

TRADITIONS

A PUBLICATION OF THE NRA FOUNDATION

SAFE SCHOOLS WEEK

Learn about NRA School Shield and how you can make your schools safer.

DOUBLE DOSE OF Y.E.S.

Take a look back on the weeks and read about students' personal experiences.

MAKING SMOKE & RAISING FUNDS

Elmer Keith's memory lives on with an annual long range handgun match that donates to The NRA Foundation in his honor.



2018

YOUTH EDUCATION SUMMIT

Features



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COVER STORY

Y.E.S., We See the Future of Freedom

The 2018 NRA Youth Education Summit brought 91 young leaders to D.C. for two sessions of unforgettable experiences.

ON THE COVER



2018 Youth Education Summit attendees pause in front of the U.S. Capitol building during their busy schedule of activities in Washington, D.C.

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*The Latest Stories from Friends of NRA and
NRA Foundation Grant Recipients*

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Editorial Manager
Diane Sohn

Editor & Designer
Ashley Re

Co-Designer
Tyler Proksa

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A Gathering of Future Leaders

at the 2018 National NRA Youth Education Summit

**Skipp
Galythly**

*Assistant General Counsel and
NRA Foundation Secretary,
The National Rifle Association*

For two decades, teenagers from across our nation have been selected to participate in the NRA's Youth Education Summit (Y.E.S.). For one week each year, these chosen members of America's youth are brought to the Washington, D.C. area to visit with political leaders, tour our nation's capital, engage in debates and discussions, expand their knowledge of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, and learn about NRA's programs and activities. In addition to learning and practicing leadership and speaking skills, the students get to compete for college scholarships.

Also for two decades, I have worked at the National Rifle Association and during this time the Youth Education Summit became one of my favorite NRA programs. This year, Y.E.S. saw the program expand from one to two groups of America's youth. I enjoyed the honor of helping to judge the current events discussion and to provide the keynote address at the farewell dinners for each group. Quite possibly more important to the teenagers participating in Y.E.S., I also presented the scholarship awards to those students chosen as demonstrating strong leadership skills and knowledgeable participation throughout the Youth Education Summit. I am glad I did not have to select scholarship winners, because based on what I saw from these young people those must have been tough choices.

As I look at a lot of teenagers in the news today, I often find myself shaking my head in dismay, wondering about the future of our nation. With the remarkable youth of Y.E.S., I find myself shaking my head in amazement at the caliber of intellect, poise, speaking ability, enthusiasm, and knowledge found among the groups of participants. While there may be times when our faith in the future may be shaken when looking at some teenagers in the world, working with NRA's Youth Education Summit and seeing firsthand the quality of our Y.E.S. participants easily shores up that faith.

At each farewell dinner, Y.E.S. attendees are invited to the podium to speak about their reflections on the past week. One of the universal themes among the students this year was that students were nervous about what to expect from Y.E.S. and their fellow participants, but on arrival relief set in when they found themselves in a welcoming group. Many students commented on the joy of being surrounded by those with similar views where they could freely speak their minds. I know that the Youth Education Summit leaves a lasting impression on every participant and I am so glad we were able to invite two groups of students to Y.E.S. in 2018.

The Youth Education Summit is made possible by the generous donors of The NRA Foundation. Your support also allowed us to expand the program to two groups this year, with a positive and direct impact on every teen attending the Summit in 2018. I am confident the impact will be lasting and we look forward to more of our nation's youth benefitting from Y.E.S. in the years to come.



ANSWERING AMERICA

NRA PRESIDENT

OLIVER NORTH



Questions written by Y.E.S.
2018 Session 2 participants.
For the full interview,
please visit the NRA blog.

★ **WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CURRENT THREAT TO AMERICA; BE IT A COUNTRY OR A SPECIFIC GROUP?**

Weapons of Mass Destruction [e.g., icbms and nuclear warheads] in the hands of adversaries who place little worth in the value of human life are the #1 threat to our nation. That clearly describes the despotic regimes in Iran and North Korea.

But the more likely and immediate threat to America is the apathy of our countrymen who do not participate in our political process, therefore threatening the future of the Second Amendment

★ **ARE YOU INVOLVED IN SHOOTING SPORTS, AND IF SO HOW DID YOU GET INVOLVED?**

Thanks to my dad and his father, I'm a hunter. If we can eat it, I hunt it. I have the best bird dog in the world: "Casey" a Boykin Spaniel. She points, flushes and retrieves – and is the best "water-dog" I've ever had.

My brothers and I started as kids with "Chrissy" – a beagle. She was a great rabbit, squirrel & varmint dog. I progressed through some wonderful labs. But Casey is the best water and upland game dog I've ever had.

Lesson learned: If you hunt waterfowl from a canoe with a lab, be prepared to go for a swim when the lab jumps out of the boat.

When the lab brings the duck or canada goose back, you will certainly get wet again! That doesn't happen with a Boykin!

★ **IF YOU HAD TO GIVE A 16 YEAR OLD ONE PIECE OF ADVICE, WHAT WOULD IT BE?**

My wife of 50 years and I have 4 children and [as of now] 17 grandchildren. I try to show them how to: "fight the good fight; finish the race and keep the faith." [2nd Timothy 4:7]

★ **WHAT EXPERIENCES IN YOUR YOUTH LED YOU TO WHO YOU ARE TODAY?**

My brothers, sister and I were blessed to be raised by God-fearing parents who loved us and showed us the right way to live.

★ **AS THE NEW NRA PRESIDENT, WHAT FUTURE GOALS DO YOU HAVE FOR THE NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION?**

-Defend the 2nd Amendment of our Constitution.

-Promote the NRA School Shield program across our nation so every school in America will be as safe as the corridors of Congress.

★ **WHEN WAS YOUR FIRST INTERACTION WITH THE NRA? WHAT DID IT ENTAIL?**

NRA instructors taught marksmanship at an outdoor range to our Boy Scout troop. They must have been good instructors since my two brothers and I all served in combat [Marines, Army and Navy] and managed to shoot better than those who tried to kill us and our troops.

My most memorable NRA experience was in 1988 when U.S. Marine Medal of Honor Recipient, America's leading fighter ace, former Governor of South Dakota, inventor of the Super-Bowl and NRA President, Joe Foss, called to inform me "you're now a life member of the NRA... meet me in Richmond, VA." I did as ordered.

The rest was history. By the time Joe Foss passed to be with our Lord and Savior in January 2003, I was on the NRA Board of Directors, and delivered a eulogy along with Vice President Dick Cheney and NBC News' Tom Brokaw.

Raising Awareness of America's Safe Schools Week



NRA SCHOOL SHIELD

By Sheila Brantley
NRA School Shield Program Director

As parents, teachers, students, and staff welcome a new school year, the question remains: are we prepared for the unthinkable? Each fall there is no shortage of back-to-school safety tips. Various media outlets are quick to remind everyone to be mindful of school zones, obey speed limits, watch for pedestrian traffic, and stop for school buses that are loading/unloading children. We have become so well versed in how to keep our children safe on their way to school, but what about once they arrive?

For many, the concern for their children at school is growing. In fact, according to the 2018 PDK Poll, "One in three parents fear for their child's physical safety at school, a sharp increase from 2013 when just 12% said they were fearful."¹ What's more, parents are arguably justified in their response. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, "In 2015–16, about 69% of public schools recorded one or more violent incidents² which is up from the 2013–14 school year when 65% of public schools recorded that one or more violent incidents had taken place."³

These data points are not to suggest our schools are the epicenter of mayhem; on the contrary, most acknowledge our schools are the safest they have ever been however, as a nation, we know we can and should be doing more.

Each year, our nation's schools are entrusted to provide a safe environment for approximately 56 million elementary and secondary school students in public, private, parochial, and independent schools. Families and communities expect schools to keep their children safe from threats – no task is more important than creating a secure learning environment for America's youth.

That is why the National Rifle Association of America created the NRA School Shield program in 2012. We know security is a complex issue with no simple, single solution. As such, we are committed to addressing the many facets of school security, including best practices in security infrastructure, technology, personnel, training, and policy. Through this multidimensional effort, we engage communities and empower leaders to help make our schools more secure.



About 56.6 Million K-12 Students are expected to be enrolled in public and private schools in the U.S. in fall 2018.



About 69% of Public Schools reported at least one violent incident at school during the 2015–16 school year.



34% of parents fear for their child's physical safety at school.

"Our children are the most important thing in our lives and we appreciate your care and concern to provide for their safety. As an NRA Member, I am proud to see what you are doing to protect lives."

