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## **Summit challenges 4-H, community betterment youth to lead with courage**

There were 160 teens and adults who attended the 2018 Missouri Youth Civic Leaders Summit, March 2-4, near Camdenton. Youth and adult teams gathered from over 20 county 4-H programs and community betterment groups across Missouri.

Organizers say the goal of this year's event, themed "The Courage to Lead!" was to inspire leaders of all ages to lead courage, built on a foundation of character and commitment to service.

Carey Portell, motivational speaker from St. James, MO, shared how personal courage, family commitment, and support from the Missouri AgrAbility Project, empowered her to triumph over major injuries sustained in a car collision.

Dylan Johnson, Director of Advance for the Missouri Governor's Office, spoke on how young people being involved makes the world better, and how his involvement in government at a young age led him a role as the state's youngest executive staff member.

Neil Klemme, University of Wisconsin Extension 4-H specialist and his team, showed how communities in the Midwest are using "Youth First Impressions" to gain fresh perspective and ideas on making towns more inviting to visitors.

As youth leaders, Mitchell Moon (Missouri 4-H) and Katelyn Watts (Missouri Community Betterment) encouraged participants to make the most out of leadership opportunities available through their organizations.

Lafayette County 4-H and Missouri Community Betterment youth advisors served as hosts for the weekend, contributing hours of planning and on-site leadership through youth-adult partnerships.

Summiteers explored leadership styles, built teamwork, and learned how to plan service-learning projects with guidance from Mizzou Alternative Break leaders from the University of Missouri.

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They attended a youth-led civic forum with elected officials, learned how to support rural broadband access in Missouri, and weighed in on why Missouri high school graduates choose to move away or back to their communities.

Youth and adult teams proposed community action projects for 2018 and took first steps to applying for mini-seed grant funding to implement their ideas. Participants also teamed up with Windermere Conference Center staff and volunteers to complete on-site service projects, contributing time valued at over \$3,000.

The summit is an annual event, with generous sponsorship support from Monsanto Company, Cenex Harvest States Foundation, Missouri Community Betterment, and the Missouri 4-H Foundation.

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More than 55,000 members strong, Missouri 4-H is an active, dynamic organization of young people who are learning, growing and preparing to be the leaders of today and tomorrow – making a real difference in their community, country and world. 4-H is the youth development program of the University of Missouri and the nation's Cooperative Extension System. For more information, please visit <http://4h.missouri.edu>.

The Missouri Community Betterment (MCB) Program established in 1963 is designed to help Missouri communities enhance their quality of life through community development, planning and implementation. MCB lends technical assistance recognizing and awarding communities that excel in the program. For more information, please visit <http://www.mocommunitybetterment.com>.