Robinson Leaders: Even the average is outstanding

By all measures, our first class of Robinson Leaders, selected in the Spring of 2011, is an outstanding group of young people. Here is a profile of a typical participant in our Leaders program. In the 2011-12 program year, these 98 students performed 4,541 hours of community service (an average of 46.3 hours each). On average, each student participated in four extra-curricular activities and participated in eight personal enrichment activities. In terms of academic achievement, the average GPA was 3.77, and of 43 Leaders who took the ACT as sophomores (a year ahead of schedule) the average composite score was 22.4.

Recognizing RSP’s scholar athletes

Robinson Scholars often represent their schools in extra-curricular activities, and they work hard to balance responsibilities to their schools and the program. This is especially true of our varsity athletes who continue to show their leadership in the classroom and on the field. Cody Harp, a senior at Corbin High School, said that being an athlete has taught him “how to give everything you have even when the odds are stacked against you.”

Class 13 Scholars Athletes

Darian Burks, Cheerleader, Wolfe County High
Cody Harp, Football, Corbin High
Taylor Johnson, Football, Letcher County High
Megan Parker, Archery, South Laurel High
Cassundra Rice, Archery, Leslie County High
Sara Ross, Basketball, Lee County High
Corey Shouse, Football, Breathitt County High
Marty Vest, Tennis and Volleyball, Morgan County High

Nashville songwriter and musician Larry Cordle, a native of Lawrence County, met with Robinson Leaders during their Mission Appalachia Camp in June on UK’s campus. Cordle performed some of his hit country songs, answered questions about songwriting and the music business, and related stories about his 30-plus years of involvement in the Nashville music scene. During the evening, Cordle gave a concert for students and the public at the Singletary Center for the Arts.
Scholar finds enjoyment and career path in music

Tanner Stevens, Class 10 scholar from Lawrence County, recently finished his sophomore year at UK as a music education major. He is a tenor in the UK Men's Chorus and is also a member of Blue Note, a UK a cappella choir.

Stevens said the Blue Note group has given him a chance to sing popular music, in addition to the more traditional selections of the men's chorus. Stevens and his Blue Note group performed in UK's A Night on Broadway, singing “Moon River” from Breakfast at Tiffany's. They also practice doo-wop and other styles.

He said the choir is a good break from rehearsals, concerts, and the demands of classes. The formula seems to work for Stevens, who holds a 3.80 GPA after four semesters at UK.

RSP was a journey of personal growth for Knott County native

Joe Hall, a Knott County Scholar, graduated from UK in May 2012 with a degree in biology. His RSP journey began in the summer of 2004 when he met the rest of class eight at an induction ceremony in Hazard.

As a high school scholar, Hall remembered the summer retreats the most. “I enjoyed reuniting with all of my friends for an entire week to catch up and learn how to be successful in school.” In his junior and senior summer retreats, Hall developed his college writing skills. “It seemed like eternities spent in the library learning to write like a college student,” he said.

Hall entered UK in August of 2008. “I quickly realized that if I was going to be successful I needed to demand more from myself,” he said. “Although I did not like all of the program requirements, they really got me to participate in things that I otherwise would not have done. These have become experiences that I already have come to miss despite how I felt about them at that time.”

Hall said his sophomore year was the toughest. Although his classes have been progressively more advanced his sophomore year was particularly difficult. “My second year was when I realized that I needed to really buckle down.” After realizing this, Hall developed more as a student. “I am proud of how I have changed and developed into a true seeker of knowledge.”

He believes there is a definite advantage to being a Robinson Scholar at UK. “Not having to worry about paying for school allowed me to focus on my studies,” he said. The program enabled a personal transformation for Hall, who finished his UK career in the Spring of 2012. He noted that he grew socially, academically, and professionally through his journey as a Robinson Scholar. “The Robinson Scholars Program has helped to shape me into a successful individual.”