– 2018 TX School Recipient

A cornerstone of the NRA School Shield program is our Security Assessor Training, which seeks to facilitate a partnership between schools and local stakeholders by teaching them how to analyze a school's physical security, communications systems, and overall preparedness. At the conclusion of this training, participants are adequately primed to conduct vulnerability assessments that assist their schools in recognizing existing strengths as well as potential vulnerabilities.

Following a vulnerability assessment, many schools are then in search of funds to move forward in making vital security improvements. In partnership with The NRA Foundation, NRA School Shield launched a grant program.

This past spring, the NRA School Shield program opened its first national grant cycle and subsequently awarded more than \$600,000 in grants to support vital school security projects and activities across the nation.

A total of 54 grants were recommended among 23 states and included both public and private K-12 educational institutions. Grant funded activities included, but were not limited to, infrastructure enhancements/renovations, access control and visitor management systems, improved communications systems, emergency medicals kits, and perimeter fencing repairs/installation as well as investments in life-saving training.

The NRA School Shield program is a critical piece of the puzzle when it comes to making our schools more secure and protecting our children. However, YOU are, too!

Is your community talking about school security now? Or does the topic only come up when tragedy strikes another community? It is important to remember – school security is a constant, evolving matter. Security experts encourage communities to be proactive rather than reactive. It is imperative to get ahead of any potential threats. Each day provides an opportunity to ensure all members in a community are prepared for the unthinkable and actively focused on preventing tragedy from ever striking.

In honor of America's Safe Schools Week (October 21-27, 2018), help us spread the word about NRA School Shield. To help you bring the topic of school security to the forefront of your community, visit our website and download our resource featuring questions to start the conversation with your local school leaders about how we can work together to protect our children. ■

¹<http://pdcpoll.org/results>

² "Violent incidents" include "serious violent" incidents as well as physical attack or fight without a weapon and threat of physical attack without a weapon. "Serious violent" incidents include rape, sexual assault other than rape, physical attack or fight with a weapon, threat of physical attack with a weapon, and robbery with or without a weapon.

³https://nces.ed.gov/programs/crimeindicators/ind_06.asp

For more information about the NRA School Shield please visit <https://www.nraschoolshield.org/>. Apply for a grant from The NRA Foundation by visiting nrafoundation.org/!





All Y.E.S. Photos Courtesy Tyler Proksa & Peter Fountain

Y.E.S. WE SEE THE FUTURE OF FREEDOM

By Abigail Klein

Marketing & Communications Coordinator, National Rifle Association

The 2018 NRA Youth Education Summit (Y.E.S.) brought some great “firsts” to the program. This was our first summer having two sessions of students, meaning that we were able to make double the impact! We also had our first ever student from Rhode Island, and had our first chaperone/student sibling duo.

In our 23 year history we have had 999 students graduate the program and awarded over \$607,000 in scholarships to our nation's future leaders. The class of 2018 consisted of 91 students representing 42 states over two sessions. This diversity is one of the program's longest-lasting impacts. The students have an unparalleled opportunity to meet people from all over the country and create networks and lasting friendships that will influence them for years to come.

Y.E.S. students are leaders in their communities, and influencers among their peers. It is our goal to help grow their leadership skills and develop their passions. We accomplish this by teaching the participants about the NRA and how they can get involved in their communities through their government, public speaking, history, the military, and civic engagement. Throughout the week in the Washington D.C. area, students explore these themes and better understand how to apply them in their lives and communities.

Some of the NRA programs and affiliates the students learned about were: NRA School Shield, Refuse To Be A Victim, Eddie Eagle, Women on Target, Hunter's Education, NRA Civil Rights Defense Fund, and the NRA Foundation. Students are encouraged to take what they learn about these programs and share them with their community to be an active voice for the Second Amendment.

During the week, Y.E.S. students had the opportunity to speak with a Congressman and learned more about serving as an elected official. In the House Gallery, they had the opportunity to hear several representatives speak about topics important to their districts. Topics ranged from recognizing heroic people and actions to environmental issues impacting their area. At the Supreme Court, students sat in the chamber and learned the history of the court, and about the process a case goes through in order to be heard at that level. Other locations visited include: the National Archives to see the Bill of Rights, including the Second Amendment, the National American History Museum to gain a better understanding of our past, various memorials that honor our veterans, and the National Marine Corps Museum.

One of the most impactful parts of the week are the debates and current events discussions. The formal debate setting offered students the chance to practice public speaking, fine tune their research skills, and work as a team. The current events discussions were more informal, and provided students the opportunity to apply their diverse experiences and voice their opinions on topics, and learn from each other in the process.

Thank you to everyone who supports the NRA Youth Education Summit and the students who attend. These leaders will transform tomorrow, inspire change, and LEAD the LEGACY! ■

Apply for one of two Y.E.S. 2019 sessions at www.yes.nra.org/application. Applications close January 25, 2019.

Y.E.S. SESSION ONE



"The students of Y.E.S. will Lead the Legacy of freedom into the next generation."

By Madison Miller

2018 Youth Education Summit Participant

Growing up in Northern Virginia as a conservative, young woman, I faced adversity because of my “abnormal views” on the Second Amendment. The NRA Youth Education Summit (Y.E.S.) has allowed like-minded high school students to gather from all over the United States of America, right in our nation’s capital.

What makes America unique is our right to freely express our opinions, ideals, and morals. Starting off the week, participants of the Y.E.S. program dove into activities that allowed us to utilize one of our founding freedoms, freedom of speech.

During the current events discussions and formal debates, every student was invited to engage in conveying their opinions on topics differing from firearm regulations to controversial issues such as education and healthcare. This opportunity helped Y.E.S. delegates realize the importance of a society with free thinkers as it can help to solve world issues, and offers a chance for us to have a greater understanding of different views from our own.

Throughout the rest of the week, we were encouraged to have forums amongst ourselves and to hear the views of our peers from different states. Each one of us had a unique perspective and background, and we all were able to learn from each other.

The NRA didn’t just teach us about the freedoms every American is entitled to, but also the costs of that freedom. Stepping onto the grounds of Arlington National Cemetery, reality sets in on what the price of freedom is. In today’s society, we have lost sight of honoring those who defended our freedom. The NRA instilled

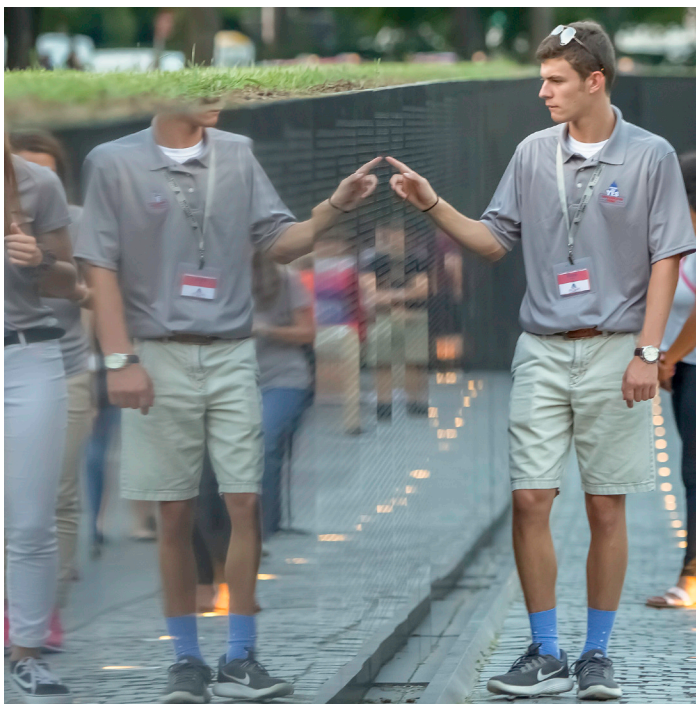
that value in every one of us, to respect those who serve as they have given their lives so we can experience the freedoms that make America so special.

Our new knowledge was not just from our differing life experiences, but also about the NRA itself. The National Rifle Association exists to protect the most important freedom, the right to bear arms. With today’s media, there are misnomers about the NRA.

Y.E.S. participants took a field trip to NRA headquarters in Fairfax, Virginia. Learning about Eddie Eagle, NRA School Shield, and the NRA Foundation, we discovered that there is more to this organization than guns and hunting. Not enough people are aware of these opportunities, and students have the resources and contacts to bring these programs back to our towns to ensure the community children, local schools, and elected officials are educated on the possibilities the National Rifle Association has for the public.

