



Many Voices Working for the Community

Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Student Representatives to the Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board Honored for Their Service

Oak Ridge, Tenn. – May 10, 2005 - The three student representatives on the Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board (ORSSAB) were honored for their service at the Board's April meeting. Stephanie Jernigan and Katie Meersman are seniors at Oak Ridge High School and Zach Ludwig is a junior at Karns High School. Steve McCracken, the Assistant Manager for the Department of Energy's Oak Ridge Environmental Management Program, presented each student a plaque recognizing their work.

ORSSAB is an independent, federally appointed citizens' panel that provides advice and recommendations to DOE on its Oak Ridge Environmental Management Program.



Zach Ludwig, Karns High School, Katie Meersman, center, and Stephanie Jernigan, both of Oak Ridge High School, were recognized recently for their service on the Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board. The three were student representatives with the volunteer citizen's group that offers advice and recommendations to the U.S. Department of Energy on its cleanup operations on the Oak Ridge Reservation.

“Why do we have students on our team?” said McCracken. “What we try to do is get a diversity of vision. Where better to get it than from young people who carry with them a set of ideas that perhaps many of us have lost? I think it's hugely important for them to get to participate and present their views.

“You are going to carry with you first-hand knowledge of how government is supposed to work,” McCracken told them. “You have a huge influence on what we do because we don't want to let you down.”

Stephanie is a member of the Oak Ridge High School orchestra as a violinist. She has participated in Oak Ridge's Sister City exchange program, traveling to Japan and hosting several Japanese students in her home. She plans to pursue a career in environmental or health care law after college. She served on the ORSSAB Stewardship Committee. "It's given us a good understanding of how this whole process works," she said. "It's nice to know there are people like these on the ORSSAB who are pushing to get the Oak Ridge Reservation cleaned up. It's good for me to be able to relay this information to others who also care about the subject."

Zach has served as a member of the Karns Academic Team, the Future Business Leaders of America, and the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. Following graduation, he plans to attend college to pursue a career in psychiatry. Zach also served on the ORSSAB Stewardship Committee. "I never knew so much was invested in discussions about our environment just outside our doors," he said. "It's been very informative."

Katie is a member the National Honor Society and the Key Club, and she attended a Model United Nations conference in Washington, D.C. Katie volunteers at Woodland Elementary School, the Oak Ridge Library Children's Room, and the Oak Ridge Children's Museum. She plans to study political science or history in college and eventually wants to become a lawyer. For ORSSAB she served on the Stewardship and Public Outreach Committee. "I'm grateful for being invited to come and participate in these meetings. It's one thing to sit in a science class; it's another to see the hard work that's being done and know how everything we're learning applies to the real world."

The ORSSAB is composed of 20 people, up to three of whom are non-voting high school students from area schools. Each year, students are seated on the Board to represent the views and interests of area youth. At least one student is selected from Oak Ridge High School and others are chosen on a rotating basis from schools in surrounding areas.

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