

Out of the classroom, into the real world

■ A Suburban sophomore attended two prestigious conferences this summer.

By MIKE NORTRUP
For the Weekly Record

Most high school students learn primarily in the classroom. But this summer, Sterling Manuel Jose Feeser took advantage of an opportunity to learn in the classroom of the real world.

From July 25 through Aug. 2, the York Suburban sophomore attended the Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership 2008 World Leadership Congress at George Washington University in Washington, D.C. In May, he had attended the Central Pennsylvania HOBY State Youth Leader-

ship Seminar at Millersville University.

This program, which celebrates its 50th anniversary this year, is named for its founder, actor Hugh O'Brian, who started it in 1958. Its goal is to acquaint young people with world issues and to work together to address them.

Also, Feeser experienced an entirely different slice of the real world in July when he went to Chicago for the Lorenzo de Zavala Youth Legislative Session sponsored by the National Hispanic Institute. Zavala was a Mexican political leader who later became the first vice president of the Republic of Texas after it won its independence from Mexico.

Feeser was selected based on an outstanding academic record and extracurricular activities such as sports and volunteer work.

His dad, retired Spanish teacher Sterling Jim Feeser, said his son was the first York

County student to ever attend these conferences, but he shouldn't be the last.

"I highly recommend that every 10th-grader get to go. It's an experience they will never get again," the senior Feeser said.

The hardest part for his son was going door-to-door selling flower bulbs to raise money for his expenses.

"I'm not a salesperson. It was kind of hard," the younger Feeser said.

But, he raised about \$500. The de Zavala event teaches the political process to young Hispanics, although non-Hispanics could attend, too. There, they were acquainted with the issues that impact America's Hispanic community.

The students were organized into a miniature replica of the U.S. government, complete with a president, Congress and courts. The idea was for them to work on and

debate issues affecting Hispanics and develop leadership skills.

Sterling was a member of Congress. He wrote a bill intended to improve Latino education. His bill failed, but he learned what everybody learns when they get involved with the political process.

"Politics is a brutal game," he said.

But there were many positives, such as learning issues that face this rapidly growing minority. "It showed us how to reach out to the Hispanic community," he said.

The O'Brian conference featured students from many countries. "They put us on panels discussing leadership and world problems. I think I learned to keep my mind

more open. It was amazing to meet people from all over the world. I'll never have that opportunity again," Sterling said.

"I got a lot out of it. It showed you how to be a leader both locally and globally as well."

Now that he is back, he is assessing the impact his two trips had on him. He is eligible to go back to both conferences next year as a senior counselor, and he would like to do that.

Feeser said he has wanted to teach high school chemistry or biology, but now he feels his career could go in a different direction.

"I know one thing, I'm more interested in politics now," he said.



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Sterling Manuel Jose Feeser spent his summer learning politics at two seminars. "Politics is a brutal game," he said.