For some of us who have never shot a firearm before Y.E.S., the NRA gave us the opportunity to exercise our freedom to bear arms at the NRA shooting range. We learned basic firearm safety skills that would be essential for the rest of our lives, whether we were an avid marksman, skilled hunter, or inexperienced shooter. The NRA brought us together on more than our respect for the Second Amendment; it united us on our love for American rights, not only inspiring us to create change for America, but to not lose sight of our key freedoms. ■

Ross Reed walks somberly through the Vietnam Veterans Memorial



Nicole Gish & Madison Miller pose in front of the White House





★ GROWTH CITIZENSHIP GROWTH CITIZENSHIP ★

By Nicole Gish

2018 Youth Education Summit Participant

From the moment the plane touched down on the tarmac at Reagan National Airport, the history of this great nation sparked a fire within me. This is where America's foundation lies—the place “We the People” take refuge to be citizens and spread ideas freely. Where this one city, the birthplace of civil duties and liberty, comes together to form our nation.

Ever since I was a young child, citizenship has always been part of my life, and contributing back to America seemed important because it had given me so much. As I applied to The NRA Foundation's Youth Education Summit, the thoughts of growth, freedom, and service rung through my ears, because I knew that this would be a beacon for me to contribute back; my opportunity to grow and learn to become a better citizen of this great country.

Once Session 1 participants arrived and all met together, ideas and conversations burst to life. Many of us shared the same experiences, even though we lived miles away from one another. We all shared the desire to learn more about our nation, stretch our ideologies and beliefs, and graduate with a new appreciation and dedication to serve our communities.

As the week progressed, there were many instances where our knowledge and skills were pushed, especially at the House of Representatives session, National Mall, National Archives, and Newseum. Each of these locations offered a different experience where we could explore our beliefs and abilities.

At the House of Representatives session, many felt our roots and pride in America strengthen. The House of Representatives is the

voice of the people and it is heard here. As members of this great nation, our values and rights are fought for and strengthened in this place. The power of watching a legislative session gave many of us hope and a belief that we could change the future.

As we toured the National Mall, the monuments moved in us appreciation for our history and where we called home. The moving reflection of ourselves in the Vietnam Memorial made us stop and think of those men and women who had given their lives to save us. Our freedoms and dreams endured because of their sacrifice.

We grew further as we were given the opportunity to learn of our foundation at the National Archives. Written over 230 years ago, the ideas have not changed, they have not faltered, and they live within us.

Another piece of citizenship was affirmed at the Newseum, its purpose—to educate visitors about our First Amendment right. As citizens we were reminded of our first liberty, the right that is taken the most for granted. This was the finishing piece to our expedition of what citizenship should look like completed to the fullest.

The Youth Education Summit taught us and grew us to be citizens. It gave us the opportunity to discuss with each other our beliefs and most importantly, what makes us better Americans. The growth we gained changed us, moved us, and will stay with us. Citizenship is the daily reminder that we have an obligation to give back because of our Founders, our soldiers, and the next generation. Citizenship looks different because of Y.E.S. 🇺🇸

By Jacqueline Callens

2018 Youth Education Summit Chaperone

In 2013 I participated in the NRA's Youth Education Summit (Y.E.S.). Now I have a bachelor's degree in nursing and just started my first job in a cardiac intensive care unit. Y.E.S. gifted me with a scholarship that was unbelievably helpful as I pursued my degree. When I think back to attending Y.E.S., I remember how nervous I was to participate in the public speaking portion and the debate that occurred throughout the week. I was excited to visit D.C., but mortified by the prospect of public speaking. I laugh at this now. Since attending Y.E.S. I have traveled to many *Friends of NRA* banquets and other groups to speak about the program. I've done radio interviews, called business owners for donations to our banquets, and was featured in the newspaper.

Up until five years ago I had barely handled a firearm. I believed in the right to bear arms, but I didn't actively participate in that right. Protecting myself wasn't much of a concern on a little farm with my parents (who owned firearms) and a couple of dogs I felt I was safe. Then, Y.E.S. gave me the opportunity to visit the NRA Range to shoot a pistol and a rifle. Handling and shooting a firearm helped demystify them to me. Guns were no longer scary for me, and that feeling has stuck. If you haven't handled a firearm, you may not mind if someone takes away your right. However, if you have put your Second Amendment right to good use, it becomes much more important to you.

After my time at the Youth Education Summit, I wished that I had used and understood my Second Amendment rights sooner. This realization prompted me to undertake two projects.

First, I decided to start a *Friends of NRA* banquet in my area to raise money for Second Amendment educational and shooting sports programs. This involved contacting my local field representative and calling people in the community who would be interested in volunteering to host a banquet. I was excited to serve as secretary on the first *Friends of NRA* committee in my community. Four years later, our local *Friends of NRA* banquet raised the second highest amount of money in our state! It took a lot of effort from everyone involved, but we are very proud of that accomplishment.

The second project I undertook was to start a youth shooting sports club. With the help of many volunteers, my parents, my brothers and I secured coaches, equipment and participants. I have six younger siblings, and they all now know exactly what the Second Amendment means to them because they have used their right. My ten-year-old sister, who competes on a B.B. rifle team, told me that the right to bear arms means, "Someday, I will be able to protect myself if I need to." When I was ten, I couldn't even tell you what the Second Amendment was. This is why shooting sports for youth is impactful. This is why Y.E.S. is impactful, because it teaches youth the meaning of the Second Amendment.



Jacqueline and her brother Isaac at the first session of Y.E.S. 2018

John and Isaac, two of my younger brothers, are also Y.E.S. alumni. Isaac attended this past summer, and I was able to chaperone his Y.E.S. class. John, who attended in 2016, finished his studies to be an electrician and is in the workforce. He has volunteered at *Friends of NRA* events, refurbished a trailer for our shooting sports club, and has volunteered for many local fundraisers. For John and me, Y.E.S. was just the beginning of our involvement, and we are still actively involved today. The program equips youth for a lifetime of activism. Isaac has just graduated from Y.E.S., but the education and resources he has received during that week will soon be put to good use. Y.E.S. sends a clear message: You are never too young to get involved.

As I officially join the workforce and move to my new home, I am so grateful that I have a firearm to protect myself and my roommates. I feel empowered, safe, and free. I don't want to lose that. At Y.E.S. this year, one of the NRA employees commented how some people protest and beg the government to take away our rights. Not us. We stand up for our right to bear arms. For every Y.E.S. student, for every firearm owner, for every American who understands our Constitution, the creed is clear: We celebrate our freedom. We understand our freedom. We defend our freedom. ■

END OF WEEK SCHOLARSHIPS

★ SESSION ONE ★



\$3K Jamie Day **UT**
Connor Covington **TN**
Chloe St. George **NV**

\$2K Riley Whitt **AZ**
Ross Reed **AL**
Hunter Lindemann **AR**

\$1K Ethan Buhl **PA**
Cole Dubois **RI**
Emma Hoover **MO**

★ SESSION TWO ★



\$5K Jake Witlin **MD**
Alyssa Brouillet **IA**

\$2.5K James Fraiser **AZ**
Victoria Crane **LA**
Taylor Christian **WA**

\$1.5K Jace Draper **UT**
Doug Gologorsky **NJ**
Payton Virden **NM**
Justin Vance **VA**

2018 GRAND SCHOLARSHIPS



Alex Henry - Arkansas

Over the past year, Alex has dedicated his time to sharing about the Y.E.S. program and his experience. He attended 11 *Friends of NRA* events educating attendees on Y.E.S. which their donations help to support, and encouraged them to share the program with high schoolers they know. He also personally thanked the Arkansas *Friends of NRA* volunteers for their hard work and dedication in supporting the next generation of Second Amendment supporters. Additionally, Alex presented the Eddie Eagle program to 750 kindergarten through 5th grader students, and supplied information to other schools who showed interest in the program. Alex was also featured in three NRA articles about his work on behalf of Y.E.S. and NRA.

Gianna Guzzo - New York

Gianna has a gift for journalism that she has shared with NRA Headquarters by writing stories for the NRA Blog and *Traditions Magazine*. Her topics ranged from her personal experience at Y.E.S., to writing about Y.E.S. alumni, and various other shooting sports topics. In addition, Gianna volunteered at two *Friends of NRA* events helping to raise awareness about Y.E.S. Gianna wanted to share her passion for the program one more time before leaving for college by conducting an on air interview with a local television program about her experience and the program in general.



Krzysztof Gajda - Illinois

While attending Y.E.S. last summer, Krzysztof learned that he could share his passion for shooting with his peers in his local community through an NRA youth shooting club. He spent countless hours organizing meetings, recruiting members, finding a coach, and gaining the support of a sponsor organization. Krzysztof also developed goals for the club, prerequisites, a membership application, and an execution plan. After the club was established, he worked with NRA Clubs and Associations to make the new youth shooting club officially NRA affiliated.

