

# Along these **LINES**

JULY/AUGUST 2020



The DEMCO 2020 Youth Tour finalists, back row from left: Kaylee Caillouet, The Runnels School; Joseph Ismail, The Runnels School; Zachary Carroll, Holden High School; Tyler Schilling, French Settlement High School; Blain Seale, French Settlement High School. Front row from left: Victoria Pursifull, Central High School; Keely Ana Strickland, Central High School; Abigail Yoes, Zachary High School; Aulyssa Wiggins, Central High School; Alessandra Purnell, St. Joseph's Academy; Saber Bankson, French Settlement High School; and Kaleigh Gordon, French Settlement High School.

## 2020 Rural Electric Youth Tour

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# Proud of Our Youth Tour Alumni

I want to thank CEO Jeff Arnold for letting me use this space to talk about a program I am incredibly passionate about: Youth Tour!

Every year, the Association of Louisiana Electric Cooperatives, in conjunction with our member cooperatives, take high school students to Washington, D.C., for a leadership experience like no other.

I have been on many trips to our nation's capital, including other school trips. None compares to Youth Tour.

I have been a chaperone on six Louisiana Youth Tour trips, working closely with "Mama Sandy" Stockwell, ALEC's retired Youth Tour director.

Sandy taught me a lot. Her itineraries ran on precision. She kept the group moving in an orderly, safe fashion. Safety is always the No. 1 concern, but she was also good at making sure the group had fun, mixing up sightseeing, history lessons, energy-burning activities and down time.

One of the highlights—although I do not think it is fully appreciated until later in a delegate's life—is meeting elected officials on Capitol Hill. Senators and representatives spend time listening to ideas, concerns and issues important to the delegates and their communities.

I watched one of our delegates talk to his congressman about the United States

Military Academy at West Point. By the end of the discussion, the congressman stood eye to eye with the young man, handed him a business card with a handshake, and promised he would work on his letter of recommendation to West Point the following week. That's how you get things done in Washington!

This would have been my first year as the Louisiana Youth Tour director. Raring to go, I had scheduled and secured most tickets, meals, flights, hotel rooms, etc. Our cooperatives had selected their 2020 delegates. But on April 1, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association made the difficult decision to cancel the 2020 Youth Tour due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

For more than 50 years, electric cooperatives from across the United States have brought almost 2,000 students a year to Washington, D.C., for a weeklong experience. This is the first time in its history Youth Tour was canceled.

Our Louisiana electric cooperatives are committed to our youth and community and believe in the program so much they are willing to send the 2020 delegates in 2021. They are willing to do whatever it takes to make sure the 2020 delegates do not miss out on this amazing experience.

Moments like these make me proud to



Addie Armato

work with these fine folks. Their unwavering support starts at the top with their board of directors, and like a rising tide moves through to the employees and membership.

I am starting to prepare for an epic 2021 Youth Tour. We will take the largest number of delegates Louisiana has ever sent. I am already looking forward to the trip.

This issue of our magazine has given me an opportunity to reflect on years past and reconnect with some of our alumni. I have enjoyed watching these delegates grow up and take on the world. I have seen them graduate, embark on careers, fall in love and start families. I have cheered them on when they have reached success and encouraged them when they hit a low. We have even grieved together when we have lost one of our own. We share a tight bond.

Only a select number of delegates has shared this experience, but they have taken their Youth Tour experience and lessons learned and shared it with the world.

I could not be prouder of our alumni. I hope you enjoy this issue as much as I have enjoyed working on it.

—Addie Armato, ALEC Director of Member Services/Public Relations

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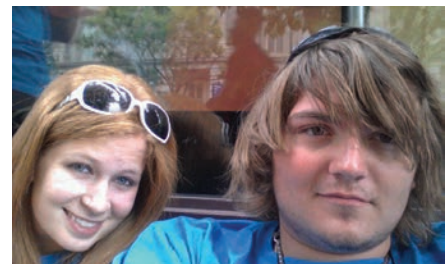
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## Reflections From Youth Tour Alumni

Louisiana's former delegates share how the trip helped shape who they are today

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## Mission

DEMCO is focused on enhancing the quality of life for members by providing safe, reliable and competitively priced energy services.

## Volume 35, Issue 4

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## Manager's Report

Randy Pierce  
CEO & General Manager

“Louisiana Strong.” We hear it time and time again. Whether we’re recovering from the impact of a tropical storm or hurricane, the Great Flood of 2016, or in this case, the COVID-19 international health pandemic, we always power through.

With each set of circumstances, heroes step up and serve so others can thrive. In the case of COVID-19, we all readily acknowledged the tremendous heroism of health care workers. They truly are on the front line of this crisis.

Not always obvious, but certainly noticed, are the hundreds of people who have shown up to work to help keep our homes, families, and lives in working order. We thank you for keeping our communities thriving during the stay-at-home order. *Story on page 5.*

Another example of our strength as a state and community was seen in the various efforts that recognized and honored the Class of 2020. Schools, parents and communities stepped up and innovated new ways to celebrate—with neighborhood car processions, photo yard signs, banners, and large schoolyard signs and displays all over town. I hope you saw the DEMCO “Congrats Class of 2020” billboards and yard sign displays—small gestures of fanfare and recognition—but we also wanted to do something for these well-deserved graduates. *Story on page 8.*

Education is a principle that we focus on at DEMCO. We visit school students throughout the years, and by the time they reach high school, we offer two exceptional opportunities. High school juniors may enter the DEMCO Youth Tour Essay Contest to win a week-long trip to Washington, D.C. Featured on the cover are the 12 finalists for the 2020 contest. Along with their teachers, parents and principals, these students gathered at White Oak Plantation for a banquet with DEMCO board members, leadership and judges. Each student gave an oral reading of their essay, and four winners were selected. *Story on pages 20-21.*

For high school seniors, DEMCO invites applications for our annual scholarship program. This marks the 27th year of awards and the first in DEMCO history to grant \$125,000 in a single academic year. The DEMCO board of directors unanimously voted to award scholarships to 50 member-students this year, each eligible for \$2,500 for the 2020/2021 school year. *Story on page 17.*

These are a few ways that we are fulfilling one of our core principles that guides us each day. The Seventh Cooperative Principle is “Concern for Community,” and these examples are some that we are certainly proud of in this season where many communities can benefit from the resources of their cooperative.

