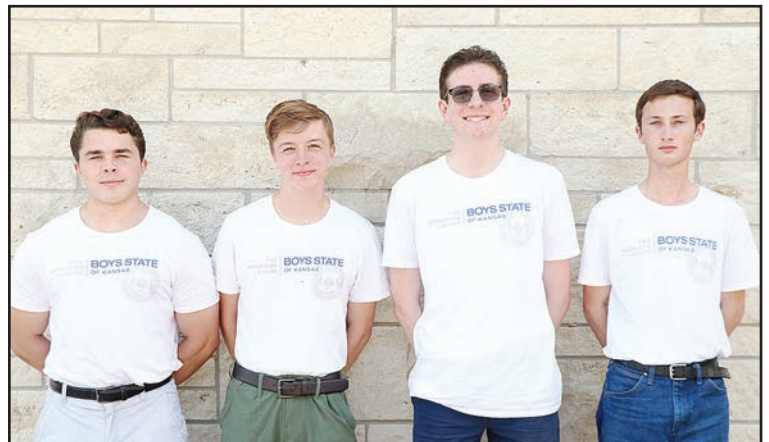
Members of the American Legion are honored during the closing ceremonies in McCain Auditorium.



Delegates from each city, selected by their peers, receive the honor of Outstanding Citizen in McCain Auditorium.



Levi Hickert of Patton County was named the Kansas winner of the Samsung Scholarship.



Boys Nation alternate Benjamin Brake, Senators Zachary Wash and Ian Gould, and alternate Gabe Wolff were announced as the election winners at closing ceremonies.

FEATURE [STATER PROFILE]



Malachi Watson performs "Waving Through a Window" from "Dear Evan Hansen" at the Talent Show.

PERFORMING WITH A HEART

Boys State shows Watson how keeping an open mind can expand views, see world from new perspectives

McCain Auditorium was dark. A single chair bathed in the warm glow of a spotlight sat at center stage. Malachi Watson walked out from stage right and sat down. Then he wowed his fellow Kansas Boys State delegates.

Watson was performing as part of the annual talent show, singing “Waving Through a Window” from the Broadway musical “Dear Evan Hansen.” This wasn’t the first time he performed the song.

“I used that song at thespian conferences for qualifying for ITF, which is International Thespian Festival,” Watson said. “It was a good experience here.”

Getting to perform is at the core of who Watson is.

“I feel like acting is always like reacting through song,” he said.

“It was a good experience performing at the talent show. I think the greatest thing about art is that you never have anything to prove, only to share. I got to share from my heart, and it was uplifting and made this week a lot more worth it to me.”

The Wichita native attends Andover High School, and he has been doing musical theater since the eighth grade after not making the tennis team the same week of musical tryouts.

“I just kind of haven’t stopped, and it’s been one of the most freeing experiences,” he said.

Watson’s experiences with acting helped him make friends.

“All my closest friends do music theater, and so many people that I know here I’ve met through mutual friends I’ve done theater with.”

Those connections helped Watson feel at home with Boys State.

“It’s like such a small world and such an uplifting community,” he said. “I feel like the best people come from theater because in theater you perform from your heart.”

Feeling that positivity is important.

“I have a lot of friends from other schools who are doing the same things, but at my school it’s kind of an isolating experience,” he said.

Watson said this is because people don’t understand his desire to be a professional thespian, but he is working hard to achieve that goal.

“I started taking private voice lessons about three years ago and dance lessons about two years ago,” he said. “Hopefully I’ll get to pursue that on a larger scale eventually. I’d like to major in music theater in college. I’m currently on track to do that, working with college audition coaches from elsewhere in the nation. And this summer I’m spending two weeks at Wake Forest for the Performing Arts Projects.”

No matter what happens, Watson said the journey will be worth it.

“You’re born and you have a beginning point, and you have an end point,” he said. “I feel like my end point is happy. So whatever steps I need to take to need to take to get there are worth it, even if I take the wrong one and have to go back. You get where you’re supposed to be.”

When he first arrived at Boys State, though, Watson wasn’t sure he was where he was supposed to be. After getting to the program about nine hours late due to a conflicting dance recital, he found himself outside of the fray.

“In my hometown, I’m pretty loud, intelligent and a prominent person in most leadership positions, so it was kind of weird to come here and be more on the sidelines,” he said. “I didn’t really get the op-

portunity to run for any elected offices, so I feel like most of the stuff I was doing was kind of not influential.”

This lack of connection to what was happening was compounded by the fact Watson said the program wasn’t his normal fare.

“This isn’t really my arena,” he said. “I’m more into honest, artsier things. I feel like Boys State is kind of militaristic. Obviously, it’s run by the American Legion, which is born of veterans, so that makes sense. But I feel like not all government offices have anything to do with marching and flag salutes. I just wish there was a way for this organization to exist and give us the opportunity to simulate government in general and practice adult life, working in public office without the whole nationalistic sheen over it all.”

