

When looking for the Youth Leadership Award Nominee, there was one student who immediately stood out in the Steelville community. That student is 14 year old, Kylee Sexton. Kylee is the daughter of Tammy and Drayton Sexton of Steelville and granddaughter of Mike and Barbara Britton of Vienna, MO, Steve and Vicki Sexton of Steelville.

Kylee is a young woman who is involved in her community. During her 8th grade year, she was an officer of Steelville Middle School STUCO, helped with fundraising to bring Rachel's Challenge to her school---she spent a full day in the sun, keeping score for the benefit softball tournament. Kylee was determined to be involved with the creation of the Crawford County Vietnam War Era Monument. She ASKED to be placed in the position of fundraising chairperson, then asked to choose other students to create that committee....she takes that job VERY seriously...even choosing to have committee meetings during lunch period, when she can get all of her committee together. She organizes her meetings, then ensures there is progress made in coming up with ideas, or solutions to problems. In class, students were told of the opposition to their work to create a Vietnam ERA Monument (listing all members of the US Military during the Vietnam War ERA of our county), yet she has not allowed that to deter her from her/the group's goal.

Physically, she was active in the school's athletic teams....basketball, volleyball, track, and softball. Practices and games/meets kept her busy more days than not.

While Kylee has had challenges in life, she has a very good attitude....when asked why she is involved in so many sports and activities she responded with, "I want to live life, not just be a spectator."

Another way Kylee Sexton has shown her leadership and drive to help others was when she chose to help with A Soldier's Wish List. At school she helped in gathering and wrapping gifts for our local military men and women. She volunteered to travel to Florissant, Missouri, to help to wrap and pack Christmas gifts for our active duty military who were deployed to war zones.

This young lady takes initiative, and it is being noticed in the community. She was approached, in a store, by a woman she was not acquainted with. The woman asked her if, "...you are that girl who is working on the Vietnam War Monument?" She replied that she is. The woman then asked her for information and a form to fill out. Kylee got that form to the lady.

Kylee is the co-signer of the request for membership in the United States of America Vietnam War 50th Commemoration, making Steelville Middle School the first school in Missouri to be a partner.

Kylee is not just a leader, but a ray of sunshine to all who know her. When there were students in the Middle School who were being bullied, Kylee would make sure the proper people were notified, then would take it upon herself to help the victim. She has a heart of gold. Kylee is a person who tries to make life better for as many people as she can. When Kylee smiles, it is truly the most cheerful, legitimate one, taking optimistic views of every situation. She is definitely a cheerleader in life!

Kylee is grounded, yet dreams of what will be, and looks for ways to make those dreams become a reality. She is SO busy, so involved....and still maintains great grades and personality. Kylee does not meet a stranger and she is liked by everyone....students, teachers, secretaries, custodians....everyone from all ages and walks of life!

Kylee attends Steelville Assembly of God Church where she is involved with the youth group and volunteer programs. She has volunteered at Gibbs Care Center in Steelville. The residents LOVE visiting with her. Her kindness and beautiful smile are infectious....something a place with elderly residents needs, daily.

The final asset that Kylee possesses that truly rounds off her personality is the love and compassion she has for her family. Kylee's family has had some rough times, but through it all Kylee has remained strong for her mom and younger sister. Kylee spends time with her grandparents helping to care for her ill Grandpa, while Grandma was away. Kylee could easily dwell on the negative and let it bring her down, but not once has she let a tough situation control her. She is strong and wise beyond her years with a dedication to help and serve others. Kylee is truly a blessing and a role model for all around her!