

American Legion Auxilliary  
Oklahoma Girls State

# THE GIRLS STATERS

VOL. 83, ISSUE 1

## The Life of Jill Castilla by Lexi Acuff, Akin City

Jill Castilla is a woman who embodies the concept of perseverance. Mrs. Castilla gave us an inspirational speech that spoke about her story of becoming a renowned family banker for the Citizens Bank of Edmond. There, she turned around the reputation of the bank during the Global Financial Crisis and the Great Recession. Mrs. Castilla turned around the struggles the bank was having by showing them the correct way to run a bank using her core values and pure determination.

Mrs. Castilla shared how, as a young adult, she worked at a grocery store, carrying groceries for people she knew while paying her college tuition and maintaining a 4.0 GPA. When her tuition funds ran out, she left college to work before learning the military would pay for her education. In the military, she developed discipline, accountability, and the ability to perform under pressure.

Mrs. Castilla applied these values throughout her life. By remaining true to them and teaching others, she gained respect and helped revive Citizens Bank of Edmond. While this is only part of her story, it's a lesson that we as Girls State delegates can apply to our lives.

In the end, Mrs. Castilla left us with a final message to close her speech. She said that to earn what you truly want in life, you have to drive through your problems and never let them hold you back, because you will always achieve something if you truly want it.





## A Day in the Life of a Delegate

by Royanna Berry, Reed City and Savanna Wyatt, Harvey City

### **Amelia** by Royanna Berry, Reed City

We asked Amelia what her favorite part of Monday's activities were and she answered, "I'm very interested in entering the animal research field, so seeing DR. Snyder talk about her success in that field inspired me to continue on that path. I was also excited to see someone who came from similar circumstances -- such as small-town living -- be able to reach such a high level in their field of study. I was able to take her inspiring words to heart, and now I'm looking forward to using those for this week and in my life after."

### **Graze** by Savanna Wyatt, Harvey City

The day in the life of a delegate can vary depending on who you are, what your goals are for Girls State, and how much effort you put into your day. Some delegates come knowing nothing, others come in so prepared that you have no idea how they know everything. Graze was one delegate who came into Girls State with previous knowledge, but expressed that she wanted to learn the most she could while attending Girls State. Monday was the first full day for girls, and when asked what her favorite part of her day was, she said going through different processes; "My favorite part of it would probably have to be the elections. I think it was really fun giving out speeches, getting to say why people should vote for me, and how exactly I should go about it. Even though I lost more times than I can count for every role, I did get City Attorney. But it was just a really fun learning experience. So, the elections were definitely my favorite part of my day."

**Real Life Advocacy**  
by Amy Puente, Parker City

Today, May 26, 2026, Dr. Rebecca Snyder came and spoke to Girls State delegates. Dr. Snyder is the Chief Mission Programs Officer at the Oklahoma City Zoo and Botanical Garden. In this position, Dr. Snyder manages wildlife conservation partnerships locally and globally, guides education programs to inspire conservation actions, leads animal wellbeing and sustainability initiatives, and conducts research on animal behavior. It is safe to say Dr. Snyder is a very educated and strong leader, and her message today reflected that. Dr. Snyder talked about advocacy and the different areas we can advocate for. She taught delegates that they can speak up for education through public awareness, campaigns, and systems using position statements. She also taught delegates how to advocate for legislation and use evidence to support advocacy. At the legislative level, she talked about helping pass a big cat public safety act and how petitions can truly make a difference in our communities. She also gave delegates some heartfelt advice about how to go on with life. She talked about following your bliss and finding something that makes you happy, not stopping for anyone who doubts you. Rise above what you believe your limits are and always advocate for yourself. Advocacy starts with yourself. Sticking up for yourself and fighting for your opportunities and passions are what can lead to happiness and making dreams a reality. Once you advocate for yourself, advocate for others. Stand up for them when they don't have a voice, or are too scared to have a voice, or for those who don't have a voice. The lesson of advocacy is a strong lesson Dr. Snyder has left these amazing delegates with.