DEMCO is more than poles and wires and kilowatt hours. We are a part of the communities we power, and we will always find a way to show our heart through our support. We love what we do, and we love doing it for you—our members.

## Lucky Account Number Contest

Four lucky co-op members will win \$25! Your account number is listed on your mailing label, but to win you must also find it in the pages of the magazine. If you find it, call 225-262-2160 to claim your prize.



# Concern for Community: We Power On

During the coronavirus pandemic and in all emergency situations, DEMCO has a strong track record of preparing for and responding to a variety of emergencies.

We've faced Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005 and Hurricane Gustav in 2008. More recently, we made it through the Great Flood of 2016. But this is the first time we've faced an emergency that has basically shut down our way of life.

Social-distancing mandates have changed the way we live and work, but it doesn't stop DEMCO from seeking out ways to serve our members and community. By engaging in the Seventh Cooperative Principle—Concern for Community—DEMCO will always find a way to touch the hearts of the members we serve.

Hundreds of Louisiana citizens are working day in and day out to provide critical services to so many who depend on them.

For the workers who are on the front line fighting this pandemic with little time to rest or get away from the critical services they are providing, we provided a nice meal to help fuel their efforts. Without these men and women who responded in the face of adversity, who showed compassion and went beyond that which they have trained for or experienced, we are sincerely grateful.

For all the other essential workers who may not be on that front line, we are thankful for you too. In times of unknown risk, these people went to work and continue working. You make it possible for our communities to thrive in times of great uncertainty and angst.

Thank you to all of you—the essential workers at hospitals, caregivers, grocery stores, gas stations, home care centers and everyone else who continues to power on. DEMCO thanks you and is grateful for your service. ■

## Sign Up for Bank Draft!

DEMCO members who pay their bill by bank draft are eligible to win a \$50 gift card! Winning account numbers are published in each issue of Along these LINES.

Congratulations to these winners:

Account #5250201001, #2480902001, #80036608001 and #80118055005.

It's easy to sign up and be eligible to win! Go to [DEMCO.org/PaymentOptions](http://DEMCO.org/PaymentOptions) or call 1-844-MyDEMCO.



DEMCO provided lunch and donated 130 surgical masks to member hospitals St. Helena, OLOL Livingston and W. Feliciana.



DEMCO and CoBank, through the CoBank Sharing Success Program, donated a total of \$20,000 to support community agencies during the COVID-19 pandemic.

MIDDLE: David Latona, DEMCO vice president of marketing and member services, presents a \$10,000 check to Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank president and CEO Mike Manning to help feed the hungry in Baton Rouge and surrounding parishes.

ABOVE: Chanon Martin, DEMCO economic development specialist, presents a \$10,000 check to Baton Rouge Health District executive director Steven Ceulemans to help provide personal protective equipment to the community.



# Youth Tour Reflections



Louisiana alumni share how the life-changing trip helped shape who they are today

**Alex Talberg, web developer**  
**Caroline Bourn Talberg, school teacher**  
**Year attended: 2011**

**Current location: Boulder, Colorado**  
Alex and I went on the Youth Tour nine years ago. I had just finished my junior year in high school and Alex had just graduated. We sat beside each other for the entire bus ride to Washington. You can really get

to know a person on a 16-plus hour road trip. We became inseparable as we explored the Smithsonian and took silly pictures with monuments. By the end of the week, he had—in the most adorable way—asked me to be his girlfriend at the All States Dance. I said yes, and we dated all through college. Last year, Alex and I got married on June 15, the eighth anniversary of the night of that dance.

These days, Alex and I live in Boulder, Colorado. I am a Montessori primary teacher. Alex has been taking classes to become a web developer and is busily building websites for his portfolio. We have two loving dogs named Bonnie and Clyde. We still love long road trips. We have had many adventures together, and we have plans for many more.

Youth Tour meant a lot to both of us. We remember it often and fondly. Thank you, thank you, thank you to everyone who made that amazing opportunity available to us and so many other young people. ■



**Caroline Bourn met Alex Talberg during the 2011 National Rural Electric Youth Tour trip. They married last year.** PHOTO COURTESY KES WEDDINGS/KAREN E. SEGRAVE



**Chance Salter, ag environmental specialist**  
**Year attended: 2010**

**Current location: Baton Rouge, Louisiana**  
The Washington Youth Tour is one of my fondest memories of my high school career. It is hard to nail down one favorite memory because the entire trip was so incredible. If I had to choose a memory it would be getting the opportunity to tour the White House. Youth Tour provided me with that opportunity that I probably wouldn't have had otherwise.

Currently, I am an agricultural environmental specialist with the Louisiana Department of Agriculture & Forestry. In February, I assisted with a utility arborist recertification at DECMO's headquarters in Greenwell Springs. Youth Tour really helped to prepare me for the career path I'm on today. When you attend Youth Tour, you interact with other delegates from





Louisiana's 2015 Youth Tour delegates spell out "LA" with their fingers on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial.

all over the country with different backgrounds throughout the week. That early experience helped me become more comfortable meeting and speaking with new people, which is a major part of my career today. I truly appreciate ALEC giving me this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. ■

**Clayton O'Callaghan, athletics academic counselor/assistant cross country and track and field coach**

**Year attended: 2012**

**Current location: New Orleans, Louisiana**

I loved getting to tour Arlington National Cemetery. It is a place with so much history dating back to the beginning of the United States. Seeing people that gave their lives for our freedom is something that humbles me because I would not have had the opportunities I have had in my life without their sacrifice.

Growing up in a small town where I knew the majority of people in the town, I

was always one that stayed in my comfort zone and was shy around people I didn't know. Spending time with other kids my age that I did not know personally forced me to get out of my comfort zone and interact with people I didn't know well. This experience showed me that I could find something in common and get along with people I did not really know well.

To this day, I still use the lessons I learned on this trip. As a collegiate track and field coach at the University of New Orleans, I spend a lot of time recruiting potential athletes. To be successful at this you must be able to interact with and find something in common with the recruit that makes you stand out among other coaches. I truly believe that without the experiences I gained through Youth Tour, I would not have the successes that I have had up to this point in my life. ■

*Continues on page 10*





# DEMCO Spotlights the Class of 2020

Throughout May, DEMCO spotlighted the class of 2020 with a campaign to acknowledge and celebrate graduates.

