

Ty Ankrom's Here's What I Think ...

The hands-on format of the yearly Pickaway County Student Leadership & Ethics Conference was a success for nearly 60 students from the county's public schools.



When invited to take part, several students said they expected a lecture and were pleasantly surprised by the conference's interactive structure.

Participants were broken into groups to allow students from other schools to meet.

Students rotate through four sessions: conducting a meeting, led by Brian Bigam of Circleville High School; swap shop, led by Jeri Hartley of Logan Elm; student ethics, led by Kathryn Schoonover of Westfall and Patti Burgett of Teays Valley; and stewardship, led by Jan Shannon of the Pickaway County Community Foundation.

Brian's session, in which students were assigned roles, was a big hit.

Katlyn Knul, a senior at Circleville who is in Pickaway-Ross Career & Technology Center's Sports Medicine program, said she didn't like the role she was given of being someone who agreed with everything.

"I like to put my opinions out there."

Katlyn, who is on the National Honor Society and is secretary of Circleville's Key Club and captain of the volleyball team, said she enjoyed talking with students from other schools.

Martino Solivan, a senior at Teays Valley, echoed Katlyn's sentiment.

"You get to create relationships with others that you might not otherwise get," Martino said.

The conference also features a keynote speaker.

Jeff Phillips, executive director of the Pickaway County Family YMCA, spoke about the age-old question of whether leaders are born or made, to which he told

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The student leadership conference concluded with each school team making "castles" out of index cards, communicating what they want to do without talking.

students that he thinks it's a combination.

He credited his father with instilling in him and his three brothers a genetic bend toward leadership, citing his father's outgoing personality.

But he also reminded the teens that his professional background helped him hone leadership qualities that serve him at the Y and as an assistant football coach at Circleville.

"Good leaders get energy from others as it feeds the creative process," he said.

In Brian's last session he challenged the students to stand up and be leaders.

"You guys know what's right and wrong. Make a difference in your school. Step up and be a leader. Don't go with the flow."

The Pickaway County ESC, the Rotary Clubs of Circleville, the county schools' National Honor Society chapters and AmVets sponsor the annual conference.

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