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ACMCYA 2018 Recognition of Commerce City Youth

Summary and Background Information : The Adams County Mayors and Commissioners Youth Awards (ACMCYA) is a program that recognizes youth in grades 6 through 12 who have overcome personal adversity to create positive change in their lives. The award program provides business, community, and civic leaders an opportunity to actively demonstrate their belief in and support for the young people in our communities.

Award recipients are determined through a nomination and selection process. All nominees are recognized at the local level by individual jurisdictions. A selection committee comprised of representatives from the county and local jurisdictions screens all nominations and selects approximately 22 nominees to be recognized at a county-wide celebration in the spring each year.

Locally, all Commerce City nominees were recognized at a banquet on March 22, from 6-8 p.m. at Buffalo Run. Information about each nominee, along with recognition of those selected as finalists will be read at the 4/2/18 Council meeting. Because the City hosted the banquet on March 22, the nominees will not be required to attend the Council meeting (they will not be receiving certificates at the meeting). Finalists will be recognized at the county-wide celebration on Thursday, April 19, from 6-9 p.m.

This year's Commerce City nominees are:

Sophia DeFiore • (Sophia D-Fi-Or-E)

Sophia is a Sophomore at Prairie View High School where she is on the varsity cheerleading team and is in honors classes. Last year as a freshman she found herself in an awkward social situation with a majority of her peers at school that led to individuals targeting Sophia and her family. Through all of this she kept her head high, continued to get good grades, and made the varsity cheer team again. When you talk to Sophia you would never know this is something that she went through and is still going through. She always has a beautiful smile on her face and goes out of her way to help others through difficult times.

Xavier Garcia

Xavier is an 8th grader at Adams City Middle School who shows compassion, empathy, integrity, and resiliency that are far beyond that of his peers. He was faced with some life altering circumstances that has tasked him with creating a new life. Xavier is a kind, dedicated student that is focused on his education and actively pursuing his dreams. One of his most admirable qualities is his kind heart. He had stood up for students who are being bullied, created holiday cards for those who did not receive any, and speaks out against racism. He consistently

stays after class to help clean, without ever being asked. Xavier embodies all of the things I hope for in the future.

Kennedi Laubert • (Kennedi Law-Burt)

Kennedi has a presence about her that always brings a smile to your face. She has a very bubbly, kind, sweet and funny personality to her. Behind all of the sunshine that she brings you would never know that she has a dark past. She has not let her past affect her at all, she joined cheerleading in middle school and followed that passion into high school where she is not the captain at Prairie View High School. She turned her academics around her junior year and is now accepted into Grand Canyon University where she plans on declaring her major as pre-med to go on to be an oncologist.

Angela Lopez

Growing up Angela came across several environmental barriers that were effecting her work at school. One of her mentors noticed her grades and started meeting with her once a week. She finished her freshman year at Adams City High School and was enrolled into Lester Arnold High School beginning her sophomore year where things quickly turned around for her. Her first quarter she passed all of her classes with a B average and started researching how to start a Student Council. Angela is now the president of the first Student Council at LAHS and is passing all of her classes with A's. Her leadership is contagious, she motivates other students to do good or get back on track and leads by example. She has caught up with all of her credits and will be taking concurrent enrollment classes next spring at the Community College of Denver.

Dino (DJ) Rivera

D.J. came across medical tragedy at the age of 5 when he was diagnosed with Rasmussen encephalitis. It is a rare autoimmune disorder affecting the left side of the brain which was causing D.J. to have a significant amount of seizures. In turn this means that half of his brain was disconnected and no longer works. The surgery caused him to lose his ability to speak, all use of his right side, the loss of his right field of vision in both eyes as well as some cognitive skills. D.J. had to relearn how to speak, walk and to get his right arm and hand to function as much as possible again. He has had to undergo intense therapies and surgeries and still continues some of these today. He is now in 6th grade at Stuart Middle School where he is meeting his grade level expectations for academics and consistently has a positive attitude. When you see D.J. in school he always has a smile on his face. He is extremely driven and has been a spokesperson for students on how he has worked hard to overcome so many challenges in his life. He wants to inspire others to be grateful for what they have and to always try to be better. Every person that has been around D.J. for any amount of time will tell you he is such a sweet, hardworking, and inspirational person.

Bryan Rodriguez

Bryan is the type of person that can light up a room with his smile. He has dedicated an ample amount of his time focusing on football and improving himself physically. Bryan recently moved to Colorado from Puerto Rico and still has several family members back there. When the hurricane hit, Bryan began working long hours after school to help out the family back home. He continues to work on care packages to send to help the community and help get his family back on their feet. Bryan is someone who many people admire and respect. He has a positive soul that longs to give service in any way that he can.

Vance Vasquez

Vance is a 7th grader at Landmark Academy. Although school has not always been easy for him, he works hard every day to rise above these challenges. He has a determined effort to always do his best and not let it bring him down. He has consciously decided that he would find the positive in life and not let challenges in school defeat him. He helps tutor special needs kids and encourages them to persevere. Other students turn to Vance for support and optimism through their trials. Vance's incredibly kind, positive attitude in life leaves an impression on everyone around him.

Staff Responsible (Department Head): Carolyn Keith

Staff Member Presenting : Shannon Whitmer