“Congrats Class of 2020: Bright Futures Ahead!” was featured on billboards throughout the DEMCO service area, on the radio and yard sign landscape displays in front of DEMCO district offices.

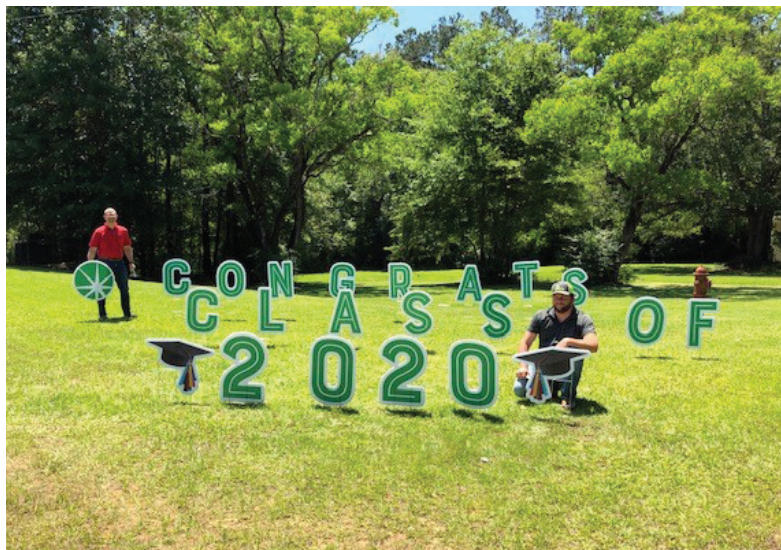
“Our members know that DEMCO is more than poles and wires and kilowatt-hours,” says Randy Pierce, DEMCO CEO and general manager. “We are part of the communities we power, and we always find ways to show our support. We are spotlighting the class of 2020 because we know what a special time it is for graduates, and we want to recognize this momentous occasion with a message of encouragement and hope.”

Whether it’s kindergarten, high school or college, graduation marks the successful completion of a milestone-moment in life. The class of 2020 campaign speaks to everyone who celebrates graduation: the graduate, parents, relatives and communities.

Graduates typically get to experience all the pomp and circumstance that goes with the graduation ceremony, but because of the COVID-19 pandemic, many school year-end festivities are postponed or canceled.

“To see the signs up for these kids all ages graduating different things was the best feeling ever,” says Jody Overhultz, parent of graduating senior Grace Overhultz, Central High School. “I hope they feel extra special. This is a nice thing for them to remember!”

“The billboards, the radio messages and the yard sign displays are our way to give a big shout out to the class of 2020 graduates to show our support and to remind them that they have bright futures ahead,” says David Latona, DEMCO vice president of marketing and member services. ■ (Account No. 80212542013)



TOP: Class of 2020 billboards lighted up in DEMCO service areas. MIDDLE: From left, David Latona, DEMCO vice president of marketing and member services, and Josh Conleay, DEMCO district line supervisor, DEMCO Greensburg district office. ABOVE: Pictured at DEMCO headquarters are class of 2020 graduates Samantha St. Romain and Grace Overhultz, Central High School.



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**Father Daniel Duplantis, 2nd Lt., USAF**

**Year attended: 2010**

**Current location: Thibodaux, Louisiana**

I'm a big airplane enthusiast. The Air and Space Museum definitely influenced my decision to join the Air Force as a chaplain.

Youth Tour really provided me with my first exposure to how our government works besides learning about it in school. The whole experience inspired me to stay informed on the issues facing our country, especially since many of these issues have pastoral implications in my ministry as a clergyman.

I've been to D.C. 11 times since my Youth Tour trip, and each trip really builds on the foundation set by the Youth Tour trip I took with the Louisiana group.

I was ordained a Catholic priest for the Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux on June 6, 2020, and am currently a chaplain candidate in the U.S. Air Force Reserve. ■

**Daniel McFarland, administrative fellowship  
Johns Hopkins Medicine**

**Year attended: 2010**

**Current location: Baltimore, Maryland**

I vividly remember being selected to be a part of Louisiana's 2010 Youth Tour

cohort and realizing that such a selection would ensure my ability to finally travel to Washington, D.C.

Throughout my life, I recall unique opportunities that other kids would dream of, and this one was one of them.

Life never ceases to surprise me. I still remember the names and a few memories I had with each of them. In fact, I reconnected with Yen Nyguen due to mutual friends within the last year. We exchanged stories and memories made during this trip as if it had occurred within the last year.

Studies have proven the correlation of positive exposures at a young age to the success acquired in one's life. By no means am I assuming that I am one of the most successful people in the United States, but I do acknowledge the unique opportunities that have been presented to me over the course of my life. This experience was one that I do not take lightly as I know a wide array of kids across the United States yearn to visit our nation's capital and experience the unique presence it provides.

My gratitude to both the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association and the Association of Louisiana Electric Cooperatives cannot be expressed enough, as their support of this initiative had a significant impact on my life and many others just like me. ■

**Daniel Bosch, law student**

**Year attended: 2010**

**Current location: Baton Rouge, Louisiana**

My favorite memory from Youth Tour was the bus ride up from Louisiana and the group tour of the monuments on the National Mall. Youth Tour gave me

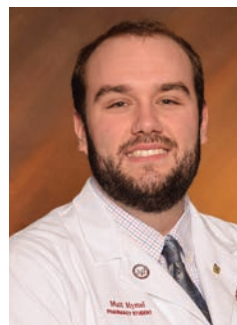


my first real exposure to government and, specifically, to Congress. It motivated me to seek out opportunities while in college to intern for a U.S. senator and to pursue a career in government. I worked at the legislature for four years while in undergraduate school and at the Louisiana Secretary of State's office while pursuing a master's degree in public administration. I now am completing my last semester of law school at the LSU Paul M. Hebert Law Center. ■

**Matthew Hymel, pharmacist**

**Year attended: 2011**

**Current location: Houma, Louisiana**



There are so many favorite memories, from the tours to interacting with students from across the country, but the most impactful was meeting with staff from the House of

Representatives member who represented my home district. I was able to advocate for policies that would have beneficial effects for electric cooperatives.

Youth Tour made me appreciate the cooperative movement and its impact in my community. My family has been involved in my local co-op for some time. My great-grandfather and great-uncle served on the board of directors, and my mother has been at SLECA for over 25 years. Youth Tour made me appreciate the grassroots effort of the cooperative movement, and that sentiment has followed me into my career today.