Watson’s take on Boys State and the unease he felt helped him with his performance at the talent show.

“I feel like normally I’m having to construct the feelings that go into that piece just because I’m not a super shy, anxiety ridden type of person,” he said. “But that’s what the character in ‘Dear Evan Hansen’ is. In this type of space, surrounded by a bunch of boys my own age, stresses me out. At home, most of my friends are girls. I don’t have the same interest as a lot of boys. It’s like being here, I was really nervous.”

Watson was able to capitalize on those feels.

“It was a good opportunity to force myself to perform anyway,” he said. “Some of the nervousness and anxiety that came early in the week, I was able to feed into when singing those lyrics.”

Over the course of the week, though, the nerves subsided, and Watson said his time at Boys State improved.

“I think it’s about getting out there and talking to people,” he said.

In conversation with other delegates, Watson found himself surprised by his peers.

“When you think of the cookie cutter Kansas teen boy, they’re generally close minded and often have views that I would consider outdated,” he said. “But being at a space like Boys State, it’s some of the smartest and most motivated boys from all the different schools in this state, so it was a good opportunity to learn. People in my own town who I wouldn’t have typically talked to, here they are willing to listen and willing to learn. I think that’s the best thing. Going through the week and learning alongside them and with me and educating each other, I’ve learned why people support certain ideologies.”

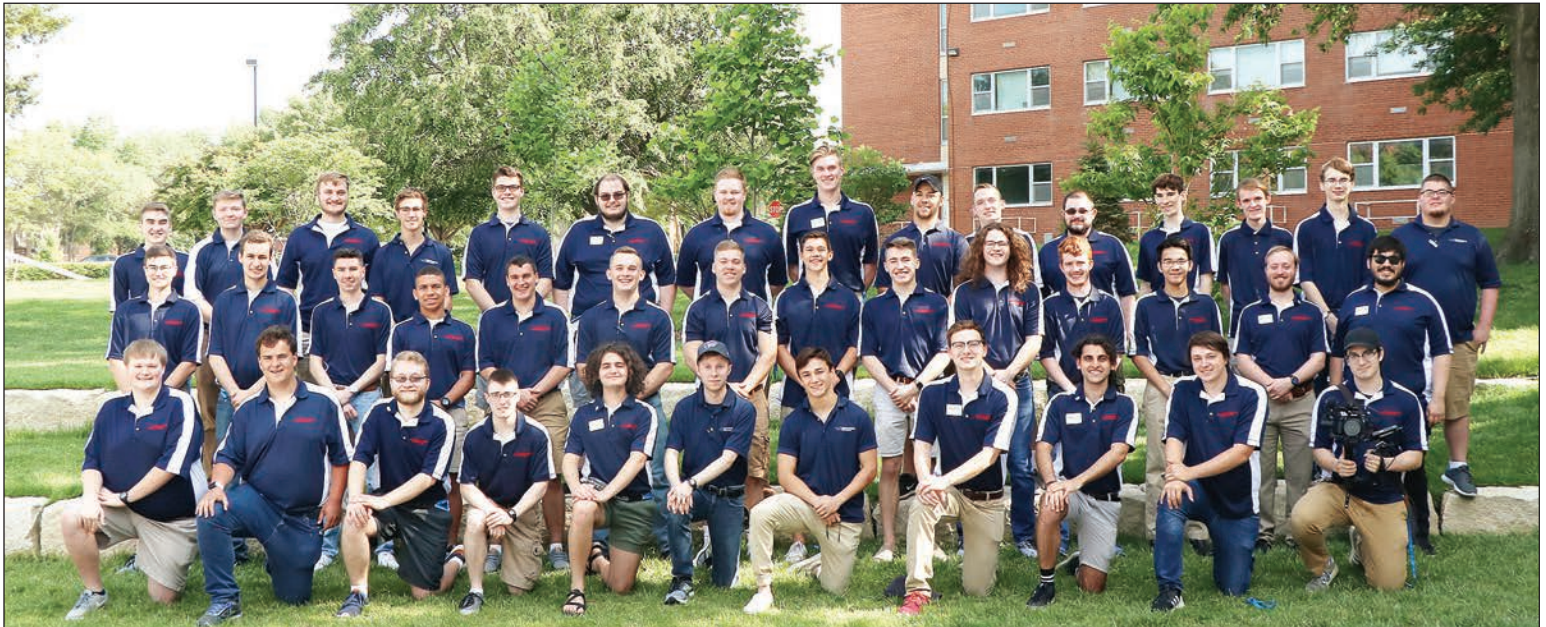
Because of this, Watson viewed his time at Boys State as positive.

“Boys State has been a great learning and growth experience,” he said. “Over the week, I learned a lot about how even the ‘small people’ make a difference in government matters.”

Overall, Boys State was an impactful experience for Watson.

