



NEWS RELEASE

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NEBRASKA STUDENTS SELECTED FOR 2021 U.S. SENATE YOUTH PROGRAM

The Nebraska Department of Education is pleased to announce the names of two students selected as delegates to the 59th annual United States Senate Youth Program (USSYP), held virtually for the first time March 14-17. Claire Doyle of Elkhorn and Dominic Mendlik of Valley were chosen from across the state to be part of the group of 104 student delegates who will participate in the program's Washington Week.

The USSYP was created by Senate Resolution 324 in 1962 and has been sponsored by the Senate and fully funded by The Hearst Foundations since inception. The program is designed to increase young Americans' understanding of the interrelationships of the three branches of government, learn the caliber and responsibilities of federally-elected and appointed officials, and emphasize the vital importance of democratic decision-making not only for America but for people around the world.

The overall mission of the program is to help grow knowledge of the American political process and a lifelong commitment to public service. In addition to the program week, The Hearst Foundations provide each student with a \$10,000 undergraduate college scholarship.

Claire Doyle, a senior at Duchesne Academy, serves as the student body president, leading the student council during the pandemic to ensure that the school remains connected. She has represented the students of Duchesne Academy in a national discussion of the Sacred Heart schools considering ways to improve the Sacred Heart Network. She is the president of Duchesne's Feminist Club and has spent the last year working with the other all-girls schools in Omaha to plan events commemorating the centennial celebration of the Nineteenth Amendment. An alumna of Youth Leadership Omaha, Claire founded the Philosophy Club and Fair Trade Committee at her school. She led Duchesne's softball team as a captain and pitcher and also competes with the slam poetry team. Outside of school, Claire volunteers at an assisted living center, tutors in Spanish, and is trained as a restorative justice surrogate.

Dominic Mendlik, a senior at Creighton Preparatory School, serves as the co-leader of his school's National Honor Society chapter, maintaining the school's peer-mentoring program. As a leader of civic student groups, he brings together community leaders to motivate students and teach skills surrounding civic engagement and public service. He is vice president of the Spanish National Honor Society, a member of Creighton's Chamber Choir, captain of the Speech, Debate, and Mock Trial teams, a lector with his school's Campus Ministry, and a mentor in The Big Brothers and Freshman Retreat programs. Dominic also volunteers with Life House, a food bank and pantry that assists his hometown community.

Chosen as alternates to the 2021 program were Lucas Lunzmann, of Auburn High School in Auburn and Elizabeth Herbin of Lincoln Southeast High School in Lincoln.

The chief educational officer in each state selects the delegates after nomination by teachers and principals. This year's delegates were designated by Dr. Matthew L. Blomstedt, Commissioner of Education.

During the program week, the student delegates will attend online meetings and briefings with senators, the president, a justice of the Supreme Court, leaders of cabinet agencies, and senior members of the national media, among others.

The student photos are available using the following

link: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1QBfVncjg87hyiXVXiIJCWwbJmIk3zUz?usp=sharing>.

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