I graduated in May from the College of Pharmacy at University of Louisiana Monroe and am starting a job at a Medicare Advantage health care plan in Birmingham, Alabama. I will spend my work day advocating for members by developing policies that ensure they receive high-quality and cost-effective health care. I hope to eventually become involved in developing health care policy at the government level.

I truly thank Youth Tour for showing me the impact individuals have when they join together in advocacy for their cause. ■





**Jeff Morrow, WAFB-TV weekend weather**  
**Year attended: 2002**

**Current location: Baton Rouge, Louisiana**

I was interested in law when I went on the Youth Tour trip. For me, the highlight was having the opportunity to visit with all my Congress people, see firsthand how the federal political process works and get a chance to ask questions of these esteemed leaders.

The other thing I remember was the bus ride there and back. It was so much fun getting to know all the youth of the Louisiana delegation as we all came from different walks of life. I also remember our bus broke down in the middle of the night on the ride back to Louisiana. Switching buses might not have been fun to most, but it certainly made the end of the trip memorable!

I enjoyed the experience so much I've volunteered my time on a number of occasions to judge or speak for the DEMCO Youth Tour selection banquet. It feels good to be a part of this awesome experience. ■

**Kayla Mims, director of operations and development for Louisiana Budget Project**  
**Year attended: 2011**

**Current location: Baton Rouge, Louisiana**

My favorite memory about Youth Tour was traveling to Washington, D.C., on a charter bus. It was truly an experience, to say the least. At that time, that was the farthest I had ever traveled outside of Louisiana. I would do it all over again.

Youth Tour helped me become a tad familiar with Washington, D.C. I now travel there often for work. We learned so much about electric co-ops.

I know how important they are around the world, and I do not mind sharing that knowledge with others. Most importantly, it opened me up to meeting new people.

I come from a small town (Fordoche). Prior to Youth Tour, I had not met many new people. I was able to meet people from various states. This was my first experience of true cultural differences, and I can honestly say this helped prepare me for college and the real world.

I currently work at Louisiana Budget Project. I graduated from Louisiana State University with a bachelor's in communications studies. I am a graduate student at LSU, where I will graduate in Fall 2021 with a master's in public administration.

Upon graduation, I plan to open a rehabilitation center for those struggling with addiction, mental illnesses and transitioning out of prison back into society. ■



## About Washington Youth Tour

Washington Youth Tour is an annual, weeklong, all-expenses-paid trip to the nation's capital open to high school students from participating electric cooperatives across the country.

Political leaders, accomplished authors and business leaders—including Apple CEO Tim Cook—are proud Youth Tour alumni.

The program began 63 years ago when future president and then-Sen. Lyndon B. Johnson urged national electric cooperative leaders to bring young people to Washington, D.C.

"If one thing goes out of this meeting, it will be sending youngsters to the national capital where they can actually see what the flag stands for and represents," Johnson said at the 1957 annual meeting of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

In Johnson's home state of Texas, cooperatives heeded his call, sending groups of young people to work during the summer in his office.

In 1958, a cooperative in Iowa sponsored a weeklong tour of the nation's capital for 34 students. Later that year, a busload arrived from Illinois. Other states followed, and by 1959, Youth Tour totaled 130 students.

NRECA began coordinating activities among the states in 1964, suggesting representatives from each state arrange to be in D.C. during Youth Tour week. That year, cooperatives from 12 states sent about 400 young people. Today, nearly 2,000 delegates and their chaperones attend Youth Tour every year.

Six Louisiana cooperatives participate: Beauregard, Claiborne, DEMCO, Jeff Davis, South Louisiana and Washington-St. Tammany. They send delegates to Washington, D.C., as a reward for academic achievement through a writing contest, to educate students about the role of electric co-ops in the national economy, foster an appreciation for the democratic form of government, expose students to the sights and sounds of our nation's heritage, and build their leadership skills so the students may make a difference in their communities.

*If you are a high school student from a participating electric cooperative, check your co-op's website or call and ask to talk to your co-op's Youth Tour coordinator about eligibility requirements and the application process. For general questions about the program, contact Addie Armato at the Association of Louisiana Electric Cooperatives at [aarmato@alec.coop](mailto:aarmato@alec.coop), 225-293-3450 or 800-355-3450 ext. 118.*

*Continues on page 16*



# GRILLING GONE *Wild*



## Garlic Pesto Trout

### Pesto

- ¼ cup pine nuts or crushed walnuts
- 1 tablespoon butter or ghee
- 1½ ounces Parmesan cheese, grated
- 1 teaspoon fresh lemon juice

- 1 garlic clove, grated or crushed
- 3 cups fresh basil
- ⅓ cup olive oil
- 1 teaspoon sea salt

Melt the butter or ghee in a medium saucepan over medium-high heat. Add the nuts. Toast until browned, about 5 minutes. Let cool. Place the nuts into a food processor, slowly adding cheese and garlic while pulsing. Process for about 1 minute. Add basil, salt and lemon juice. Put the lid on the processor. Slowly add oil through the lid's opening while pulsing until the pesto is smooth.

### Trout

- 2 medium-sized trout
- ½ small sweet onion, sliced into thin rings
- 6 cloves garlic, roasted until soft
- 4 sprigs fresh oregano

- One large lemon, sliced, seeds removed
- ¼ stick of butter, sliced
- Salt and black pepper, to taste

Heat grill to medium-high. Rinse the trout and pat dry. Slice open lengthwise from the belly. Rub one garlic clove inside each fish, and place two lemon slices and several onion slices inside each. Divide the butter between each fish, placing inside the fish with the onion rings and lemon. Place each fish on a sheet of aluminum foil about 10 inches long, folding around each and creating a sealed package.

Grill for 5 to 7 minutes, until cooked through. Remove fish from grill, de-bone and stuff each fish with half of the pesto. Garnish with remaining lemon, garlic and oregano. Serve immediately.

Serves 2

*Recipe by Chelsea Glanz*

PHOTO BY DAN GLANZ



## Peaches With Cream Topping

½ teaspoon cinnamon      2 teaspoons honey  
¼ teaspoon vanilla extract      1 cup heavy, thick coconut  
Juice of ½ fresh lime      cream or thick, plain  
2 large, ripe peaches      yogurt, such as Noosa  
4 tablespoons butter      brand

Whisk the cinnamon, vanilla extract and lime juice into the coconut cream or yogurt using a stick blender or electric mixer until smooth. Refrigerate for at least 30 minutes.