“I did learn a lot about why people may feel the way they do about certain political leaders or platforms, and I’ve learned that someone’s specific views on one thing doesn’t automatically mean they want to alienate other people,” he said. “It changed my perspective on people. It opened my mind a lot. It’s taught me a lot about how I can’t close my mind off to all thought because of my experiences. Neither should other people.”

Counselors



Front Row: Jacob Stark, Alex Hammeke, Ian Ediger, Jordan Fullerton, E.J. Charboneau, Kodi Reed, Seth Doud, Chris Moe, Pumposh Bhat, Isaac Stark, Joey Moreno

Middle Row: Joe Mirikian, Ian Buhman-Wiggs, Nathan Lipinski, Daylan Williams, Justin Grega, Brian Houck, Max Curtis, Brett Norris, Chase Branson, Zachery Brunner, Zach Thomas, Nathan Bailey, Nicholas Graham, Dustin Curiel

Back Row: Michael Shuey, Spencer Pruter, Nolen Wright, Justin Watkins, Michael Conaway, Trey Scarborough, Nick Storm, Ethan Doherty, Corbin Sanner, Hayden Dahm, Joseph Pilens, Reece Mathews, Jacob Casey, Teddy Conrad, Brandon Englund

Not Pictured: Jack Hermon, Oliver Pinckney, Alejandro Rangel-Lopez



Dean of Counselors Shane Wilson presents Jacob Casey with the 2019 New Counselor of the Year award.



Dean of Counselors Shane Wilson presents Dustin Curiel with the 2019 Counselor of the Year award.



Dean of Advisors Jay Shelton (right) presents Brad Biles with the 2019 Advisor of the Year award.

Advisors



Front Row: Rich Senften, Earl Mims, John Lindholm, Jared Meitler, George Rothwell, Jacob Brown, Chris Werring, Scott Bley, Bob Jenkins, Justin Herron, Todd Vogts

Back Row: Jake Ellis, Chris Wierman, Curtiss Kimble, Allen Klassen, Jay Shelton, Thane Chastain, Brab Biles, Jeremy Harland, Kyle Wheatley, Troy Fowler, Matt Wedel, Jordan Watson, Shane Wilson, Matt Brandt

Not Pictured: Larry Andrews, Glenn Fogo, Greg Harkrader, Mike Paynter, Mario Rios, Jeff Schrag, Chuck Shoemaker, Tom Wierman

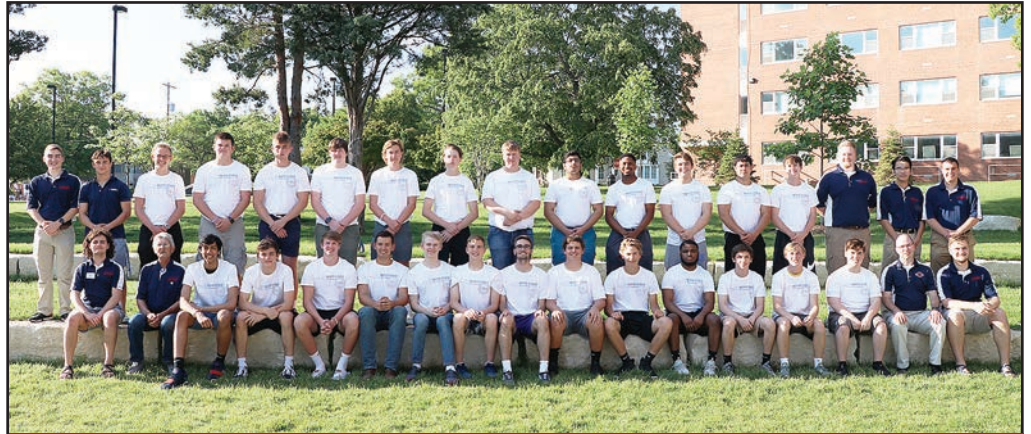
Coordinators



From Left: Ryan Fullerton, Curriculum; Jack Curtis, Co-Events; Trevin Garcia, Co-Events; John Shively, Program; Scott Ring, IT; Cody McCarty, Hall; Logan Gideon, Media

EISENHOWER

Front Row: Counselor EJ Charboneau, Legionnaire Curtis Kimble, Karthik Kasarabada, Jack Souder, Keatyn O'Dell, Mason Ericson, Mason Lutz, David Koster, Jordan Barth, Cole Nicks, Porter Richards, Isaiah Walton, Aidan Bowen, Alex Drone, Luke Gwartney, Advisor Scott Bley, Counselor Nolen Wright
Back Row: Counselor Michael Shuey, Counselor Seth Doud, Curtis Springer, Mark Early, Benjamin Canfield, John Price, Nolan Meyer, Nolan Werner, Aaditya Pore, Joseph McCray, Nate Snyder, Joseph Ferguson, Kyle Kubler, Counselor Nick Storm, Counselor Nathan Bailey, Counselor Justin Grega



