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**Diane Joens**

*Office of the Mayor of Cottonwood*

It was my great pleasure to nominate Robert Valentine for the 2013 Verde Valley Youth Leadership Award. I have known Robert for several years in our mutual capacity of working on community projects through his participation in the Cottonwood Youth Advisory Commission. This commission is advisory to the Mayor and City Council of Cottonwood.



From Hezekiah Allen, Adult Leader of the Cottonwood Youth Advisory Commission: Robert Valentine currently serves as President of the Cottonwood Youth Advisory Commission. This position is elected based on majority vote. The election process begins with each candidate presenting their platform, and after everyone has stated their stance the commission votes. Robert's platform was "Today's gestures equals tomorrow's great choices." The plan he presented to accomplish this was to provide quality programs, commit to community service, and invest in our youth. One avenue he has chosen to accomplish this is to sponsor a Verde Valley Little League baseball team. By doing so, younger youth see the value of giving back and hopefully do so in the future when the opportunity is presented. This would also allow disadvantage youth the opportunity to play baseball. Under Robert's leadership the Commission has completed 516 hours of community service and organized programs that have touched the lives of many Verde Valley Youth. The Commission is looking forward to continuing this trend through the second half of the school year under Robert's direction."

HERO. Title: Youth Council President, Humanitarian Efforts Reaching Out (HERO), is a non-profit organization where doctors and nurses from the community send medical supplies to third world countries. Robert is the Youth Council President, which means he heads the youth division as they collect items to send to children in third world countries.

Church Youth Group. Robert's youth group holds fundraisers and puts on activities for the church such as barbecues, collecting funds for local food banks and assisting with donations for St. Vincent de Paul. Robert's youth group also helps teach the younger parishioners about Catholicism, and helps with their Bible studies. That is their biggest activity, mentoring the younger kids, and helping them progress and learn more about their faith.

National Honor Society. The chapter of National Honor Society at Mingus Union High School participates in a variety of different service based activities. Activities range from tutoring students at MUHS, to completing service activities for organizations around the community. These events include car washes, painting benches, visiting the elderly, and working concession stands. NHS tries their best to become involved in all projects that seek student help.

4-H. Title: President (11), Vice President (9). Along with the six required community service hours required each year, Robert shows, and has shown Bantam and Cornish Cross chickens and rabbits. He has been involved in 4-H since he was six, and the mentoring of younger members is one of the most important things he learned to do. Robert says, "From being the mentee to the mentor, this club provides the full circle experience. When fair week is upon us we meet more frequently as we need to help the younger members with cage set up, and animal transportation. We also help these members write their buyers thank you letters."

Varsity Baseball. Title: Co-Captain. Robert has played baseball since he was four, and this has been a tip of the iceberg experience for him so far, he says. He was part of the team last year that finished in the top eight in state, and this year they are hoping to be state champions. Baseball has helped him become a leader, Robert says, as they always represent their school and all team members, whether they are on or off the field.

Tournament Baseball, Title: Captain. This is the team they dubbed their "fall ball" team. They prepare for their regular season by playing in exhibition games during the fall. This is another activity that helps with the mentoring process as they have one team filled with players from all four grade levels. The older players have to help the underclassmen learn what they now know as the basics of high school baseball.

Mayor Joens says, "Like Verde Valley Leadership current class members and graduates, Robert has shown by his actions that he inspires individuals to action. Robert is motivated by self-inspiration to do good things for others and provide leadership and mentoring. He has strong family support. The activities in which he has consistently been involved throughout high school have, in the words of Verde Valley Leadership's Mission, "Promoted a good environment for families, businesses, nonprofit organizations, effective government and other systems that nurture strength within our communities." He easily fulfills Verde Valley Leadership's guiding principles of "Service, Stewardship, Teamwork and Integrity." Robert Valentine has maintained a 4-point-plus grade point average in spite of the tremendous donation of time he provides as a leader in service to our communities."

Many thanks to Verde Valley Leadership for sponsoring this Youth Award, and the \$500 Scholarship!