While cream is cooling and setting, heat grill to medium heat. Slice each peach in half and remove the pits. Melt half of the butter and brush it over each peach half, coating thoroughly.

Place all peach halves on the grill, cut side down. Grill for 4 to 5 minutes, depending on the type and heat of the grill, checking frequently to prevent burning. Grill until the cut side of the peaches are lightly charred. Turn and lightly grill the other side, about 4 to 5 minutes, until soft but not mushy. Remove from heat and place in serving bowls, cut side up.

While the peaches are still hot, add the remaining butter and honey to each half, dividing evenly so the butter melts into each peach. Top with a generous spoonful of cream. Serve immediately.

**Serves 2**

*Recipe by Chelsea Glanz*

## Bacon-Wrapped Dates

12 medjool dates, whole      12 slices bacon  
and pitted      Sea salt  
2 ounces firm brie cheese,      Ground pepper  
sliced into small chunks

Preheat grill with a medium heat flame. Gently open each date just enough to stuff with cheese, keeping each date mostly intact. Tightly wrap a bacon slice around each date and secure with a toothpick. Bacon slices can be cut shorter if they are too long to allow the toothpick to hold the bacon and date together. Lightly sprinkle salt and pepper over the dates.

Grill over indirect heat, rotating occasionally until the bacon is thoroughly cooked and crispy, about 10 minutes. Remove from heat and place on a serving platter. These pair well with port wines, cheeses and gourmet nuts.

**Serves 2**

*Recipe by Chelsea Glanz*

## Wild Mushrooms With Pesto

¾ cup pesto      2 tablespoons ghee, melted  
Six wild mushrooms\*      Salt and pepper, to taste  
¼ cup extra virgin olive oil

Heat grill to medium heat. Wash and pat dry or air dry the mushrooms. Gently toss the mushrooms in the olive oil, salt and pepper. Grill for 1 to 4 minutes per side, depending on the type of mushroom. Remove from heat and place on a large serving platter, drizzling the ghee and pesto on top. Serve immediately.

\*Amount will vary depending on the size of mushrooms.

Select as many as desired to serve two, keeping in mind mushrooms will shrink slightly when grilled. Make sure the mushrooms are large enough to be placed on the grill without using foil. The following types work well for grilling and pair well with pesto:

- Extra-large chanterelles: 1 to 3 minutes per side.
- Portobellos: 3 to 4 minutes per side.
- Large trumpet mushrooms: 3 to 4 minutes per side.
- Lion's mane mushrooms: 2 to 3 minutes per side.

**Serves 2**

*Recipe by Chelsea Glanz*

## Bison Meatballs

1 pound ground, grass-fed      1 tablespoon fresh basil,  
bison      minced  
¼ cup sweet yellow onion,      2 tablespoons fresh parsley,  
minced      minced  
1 garlic clove, crushed and      ¼ teaspoon salt  
minced      ¼ teaspoon pepper  
1 egg      2 tablespoons olive oil, divided  
2 tablespoons breadcrumbs      1 tablespoon red wine vinegar  
¼ cup Parmesan cheese,      14 ounces canned tomatoes,  
grated      sliced, diced or crushed  
1 teaspoon oregano

Combine bison, onion, garlic, egg, breadcrumbs, cheese, oregano, basil, parsley, salt and pepper in a large mixing bowl. Mix thoroughly and shape into small balls. Refrigerate for at least 30 minutes.

Heat grill to medium. Brush meatballs with half of the oil. Place on the grill and turn periodically. Grill for about 8 minutes, until browned and cooked through.

While the meatballs are grilling, heat remaining oil, vinegar and tomatoes in a saucepan over medium heat. Whisk thoroughly. Once meatballs are cooked, remove them from heat and place on a serving platter. Drizzle the tomato sauce mixture on top. Serve hot.

**Serves 2**

*Recipe by Chelsea Glanz*

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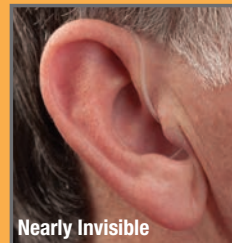
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Continues from page 11



**Sayle Sanson, recent master's graduate**

**Years attended: 2013 and 2015**

**Current location: Hattiesburg, Mississippi**

I recently graduated with my master's in professional accountancy from the University of Southern Mississippi.

I attended Youth Tour in Washington, D.C., twice, during the summers of 2013 and 2015. I met some exceptional new friends and made a handful of memories through these experiences.

Washington, D.C., is one of my favorite places to travel and explore, so getting the chance to sightsee with other students my age from around the country was an opportunity of a lifetime!

One of my favorite memories from the trips was listening to Mike Schlappi, a four-time Paralympic medalist and two-time world champion in wheelchair basketball. His presentation, "If you can't stand up, stand OUT," will always be one to remember.

Some of my other favorite memories are running around Washington, D.C., to take fun pictures with the monuments throughout the city, and meeting Louisiana Sen. Bill Cassidy in his office and getting to sit in his chair.

These trips leave a never-ending impression on the students who attend and lifetime friendships. ■

**Whitney McElroy, teacher**

**Year attended: 2012**

**Current location: Grayson, Louisiana**

My favorite memory from the Louisiana Youth Tour was getting to visit the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. It was a beautiful memorial to one of the world's most tragic events, and it's something I still talk about with people today.

I also made some of the best friendships while on this trip, and for that I am so grateful.

Youth Tour gave me an opportunity to travel and experience history. I have been able to see monuments and memorials that many people haven't, including Ford's Theatre, the Albert Einstein statue, the Smithsonian museums and Arlington National Cemetery. These are places that most people in Louisiana don't have the chance to see. Youth Tour gave me those experiences for free.

Today, I am an English teacher trying to inspire my students to get out and live the world firsthand. I try to find them opportunities such as these so they can get the chance to really absorb history and just see somewhere different. ■



for DEMCO in 2010. There are many reasons that made DEMCO's Youth Tour special to me. I am grateful it was an opportunity to build meaningful relationships with many friends.

I also got to know my future husband, who was chosen as a delegate and went on DEMCO's Youth Tour in 2011. My husband and I have been married for five years. We love reading and learning about history.

