

LANB funds teen leadership project

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June 2, 2007

Ten teens from the Los Alamos Youth Leadership (LAYL) program met with Los Alamos National Bank CEO Bill Enloe on May 22, hoping to receive some advice and a small donation towards funding for their leadership project, which is a new sign for Los Alamos High School. The stunned kids walked out with \$30,000 — the full amount needed to purchase and install the sign.

Enloe said he decided to fund the entire project after observing the young leaders' presentation.

“It was the effort they gave to their presentation and the dedication, seriousness and thought they put into the project,” Enloe said. “Everyone talks about leadership but it really takes hard work. These young people have done the work and they deserve to have their project funded.”

The teens call themselves Team NRG (Energy). Several members expressed their appreciation for Enloe's generosity.

“I would just like to say that Bill Enloe's support means so much to us, words can hardly say it,” Ashley Valdez said. “The sign is going to be a good investment towards our community.”

Craig Girrens said, “I am extremely grateful for Mr. Enloe's generosity and I'm sure the new sign will prove to be a tremendous asset to the community.”

Brenna O'Hara praised Enloe for his support. “Mr. Enloe could have just turned his back on us but no, he said he will pay for our whole project,” she said. “I feel that a real leader does risk things and always wishes for the best out of everything.”

LAYL is a program sponsored by Leadership Los Alamos and the Juvenile Justice Advisory Board (JJAB). JJAB Coordinator Sharon Stover said that while the teens went to Enloe for some financial support, they also wanted to ask him for guidance in how to get the sign funded.

“They told him they had committed their own \$5,000, which they collected from fund raising efforts through dances at Central Avenue Grill and the sale of spirit T-shirts,” Stover said. “They were willing to do more fund raising and wanted to get suggestions from Bill. He was just the best with them. He was engaging, he joked, he asked lots of questions, not just about the sign but about the youth leadership program. He wanted to know why they participated and what they got out of it.”

Stover said she especially appreciated how Enloe made the teens feel at ease and valued. He told them they could put their money into the sign, but suggested they put it back into their youth leadership program.

“Of course, they were all over his generous offer and presented him with a ‘Topper Parent’ spirit shirt,” Stover said. “I was really proud of the students and their presentation. While they may not yet realize that an offer like this doesn't happen every

day in any community, they will all remember their meeting with Bill and when they are older, will better understand how fortunate they are to live in this community.”

“LANB, because of Bill, is extremely philanthropic,” Stover said. “I would wager their community support against that of any community on the planet.”

Stover praised Los Alamos County Traffic Division Manager Nancy Talley for all her assistance in meeting and working with the teens to ensure the sign placement meets traffic safety concerns.

Team NRG updated the Los Alamos School Board about their sign project on May 24. Applause filled the room when the teens announced that LANB was funding the entire cost.

Along with Valdez, Girrens and O’Hara, Team NRG members Kory Archuleta, Sean Erickson, Nat Gustafson, Ben Havemann, Grant Janecky, Elliot Marcille and Dia Obermeyer, conducted the presentation with assistance from Stover and adult volunteer Lori Heimdahl Gibson.

“The students have worked really hard on this project,” Gibson said. “Even though they had officially graduated from the LAYL program on April 15, they unanimously decided to do whatever it would take to get the funding for the sign this year. The students did a fantastic job of presenting to Bill. We all were ecstatic when he said LANB would fund the entire sign. How fortunate that this community has a man like Bill Enloe and a business like LANB that support not only this worthy project, but so many more.”

Adult volunteer Joy Freymiller also works with Team NRG. “I was really excited when I found out that the kids did such a wonderful job in their presentation and that Bill had decided to fund their project,” Freymiller said. “I am just so excited for the kids and I can’t wait to see the sign installed.”

Stover said the plan is to install the sign by summer's end.