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HHS students return from leadership camp

By RICHARD CRAWFORD
Editor

Four students who will be seniors at Hutchinson High School this fall recently returned from a weeklong camp designed to boost youth leadership skills.

The students are Erik Maland, Katie Jensen, Bo Connelly and Steph Vacek.

They attended the Wilder Forest camp near Stillwater through a program that is part of the National Youth Leadership Council.

The Hutchinson students were among about 32 students from a variety of school districts who were learning leadership skills involving such things as ethics, peace-keeping, community service and cultural diversity.

The first night there, the students spent the night outside as an exercise to build trust and team-

work with other campers.

"It was really tough because it was rainy and there was no food," Vacek said. But the exercise helped everyone to get to know each other, they said.

The group spent several days attending seminars pertaining to leadership skills and then separated to take part in community service projects.

Jensen helped create a Web page for a nonprofit organization. Vacek, Maland and Connelly did work at homeless shelters in Minneapolis and St. Paul.

Maland said the group hopes to start a youth group in Hutchinson that will focus on community service.

The students also hope their leadership training will benefit the groups they participate in at

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Staff photo by Richard Crawford

From left, Bo Connelly, Katie Jensen, Steph Vacek and Erik Maland upon their return from a week-long leadership camp. They're hoping to plan community service projects in Hutchinson.

Students/ Hoping to use skills in school

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HHS.

► Maland participates in football, swimming choir and musical productions.

► Jensen is involved in swimming, basketball, student council and National Honor Society.

► Connelly is on the student council and the swimming team.

► Vacek is on the volleyball and softball teams, danceline and the National Honor Society.

"The whole purpose is to try to make a positive change in the community," said Chuck Wedin of the Park, Recreation and

Community Education Department, which helped sponsor the camp experience.

Jensen said the skills they learned at the camp should have a positive impact.

"It's showing students and the community that we can make a difference," she said.

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