



Perris Press Release

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Perris Students Honored

Four Perris high school students who participated in a week-long crash course in the fundamentals of self-government were honored recently with a luncheon at American Legion Post 595 on D Street.

Richard Blackmon and Erick Galeano, both 17 and students at California Military Institute, spent a week learning the ins-and-outs of local, state and federal government in an the American Legion-sponsored "Boys' State" program.

Darian Corner, 16, a senior at CMI, and Victoria Rudisill, 17, a senior at Heritage High School, attended the companion "Girls' State" at Claremont McKenna College.

Participants live in dormitories and work under the guidance of counselors, adults who are well-versed in the workings on municipal, city and state government.

Joanne Evans, Perris Mayor Pro-Tem and a long-time member of Post 595, served as master of ceremonies during the luncheon.



Richard Blackmon Erick Geleano, Perris Mayor Pro-Tem Joanne Evans and Jim Bieger, American Legion District 21 First Vice-Commander, Darian Corner and Victoria Rudisill are pictured at the recent luncheon at Post 595 in Perris. The four youngsters took part in Boys' State and Girls' State programs this year.



A cake decked out in red, white and blue was served during the festivities.

Evans, a former Marine and retired firefighter, said the teens who attend Boys' State and Girls' State activities learn teamwork, patriotism and civic pride. Post 595 spent \$400 each to send the four teen-agers to Boys' State and Girls' State. The winners were selected after a several step process.

"They are some of our best students," she said. "They have proven themselves outstanding in both academics and character."

American Legion representatives say Boys State' and Girls' State draws 900 teen-agers from all over California who work together to learn first-hand the "duties, rights and responsibilities of American citizenship."

The program began in 1937.

Participants establish city governments by electing members to a City Council and installing police departments and courts. County governments are organized and elect a board of supervisors, sheriff, a district attorney and other positions. At the state level, participants elect a governor, lieutenant governor, secretary of state and Supreme Court justices. A state legislature is organized and participants work as a lawmakers.

American Legion literature calls Boys' State and Girls' State a "laboratory of practical political science."

"The strength of a nation lies not alone in the size of its armed forces, but also in the character, loyalty and intelligence of its citizens. Citizenship confers many privileges, but it also imposes duties and obligations. If these duties and obligations are not fulfilled, the privileges may be lost."

Rudisill said she learned "how government works" during her week at Girls State.

"Everybody wanted to learn and wanted to work together," she said.

Corner said she is interested in issues like women's rights, pay inequality for women and family-leave guidelines. Girls' State was a great place to talk—and learn—about those concerns.

Blackmon said he learned about "the election process, leadership and teamwork."

"It opens you up to new ideas," he said. "It's not always easy for a group of people to agree on things."
Galeano called his Boys' State experience "great" and said it ended all too quickly.

"The week went by very fast," he said.