Emily Cupp - California

Emily used her social media skills to share about Y.E.S. and raise awareness of the program. By using Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook, she was able to reach over 1,000 people and share her story with a new audience. Emily also visited two *Friends of NRA* events to talk to attendees about how Y.E.S. impacted her, and why she would encourage others to apply for the Summit.



Quinton Taylor - Ohio

Quinton left Y.E.S. with a refreshed passion for the shooting sports, which he shared with his local shooting team. It was then he decided to write an article on his team captain's experience at the Scholastic Clay Target Program (SCTP) National Championship for *Traditions Magazine*.

Y.E.S. SESSION TWO



"We are left with memories of the past, and it is time to make our own mark on the history of this great nation."



By Hannah Gertz
2018 Youth Education Summit Participant

As the week began, I wasn't exactly sure what to expect. We all arrived on Monday and got to know each other. It was pretty awesome meeting other Second Amendment supporters from all over the county.

The United States Capitol building was incredible. It was our first historic stop during our week. As we walked the same paths some of our greatest leaders once walked themselves, it was truly awe-inspiring. In addition, learning about the historical figures that are honored in the building was quite interesting.

Later, as I sat in the U.S. Supreme Court listening to the history behind the room we were in, I got chills. I was sitting in the very room that the famous *Brown v. Board of Education* was ruled. This was only one of many opportunities the 45 student attendees had during our week at the Youth Education Summit (Y.E.S.) to engage with the history of our great nation, and grow to understand the importance of learning and analyzing the past.

During the week, Y.E.S. students were able to apply their previous historical knowledge in debate. The participants were divided into groups, and given a current event topic to research. While forming arguments for these hot topics, many students tied in historical knowledge, as well. This made their arguments much stronger, as history does indeed repeat itself. By looking at the past, one can effectively understand the present, and prepare for the future.

At George Washington's Mount Vernon, students were able to actively engage with the personal life of one of our most respected leaders of all time. We were able to walk the grounds, visit the museum, and get a tour through Washington's actual house. Along the tour, we saw the exact bedroom where Washington died.

At the Marine Corps Museum, we were able to honor our heroes both past and present. We got to see the whole history of the Marine Corps, from the very beginning of the branch up to present day. That evening, we went to the Marine Corps 8th & I parade where we watched "The President's Own" United States Marine Band, "The Commandant's Own" United States Marine Drum and Bugle Corps, The Marine Corps Color Guard, and The Marine Corps Silent Drill Platoon.

Visiting the Newseum was a personal favorite of mine. Looking at all the news reports from past events was fantastic, and looking at the Pulitzer Prize photographs allowed me to become connected to the people that personally experienced the particular event. The photos were so eye-opening, and they were actually very emotional.

All in all, the week at Y.E.S. was what one would call the opportunity of a lifetime. Engaging with students from all over in the epicenter of our nation is not something that happens every day, and I am forever honored to be able to have participated in this amazing opportunity! 🇺🇸



By Victoria Crane
2018 Youth Education Summit Participant

Throughout the week of Y.E.S., participants have the opportunity to visit many sights that highlight America's military history and the sacrifices made by members of the armed forces, who contributed to the many freedoms we enjoy today.

Strolling through the American History Museum with a fellow Y.E.S. participant, Morgan Sanders (MN), one particular display drew our attention. This exhibit highlighted the elimination of Osama Bin Laden by American Special Operations Forces. As we viewed the exhibit, we spoke of our memories of that day in 2011. While our memories were limited due to our young age, we both remembered recognizing the gravity of that day and shared a sense of the military's protection of our way of life.

The next day, at the National Museum of the Marine Corps, our group got a taste of what these dedicated men and women went through in order to prepare themselves for the great task of protecting our nation. In one portion of the museum, another

Y.E.S. participant, Baylee DeVos (MI), experienced a simulation of a Marine drill instructor yelling out instruction to her as she assumed the role of a raw, inexperienced recruit. After just a few seconds, she popped out from the simulator. The intense look on her face was enough to tell us that the first day of boot camp marked the start of a very vigorous journey to earn the title of Marine. This experience showed us that our nation's military maintains high professional standards which begin on a recruit's very first day.

The military's high standards were evidenced throughout the week; notably at the Marine Barracks 8th & I evening parade we attended that same night. Describing the members of 8th & I as precise and professional would be a complete understatement. No words could capture the patriotic pride we all felt as the President's Own Marine Band paraded across the field in perfect synchronization with the beat of their drums, or when the Silent Drill Platoon flipped their rifles above their heads. As we concluded our Y.E.S. activities, we made sure to recognize those who made the ultimate sacrifice in defense of our freedoms by taking part in a wreath-laying ceremony at The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery.

Justin Vance and Faith Wealot present the Y.E.S. wreath at Arlington National Cemetery



Here, the imposing soldier guarding the tomb marched in the steps of thousands who have gone before him. These perfectly aligned steps demonstrated the reverence for those who dedicated their lives to freedom in conflicts past. This experience made clear that each member of the United States Military does not simply protect our nation, they become a part of its historical fabric with each new recruit, sharing in common experiences and hardships as millions in whose footsteps they walk.

I, like many of the other students who attended Y.E.S., expected to explore our American government and history. Y.E.S. provided these opportunities and more, by encouraging all of us to further refine ourselves and become responsible citizens who recognize and appreciate the sacrifices of those who help maintain the freedoms we enjoy today. ■



★ GOVERNMENT GOVERNMENT GOVERNMENT GOVERNMENT ★

By Alyssa Brouillet
2018 Youth Education Summit Participant

Abraham Lincoln famously stated that democracy is the government of the people, by the people, and for the people. Throughout my Y.E.S. week, the prevalence of this idea was shown in every step of our journey.

Prior to embarking on this week's adventure, I, along with 44 others, could never have imagined just how great our take-away would be. While in Washington, D.C., The NRA Foundation ensured that we would be given the full government experience, which meant engaging with all three branches of government, reviewing the history of our democracy, and discussing the future of our nation.

Some of the very first steps on this journey led us to Capitol Hill, a symbol of our American democracy. Upon our arrival, we were met by Congressman Duncan of South Carolina, who we were privileged to speak with about the significance of our civil liberties and the power of the public. We also viewed the House of Representatives Gallery and were granted the opportunity to listen to state representatives present their local needs. It was inspiring to see our democracy at work through observing our states' elected officials as they communicated the demands of the public.

From there, we set off on our path to learn about the Judicial Branch of our government. Our group attended a Supreme Court lecture where we not only listened to a presentation on the history and inner workings of the Court, but interacted by asking questions in the courtroom itself. This proved to be a very effective and engaging way to learn about the judicial system,

specifically for those in our group who were looking to pursue a career in law or the political sphere.

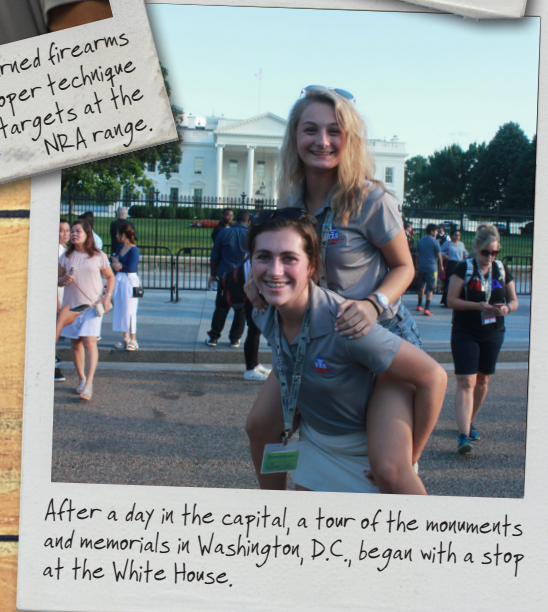
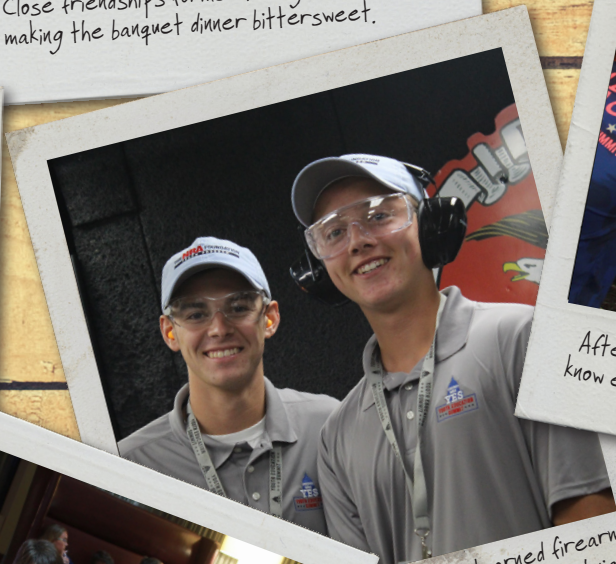
Later in the week, we took some literal steps during our walking tour of Washington, D.C. This featured a stop in front of the White House where we discussed the history of our nation's presidencies, and observed the changes they had each made over time. It was a remarkable day where we got to physically follow in the footsteps of our nation's leaders.

