

**Buchanan County, MO
County Clerk
"Missouri Youth Election
Participation Program"**



OFFICE OF COUNTY CLERK

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Dear Elections Interest Group Co-Chairs & NACRC Board,

I would like to submit our "Missouri Youth Election Participation Program" for the Election Administration Best Practice Award. This program was implemented in our County seven years ago. We were the first to initiate this program in the state of Missouri. Since then many counties have been using this practice in their jurisdiction as well.

The Youth Election Participation Program allows full time students to volunteer as poll workers. This program is authorized by section 115.104 RSMo. Two very important goals are accomplished by introducing these students to the process of democracy. These goals are: gaining an insight to elections that could possibly prompt the students to one day become active and educated voters and witness first hand, the importance of involvement in civic government. The county also benefits from this program by expanding the number of poll workers. This is so important as technology will be playing an increasingly greater role at the polls. These students' knowledge of or with computers and their technical skills will help to ease confusion and enhance the services offered at the voting locations. This program has been positively accepted not only by the students and poll workers, but the voters as well. As you know, about 95% of our current poll workers are in the elderly category and they have received the younger students with great enthusiasm. They think it is great the students are so interested in the voting process and take the opportunity to become involved with the community.

Our local media advertise this program through stories and local businesses and political committees have become involved by donating money to our scholarship funds. This year we had 46 students participate in this program and were able to offer six scholarships totaling \$6,000.

I have attached a brief outline of how our program works, along with copies of articles published in our local newspaper.

Thank you for allowing me this opportunity to share this program with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Pat Conway".

Pat Conway
Buchanan County Clerk

Youth Election Participation Program Procedures

We first contact the school district and/or area high school principals to let them know about the program and to have their permission to call on the schools to reach a contact person. This person will help organize the program with us and relay correspondence to the students. We ask for a list of students that are Juniors, so that they can work their Junior year, through the summer, and any elections their Senior year.

Once we have compiled lists of students from the schools, we will have a training session. The county clerk will explain the voting procedures and what poll workers do at the polling places. We have handouts of any forms used on elections day, sample ballots and poll books for them to be familiar with. The students work with the poll workers from 7:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. to observe, learn, ask questions, and help with any tasks asked of them. We have the students fill out a form with any personal information we need to contact them and for payroll purposes. The students are paid a small wage of \$10.00 per day during the school year, and \$30.00 during any election through the summer months.

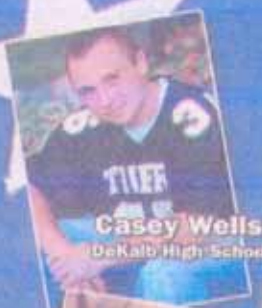
After students have worked their last election through their senior year, we award certificates of participation to all students and scholarship money to those students who have excelled in the program. The supervisory judges complete an evaluation sheet for each student that worked with them. The students must submit an essay on the subject of voting and a short resume. We will have a panel of educators and community members evaluate all the criteria submitted for each student to determine the scholarship winners. A reception is held honoring the scholarship winners, along with their parents, teachers, local political committees & media present.

6/25/03

Congratulations

To the Youth Election Program

Scholarship Winners!



Casey Wells
DeKalb High School

The Youth Election Program includes area high school students that worked five elections during their junior and senior years. The students assisted poll workers at various polling places to gain an insight into the voting process. This year, 56 students participated in this program. In addition, they had the opportunity to submit an essay on a subject related to voting. A panel of educators and community members evaluated the essays and these six students will receive scholarships.



Matt Williams
St. Joseph Christian



Emily Stock
Central High School



Jessica Burgess
Benton High School

The News-Press is proud to join Pat Conway, Buchanan County Clerk, and Matt Blunt, Secretary of State, in honoring these students.



Elizabeth Losson
Bishop LeBlond High School



Jessica Clinton
Mid-Buchanan High School



Yours For Life.

Election helpers win scholarships

Blunt, Conway honor 6 students

By RAY SCHERER
rscherer@npgco.com
St. Joseph News-Press

Missouri Secretary of State Matt Blunt and Buchanan Coun-

ty Clerk Pat Conway thanked a group of students Wednesday for helping them and their staffs smoothly carry out a series of elections.

Both men honored six Buchanan County high school students who worked five elections at various polling places during their junior and senior years. Along with officials' administration, the students received

Youth Election Scholarships for their efforts and by meeting other necessary criteria. The scholarships were distributed during a reception sponsored by the *St. Joseph News-Press* at the St. Joseph Riverfront Historic District Hotel.

Mr. Blunt called the youth-based program worthy of imitation by other Missouri county clerks.

"This is one of the most innovative programs for getting young folks involved in the elections process," he said.

Recruiting election judges has been a familiar problem confronting county clerks, Mr. Blunt said. He said the students helped ease the burden of poll workers while serving as "models to their peers" on the importance of their role in the

nation's democracy. "We do need to be concerned about the low level of (election) participation by young people," Mr. Blunt said. "This program draws attention to that need."

Mr. Conway also talked about the increased youth involvement in elections, now preparing to enter its fourth election cycle.

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METRO/REGION

Election helpers win scholarships

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"It's been very effective," he said. "Most of the students have been among the best workers we've got. Most of the students volunteered to work the summer election. We hope the program spreads throughout the state."

Two of the students said working the polls enhanced their understanding of government.

"I enjoyed working with the people ... the most," said Elizabeth Losson, a Bishop LeBlond High School graduate. "I learned the process better."

Central High School graduate Emily Stock said the involvement encourages her in urging friends to vote.

"They're scared about it, because they're not sure what's

going to happen," Ms. Stock said.

Participating students also were given the opportunity to write voting-related essays as part of their scholarship application. Ms. Stock, for example, wrote her essay on women's suffrage.

A total of 56 students participated in the Youth Election Program for the most recent election cycle, Mr. Conway said. Election supervisors evaluated the students, and a panel of educators and community members reviewed 17 submitted essays.

The students received a daily per-diem allowance for each of the elections.

The scholarship awards program is currently subsidized by Republican and Democratic party organizations in Buchanan County, Heartland Health, the



Jessica Burgess



Jessica Clinton



Elizabeth Losson



Emily Stock



Casey Wells



Matt Williams

Central Labor Council and the Buchanan County Commission. More than \$6,000 was raised this year.

"We're asking for further support from throughout the community," Mr. Conway said.

A new crop of participating junior class members will begin training this fall for the 2004 elections, he said.

Ms. Losson won the \$1,500 Award of the Year scholarship.

Following is a list of other Youth Election scholarship winners:

Winners of \$1,000 scholarships: Jessica Clinton, Mid-Buchanan High School; and Jessica Burgess, Benton High School.

School.

Winners of \$750 scholarships: Ms. Stock; Casey Wells, Buchanan County High School in DeKalb; and Matt Williams, St. Joseph Christian High School.