

2014-2015 RECIPIENTS



SHANNON CIFUENTES

From Kelly Lugo, business education teacher for Arlington Independent School District :

"Shannon is a strong student who challenges herself with a variety of Pre-AP and AP courses for all of her core classes. Many students try to decrease their workload by taking less-rigorous classes during senior year, but Shannon has chosen to remain in these rigorous courses even during senior year.

Shannon is involved in a variety of extracurricular activities. She has competed as a member of the track team and varsity tennis team. Shannon also is heavily involved in FFA, and has received both the Green Hand Degree and the FFA State Pin in Nursery and Landscaping. She has earned awards at a variety of invitational competitions for FFA. Additionally, Shannon is a member of the Cultural Club, Technology Club and Art Club. She does whatever she can to help her teams succeed.

Shannon makes it a priority to serve her community. She has volunteered for Children's Miracle Network, Meals on Wheels and the Red Cross. Shannon also volunteers through school clubs and the FFA Booster Club. Through her academic success and volunteer work, she was selected for membership in the National Honor Society.

Somehow, Shannon also finds time to work part-time for her family's construction business. She is learning a valuable trade and plans to apply these skills later in life when she starts her own business. First though, she hopes to become a veterinarian. Shannon's success in her rigorous courses, her

involvement in extracurricular activities, her commitment to serving her community and her professional goals make her an excellent candidate the 2014-2015 GROW Achievement Award."

From Shannon:

"In honor of receiving this reward, I would like to thank the people who brought me here today. Without the guidance of my close friend, Beatrice, I wouldn't have discovered my passion for agriculture. Being involved in FFA has broadened my knowledge about becoming a veterinarian and my future plans of having my own landscaping and nursery business. When my team reached fifth place in the state at an FFA competition, I realized I can do anything through determination. Getting involved in the National Honor Society and Key Club also helped build my understanding that giving a helping hand to others can really change one's day for the better. Lastly, I want to thank my family for their support and motivation, as it has taught me to never give up no matter the circumstances. Through this, I have been able to create a strong foundation for what the world of agriculture will bring me."

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COLIN SANDERS

From Rick Fleming, Colin's former agriculture science teacher:

"Colin is a very outgoing young man with a desire to do well. His action-oriented personality and competitive spirit drive him to always do his best. He participates in extracurricular activities, while also succeeding in the classroom. He is a member of the National Honor Society and the basketball team. Colin is an active member of his local FFA Chapter, where he has been both a chapter and district officer for the past two years.

Colin has raised pigs since fifth grade and has since become a mentor for many younger students in the community. He spends many hours at his own barn working with his animals, as well as helping out individuals who are just starting out in the program. Colin has shown pigs in the local county fair, as well as the Houston and San Antonio Livestock Shows. He has won many awards for his showmanship abilities in the show ring, but to Colin, it is not about the awards. It is about mentoring others. He never hesitates to help others with their livestock animals both in and out of the show ring.

Colin also is a member of the Livestock Judging team. His team qualified for state competition last year. Colin has always wanted to raise a steer, but barn facilities and finances created a roadblock. This, however, did not stop Colin. At the Houston Livestock Judging Contest last year, Colin placed fourth overall, which qualified him for a calf scramble certificate. Colin was getting his steer! He continues to prove his dedication to getting things done.

Colin was recently selected as a member of the Show Pig All Star Team. As a member of the team, Colin participated in a five day leadership camp in West Virginia, where he participated in leadership skills training and community service activities. While there, Colin received the Mentor Award.

Colin is indeed a true individual with a great work ethic and a desire to help others. With my many years of teaching, it is rare that I come across students such as Colin who have such a love for the industry and winning way about them. I know he will do great things in his future."

From Colin:

"I am honored to be nominated by Mr. Fleming and humbled to be chosen as a winner of the GROW award."



HAILEY OSBOURN

From Colleen Womack, teacher at San Saba High School:

"I have known Hailey Osbourn for about 10 years through stock shows and various school events. I didn't realize the type of student she was until her junior year when she decided to take my accounting class. I noticed from day one that she was very motivated and self-disciplined. She was always finishing her work much faster than her classmates and was always asking if there was anything else she could do.

I decided I would keep her busy by giving her some advanced University Interscholastic League (UIL) accounting practice tests. Much to my surprise, she was pretty good at concepts she hadn't even been taught. That's when I decided to put her on my UIL Academic Accounting team with my second year accounting students. Hailey ended up winning second place at district behind one of her teammates. I could tell that this was not good enough for Hailey. At the regional competition, she placed first and advanced to state competition where she finished fifth in the state.

