

# Raton High School students return to school after busy summer

By Kate Little For the Comet | Posted: Thursday, September 18, 2014 10:45 am

RATON—Over the summer, ten Raton High School students stayed busy by participating in a variety of programs in locations throughout New Mexico and Colorado.

Ashya Gertler and Juan Prieto-Archuleta attended the Hugh O' Brian Youth Leadership (HOBY) seminar at University of New Mexico (UNM) from May 30 to June 1. HOBY is a national program that students attend after their sophomore year. It teaches students how to become leaders and to use new skills in their everyday lives.

"I was conflicted on going at first, but I thought of it as a new way to explore the different opportunities of life," Prieto-Archuleta said. "It was an outstanding way to learn about leadership." He recommends all sophomores ask their counselors about the program.

Gertler said she attended the conference because she thought it would help with the college admissions process and was good opportunity. She called the conference a great "learning experience."

Danny Record attended a baseball trip in Pueblo, Colorado during the summer. The trip, from late May to mid-July, included playing about two dozen games with 16 teams at the Runyon Field Sports Complex. The teams were separated into two leagues: "National" and "American". Participants were chosen by the win counts of their school teams. Record's team played several games, some against Trinidad and Wingate. All of the games were seven innings and the majority were double headers. Record and Brent Trujillo, another participant, say that they enjoyed the trip. The experience of the baseball trip was, as Record said, "a whole lot of fun."

Camille Gonzalez and Adan Fernandez went to the Hispanic Youth Research and Leadership at the University of New Mexico July 7 through 15. The UNM National Hispanic Youth Research and Leadership Program's goal is to focus Hispanic youth on the opportunities in pursuing a degree and the careers available in the science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields. This was a college prep program in which both students learned about and did research on energy resources. They also received training on how to be Hispanic leaders in our communities. Both students said they had a great



Raton High School students ready for school after a busy summer

Pictured from the top row clockwise are Kristina Jansen, Briana Pais, Juan Prieto-Archuleta, Ashya Gertler, Cheyann Duran, Rhiannon Barela and Camille Gonzalez.

time and would recommend it greatly.

Cheyann Duran and Briana Pais spent June 19-29 in the Manzano Mountains for the Rotary Youth Leadership Award (RYLA). Duran and Pais were anonymously nominated, then interviewed and chosen for this event. The two attended leadership classes and participated in workshops. There were other activities such as capture the flag, kickball, and college night. Duran recalled jumping off a telephone pole to capture a trapeze bar in an “up-in-the-air obstacle course”. Without any cellular service, the girls interacted and communicated with others.

Pais said the biggest takeaway for her was the importance of taking time to learn about new people you meet.

“You should get to know people before you judge them. Never judge a book by its cover,” she said. “It was a once in a lifetime experience.”

RYLA offers students this experience every year. Duran and Pais definitely recommend it to the upcoming seniors.

Rhiannon Barela and Kristina Jansen attended the New Mexico Girls State convention June 1-June 6. With 100 delegates, Girls State is held every year in Portales at Eastern New Mexico University (ENMU). It is a nonpartisan program put on by the American Legion Auxiliary, designed to help girls who are in their senior year develop a love for citizenship, God and country. The two highest-ranking upcoming seniors are chosen to attend the conference. Barela and Jansen attended a week of government workshops and took on roles of city, state and county government officials. They had to be up and dressed in business attire by 7 a.m. every day, as if they were officials. While there, Barela was elected to city and county positions. Her drawing was chosen to be displayed at the inaugural banquet, winning the art cover contest. She was also awarded a scholarship to ENMU that would pay for her room and board for her first semester of college.

—*Raeanne Fissel, Noah Schoonover, Juan Prieto-Archuleta, Jami Lopez and Caylene Romero contributed to this story.*