

SAN MARCOS AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Youth Leadership San Marcos Celebrates Another Year of Inspiring Future Community Leaders

San Marcos, TX – 5/7/2025 – Youth Leadership San Marcos (YLSM), a program of the San Marcos Area Chamber of Commerce, proudly concludes another impactful year of developing the next generation of civic-minded leaders. Designed for local high school students, the program aims to foster mutual understanding, respect, and engagement between youth and their community while also building awareness of local career opportunities right here in San Marcos.

YLSM works closely with San Marcos High School and San Marcos Academy, ensuring student selection and participation are collaborative efforts that serve both the schools and the community. The program runs annually from September through April, featuring eight themed sessions, culminating in a graduation luncheon.

“The goal of Youth Leadership San Marcos is to plant the seeds of community involvement, leadership, and career exploration in our students,” said Page Michel, president of the San Marcos Area Chamber of Commerce. “We want to expose these young people to local businesses and leadership contacts so they can foresee a successful future right here in San Marcos.”

Each YLSM session is built around a specific theme or career field: Session 1 Team Building; Session 2 History; Session 3 Government and Public Service; Session 4 Economic Development and Tourism; Session 5 Small Business and Manufacturing; Session 6 Health Care and Human Services; and Session 7 Media and Technology.

The eighth session was a graduation luncheon with keynote speakers including San Marcos Mayor Jane Hughson and Ted Groholske, Director of Workforce Development with the Hays Caldwell Economic Development Partnership. It was hosted at Palmer’s Restaurant & Courtyard, thanks to generous support from Chef Monte Sheffield.

This year, 16 students graduated from the program, including: Adrian Romero, Aiden Nolan, Angelina Vazquez, Aryam Nunez, Cuauhtemoc Ramirez, Diego Vacaflares, Emma Scull, Haley Aguilar, Jackson Herman, Khatin Raymond, Rebeka Onofre, Shawn Joey, Shelita Adams, Shyra Kincheon, Victoria King, and William Lunkenheimer

During the YLSM sessions, students visited local businesses to learn firsthand from owners and managers about their unique educational backgrounds, leadership paths, and the realities of operating within the San Marcos economy. These immersive experiences encouraged students to reflect on their own interests, identify career paths that resonate with them, and explore opportunities they may not otherwise encounter before entering the workforce.

A key aspect of YLSM is its focus on local career development, aiming to keep young talent invested in San Marcos. By highlighting both small and large local businesses, the program emphasizes the value of homegrown opportunity and community-rooted success.

The success of this year's program would not have been possible without the dedication of facilitators Clayton Odam from San Marcos CISD and Rachael Rodgers from San Marcos Academy, plus the support of volunteer facilitators Brooke Damron and Crystal Dixon, along with the generous participation of San Marcos businesses who opened their doors and gave of their time to help educate and inspire.

YLSM is currently preparing for the next class of student leaders that will kick off in September 2025. Interested students can reach out to Mr. Odam and Ms. Rodgers at their schools. For more information on this or other Education & Workforce Development programs, please contact the San Marcos Area Chamber of Commerce at 512-393-5900 or chamber@sanmarcostexas.com.

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About the San Marcos Area Chamber of Commerce

Since 1903, providing ADVOCACY and CONNECTIONS for businesses to THRIVE. The Chamber's mission is to improve the economic prosperity and quality of life of its members through leadership, education, and business advocacy. The SMTX Chamber's vision is to be the leading membership organization that collaborates with stakeholders to develop an environment where businesses thrive, leadership is encouraged, students excel, housing is ample and attainable, all members are active, and quality of life is a priority. More Chamber information is available at SanMarcosTexas.com or call 512-393-5900.