BLEY

Front Row: Counselor EJ Charboneau, Legionnaire Curtis Kimble, Max VanMetter, Ian Gould, Parker Jackson, Gage Christiansen, Michael Blanks, Micah Stewart, Gabe Roberts, Benjamin Cahill, Andrew Patton, Casey Booth, Stanley Coates, Cade Stout, Braden Wright, Charles Brookby, Advisor Scott Bley, Counselor Nolen Wright
Back Row: Counselor Michael Shuey, Counselor Seth Doud, Robert Clear, Evan Porter, Connor Bullock, Nick Meyer, Matthew Perry, Gavin Gardner, Tristen Burger, Elijah Deegan, Michael Sen, Jack Watson, Thomas Arnett, Adrian Kaus, Trent Ediger, Counselor Nick Storm, Counselor Nathan Bailey, Counselor Justin Grega



BLUEMKE

Front Row: Counselor EJ Charboneau, Legionnaire Curtis Kimble, Paul Masoner, Tyler Black, Cody Hay, Hayden Miller, Jace Toon, Rushabh Joshi, Kyle Kramer, Nikhil Zcharia, Tanner Henrichs, Korbin Hogan, Samuel Lipinski, Brice Helton, Stephen Mefford, Advisor Scott Bley, Counselor Nolen Wright
Back Row: Counselor Michael Shuey, Counselor Seth Doud, Patrick Arnold, Zain Labidi, Elijah Caswell, Eli Eis, Solomon Kaufman, Chance Delaney, Levi Thomas, Dakota Morgan, Holden Woodward, Caleb Kline, Alexander Garcia, Harrison Kurz, Matthew Brandenburger, Counselor Nick Storm, Counselor Nathan Bailey, Counselor Justin Grega



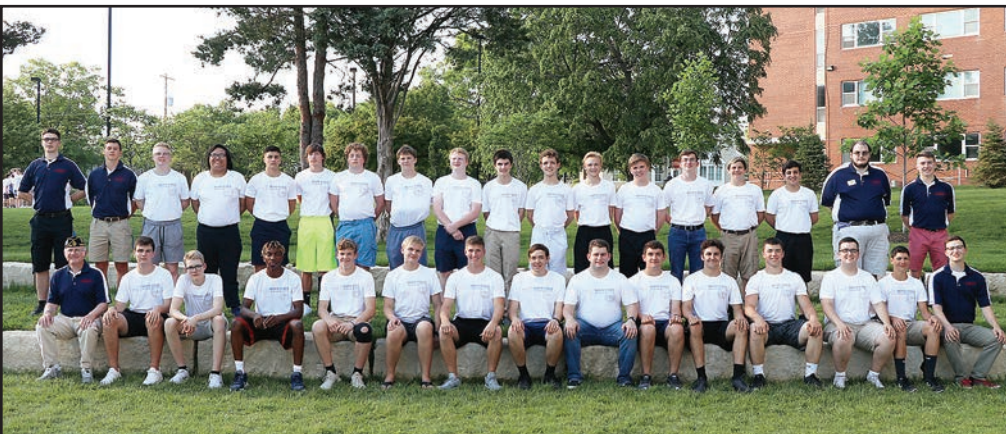
CHASTAIN

KENNEDY



FINLEY

Front Row: Legionnaire Glenn Fogo, Aiden Gibson, Drew Bellamy, Kenneth Mupendwa, Josh Brandt, Parker Schmitt, Cade Lanning, Jayden Porter, Eric Matthews, Ethan Knocke, Davis Miller, Thomas Dunn, Lane Anderson, Jacob Williams, Gavin Jones, Counselor Chris Moe **Back Row:** Counselor Brett Norris, Counselor Michael Conaway, Mason Vietti, Nirvan Silswal, Daniel Balk, Quintin Combes, Zachary Barnes, Christian Graves, Samuel Baldwin, Preston Martin, Kyser Meininger, Moses Haung Daung, Dalton Dicks, Reed Krewson, Alejandro Ortiz, Kaleb Kroenke, Counselor Trey Scarborough, Counselor Joe Mirikian



GARDNER

Front Row: Legionnaire Glenn Fogo, John Long, Harrison Dollar, Eric Patterson Jr, Malcolm Lathrop-Allen, Maximilian Worth, Grant Murray, Ethan McAnerney, Ethan Minter, Colton Gauthier, Gabriel Ruder, Jensen Riffel, Lucas Songer, Jason Hecht, Counselor Chris Moe **Back Row:** Counselor Michael Conaway, Counselor Brett Norris, Brian Mann, Nalin Ngo, Julian Lujano, Kutter Jewell, Roland Voracek, Dacotah Lee, Benjamin Coffman, Elliott Whisenant, Drew Ross, Tate Brungardt, Nathan Paukstelis, Shane Winner, Jeb Marshall, Viturva Patel, Counselor Trey Scarborough, Counselor Chase Branson