Youth Tour was a wonderful experience. During the trip, I and the other students had an amazing time learning about the capital and exploring its many museums, monuments and historical sites. One experi-



**Yen Nguyen Morvant, tax CPA**

**Year attended: 2010**

**Location: Baton Rouge, Louisiana**

I have been a tax CPA with Postlethwaite & Netterville since 2016.

I was selected as a Youth Tour delegate

ence that was particularly sobering was Arlington National Cemetery and The Tomb of The Unknown Soldier. The visit left a lasting impact on me, and it opened my eyes to the incredible sacrifices that were made to keep this country free. ■



# Lena's Closet Program Boosts Students' Confidence

"An exclusive store for distinct students" is the motto of Lena's Closet (St. HeLENA).

The program was created in 2018 by the St. Helena Parish School District administration to serve students who need clothing, personal hygiene products, food, school supplies and other things to make it through the school day.

"We also provide services such as haircuts and other grooming needs," says Dr. Kelli Joseph, superintendent of St. Helena Parish School District. "We developed this idea over a year ago with the intent to make our children feel special when they receive the products they need.

"Our school principals went out of their way to make Lena's Closet look, feel and smell like a boutique. We wanted it to

feel like a high-end shopping experience that lifts their spirits, rather than make them feel embarrassed or less than others."

Items are displayed on shelves and in cubbies. Inspirational art is placed around the shop. There's even a place for students to change into fresh clothes.

Benefits extend beyond the kids who use the items from the closet. Students who help keep the room organized say it makes them feel good to know they can help others who may be struggling or need a little confidence boost.

"The icing on the cake is the fancy Lena's Closet signature store bag," Joseph says.

Each of the district's three schools has a Lena's Closet: St. Helena Early Learning



Each of the district's three schools has a Lena's Closet.

Center (pre-kindergarten to second grade), St. Helena Arts and Technology Academy (grades three to six) and St. Helena College and Career Academy (grades seven through 12).

Lena's Closet is free and open to all our students and their parents. ■

*Although most donations come from parents and employees within the school system, anyone can donate. Donations of nonperishable foods, new and unopened hygiene items and underwear, new or gently worn clothing and shoes, new accessories (earrings, bracelets, etc.) or monetary donations may be delivered to the St. Helena Parish School District Office, 354 Sitman St., Greensburg, Louisiana. Call 225-222-4349 to schedule a delivery.*

## DEMCO Awards Scholarships to 50 Member Students

DEMCO awarded academic scholarships of \$2,500 each to 50 member-students for the 2020-2021 academic year. This is the 27th anniversary of the DEMCO scholarship program and the first year in DEMCO history when \$125,000 in scholarships was granted in a single academic year.

"DEMCO is pleased to offer academic scholarships to our member-students because we know that whenever we invest in our youth, we invest in the future of our community," says Randy Pierce, DEMCO CEO and general manager. "We hope this round of 50 awards is a boost to DEMCO families and helps rejuvenate spirits and hope for brighter times ahead."

DEMCO receives hundreds of applications for the annual scholarship drawing from member-students in the DEMCO seven-parish service area of Ascension, East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, Livingston, St. Helena, Tangipahoa and West Feliciana.

Each scholarship award recipient is eligible to receive \$1,250 for each of two semesters for the 2020-2021 academic year, for a total of \$2,500. The scholarship money can be used by students to attend, on a full-time basis, any Louisiana accredited public institution of higher education. (Account No. 80274059002)

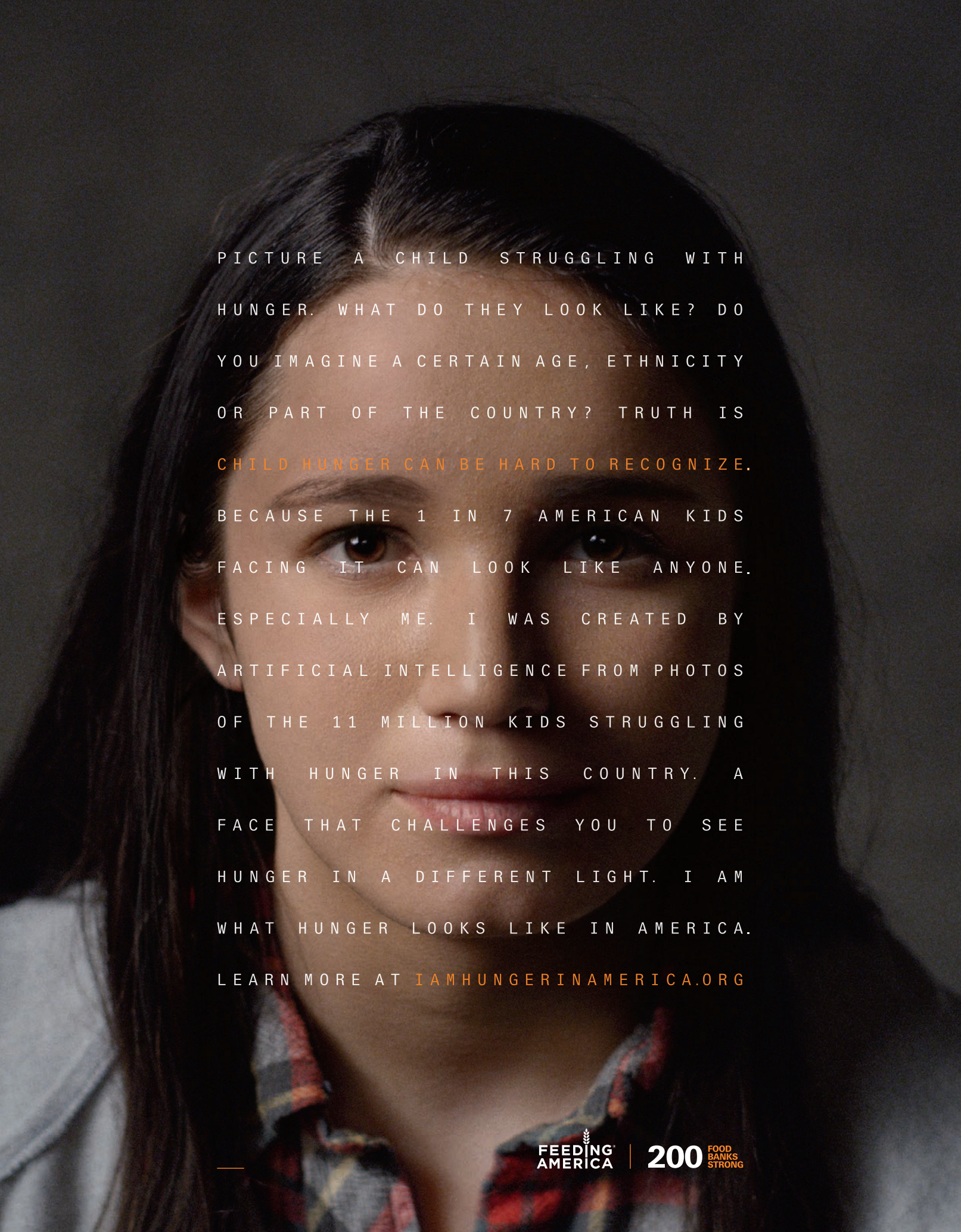
Through legislative changes made in 1993, unclaimed deposits are allowed to be placed in a general scholarship fund to assist

