

A LETTER TO YOU FROM OUR STUDENT PRESIDENT

Last year, I was able to attend the 2015 Business Professionals of America (BPA), National Leadership Conference in Anaheim, CA thanks to the support of an invaluable network of local businesses and individuals. I was able to engage in a wide variety of professional development workshops, internships and leadership academies to further expand my business acumen while fine-tuning my leadership and communication skills. I was awarded 7th place for Economic Research Project at the national level. There is nothing more rewarding than being in a learning environment with like-minded individuals who stop at no end to encourage the success of one another.

One year later, Ludington BPA has unveiled a fundraising campaign for not just one student, but eight students, to attend the 2016 NLC in Boston, MA. The opportunity for me to attend the 2015 NLC and share my story with our members, has lead to a wave of motivation and excitement over the past year. We had more winners place at the regional and state levels than ever before. Our membership in both our high school and middle school chapters has increased significantly. In addition, we have also given more volunteer service hours back to our community than ever before in the history of our chapter.

As a distinguished partner of Ludington BPA, you have directly contributed to a movement amongst the youth in our community. Students are realizing that business isn't a bad word, and they are beginning to appreciate the role of ethical business practices across all career fields. Students from 6th thru 12th grade want to be involved in an organization that provides professional growth to individuals, while at the same time giving back to this amazing community we call home.

Ludington BPA is so much more than an after school club. We are a group of 60+ kids who share one trait in common: we all want to achieve our personal best. Ludington BPA strives to give students the business and professional skills they need to go out and become the best version of themselves that they can possibly be. Our local business partners play a vital role in making this vision a reality.

This year, the motivation of our members has lead Ludington BPA middle school students to establish the Michigan BPA Middle Level Association. Our middle school members spent the past year contacting schools from across the state of Michigan, giving testimonials to the amazing effects our organization has had on their personal, academic and professional lives. Over ten different schools joined this year, and came together for the 1st Annual MI BPA Middle Level State Leadership Conference held at Davenport University in February. Here, middle school students from across the state competed in business and technology related events. I am proud to report that Ludington BPA took home 35 Awards- by far the most of any school there. At that conference, five middle school students qualified to move on and compete at the 2016 National Leadership Conference in Boston, MA this fall. Initially, the school board wasn't going to allow these members to attend because of their age. However, after presenting their case to the board, they were granted permission to attend. As the entrepreneurial founders of the MI BPA Middle Level Association, it is only right that they continue to lead Michigan all the way to Boston.

Two weeks ago, our high school students attended the 2016 MI BPA Secondary State Leadership Conference in Grand Rapids, where 14 of our members competed against 3,000 members from across the state. Myself, along with two other high school members, also qualified to compete nationally. It should also be noted that our advisor, Mrs. Tomaski, was recognized as the 2016 Advisor of the Year, honoring the gateway to the professional world that she has helped create for students across Michigan.

Last year, you were one of the generous supporters of my trip to nationals in California. This year, as a direct result of your previous contributions, we now have eight students who qualify to attend the National Leadership Conference. However, we again will not be receiving funding from our school district. Thus, it will be up to parents, friends, and our distinct network of quality community partners to get these deserving, hardworking students to Boston.

Thank you for your ongoing patronage of this organization. It is your commitment, dedication and belief in today's youth that will allow us all to share in a better tomorrow.

Best Regards,

Griffin Gonzales

Griffin Gonzales
President, Ludington BPA