Hailey not only excels in the classroom, she also is a leader in sports, the show ring, church and the community. Some of her accomplishments and affiliations include: UIL state solo and ensemble, regional qualifier in cross country, UIL state academic, Rotary Honor Student, student council reporter, 4-H treasurer, regional track qualifier, class reporter, basketball academic all-district and National Honor Society. She also received the Presidential Award for three years, as well as the Principal's Character Award through San Saba High School.

Hailey has had class goat and barrow champions in the San Antonio Livestock Show, and she has participated in local stock shows since she was in first grade. As you can see, Hailey is a well-rounded student with ambition. She is definitely a leader in our school and community. If there were ever a student who possesses leadership qualities, I would definitely say that Hailey Osbourn would be my pick!"

From Hailey:

"Receiving this award is such an honor, and I would like to thank Mrs. Womack for nominating me. Participating in 4-H, stock shows and sports has taught me so much about leadership and responsibility."



LEAH WARREN

From Dr. Ronald Morris, principal at Sweetwater High School:

"If someone asked me to describe the key attributes of a student leader, I would think of Leah Warren and her servant leadership approach at Sweetwater High School. Leah is a six-year member of FFA. She participates, coordinates and assists in planning every major event and show each year. She has participated in stock shows, poultry and cotton judging, and veterinary technology contests. Like her agriculture teacher, Mr. Dudensing, she provides inspiration to incoming students by assisting them in deciding what direction to take in school.

She is a band drum major and percussionist, as well as a member of the Robotics Club. Leah excels in honors and dual credit classes, having earned 18 college hours through Western Texas College. She says that she loves being challenged by rigorous instruction and academics. Leah also is excited to represent Sweetwater High School as part of the National Society of High School Scholars.

In the community, Leah plays intramural soccer, operates the technology each Sunday morning for her church and was the 2014-2015 Sweetwater Lions Club Queen.

Leah is set to attend Tarleton State University in August 2015. She plans to study science for a career in veterinary medicine. Leah credits her experiences in FFA and her agriculture classes for cultivating her love of animals and understands their impact on the West Texas economy. I know that Leah will exceed all expectations from teachers, parents and Sweetwater community members, and will demonstrate Texas pride in her future endeavors by leading with a quick smile and compassionate heart!"

From Leah:

"Receiving the GROW award celebrates the positive impact the community of Sweetwater, Texas, has had on my development over the years. Moreover, I am thrilled that our new Texas Commissioner of Agriculture, Sid Miller, continues to recognize student leaders in Texas who demonstrate excellence in academic and extracurricular activities."



WESTON REYNOLDS

From Robbie Hines, language arts teacher at Huntington Middle School:

"Leaders set direction, build an inspiring vision and create something new. Weston Reynolds of Huntington, Texas, definitely displays these abilities. Both in the classroom and out, Weston sets the bar high and works to attain the apex of all endeavors. He is a straight A student who is highly conscientious of his work and will not settle for anything less than his best. He is ranked number one in his class. Weston also is a member of the Student Council.

This summer, Weston voluntarily worked alongside teachers during summer school to help tutor students who were in danger of failing. Not many seventh grade students would care enough to volunteer their summer vacation to help those who were struggling.

Weston is active in 4-H, where he has held many leadership positions, including historian/reporter, second vice president and county council delegate. Weston has attended many leadership camps and conferences through 4-H. He has gained valuable knowledge in breeding, raising and showing steers, heifers and chickens.

Over the last three years, Weston has won more than 50 awards for his 4-H projects. Students do not win awards for simply showing up. His awards include: 21 Junior and Intermediate Showmanship awards, nine Grand Champion Steer and Heifer titles, four Reserve Champion Steer and Heifer titles, three Best of Show/Blue Ribbon projects, 15 buckles for Showmanship with Heifers and Steers and the

Jr. Spirit award for Angelina County.

When I first read the email about this award, Weston immediately popped into my head. Weston is very deserving of this award. He has definitely set a direction and has a vision for himself and the people of this great state."

From Weston:

"I cannot express how indulged and honored I am to receive this award. I truly appreciate the support of my teachers and parents. Without their assistance, I would not be situated where I am today. Excluding the aid of my mentors, I have invariably tried to do my best and to never give up, no matter how challenging the task may be. I immensely abide by that and plan to do so for the many years to come.."



MYLES MARTINEZ

From Larry White, agriculture science teacher and FFA advisor at James Earl Rudder High School:

"Myles shows leadership at school by setting a good example in class by making good grades. Myles takes challenging classes in the academic areas and has excelled in the ag classes. He has been nominated for the National Honor Society.