co-op member-students within the DEMCO service area rather than forwarding the monies to the state's general treasury fund. DEMCO scholarship funds are not taken from DEMCO operating funds.

### DEMCO Scholarship Recipients 2020/2021

**Baton Rouge Community College:** Alexa Daigle, Blade Thompson and Marlin Loveless. **Louisiana State University:** Julia Boulton, Madeline Britt, Alexis Johnson, Emogene Stringer, Jude Thomas Barker, Kyle McCleary, Ainsley Nunneley, Colin Rabalais, Riley Charlet, Daniel Jenkins, Brianna Burnthorne, Richard Lane Courtney, Carter Alphonso, Matthew Fontenot, Gabriel Deaton, Sarah Resnick, Scott Michael Brown, Jacob Favre, Ebony Johnson, Emily Burley, Haley Major, Bennett Averett and Elizabeth Hilton. **Louisiana Tech:** Coy Disher. **Nicholls State University:** Madison Levert. **Northwestern State University:** Emma Cockrum. **Southeastern Louisiana University:** Trinity Huszar, Landon Vidrine, Joshua Guedry, Kennedy Toussaint, Da' sharna Smith, Gabrielle Beatrice Mejia, Joni Cowart, Tameron Turner, Jonathan David Neal and Devyn Matherne. **Southern University:** Jaci DeNai Holliday, Brittney Jackson, Cameron Hays, Julian Shorts, Madison Ashford, Willis Gaut and Diamante Moore. **University of Louisiana at Lafayette:** Byron Donahue, Alyssa Barr and JaDarian Woods. **University of Louisiana at Monroe:** Alex Jungina.





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FACE THAT CHALLENGES YOU TO SEE  
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DEMCO Presents ...

# 2020 Youth Tour Essay Contest Winners

DEMCO hosted final judging of its annual Rural Electric Youth Tour essay contest March 10. The four winners selected to participate in the all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C., are Keely Ana Strickland of Central High School, Joseph Ismail of The Runnels School, Abigail Yoes of Zachary High School and Aulyssa Wiggins of Central High School.

Final judging included testing the students' knowledge about the history of rural electrification and DEMCO facts, in addition to an oral presentation of their essay.

Twelve DEMCO member finalists were selected from 75 11th-grade student applicants. Each submitted an essay in the form of a letter to a political leader that addressed a topic of concern and importance to the student-author.

"The board of directors and I are proud to support this endeavor," says Randy Pierce, DEMCO CEO and general manager. "The student delegates win the trip of a lifetime to Washington, D.C., and attend Youth Tour to learn all about America's rural electric cooperatives and the principles, such as democracy, that govern us."

DEMCO has sponsored student delegates to participate in the national event since 1978. Touted as the trip of a lifetime by the co-op and former winners, the National Rural Electric

## **An Excerpt from Keely Ana Strickland's Letter to the President**

"On March 17, 2017, my world was changed when my dad, Lt. Eric Strickland with the East Baton Rouge Sheriff's Office, and his friend, Lt. Shawn Anderson, were attempting to apprehend a violent crime suspect. It became Mr. Shawn's last call. It was cruel, violent and senseless. Our friends lost a husband and father. Society lost. Just eight months prior, six additional officers from my capital city were ambushed. Three lost their lives and three, including their families, will never be the same. Humanity will never be the same. These men are all heroes. They have families. Their lives matter. My dad's life matters.

My dad, like most law enforcement officers, works endless hours to provide for our family. Sometimes he misses my tennis matches or my sister's gymnastics meets, family holidays, dinners, and even church. He often goes without meals while working and he must remain calm and strong in painful situations. He never complains. He bleeds blue, and is honored to protect and serve. He has proudly worn his badge for nearly 22 years. Like most officers, he is not afraid, but I am ...

Our government can help. You can help. We need funding to better equip every officer across the U.S. Our officers deserve that much. We need to respect those who kiss their families goodbye each day not knowing if it will be the last; those who are proud to serve and willing to lay their lives on the line if duty calls; those courageous men and women, like my dad. We cannot erase this hate, but we can build a better tomorrow if we can save just one officer from being gunned down."

Cooperative Association has worked with electric cooperatives to take high school students to our nation's capital since the late 1950s. More than 2,000 students come together from around the country for a weeklong experience on Capitol Hill. Sen. Lyndon B. Johnson inspired Youth Tour when he addressed the NRECA annual meeting in Chicago in 1957. The senator and future president declared, "If one thing comes out of this meeting, it will be sending youngsters to the national capital where they can actually see what the flag stands for and represents."

Students will travel to Washington, D.C., as Louisiana Youth Tour delegates to participate in leadership training, learn about electric cooperatives, engage in one-on-one conversations with their elected officials, and tour our nation's capital, sites, museums and monuments. (Account No. 04732501001)

The 2020 Rural Electric Youth Tour trip was scheduled in June, but canceled due to COVID-19. In light of this decision, DEMCO offered students the option to either attend the trip in 2021 or receive a \$2,000 education scholarship. Abigail Yoes of Zachary High School and Joseph Ismail of The Runnels School opted to attend the 2021 Youth Tour event. Aulyssa Wiggins and Keely Ana Strickland of Central High School accepted the scholarship.

