

OUTSTANDING CITIZEN

Girls State program selects Surprise junior as 'outstanding citizen'

Shadow Ridge High School student China Dennington was selected as the Outstanding Citizen in the American Legion Auxiliary's Girls State program.



China Dennington

The ALA Girls State program, which took place in the summer at the

University of Arizona, is a week-long academic event emphasizing the workings of government and responsible citizenship.

Nearly 300 Arizona high school girls participate in the program each year.

"Attending this program has empowered me to speak

up and have courage," Dennington said. "It was an incredible experience to be surrounded by so many dedicated, confident young women. It encouraged me to have confidence in myself as well."

Interviewed, selected and sponsored by the Peoria American Legion Auxiliary unit, Dennington petitioned to attend the 70-year-long

tradition through her school counselor.

"China was exactly the kind of student we are looking for," Doris Theiss, unit president, said. "She demonstrated the kind of patriotic values critical in embracing the program."

A published author at age 13, Dennington also participates in choir and is an officer in the Hugh O'Brian

Youth Arizona Alumni Association. She won the President's Award for Volunteer Service. Following the session, she also designed and implemented a website borne from her experience. The website, www.ShelsNotAnObject.com, hopes to bring an end to sexist comments in everyday conversation.

>See Citizen on page 14

Citizen

» From page 12

The John J. Morris Auxiliary unit in Peoria sponsors 22 girls each year into the ALA Girls State program.

"Over the next year, the Arizona American Legion Auxiliary will positively affect the lives of thousands of Arizona veterans, military, local families and their communities, and my goal is to make sure we can continue to do so in the years to come," Yolanda Bonilla, Arizona department president, said.

Bonilla has selected the ALA Girls State pro-

gram as the department president's special project during her year-long tenure as president.

"By reaching out to youth like Ms. Dennington, we believe we can simultaneously build a stronger America and a stronger patriotic organization," she said.

"For me, the Girls State experience confirmed that I want to go into government. It gets me fired up and excited," Dennington said.

To learn more, visit www.AZPost62.com/ALA or email ALAAunit62AZ@gmail.com.