Aside from the three branches of government, we were able to delve deeper into these footprints when we visited the National Archives Museum. The National Archives Museum appeared to be one of the favored sites throughout the group, as we were able to see the original documents our entire government and nation were founded upon. Beyond that, the museum took us on a journey throughout time, showing us not only the origin of the laws we have today, but the causes behind their creation.

When we dove into the week's debates and discussions, those records became very prominent given that it taught us we have the power to create a future that is free of our past mistakes. Having a government that was created "of, by, and for the people" only ensures promise. Our future rests not in the hands of select officials, but in the public itself.

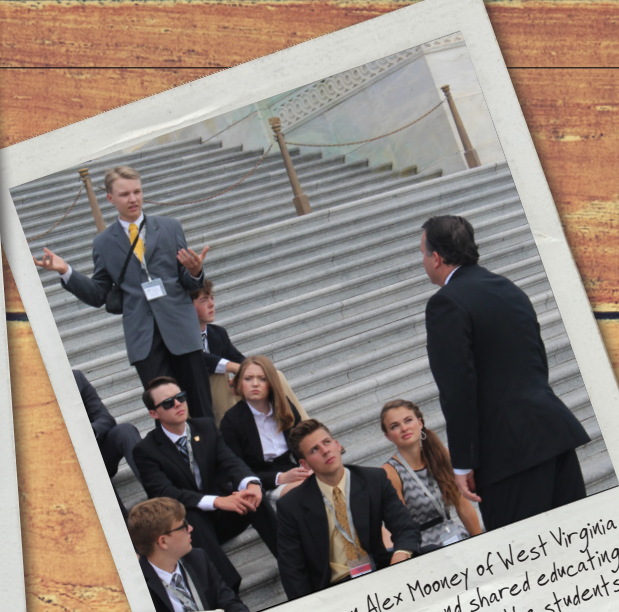
As the week came to a close and we neared the end of our journey, we were able to leave knowing that there was light at the end of the road, regardless of the destination. ■

SNAP





took advantage of the views
Newseum terrace to snap a



Congressman Alex Mooney of West Virginia
answered questions and shared educating
and inspirational words with the students.

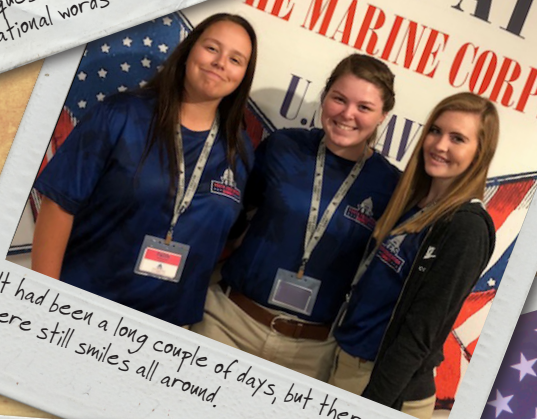


A day at the NRA range is a day
well spent. Just ask
Brian Jackson.



A LOOK AT THE FUN AND FACES OF THE 2018 NRA YOUTH EDUCATION SUMMIT SESSIONS

Submit your Friends of NRA and NRA Foundation
photos to friends@nrahq.org! Help us celebrate
more memories and milestones.



It had been a long couple of days, but there
were still smiles all around.



Patriotic socks were the main fashion
statement at Y.E.S. session one!



Dressing up for a final night of
fun, food and friendship at the
closing banquet.



Mitchell Almind strikes a pose at the National
Museum of the Marine Corps.

SHOT

Making Smoke & Raising Funds

In Memory Of Elmer Keith

By Jamie Day

2018 Youth Education Summit Participant

In the Palouse country of Southeastern Washington there's a small community called Valleyford. If you were there in the early days of June you would have heard the crack of handguns cutting through the air followed by the solid slap of steel plates. This welcomed commotion is the result of group of avid handgunners who have gathered every year since 2001 for the Elmer Keith Memorial Long Range Handgun Match. The match is held in Elmer Keith's honor; a man who not only inspired an entire generation of gun enthusiasts with his writing and influential role in the creation of the .357 Magnum, .41 Magnum, and .44 Magnum, but also lived a simple life as a rancher in rural Idaho. The memorial match has attracted a number of Elmer's devoted followers and earned close to \$100,000 for The NRA Foundation.

It started when Will DeRuyter, the memorial shoot founder and organizer, took an interest in Elmer Keith's writing, particularly the legendary story of Keith shooting a wounded mule deer

at over 600 yards with his .44 Magnum handgun. DeRuyter himself had always been a rifle hunter and was amazed that Keith had made such an incredible shot with a handgun. So, out of curiosity, he went into his backyard with his own .44 Magnum, picked out a rock on the hillside that was about 150 yards away, and began shooting at it. After emptying several boxes of cartridges, he finally hit the rock and soon thoroughly demolished it. DeRuyter then had steel targets made and decided he no longer wanted to keep all the fun to himself.

When telling this story, DeRuyter said, "Shooting at the steel plate was so much fun that I decided to invite 300 of my closest friends to come over and join in. That first year only 12 of them showed up, but we shot a lot, and I fed them very well. We auctioned off some items, and we sent \$650 off to The NRA Foundation." The group had such a great time that it was decided the match would become an annual affair.



Photos Courtesy John Parry



Smith & Wesson M-24 customized by Rick Bemel of Creative Arms and engraved by Paula Biesen. This will be the grand prize gun at a future event.



Co-sponsor Ed Parry (right) presenting high score trophy to winner Ace Fernandez with second place winner, Bob Toppen, (rear) and third place winner, Guy Makaad (left).

The next year about 20 people attended and the money raised nearly doubled. After several years of depositing the checks into a general fund, it was suggested by someone that DeRuyter and his friends establish a named fund with The NRA Foundation in Elmer Keith's name. So, the Elmer Keith Memorial Acorn Fund was created and the annual invitational match was established.

Every year on the first day of the match, roughly 45 participants from across the country, ranging in age from 7 to 85, meet at the wheat fields near DeRuyter's home where the shooting match takes place. The range is quickly set up, and later in the afternoon participants sight in their handguns and take as many practice shots as needed. Then a large spaghetti dinner is served and everyone heads to bed to rest up for the exciting day ahead.

The next morning everyone has their fill of hot coffee and rolls and the competition begins. Every competitor is given 10 minutes to fire 12 shots at various targets down the range. Dave Workman, former NRA Board Member and senior editor of the Second Amendment Foundation, has attended the match multiple times and remarked on the marksmanship displayed at the range. According to him, "Some of the participants are probably the best long-range handgun shots around. They just don't feel the need to run around the countryside proving it. It is not easy to hit a target at 100 yards, much less 150 or 200, with an open sight handgun. It's a testament to concentration, and every principle of good marksmanship."

Believe it or not, the 200 yard shot isn't even the furthest possible target. At about 600 yards a 30" x 30" steel plate stands for anyone who dares attempt the legendary Elmer Keith mule deer shot. Each shot is awarded a higher point value based on distance of the target and the shooter's ability to successfully hit a called shot.

In the middle of the day lunch is served with a main attraction of pork ribs and brisket. If you haven't caught on yet, the theme of good food is nearly as important as the theme of good shooting. After all, you can't expect someone to shoot straight on an empty stomach. After lunch the shooting continues, and when everyone has been given their chance to compete the range is closed and the banquet begins.

Dinner is served, the top three shooters are bestowed their awards (this year there was an exciting three way tie which was resolved in a sudden death shootout), and the raffle and auction take place. Every year the grand prize of the raffle is a custom handgun, either internally enhanced or handsomely engraved. These custom handguns are instantly treasured by their new owners and often brought back to be used in the following years of competition.

Afterwards, campfires are built and friends gather around. Many close relationships are formed during the memorial match, and every year old friends reacquaint themselves and create new memories together.

