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American Legion Post 649
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To the members of American Legion post 649,

As a part of the Adams State University Boy's State college credit leadership program I have written a paper which reflects upon my entire week at Boy's State and provides feedback to you about it. Thank you again for sponsoring me to attend this prestigious event.

While at Boy's State I had a very rich and exciting time. To my happy surprise I was assigned to the luxurious American River Courtyard building with a red lanyard and electronic key fob to unlock the doors. Each of us in Haley County had a private room. Each suite had five rooms, a living room, showers, and a kitchen which was not used. While experiencing dormitory life I met my four roommates, Tyler, Ariaah, Nathan, and JJ. I was assigned to be a Federalist, my city was Crocker. Crocker proved itself exemplary in its participation, dominated the county elections, and won the volleyball tournament. As a result, Crocker was named the number one city at Boy's State.

On the first day everyone took the bar exam and many, including myself, passed. I ran for the position of city councilman because I was told that that was one of the most fun and memorable jobs. I also was appointed to be one of the sheriff's deputies and successfully practiced law as a lawyer. As a "citizen" and a city councilman I proposed laws for both my city and for the state assembly. I used an idea from Baker County to create an "arson" system for my city, which gave the fire chief something to do by allowing people to post "fire" on the door of a dorm room; no one may enter such a room until the fire chief takes the paper down and rescues those inside. I also went to several other counties and cities to see their laws so that I could put them to the test, but there were few laws worth challenging.

The cities held meetings every day. Our city had a large number of laws, including a left turn license and the arson system. The college facilities were very nice, I took several exploratory tours of the campus, used its library, and, along with all my fellow Boy's State delegates I flocked to the coffee/smoothie shop in the dormitory area. During the week we also were able to hear from and see several of California's public officials and former Boy's State delegates, including Judge Dale A. Drozd, who spoke about the nature of being a judge, Speaker of the Assembly John Perez, who spoke about the issues and difficulties in the legislative process, Assemblyperson Paul Cook, who spoke about zero base budgeting for California, and members of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard, police, and firemen who encouraged us to join them in protecting America.

Every day we were given a large amount of free time, which we filled with various sports. There were softball, football, soccer, volleyball, and ultimate Frisbee teams which played with all their might. I started a club of my own during some of these days and learned new sport skills that I didn't have before. Strangely, a large number of delegates were injured this year,

from breaking a tooth to breaking ankles. Also, many delegates held a special fondness for the office of coroner; they took it upon themselves to form Mafias in order to perform "assassinations" (cardboard weapon attacks and written notices that the subject died somehow). The mafias also "blew up" (on paper) an entire story of Baker County and sent a bomb to our city hall. While it was all in fun, the supervisors did not approve, so it seems there will be no coroners next year.

When I was at Boy's State I was struck by how similar we all were, almost a thousand people who all have the same ideas, clothing, and culture. I was impressed at how friendly everyone was. There were no walls between us or any standoffish people. I was able to gain many new friends and meet a lot of people. However, once I was there I was surprised to find that many had fabricated their qualifications during their interviews so that they could attend. Several delegates openly admitted with a chuckle that they had made everything up during their interviews. This was surprising because I told nothing but the truth and but was chosen as an alternate.

Before I went to Boy's State I had known that elected officials were important people who made decisions but I wasn't sure how they made them. After participating in city meetings as a counselor and observing the assembly debate issues and vote on them, and after hearing real legislators talk to us about the issues that they are dealing with, like the state budget, I think I understand what is happening in Sacramento. I realized that there are real people there who want to solve the problems just as much as we do, who are at work right now managing our state so that people can live here. I found that the process of law and decision making is this: an idea is suggested, becomes a paperwork bill, is debated, and then voted upon. During the week we repeatedly were called upon by the real leaders of California to forgo partisanship and party

rivalry when we are voting or practicing leadership. They encouraged us to work together with everyone to get things done.

While I was already excited to be a voter and I already wanted to vote, being at Boy's State while hearing about our society and government has only encouraged me further. This experience was fun because it gave me a taste of freedom similar to the real world. I had a job, money, and I could go where I wanted to on the campus with the freedom and responsibility to get my work done. I am glad to have gone to Boy's State, to have the experience of running a government, living on my own, and to have made many new friends in the process.

Thank you very much for sponsoring me to attend this life changing experience. I will always remember it. I believe it is and will be a blessing to me far into my future.

Sincerely,

Tyler J. Finn