

Superintendent, school board honor youth program director, participants

The Harlan County Board of Education honored students from the district who were selected and participated in highly competitive youth programs offered through the Center for Rural Development and also recognized an outgoing official who has been instrumental in the growth of those programs.



Meeting in special session, the board of education recognized Delaney Stephens for his work with Harlan County students over the past five years in his role as youth programs coordinator and community liaison at the Center for Rural Development.

“In addition to Harlan County, Mr. Stephens has had a tremendous impact on the lives of many students in 42 southern and eastern Kentucky counties,” said Brent Roark, Superintendent. “His work with middle and high school students includes Rogers Scholars, Rogers Explorers, and Entrepreneurial Leadership Institute (ELI) programs. Each of these programs have been important to the development of youth in our region.”

Stephens, a 2010 graduate of the University of Kentucky, holds a bachelor’s degree in communications and leadership development. He worked in the tourism industry prior to accepting the position with the Center for Rural Development.

“We are honoring him for the work he has done with our students in the past and for the work he will be doing in the future through his new position with the Boy Scouts of America,” said Roark.

Stephens is the new district executive for the Boy Scouts for the region which includes Harlan County.

“I thank him for the tremendous help he has provided to many of our students,” said Roark.

Stephens, who later took part in the presentation of awards to students for successfully completing the Rogers programs this past summer, said he was appreciative of the award. He said he will continue to work for the youth of the region in the future.

Roark noted one of the center’s flagship programs is Rogers Scholars, which opens doors to Harlan County students for attending college.

“It is a prestigious program,” said Roark.

Stephens explained that since 1996 more than 400 applicants are received per year for this program. Only 60 students are selected from the 45 counties. He agreed it is a “tremendous program” providing unique opportunities for successful applicants.



Delaney Stephens with the HCPS Board of Education and Superintendent

Roger Scholars meet for a week-long program during the summer at various locations. It is for students completing their sophomore year of high school.

Receiving the award for the completing the program was Christopher Brown, a junior at Harlan County High School.

Brown said it was an “experience of a lifetime.” He said there were various activities designed to broaden participants’ knowledge in many areas, including leadership.

Janice Dean was honored for her ELI selection and participation. Students spend one week between their freshman and sophomore year learning about what it takes to start a business, researching a



Christopher Brown

business idea, developing a prototype and pitching their presentations to a panel of judges in hopes of winning a presidential scholarship to Eastern Kentucky University.

She said it was intriguing to “plan every single detail” of a child care facility.

Harlan County student Ally Alred also participated, but will be honored at a future board meeting due to a cross country event conflicting with the board meeting date.

Rising freshmen Kiki Dean and Brett Roark were honored for their participation in the Rogers Explorers program.

This program has been in place since 2006, said Stephens. With seven partners, the explorers meet on college campuses to learn and broaden their skills in science, English, math, community service and leadership. There have been 210 students participate to date.

Stephens said the program is also important because “It gets them on a college campus.”

K. Dean’s experience was on the campus of the University of the Cumberlands. “I did meet a lot of people... It was a great experience. I learned a lot of things I never thought I would learn or could learn,” said K. Dean.

Brett Roark, who attended the program at Union College, said it was a “very good experience for me. I had a good time. We learned about a lot of things there, science, math and technology.” He said a highlight was speaking with a NASA official who grew up in Hazard, KY.



Janice Dean



Kiki Dean



Brett Roark