Everyone involved has a passion for the memorial match, and when asked to describe the group as a whole, Dave Workman simply stated, "They're top notch people. They're the kind of people you would be delighted to spend an evening with around the campfire." It's a perfect and simple description that tells you everything you need to know about the wonderful people that do so much to keep the memory of Elmer Keith alive and raise money to protect their Second Amendment rights. At the end of this year's competition a new event record was set when over \$10,000 was raised. This brings the Elmer Keith Memorial Acorn Fund extremely close to their goal of \$100,000.

The last question asked to DeRuyter was if he believed there was anything unique about his Elmer Keith Memorial Match. Surprisingly he first replied, "No, there's nothing at all unique about it." He then explained his opinion. "The reason I say that is because anybody can have a fundraiser like this. The point is that someone of modest means, which I consider myself, can play with the big boys who simply sit down and write a check to support the cause, but I think the way we do it is a whole lot more fun."

At its essence, the Elmer Keith Memorial Long Range Handgun Match is an event where you'll find a gathering of kind and good hearted people taking part in a friendly competition, enjoying each other's company, raising money, and honoring Elmer Keith, a man that they hold dear to their hearts. ■



Building the NRA In Our Nation's Capital

By Madison Miller
2018 Youth Education Summit Participant



Matthew Bergstorm, Chairman of the National Capital Committee

The night of May 18th, 2018 was the 3rd annual and most successful event of the National Capital Committee's *Friends of NRA Banquet*. Held at the Army Navy Country Club in Arlington, Virginia, all Second Amendment endorsers were invited to come out and support the shooting sports programs. The venue featured stunning views of D.C. and the Washington Monument from the terrace. This event also attracted high profile guests including NRA Board of Directors members and Mr. Dick Heller (Heller v. District of Columbia case).

Matthew Bergstrom, chairman of the National Capital Committee, created a team of hard-working volunteers who were able to pull off a successful event despite difficulties of the location. The committee overcame the challenges of high local costs and unwelcoming settings, while still trying to create a premier event and continue to achieve High Caliber Level status, something they've done since the beginning. As one volunteer said, "We were extremely proud to just be able to organize and establish a *Friends of NRA* program in our Nation's Capital. For it to become the premier event straight out of the gate, it has been 'icing on the cake.'"

To help spread the word of the event, the National Capital Committee's social media presence assisted in bringing out Second Amendment supporters from Maryland, D.C., and Northern Virginia. "In this region, protests occur at the drop of a hat. Thus, we have avoided public advertising. Instead, we have relied on social media directed at our target audience," said Bergstrom. Unlike other *Friends of NRA* events from around the country, this committee offers a variety of raffles, and the majority of information about the event is circulated through Facebook pages and email.

The National Capital Committee does a great job securing quality donations to use in their raffles and for their live and silent auctions. Highlights included two donated defensive training courses that were donated by Spec Dive Tactical, the event's FFL, and handguns paired with each. Each offer raised

\$3,400 in the live auction. Total funds from the event reached over \$35,000 to benefit the shooting sports.

Another unique aspect of this event is the presence of the U.S. Army Old Guard Fife and Drum Corps. They provided entertainment during the arrival of guests, and also started off the banquet with a song that led into the Pledge of Allegiance. Each year, the committee also invites a guest speaker to attend the event and share their support for the Second Amendment.

Since the committee's first event in 2016, they have managed to raise over \$145,000 net dollars for The NRA Foundation. Volunteers on the National Capital Committee truly help make this special event thrive, and it would simply not be possible without them. The committee is hopeful the event will keep growing in the community and become more successful than the last, and will continue to overcome the regional obstacles in their path.

David Wells, Senior Field Representative for the National Capital Committee summarizes perfectly, "The success of this committee and their event is a shining star for our program, and proves without a doubt that our mission has strong support in our Nation's Capital." ■

Find a Friends of NRA event near you at www.friendsofnra.org/Events. Have a story idea for Traditions? Submit them through email to friends@nrahq.org.

Senior Field Representative David Wells kicks off the Live Auction



One lucky winner heading up to claim his prize



Photos Courtesy Andrew Politano



The Legacy Of **A POWER COUPLE**

By Thomas Wegmann
2018 Youth Education Summit Participant

Katie and Jesse Johnson are a dynamic husband and wife team involved with many different NRA and firearm programs. The Johnsons have been on the Madison County Friends of NRA Committee for many years.

Jesse is an old hand behind the trigger, but Katie didn't engage with firearms until adulthood. After an unpleasant encounter with a neighbor and some encouragement from a cousin, Katie signed up for shooting lessons from her future husband. With Jesse's instruction, it didn't take long for Katie to catch up. The Johnsons both earned their instructor certification and opened a gun and training shop shortly after they married.

Katie and Jesse each have a wide range of firearm certifications. Jesse is an NRA Training Counselor, and a Chief Range Safety Officer for several local programs and groups, including the Town and Country Gun Club. Katie also has her Chief Range Safety Officer certification and is working with her husband to curb the misconception that civilians can't be Safety Officers. As a wife and mother, Katie makes every effort to buck the notion that firearms culture is for men.

To do so, Katie has introduced a handful of programs into her Illinois community and taken on leadership roles to help advance already-established organizations with Second Amendment values. She founded a local Well-Armed Women chapter, became an Eddie Eagle Safety Instructor, serves as vice president of the Town and Country Gun Club, and above all is a Madison County Friends of NRA committee chairperson. Katie brought on seven new committee members to the committee in 2018, and the committee as a whole brought on 20 new committee members. The highest in the state resulting in a 78% attendance increase to their Friends of NRA event and a record NET high for this committee by reaching a 66% NET gain over the previous record-breaking year.

"To see them operate in unison is quite impressive. They specialize in many safety training classes that they provide to the local community. Yet they still find the time to be engaged in the local Friends of NRA." - Don Higgs, NRA Senior Field Representative for Southern Illinois

It takes dedicated committee members like Katie and Jesse to enable Don Higgs, Field Representative for Southern Illinois, to finish the year with 23 banquets and a new record for Area #52 of \$625,000 net!

Together, the Johnsons are committed to providing safe, ethical, and responsible firearm training to youth and the community. They share their time to teach church groups, parenting groups, and others using the Eddie Eagle Gun Safety curriculum. "The biggest threat we see to the Second Amendment today is lack of knowledge," says Katie. "It's important to us to truly educate others about the need for and importance of the Second Amendment."

Amid their bustling business and volunteer work, Katie and Jesse are raising Levi, their two-year-old son, and it's always family first for them. "You can find Levi at the shop eagerly greeting customers four days out of the week. He's already imitating the proper shooting stance. We are very proud," Jesse says with a smile.

Hopefully one day Levi will take over the business with a family of his own. Thank you, Jesse, Katie and your whole committee for all you do for the Friends of NRA, youth shootings sports, and NRA Safety Programs. With people like Katie and Jesse leading the legacy, the future looks bright. 🇺🇸

Apply for a grant to support your organization at nrafoundation.org! Learn more about Friends of NRA in Illinois and find an event near you at friendsofnra.org/IL.

Friends of NRA donated a grant check to a local high school Pistol & Rifle Club



Katie and her son, Levi, at the Madison County Friends of NRA Banquet



Photos Courtesy Katie Johnson



By Ashley Re
Event Marketing & Communications Coordinator,
National Rifle Association

Pelican State *Friends of NRA* celebrated their 25th anniversary by holding their annual banquet on August 18th, 2018 at the Crowne Plaza in Baton Rouge. With over 500 attendees, this committee showed why they have been around for so many years and proved why they are among the top committees in the country. This was the committee's ninth year in the Crowne Plaza since moving from a smaller venue. Attendance has grown expediently in the past years, mostly due to items chosen for the live and silent auctions and bucket raffles. Pelican State uses several *Friends of NRA* Standard Package items, but receives various unique donations which they include in their games and auctions. Numerous committee members attributed the unique items as being what keeps their event fresh year to year, and keeps attendees coming



Pelican State Friends of NRA set up a mock target shooting area

Dan and Grace Calvert awaiting the start of their committee's 25th banquet



When asked how the committee continues to be so successful, Rocky Lockwood, Treasurer of the Pelican State *Friends of NRA* committee replied, "We have a great core group of committee members. Most of them have been around since the beginning, and if not since the beginning, they have been here for 10, 15 or even 20 years. We're like a family."

Not only is the committee like a family, but in some cases, they are family. Dan and Grace Calvert make the ideal father daughter duo. Grace noted, "My dad used to bring me to the banquets when I was little. I remember one year they were auctioning off a puppy, so me and some of the other kids were in charge of watching him until it was his time to go on stage."