JOHNSON

Front Row: Legionnaire Glenn Fogo, Payden Brunton, Malachi Watson, Noah Younger, Keaton Hoy, Russell Wells, Luke George, Caden Prather, CJ Pfanstiel, Austin Miller, Sam Huffles, Matthew Inman, Kaden Counts, Elvis Bosley, Shelton Rothchild, Nick Rost, Counselor Chris Moe **Back Row:** Counselor Michael Conaway, Counselor Brett Norris, Logan Hope, Ethan Dozier, Adam Henely, London Gregory, Trenton Bryan, Erick Menjivar-Flores, Josh Khang, Gavin Pore, Jackson Manske, Gabriel Parrish, Hugo Gonzalez, Philippe Fall, Eric Boyes, Counselor Trey Scarborough, Counselor Brian Houck

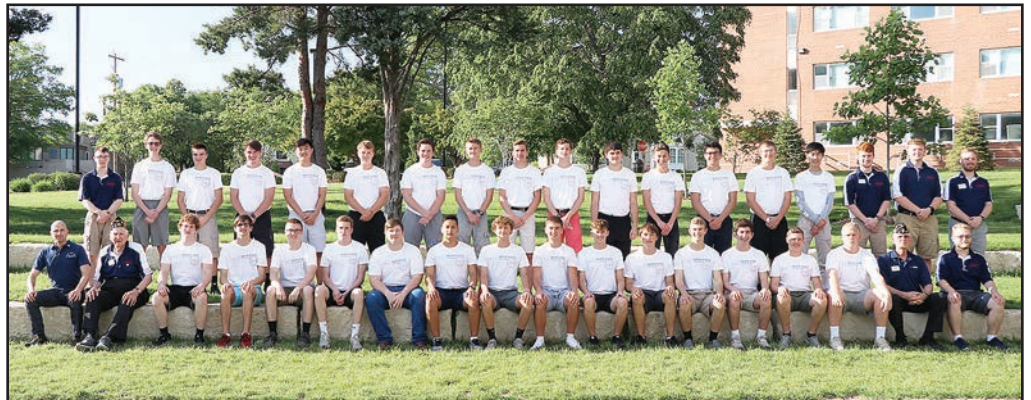
PATTON

Front Row: Advisor Chris Werring, Legionnaire John Lindholm, Johnny Goetting, Eric Jantz, Gabriel Deng, Luke Wichmann, Quinn Davidson, Ivon Owen, Cade Willburn, Trenton Brutchin, Christian Brautigam, John Stanley, Petyon Weixelman, William Harvey, Chris Lee, Legionnaire Rich Stentfen, Counselor Zach Thomas, Counselor Ian Ediger
Back Row: Counselor Jordan Fullerton, Advisor Allen Klassen, William Frank, Gage Pucket, Thomas Rodgers, Ashlind Gumpenberger, Alex Ast, Rhett Heide, Tucker Jessip, Bryce Goswick, Dylan Henry, Ronald Heminway, Josh Schatzel, Andrew Champman, Counselor Nicholas Graham, Counselor Spencer Pruter



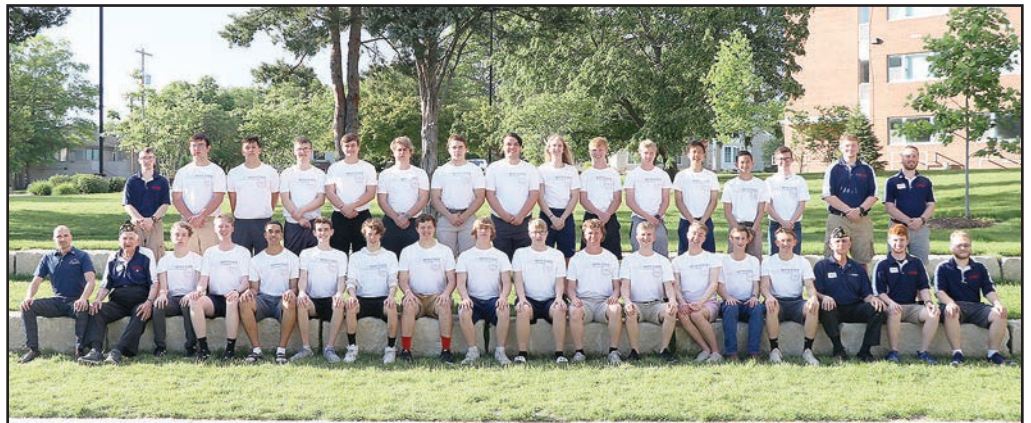
KLASSEN

Front Row: Advisor Chris Werring, Legionnaire John Lindholm, Austin Fink, Anthony Harris, Michael McAlister, Erik Moore, Antonio Lemus, Samuel Hesse, Ryan McNeely, Josh Eichem, John Black, Levi Hickert, Sawyer Shutts, Dalton White, Reid Plinsky, Legionnaire Rich Stentfen, Counselor Ian Ediger
Back Row: Counselor Jordan Fullerton, Alexander Porter, Issac Bugner, Matthew Mitchell, Ruiyang Ma, Joshua Woodsmall, Jack Merchant, Jack Wojtalewicz, Joshua Schlittenhardt, Brett Ward, Jacob Elliss, Curtis Ware, Josh Barron, Tanner Gould, Eason Cheung, Counselor Zach Thomas, Counselor Spencer Pruter, Counselor Nicholas Graham