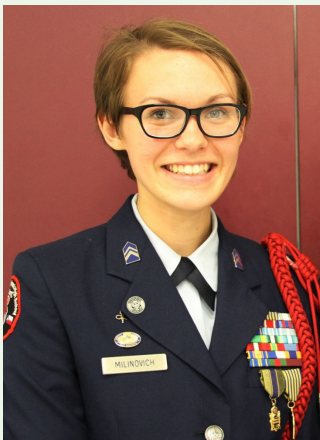
Myles is the secretary of Rudder FFA. He competes in numerous competitions representing FFA and 4H. He has presented an ag science fair project that placed first at the San Antonio Livestock Show. As the first place winner, Myles won a \$10,000 scholarship. He also placed third in the state with this same project at the FFA convention. He also gives back by helping younger students with their ag science fair projects.

Furthermore, he is working on getting OSHA certified, as well as on several agriculture mechanics projects that he will take to future competitions. Myles is always willing to help after school on service projects for his community and school. He has been the 'Student of the Month' at James Earl Rudder High School each year. He also received the Star Farmer Award in FFA.

Myles works hard raising commercial and show cattle. He excels in record book keeping and judges interviews. He exemplifies good character and leadership skills naturally. It has been a pleasure to see Myles grow and learn as much as he can about agriculture and the potential he has to pursue this as a career in the future."

From Myles:

"I greatly appreciate this recognition from the Texas Department of Agriculture. It just goes to show that the things you do now will affect you in the future."



SHELBY MILINOVICH

From Dylan Smith, Chief Master Sergeant (retired) and Aerospace Science Instructor at Coldspring-Oakhurst High School:

"Cadet Shelby Milinovich is currently the Vice Corps Commander and senior leader for the Air Force Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (AFJROTC) at Coldspring-Oakhurst High School. She has been a dedicated member of the program since 2012. Cadet Milinovich has held the following key leadership positions and jobs: Vice Corps Commander, Female Color Guard Team Commander, Saber Team Commander, Flight Commander, Inspector General and Physical Fitness Officer. This past summer, she attended the Leadership Learning Academy at Prairie View A&M University, where she was selected as one of the top ten leaders out of approximately 100 cadets. She was nominated to be one of three squadron commanders, which made her responsible for the continued training of approximately 200 cadets who attended a five-day summer leadership course. Cadet Milinovich is an outstanding representative for her school and town. She has volunteered more than 100 hours of her time in support of AFJROTC, her community and other local nonprofits. In addition to AFJROTC, Cadet Milinovich is involved with Yearbook Club and Art Club. She also is enrolled in several honor classes, including AP English, Government, Chemistry and Calculus. Moreover, Cadet Milinovich is an active member of the youth group at the United Methodist Church she attends. Cadet Milinovich also serves as the senior leader for the school's JROTC Kitty Hawk Air Society, an honor society for the AFJROTC. The honor society is designed to further instill leadership and teamwork qualities in cadets. Cadet Milinovich is an awesome cadet. She has the drive, initiative and will to achieve and meet any goal that she sets for herself, fellow cadets and classmates. Cadet Milinovich is truly deserving of this award."

From Shelby:

"I am very honored and surprised at receiving this award for I had no clue that I was even being nominated. To think that Chief Smith decided to nominate me out of all of the cadets means a lot to me and is a huge honor. Receiving this award for all the things I have done is a shock because I never thought about doing it to get recognized; I enjoy volunteering and being a part of AFJROTC."



AMBER ADAMCIK

From Annette Hill, East Bernard High School Agriculture Science Teacher & FFA Advisor:

"Amber Adamcik is a natural born leader. An outstanding student ranked second in her class, Amber is currently the secretary of the East Bernard FFA. For six years, she has raised steers for the Junior Commercial Steer Feeding and Management Programs at the San Antonio and Houston Livestock Shows. Participating in these events has made her a more refined public speaker, more knowledgeable about the agriculture industry and given her the tools to advocate for agriculture. Amber also participates in many other school and community clubs and organizations. At school, she is a member of Student Council and National Honor Society. She also participates in the UIL accounting event and is a member of the varsity volleyball and softball teams. In her community, you can see Amber working with many different groups. She is a member of the Guardian Angel Catholic Church and volunteers at many church events and functions. Family is a huge part of Amber's life. She is the youngest daughter of Bill and Karen Adamcik and has one older sister, Stephanie. As a family, they enjoy working at the family cattle ranch and feed store. Amber is a well-rounded, dedicated, diligent and loyal individual. She truly knows the definition of hard work and understands what it takes to be successful in her endeavors. She is a joy to be around. I cannot think of a more deserving candidate for this award."

From Amber:

"I am very privileged to receive this award and thank Mrs. Hill for nominating me. Being involved in agriculture on a daily basis makes this award from the Commissioner of Agriculture even more special."