Dan became a committee member because he wanted to give back to his community. Being able to give donations to local shooting clubs in his area is one of the main highlights, according to Dan. He mentioned how the Louisiana State Fund Committee sends grant money to the youth shooting program at Palo Alto Rifle and Pistol Club. "In 2016, the club sent two of their shooters to the Olympic trials. One of them, David Higgins, made it through the trials to the games. It's accomplishments like that, and being able to

give donations to these types of organizations that teach shooting safety and handling that make me proud to be a committee member," said Dan.

"I've been around since the beginning," said Rocky Lockwood, Treasurer of the Pelican State Friends of NRA committee. Once you get in, you don't get out."

"One thing that I really like about our committee is the relationships we have with our sponsors," said Joey LeBlanc, the committee's youngest member. "They take ownership and treat the banquet like it is also their event." Joey wasn't the only one to mention the sponsors of the banquet. Rocky recalled a story where he ran into a table sponsor at a local gun shop months before their banquet. "He asked me when our banquet was. Our banquet. It put a smile on my face knowing they consider this their event." Dan also made mention of a banquet where a table sponsor bid very highly on a BB gun, just so he could win it and give to one of the children at the event.

After 25 years, Pelican State *Friends of NRA* knows how to put on a successful event. There were laughs, bids, awards, delicious food and drinks, unique auction items, and smiles throughout the whole evening. Every committee member had a wealth of knowledge about the program, and it was apparent each and every one of them love what they do. Rocky summed it up best by saying, "I guess we all can't help but to get a little excited about banquet night."

To learn more about Friends of NRA events and to find one near you, visit friendsofnra.org. Learn more about The NRA Foundation at nrafoundation.org.

Committee members sell raffle packs and tickets for the bucket games





NRA SCHOOL SHIELD GOES TO NORTHEAST TEXAS

By Faith Wealot
2018 Youth Education Summit Participant

The NRA has several tangible programs that benefit communities across America by providing valuable education and training resources on firearm safety, self-defense, and security. One such initiative is the NRA School Shield program which was started in December 2012 to help evaluate and assess potential security threats in classrooms and on school grounds.

The program has a Trained Security Assessor conduct a comprehensive vulnerability evaluation at schools, and inform the school system of their security strongpoints and potential threats while providing practical ways to help eliminate those threats. The program goes above and beyond by also making financial grants available for schools to apply for much needed assistance that help cover the expenses associated with improving the school's security and safety measures.

Early this year, Chairman of Northeast Texas *Friends of NRA*, Ray Hollingsworth, learned that no one had yet taken advantage of the NRA School Shield program in his area. Ray immediately contacted his friend, the Winnsboro Independent School District Chief, to discuss what the opportunity could mean for their local schools. Within just days, NRA Headquarters and the Winnsboro ISD Chief were in contact regarding the school safety program. By the spring, a Trained Security Assessor traveled to the schools in Winnsboro and spent two days developing a comprehensive security assessment.

The Winnsboro School District later applied for a grant from the NRA School Shield program to help pay for the updates, and Chairman Ray was honored with the privilege to present the

Winnsboro School District with a grant worth over \$57,000 on behalf of The NRA Foundation.

Over the course of this year, several other schools in Northeast Texas have taken advantage of the NRA School Shield program as well to help improve school safety and better protect the children attending these schools. The NRA Foundation has the ability to supply generous grants such as this through the coordinated efforts and gracious support of various fundraisers, including *Friends of NRA* annual banquets.

"I decided to start and Chair the Northeast *Friends of NRA* committee in 2015 after realizing the closest *Friends of NRA* was over an hour away from my home," said Ray. Since that time, the Northeast *Friends of NRA* has held four banquets, two of which sold out with approximately three hundred people in attendance. In addition to NRA School Shield, money raised at the fundraisers provides funding for grants to programs in the community such as the 4-H shooting team, practice ammunition for local police departments, Junior JROTC programs, and establishing a shooting program for local Boy Scouts troops in the area.

When asked what advice Ray could offer to someone looking to start their own local *Friends of NRA* committee, his words were simple but genuine, "It's just getting out there and being a good representative of the NRA and helping promote the youth shooting sports. That's our next generation. Teach them the safe and correct way to handle firearms and enjoy it as well." ■

Introduce your schools to NRA School Shield. For information and resources, visit <https://www.nraschoolshield.org/>. To apply for a grant to support your organization visit nrafoundation.org/!



Winnsboro ISD receives their grant check from The NRA Foundation



LONG RAIN SPONSORSHIPS

By Nina Schuett
2018 Youth Education Summit Participant



Photo Courtesy Joe Crismore



Montana *Friends of NRA* is excited about what the *Friends of NRA* National Sponsorship program has added to their pool of grant money.

Selling nearly 900 sponsorships in 2017 puts Montana second to only Oklahoma with about 1,000 national sponsors. Sponsors in Montana account for nearly 25% of the gross income and are about 10% of the banquet attendees.

In this sponsorship program, there are numerous levels and multiple gifts to choose from. Everything from exclusive firearms to outdoor gear, home gear and also once in a lifetime experiences. These gifts are delivered to those sponsors that contribute anywhere from \$300 to \$12,500 and more.

The exclusive guns include tested firearms shot by notables like former NRA Secretary and Marine Sniper Major Jim Land. Also special run firearms by manufacturers like Ruger, Henry, Kimber, Colt and of course our national sponsor Daniel Defense, to name a few.

The outdoor gear and home gear have been highlighted by Buck Knives, Lucid Optics, Case Knives, Leupold Optics, Liberty Safes and many others.

Experiences have been anything from shooting events to safaris. The most recent once in a lifetime experience took place in June of 2018, where some of the Montana Sponsors met in Wyoming to take part in a long range clinic. The day-long clinic gave seven shooters a chance to learn more about long range shooting, gun safety, ballistics, and the shooting community around them.

The clinic started off with an hour and a half class taught by instructor Army Ranger MSG Jim Gilliland retired. During this class, the students learned about the ballistics of shooting at targets up to 1,000 yards away, and how different circumstances such as the wind, heat, and humidity affect the way a bullet travels.

After the class, everyone took what they learned out to the range to receive help and

guidance from their instructor. Everyone was able to practice their shooting skills, and learn how to become better. Also in this section of the class, the participants were introduced to their new .224 Valkyrie. The participants, with the help of their instructors, learned about their guns and scopes to zero it in to the distances they were about to shoot.

Participants first sighted their new firearms in at 100 yards with paper and steel targets to shoot at 400, 600, 800 and 1,000 yards away. Once they had accomplished and became comfortable shooting out to 1,000 yards, range staff had loaner firearms if needed to attempt a one mile (1,760 yard) shot.

Joe Crismore, the NRA Senior Field Representative for Montana, commented on the learning experience saying, "As optics improve and shooting equipment gets better more people are going to shoot long range. I would say if a person was comfortable at about 300 or 400 yards before, he or she may now be comfortable at 500, 600, or even 700 yards. I definitely think there's a need for long range shooting or a niche for it and a drive for people to shoot further than they have ever before."

Montana Sponsors should be proud of what they have contributed. Without these contributions there are numerous organizations and projects that would never have flourished. Nearly 30 Montana 4-H shooting clubs would not be where they are today, multiple women's programs and dozens of shooting ranges would either not exist, be outdated or be barely able to service their communities.

Joe Crismore further stated, "Next to actual committee members and volunteers, our sponsors and contributors are the backbone of our program! Without them very few shooting sports safety and education programs would have a chance to succeed." ■

Become part of the Friends of NRA National Sponsorship program by visiting friendsofnra.org today!

SHOOTING FOR THE FUTURE

COMBINING FORCES FOR A BETTER TOMORROW

By Jim Reardon

*Field Representative for Utah & Eastern Nevada,
National Rifle Association*



UTYESS President Brian Beard & Skyline X team coach Jenny McGowan

Trying to predict the future is risky business, but it's safe to say the future is bright for the youth of Utah. Thanks to the hard work and dedication of Utah Youth Education in Shooting Sports (UTYESS), youth shooters have the opportunity to safely compete amongst their peers – not in an environment with adult competitors. There are currently seven UTYESS teams made up of fifth grade through collegiate-aged shooters, and the numbers keep growing.

Programs like UTYESS don't run themselves. They need committed leaders at the helm to ensure growth, effectiveness, safety, education, and fun. Two such leaders are UTYESS president Brian Beard, and coach Jenny McGowan (Skyline X team) who are driving forces in the success of this scholastic shooting program.