LANE

Front Row: Advisor Chris Werring, Legionnaire John Lindholm, Ike Phillips, Sitivi Wong-Mageo, Chadwick Hanson II, Ben Hoopes, Creighton Park, Lucas Franssen, Tucker Ashburn, Gavin Tully, Joshua Knecht, Charles Pershall, Gabe Wolff, Joshua Eskra, Legionnaire Rich Stentfen, Counselor Zach Thomas, Counselor Ian Ediger
Back Row: Counselor Jordan Fullerton, Logan Bogle, Kaden Jaquez, Cooper Koestel, Loudon Schwab, Dylan Newton, Benjamin Brake, Benden Blakley, Liam O'Leary, Tate Allen, Brett Chapman, Will Hwang, Jeffrey Duenas, Cayden Hague, Counselor Spencer Pruter, Counselor Nicholas Graham



O'LEARY

PERSHING



SCHRAG

Front Row: Counselor Jack Hermon, Eli Blaufuss, Tyler Boutte, Nick Farrell, Jackson Nicodemus, Deven Wieland, Nicholas Martisko, Thomas Spachek, Jacob Strecker, Colton Sullivan, William Madden, Sam Nordhus, Will Bannister, William Shropshire, Weston Curnow, Counselor Justin Watkins **Back Row:** Counselor Max Curtis, Davis Griffey, Lawson Vitosh, Eli Holloman, Harper Molen, Jackson Proett, Braiden Moyer, Britton Beggs, Santiago Trejo, Brock Barthol, Griffin Stuewe, Alex Cannady, Colby McManis, Isaiah Krumme, Counselor Zachery Brunner, Counselor Brandon Englund, Advisor Chris Wierman



SHELTON

Front Row: Counselor Daylan Williams, Dominic LiCastro, Dallin Armstrong, Caleb Walker, Devin Appelhanz, JohnJoe Lopez II, Hamza Khaliq, Orion Swienton, Nicholas Burket, Aidan Taylor, Henry Nelson, Wyatt Langfoss, Logan Matzke, Trenton Parks, Counselor Justin Watkins **Back Row:** Advisor Jay Shelton, Counselor Max Curtis, Isaiah Sterling, Richard Dusheke, Alejandro Calderon, Bradley Libel, Zachary Chrisman, Resse Danitschek, Andrew Umscheid, Cameron Maltz, Caiden Rempel, Ethan Brown, Brett Wendler, Ethan Voss, Youngmin Jeon, Counselor Zachery Brunner, Counselor Brandon Englund, Advisor Chris Wierman

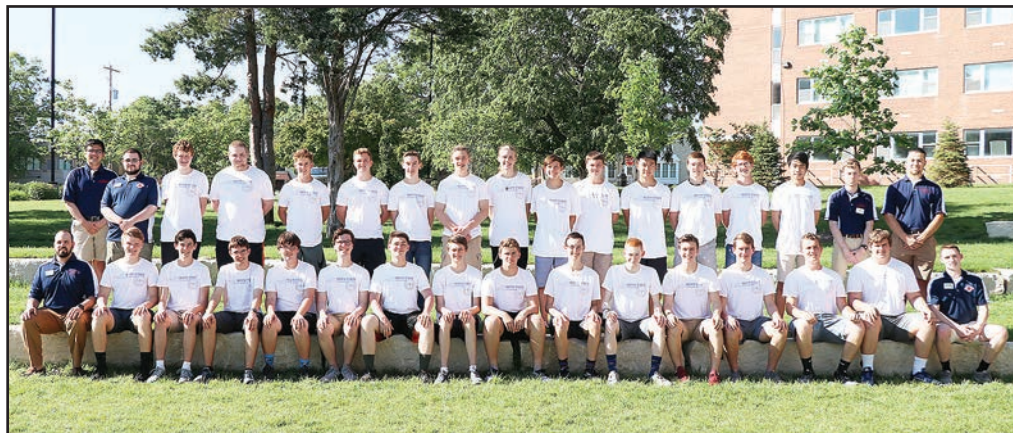


SPIGARELLI

Front Row: Counselor Ethan Doherty, Creighton Markovich, Hayden Rogers, Christopher Hargreaves, Zac Biel, Jack Pirtle, Camden Baxter, Jeremiah Nieves, Joseph Godown, Eli Graham, Connor MacWherter, Atticus Feldt, Jacob Carnes, Blake Miller, Braden Snider, Counselor Justin Watkins, Counselor Brandon Englund **Back Row:** Counselor Max Curtis, Reagan Wetzel, Cole Cunningham, Gabe Staudinger, Trevor White, Joshua Woolverton, Gregory Hardwick, Logan Russell, Vivasvat Vatarmaja, Robert Ybarra, Evan Wooten, Alex Gallion, Alex Acosta, Quinn McDonald, Joseph Agee, Counselor Zachery Brunner, Advisor Chris Wierman

