

FRIENDS & NEIGHBORS

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TEAMWORK — Union City firefighter Justin Hepler lends his expertise using a fire hose as Youth Leadership Obion County participants Macey McKenzie (left) and Erin Chappell learned how to maneuver the water spray. This year's Youth Leadership Obion County class recently visited the Union City Fire Department. The 24 students in

this year's class got a little hands-on training during their visit. Students crawled around inside the firetrucks, tried on firefighting gear and got to try out the fire hoses. The Youth Leadership Obion County program is currently in its 14th year. Plans are currently being made for a trip to the state Capitol and a meeting with the governor.

Unique lessons give local teens new view of OC

By **KEVIN BOWDEN**
Staff Reporter

South Fulton High School sophomore Abby O'Neal enjoyed learning about law enforcement. Obion County Central High School sophomore Erin Chappell said she enjoyed learning about Obion County's agriculture. Union City High School sophomore Rachel White said Law Enforcement Day was a real "eye opener."

All three students are members of this year's Youth Leadership Obion County program.

They are part of a select group of 24 high school sophomores who were chosen to participate in the nine-month leadership training program.

This year's class has already completed five of the nine sessions — Camp Mack Morris, Ag Day, Public Service Day, Community Service Night and Law Enforcement Day.

"My favorite day was Law Enforcement Day," SFHS sophomore Abby O'Neal said. "I thought it was very interesting. Youth Leadership has also helped me meet new people that I never would have met otherwise."

"I really enjoyed Law Enforcement Day. It was extremely entertaining," SFHS sophomore JoAnna Taylor said.

It was during Law Enforcement Day in early January that the group of students visited the Union City Police Department, General Sessions Court and the Obion County Law Enforcement Complex.

In September, the class attended a two-day leadership retreat at Camp Mack Morris called COPE. The retreat is part leadership development and part entertainment.

The Challenging Outdoor Personal Experience program develops such skills as problem solving, communication, self esteem, leadership development, trust, decision making, teamwork and planning.

The local youth leadership group participated in a series of challenging exercises at Camp Mack Morris designed to provide them with unique leadership skills.

Each month through the remainder of this school year, the group of 24 sophomores will participate in monthly sessions targeting specific areas of the community. Upcoming sessions will focus on health care, business and industrial development, public service and state government.

Each session includes special tours and presentations.

"I really enjoyed Law Enforcement Day because I learned so much. It is like a whole other world in jail," OCCHS sophomore Kelsey Beeler said. "I also like Ag Day. Touring all those factories changed me. I have made so many memories that I will never forget."

"Law Enforcement Day was very interesting and I learned a lot that I never knew about what all goes into Union City's law enforcement. Ag Day was my favorite also. I was so into what all was going into the factories. I learned a lot from both days that interested me more in Obion County," OCCHS sophomore Alex Wilson said.

"Law Enforcement Day has been the best. I loved going to the jail and seeing the inside of it. Youth Leadership has helped me make new friends and become a better leader," fellow OCCHS sophomore Macey McKenzie said.

Throughout their experience, the students learn more about their community and how it works.

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IN JAIL — Members of this year's Youth Leadership Obion County class toured the Obion County Law Enforcement Complex as part of their Law Enforcement Day experience. The tour of the jail was led by Lt. William Sudbury and included a thorough explanation of jail policies and procedures. The students visited one of the jail's holding cells, control room and the kitchen. At the conclusion of their jail tour, the students met with one of the inmates, who described what life is like inside the jail.



POULTRY SHOW — Members of this year's Youth Leadership Obion County program got to tour the local Tyson Foods plant as part of their Ag Day. Checking out a piece of poultry at the plant during Ag Day were (from left) Kelsey Beeler, Alex Wilson, Macey McKenzie and Jessie Perry, all of Obion County Central High School, as Tyson Foods employee Carolyn Goetz shows off the cutlet. This year's Youth Leadership Obion County class

toured the Williams Sausage plant outside Woodland Mills and also visited a poultry farm as part of Ag Day. This year's class is made up of 24 high school sophomores from all three local high schools. The students spend one day a month learning about such areas as agriculture, leadership development, law enforcement, community and public service, health care, local and state government. Each session includes tours and special presentations.



HAPPY FACES — Youth Leadership Obion County members Joanna Taylor (left) and Erin Chappell enjoyed a laugh as they occupied the driver's seat of one of the Union City Fire Department's firetrucks. Miss Taylor is a sophomore at South Fulton High School and Miss Chappell is a sophomore at Obion County Central High School.



TRUST EXERCISE — A two-day retreat at Camp Mack Morris last fall included a series of trust exercises for members of this year's Youth Leadership Obion County class. Working on a three-man trust fall exercise were Molly Maclin (left) and

Laura Reed Smith, both sophomores at Union City High School. The trip to Camp Mack Morris in Benton County involved the students in what is known as COPE, which is an acronym for Challenging Outdoor Personal Experience.



STEADY AS SHE GOES — One of the exercises done at Camp Mack Morris by this year's Youth Leadership Obion County class was called "Hot Chocolate." Working on completing their task were (from left)

Molly Maclin of Union City High School, Rachel White and Ryan Moore of South Fulton High School. Students in the program participated in a series of exercises designed to teach them leadership skills.