Brian has been involved in the shooting sports for a long time. He was vice president and served on the board of directors of the Provo Gun Club for nine years before getting involved with UTYESS. In 2015, Brian became a UTYESS assistant team coach, and was elected president by the seven team coaches in May of 2017.

Jenny got her start in the shooting sports as a student at Utah State University. After receiving a shotgun as a gift, and having no idea how to shoot, she sought instruction at Cache Valley Gun Club. The members took her under their wing and molded her into a competitive clay shooter. After college, Jenny began competing in Amateur Trapshooting Association (ATA) competitions, met her



husband (who hid an engagement ring in a box of .410 shells and proposed at the gun club!) and started their family.

Jenny recognized the need for youth recruitment in the shooting sports, so she sidelined her own competitions and jumped into coaching. Her goal was to recruit a 5 member youth squad, but word spread like wildfire. In her first year of coaching she ended up with 50 remarkable new shooters.

UTYESS is a program that is designed with intention. It's a program that gets youth involved in a sport that they can enjoy for life. The shooting sports are family oriented – many parents coach and assist with the competitions. UTYESS, and other shooting programs, teach our next generation valuable life lessons. Firearm safety is the number one priority, but kids also gain team building and leadership skills, respect and humility. They also get a great sense of satisfaction from breaking clays and hitting targets.

Brian and Jenny also see the shooting sports as an excellent mentorship opportunity for older kids. If a young shooter is having difficulties, in the sport or in school, they are apt to reach out to an older team member for guidance.

There is a lot of opportunity for these young shooters to receive accolades, awards and trophies. The Tri-State Shoot includes teams from Nevada, Idaho and Utah where the best of the best compete, and the Utah Year-End State Shoot are both well attended. The Utah Year-End State Shoot includes three disciplines: skeet, trap and

sporting clays. After this year's competition people enjoyed lunch and an award ceremony where 136 NRA Marksman Qualification awards were handed out. There were 8 Pro Marksman, 16 Marksman, 12 Marksman 1st Class, 25 Sharpshooter, 20 Expert and 55 Distinguished Expert designations.

The seven UTYESS teams shoot locally and submit their scores in an official capacity. There is a high school lettering program that requires participants to attend seven specific shoots, complete a service project, maintain a pre-determined grade point average and achieve NRA Distinguished Expert. 26 individuals earned their high school letter.

Brian and Jenny both give credit to the coaches involved in the league. This is a strictly volunteer program that requires an extraordinary amount of time teaching shooting safety, skills and developing confidence and patience in today's youth – the future of our communities and our country. The coaches also lead fundraising projects to offset team expenses.

The NRA Foundation and *Friends of NRA* are proud to help fund youth shooting programs, including UTYESS. Many of the youth would not be able to participate if not for NRA Foundation grant dollars. Help bring shooting sports to your community by applying for a NRA Foundation grant. ■

More information on UTYESS can be found at www.usayess.org. Apply for a grant to support your organization visit nrafoundation.org!



VETERAN OWNED.
VETERAN OPERATED.
COMBAT VETERAN MADE.



By Vienna Jacobson
Strategic Communications, Flags of Valor

Photos Courtesy Flags of Valor

Brian Steorts, founder of Flags of Valor and Mark Geist, Benghazi hero

Brian Steorts was a paratrooper in the 82nd Airborne before leaving active duty to study at the University of Alabama. After 9/11, Steorts felt called to return joining Air Force Special Operations Command.

“On 9/11, I was in a macroeconomics class at the University of Alabama,” said Steorts. “And just like most that day, I was enraged. I knew I needed to return to military service because I had more work to do. Back then, everyone flew their flags, but then they went away. I didn’t forget, I haven’t forgotten, and I’ll never forget. Where is your flag?”

In 2013, after serving in eight consecutive deployments, Steorts came home. While rehabbing from a service-related injury, he be-

gan woodworking after searching and failing to find an American wooden flag made in the United States.

After first attempts failed to give Steorts a product he was proud of, he became obsessed with woodworking and moved from novice to craftsman. In 2015, after donating several of his pieces to the families of fallen EOD soldiers, he transformed his passion into a business by starting Flags of Valor.

Flags of Valor is a veteran-owned, veteran-operated, and veteran-made company that creates gorgeous works of all-American art. Located in Ashburn, Virginia, the showroom walls are covered in beautifully handcrafted wooden flags, each unique with a signature from the veteran that created it.

Friends of NRA volunteers and Mark Geist with his signed flag



Flags of Valor Showroom

In the summer of 2016, Flags of Valor started working alongside the NRA, and in conjunction with veteran Mark Geist, Flags of Valor created a special edition handmade piece for the *Friends of NRA*.

Flags of Valor will be launching a new product line in early fall 2018, and through collaboration with Tactical Walls, will be able to deliver handmade products with their expertise in home concealment solutions. One particular item in the new line will be featured in the 2019 *Friend of NRA* Standard Package Catalog, and can be purchased during a *Friends of NRA* event.

“We’ve had an opportunity to create a team building event,” Steorts said. “These events allow other companies to get out of their house and get into our workshop and work alongside our combat-veteran craftsman, creating something unique for them



Mark Geist with Flags of Valor employees

to take home, give to clients, employees, or hang in their office.” The NRA Foundation Field Operations department will get to experience a workshop with Flags of Valor in 2019.

Flags of Valor is not just a business that provides Americans with exceptional products- the spirit behind the company, driven by Steorts passion, employs veterans and raises money for veteran and first-responder charities. It also fosters an environment where combat-veterans can come and find brotherhood.

When Steorts first started woodworking, he was trying to create a product that would answer the question, “Where’s your flag?” Now, Flags of Valor answers that question. Get your flag at your local *Friends of NRA* event. ■

Find an event near you by visiting friendsofnra.org today!

APPLY NOW TO Y.E.S.2019
FOR ONE OF
TWO SESSIONS
LEAD THE
LEGACY



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APPLICATIONS DUE JANUARY 25

REP WRAP



Michael Webb

TENNESSEE FRIENDS OF NRA

Senior Field Rep since February 2006

Tell us something unique about you...

My parents instilled in me at a young age to work hard and the Golden Rule, to treat others as I would like to be treated and to give back to the community. I've always strived to be that person with my volunteer work in organizations such as Muscular Dystrophy Association, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, Children's Miracle Network Hospital, Carl Perkins Center for Abused Children and as a volunteer firefighter. That driving force helped me take the state of Tennessee from sixteen to twenty-five events and achieve several record breaking years.

What is your favorite firearm and why...

My favorite firearm is a Magnum .357 Revolver. I like the power of the .357 round and this was my firearm of choice that I carried as a reserve police officer in Somerville, Tennessee, and as a reserve sheriff's deputy in the late 1980's in Fayette County, Tennessee.

How did you get involved with Friends of NRA?

My involvement with the *Friends of NRA* started in 1999 with the manager of Whitten Arms, a local shooting range in Memphis asking me for a donation. He bought me two tickets and invited me to my first ever *Friends of NRA* event; I was so impressed with the program that I joined the committee and two years later I was chairman. I continued in the roll of chairman for the next four years.

What did you do in your previous life?

My previous work experience was in retail management with the first part of my career being in the supermarket industry. The last eight years prior to becoming a NRA Field Rep was managing a corporate Redwing Shoe Store.

Name 5 things you can't live without...

The five things I can't live without would be God, family, friends, camaraderie of my *Friends of NRA* volunteers and colleagues and diet cola.

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GIVE THE GIFT OF Y.E.S. ON NOVEMBER 27

HELP US LEAD THE LEGACY BY DONATING TO THE NRA FOUNDATION
TO SUPPORT NRA'S YOUTH EDUCATION SUMMIT SCHOLARSHIP FUND.

THE NRA YOUTH EDUCATION SUMMIT HAS GROWN TO TWO, ONE-WEEK SESSIONS!

JULY 8-14 AND JULY 22-28, 2019

Since its 1996 inception, NRA's Youth Education Summit (Y.E.S.) has encouraged young adults to become active citizens and leaders of tomorrow by learning about the Constitution and Bill of Rights, the federal government and the importance of engaging in civic affairs.

Competitive team debates and casual current events discussions highlight the diverse backgrounds and beliefs of participants while fostering fellowship and respect.

The program's nonstop agenda also includes exciting activities and opportunities from meeting with members of Congress and visiting NRA Headquarters to touring historic sites and monuments in the D.C. area and reflecting on the dedicated service of the nation's military.

Through participation in the program's events, students compete for \$55,000 in college scholarships—this is where you come in!

SAY "Y.E.S." ON NOVEMBER 27 AND SUPPORT TOMORROW'S LEADERS!