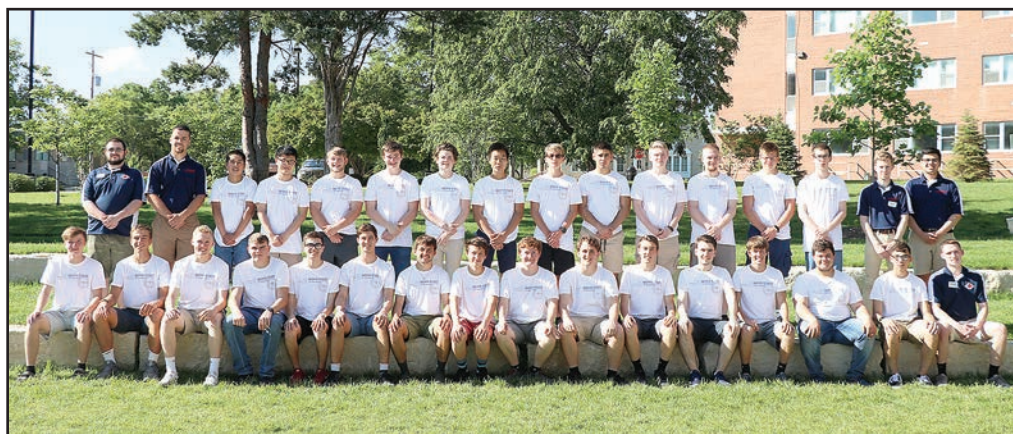
POWELL

Front Row: Advisor Kyle Wheatley, Evan Chladny, Jonathan Hoepner, Michael Kmiec, Matt Gawlick, Thomas Dayley, Sammy Parrigon, Colin O'Brien, Matthew Lettow, Evan Murphy, Declan Carter, Hayden Cannon, Jacob Hagg, Gibson Hobbs, Counselor Hayden Dahm **Back Row:** Counselor Alejandro Rangel-Lopez, Counselor Joseph Pilens, George Ruff IV, Jonathan Fox, Jack Murphy, Jacob Adams, Zachary Arensman, Jade Stauffer, Jared Chipman, Trenton Wagner, Gerod Shaffer, William Jiang, Andrew Myers, Taj Bailey, Allen Zhang, Counselor Kodi Reed, Counselor Corbin Sanner



THOMSON

Front Row: Zachary Wash, Trase McQueen, Alex Liebelt, Jacob Donaldson, Joe Nordling, Jack Morrow, Liam Neidig, Luca Stockwill, Bode Sadd II, Travis Babcock, Bryce Liedtke, Chase Harri-man, Kyler Kaniper, Peyton Nevil, Noah DeVlaminck, Counselor Hayden Dahm **Back Row:** Counselor Joseph Pilens, Counselor Corbin Sanner, Joseph Yanez-Perez, Han Yun Park, Daniel Rieke, Jack Gray-Nichols, Ben Burger, Robert Zhang, Caelan Neibert, Julian Apa, Luke Stanford, Peyton Montgomery, Christian McAlister, Calvin Spellman, Counselor Kodi Reed, Counselor Alejandro Rangel-Lopez



WERRING

Front Row: Advisor Kyle Wheatley, Andrew West, Ethan Eckman, Sam Howell, Andrew Harty, Erik Rytter, JJ Smith, Andrew Nordberg, Alexander DeGuzman, Graham Bond, Rylan Kohl, Cole Wenzl, Ryan Cole, Andrew Schatte, Jarod Sheko, Counselor Hayden Dahm **Back Row:** Counselor Kodi Reed, Counselor Joseph Pilens, Benjamin Anderson, Namgyung Yoo, Caleb Orr, Anthony Molina, Chase Martin, Mason Rusk, Juan Salinas, Kyle Pfannenstiel, Mason Escobar, Lane Warner, Inri Medina, Pierce Gwartney, Seamus Wamsley, Counselor Corbin Sanner, Counselor Alejandro Rangel-Lopez



WHORLEY

Counselor inspires hope, growth through service

Growing up in Lebo, E.J. Charboneau (they/them/their) had limited exposure to individuals who looked or thought differently than what they did.

That all changed in 2014 when Charboneau attended the American Legion Boys State of Kansas as a delegate.

“Boys State was, quite honestly, the first time I had had a real conversation with a person of color in my life because that was just not a perspective I was exposed to where I grew up,” they said.

The experience was a defining moment in Charboneau’s life. They said it is something they think of on a daily basis, and it has been instrumental in shaping their life.

The Boys State program allowed Charboneau to create connections and form bonds with a variety of individuals. This showed potential for the state of Kansas, which is often assumed to be conservative.