## **An Excerpt from Joseph Ismail's Letter to the President**

"... Today, NASA receives only about 0.48% of the federal budget, compared to the 4.4% that it received during the 1960s. If NASA's budget is increased, the American people will truly stand to reap the benefits of such a momentous investment. Time and time again, those critical of such a proposal suggest that an increase in funding will lead to a net loss in funds that could have been invested elsewhere. Such opponents see the increasing of NASA's budget as nothing more than an extravagant purchase with the bill being slapped onto the backs of the American taxpayers. This talking point, however, could not be any more false. In 2005, approximately \$180 billion was generated as a result of various economic activities tied to the space industry. Over half of that revenue further resulted from the goods and services that originated from investments in space exploration. In 2002, the companies that invested in NASA-led research and development received an average of \$1.5 billion in return. Even during a time when funding crept steadily below 0.70%, NASA-based activities still yielded an immensely significant amount of economic stimulation and vitality ...

... During the days of the space race, NASA's triumph over the Soviet Union greatly aroused a fiery sense of national pride amongst the American people. Unfortunately, such a sense of unity is now terribly scarce. But under the umbrella of national achievement through continued space research, significant advancements towards greater national unity can definitely be attained ... Therefore, Mr. President, we must combat such an obstacle, and we must choose to go to the moon."





The DEMCO 2020 Rural Electric Youth Tour winners are, from left, Keely Ana Strickland of Central High School, Joseph Ismail from The Runnels School, Abigail Yoes of Zachary High School and Aulyssa Wiggins from Central High School.

**An Excerpt from Abigail Yoes’ Letter to the President**

“... Mental illness and drug abuse are still a taboo in our society, and politicians aren’t advocating nearly enough for these causes. Finding a solution to this issue, helping those affected individuals, and preventing the spread of the drug crisis are the key to getting back to the cherished American ideals of dignity and a strong self-made nation.

Mental health issues and homelessness are undeniably intertwined. Very often, individuals may start with only one of the two conditions, but the other soon follows. However, instead of funding proactive and preventative measures, our government seems to be caught in a cycle of reacting to public pleas for assistance when we’ve already gone past the point of crisis. All too often, an individual with an unresolved mental problem turns to illicit drug use first, not seeking the help of others or resources that may be available to them.

The number of people going down this dangerous and destructive path is increasing, and substances are becoming easier to access. Without proactive intervention, families lose their loved ones, futures are destroyed, and children grow up without strong parental figures. According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, the use of illicit drugs is highest among people in their late teens and early twenties, and the numbers are increasing. These young people are the future of America, yet they are literally being buried by this problem ...”

**An Excerpt from Aulyssa Wiggins’ Letter to the Secretary of Homeland Security**

“Child trafficking is a disgrace to the values and rights that we share as Americans. Forty-six children a day are taken in the United States and sold by human traffickers with the intent of sexual exploitation or forced labor. These children are stripped of their innocence and faced with significant long-term problems such as physical and sexual abuse, sleeping/eating disorders, STDs, drug addiction, fear, anxiety, depression, and PTSD. In attempts to lower the number of children that are sold into trafficking, the public needs to be more aware and educated about child trafficking. (Account No. 80176379003)

Child trafficking is often thought to be an issue in Third World countries, but the truth is that the United States is susceptible to having these issues likewise. I strongly advise that the government make more attempts to educate the public on this matter due to the fact that the more knowledge that people have about what child trafficking is, the better equipped they will be to stop it. With the average age to enter trafficking being 11 to 14 years old, schools should be required to educate their students on trafficking. In order to prevent young people from being involved with this crime, the government should make every attempt to teach students about these issues ...

Ultimately, in order to productively protect children’s freedom in our beautiful country, we must ensure that child trafficking is made aware to all American citizens ... Thank you for taking the time to consider this proposal.”

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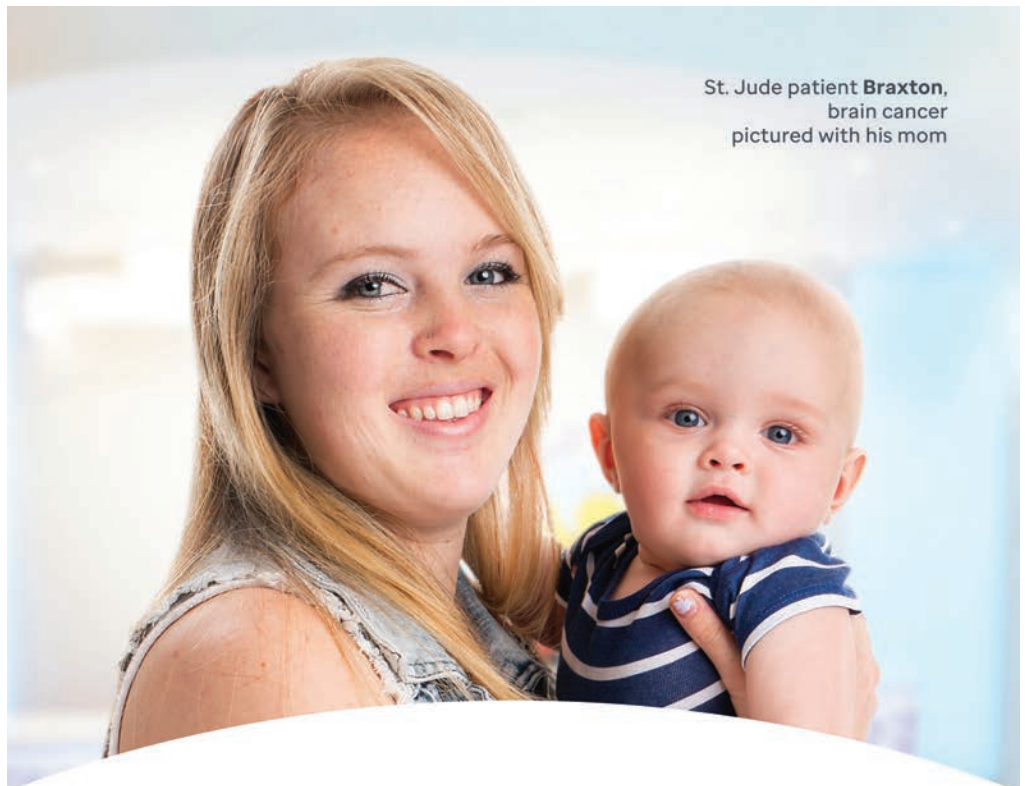
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St. Jude patient Braxton, brain cancer  
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