

El Reno Tribune

Mustang News

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By Ray Dyer

Shh...listen

The annual Youth Speak Out Conference was held Wednesday at Redlands Community College.

The event brings together teens from throughout Canadian County for one reason: to tell adults what's going on in their lives and share concerns about the issues they face on a daily basis.



At the podium—El Reno High School's Nathan Bengue addresses the audience at the Youth Speak Out Conference.

Organized by the El Reno Leadership Class, Mustang Prevention and Coalition Team and Yu Can Coalition, students addressed the audience made up of educators, lawmen, political leaders and professionals on a variety of issues.

Some of the topics covered by the students were drinking and driving, bullying, religion and cultural awareness, school and stress, sex education, high stakes testing, texting and driving, drug testing, community service, leadership and college prep.

Some other areas included seventh-hour sports, arts facilities and snacks in

Daniel Gassen, an El Reno High School student, kicked off the session and school leaders to find a way to improve the tennis courts said someone could get hurt if they trip over the cracks and uneven courts.



Ready to talk—Students wait their turn to speak on issues.

in the discussion lunch issues, fine schools.

session by imploring at Legion Park. He ven edges on the



Ready to listen—Adults in the audience listen to the concerns and ideas presented by the students.

Other students followed, with EHS student Felipe Plasencia talking about the need for more religious and cultural awareness. Parker Stell and Kassie Meyer, also of EHS, voiced views on issues with the high school marching band, while Josh Castrop and Claire Emory discussed lunch issues and safety concerns. Another El Reno student, Kyia Graham, addressed issues related to sex education in school, and Logan Cash of EHS talked about stress and anxiety. Other El Reno student speakers were Parker Ronspiez on snacks in school, Morgan Cerne on college prep, and Adelia Owens addressed leadership.

The mission statement for the Speak Out Conference reads: To provide a structured forum for youth to present their views, opinions and solutions on issues that they face to a listening panel comprised of elected officials

and community leaders who are in a position to take action based on the presentations of the youth.



Getting the message across—Some student attendees wore this shirt at the conference.