“It was an ‘ah-ha’ moment of, like, this is a state I can actually see myself staying in and a state I can see positive changes happening in,” they said.

The diversity of Boys State has kept Charboneau coming back. They’ve been on staff for five years and have experienced a great amount of personal growth.

However, Charboneau said their focus remains on the delegates first and foremost. They want to impact others and put others ahead of themselves.

“I get so much out of this, but who should be getting the most out of this is the Staters,” they said. “I’ve had my week. I’ve had my moment. The people whose moments that week need to be centered on is the Staters.”

To accomplish this, Charboneau believes it comes down to two factors — staff and programming.

The staff, Charboneau said, plays an important role.

“We are here to be a support system for each other,” they said.

Such support stems from how staff members are able to create moments of learning by working together.

“The people in this program continue to blow my mind,” they said.

This ability to come together for the com-

mon cause of impacting the lives of delegates is augmented by the structure of the program, which is what struck Charboneau the most when they were a delegate.

“Coming to Boys State and getting immersed in this experience with kids my own age from around the state really kind of put forth a more accurate picture in my mind of what the demographics of Kansas look like,” they said.

Charboneau said the newly gained perspective gave them hope.

“Boys State opened my eyes to that possibility and potential for Kansas,” they said.

As such, Charboneau hopes to provide an increasingly positive experience for those that come to the program.

The Boys State experience could change the state or even the world.

“Imagine if more of the world looked at things and saw things for not what they are but for what they could be and what they might be,” Charboneau said. “That continually inspires me to come back and make sure I’m doing my part to be at least one piece to that puzzle.”

Charboneau’s drive has been recognized by the Kansas Boys State program.

In 2018, Charboneau was named Experienced Counselor of the Year.

“Validation is always nice,” they said.

However, it was more meaningful than that.

“Having that recognition and knowing that the things I thought I was providing to the program and seeing that kind of emphasized and recognized by my peers, people whose opinions of me I do hold very highly, was really rewarding,” they said.

The skills Charboneau has gained and developed through Boys State aren’t confined to just the week of the program. They also focus on developing others by majoring in interdisciplinary studies and working with student life at Kansas State University.

In May 2020, Charboneau will graduate and plans to go directly into graduate school, hoping to work full-time with student housing. With a graduate degree completed, Charboneau then hopes to work in higher education leadership studies.



As a first-generation college student, Charboneau said they want to support other first-generation and minority students.

“There’s a severe lack of support systems that are adequate for students from minority backgrounds,” they said. “There are a ton of strides that need to be made in terms of who we have on college campuses advocating for those students and working to improve the quality of education we are providing to them.”

For the 2019 session, Charboneau served as the Eisenhower County counselor.

THE END OF THE WEEK

And so it is over. The 82nd session of the American Legion Boys State of Kansas is complete. These are just some of the lifelong memories, captured in picture form, that you created over one week in the summer of 2019.

You arrived at Kansas State University on Sunday, June 2, wondering what exactly to expect. Suddenly you were thrust into a high-paced, cooperative and very involved program. The tasks of creating and maintaining a working government were placed in your hands. Hopefully through this program you were able to see exactly what kinds of decisions our society is faced with.

Elected officials have the incredible tasks of creating legislation to protect their constituents' rights, while at the same time maintaining financial and social stability. One evident message of our program is that it is not easy to be a leader. We hope that you not only found opportunities for great success, but that you also faced the chore of overcoming a sound defeat. It is in these instances where a leader proves his worth, and you have undoubtedly taken this message from the American Legion Boys State of Kansas.

So it is up to you, and you alone, to overcome the failures and struggles that life will present you. Democracy, the most effective form of government, is dependent on involvement. We are taking for granted that you will certainly be involved, but we challenge you not only to become involved but also to become a leader, that extra step beyond simple participation, within your communities.

Democracy is not limited to the realms of Topeka and Washington, D.C.

Democracy exists in your homes, schools, congregations, and workplaces. There will be times in your life when you will be faced with a situation that you do not agree with or that you feel is unfair to you or someone you know. As difficult as it may seem, it is not only your right but your responsibility to use the knowledge and skills you gained from our program to help yourself and your fellow citizens do the right thing.

No matter what you think about what has happened in the past, or even what is happening now, you have the opportunity to change the future, and that is what is great about America. In a very short time a couple hundred years' worth of progress will be handed to you. What will you do with it? Will you be content to stand still? Will you move forward? The decision is up to you.

Serve your community and serve it well. We wish you the best of luck in your endeavors, and we hope that the American Legion Boys State of Kansas helped you along the way.

— The 2019 American Legion Boys State of Kansas Staff

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To view more stories and pictures of your week at the American Legion Boys State of Kansas Leadership Academy visit www.ksbstate.org and www.ksbsmedia.com.

You can also download an application and help send someone to an upcoming session of Kansas Boys State. Call us toll-free at (866) 241-9920 or e-mail us at info.1937@ksbstate.org to request additional information.





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