**Giant Steps, a poem**  
by Lilli Moore, Green City

The giant step that no one takes  
A simple one that isolates  
For your world will never be the same  
A view that isn't somber again

And when you think you're finally done  
Your family smiles and waves for fun  
The phone will ring, and you will frown  
For the boss will say you need to head  
down

Traveling countries to fight for rights  
A tear that falls for every flight  
And when you think you're done, once  
more  
Fear will travel home to your family's  
door

But in the end, for every loss  
The savior who lies upon the cross  
Will have your back; he always has  
For you will return no longer sad

*A poem inspired by  
Sgt. Major Melissa Ritter*

# THE DAILIES!

## Empowered By Our Outfits

by Adyson Pfleider, Bonham City, and Zoye Gossen, Keene City

Today, the second day of Girls State 2026, we celebrated Memorial Day and honored the brave men and women who have given up their lives for our country. This momentous occasion has inspired a few notable fashion statements from our young leaders. The red, white, and blue colors were displayed proudly and gracefully in many outfits. We saw these colors flaunted in dresses, blazers, shoes, and so much more! Although fashion may seem like a minor detail in the grand scheme of things, it is a welcome representation of respect and enthusiasm for our country. We wear our country's colors with pride! We are so excited to see how these young women empower us further through the upcoming days of Girls State!

Today's featured outfit was worn by Georgia Nelson from Keene City. She wore a large, red, gingham print dress with blue embroidered eyelet around the sleeves and bottom hem. She paired blue heels with her stunning look. Georgia was feeling very empowered today by representing the amazing Red, White, and Blue. This was just one of the many fabulous Memorial Day looks of Girls State!



Hey, guys!

We're Braylee and Macy, and we'll keep you updated on the weather... even though Oklahoma can't make up its mind.

One minute it's 88 degrees (F), the next it's 68, and everybody's carrying jackets and shorts at the same time. The forecast for Tuesday, May 26<sup>th</sup>, is: dress for summer, winter, emotional damage (and make sure it's business casual)! Back to you guys.

## Weather Or Not

by Macy Brown, Smith City  
and Braylee Gramer, O'Leary

**Poppy Ceremony,**  
Evalyn Wolfe, Demke  
City



*In Flanders Fields* is a World War I poem written Lieutenant-Colonel John McCrae that is meant to honor fallen soldiers.

Our speakers for the ceremony include Sgt. Major Melissa Ritter, who enlisted in the Oklahoma Army National Guard as a radio communications specialist in the 45th Rear Operations Center in 1999. She served six years in a traditional capacity and volunteered for two overseas training missions. Something inspirational that a delegate took and shared from her speech, “I appreciated when Sgt. Major Ritter spoke about her personal journey with leadership, encouraging others to stand up for themselves and reminding everyone that if they do not feel welcome at a table, they should create their own and pursue it with passion and determination.”

Our second speaker, Staff Sgt. Kaitlyn Remington, enlisted in the Oklahoma Army National Guard as a combat medic in 2015. She has served as a medic in Medical Detachments for the state of Oklahoma, as a squad leader in the 700th Brigade Support Battalion. One delegate shared her thoughts, saying, “I thought the most inspiring thing Staff Sgt. Remington spoke about was how something as cruel as cancer created a lifelong passion within her to help everyone she can.”

For many girls attending, the ceremony was one of the most meaningful experiences of Girls State yet. Standing beside one another, they were reminded that leadership is not only about holding positions or speaking loudly, but also about honoring the past and carrying forward the values of courage, service, and patriotism. The poppy itself symbolizes remembrance and hope, leaving a lasting impression on everyone present.



Artwork by Cora Harvey, Chisolm City

# The Adventures of the Apple

by KatyAnn Fuerst, Engstrom City

Here at Oklahoma Girls State, there's been a catastrophic discovery. Engstrom City's beloved Red Apple (which may or may not be the center of the CORE) has been kidnapped! The once active Instagram has gone silent, an amber alert has been posted, and Engstrom City members are under investigation / launching investigations to bring the Apple home safe and sound. If you know anything, let us know! Appleina, if you're out there, we miss you.



## AMBER ALERT



### MISSING THE APPLE



**MISSING:**

# THE APPLE

**DESCRIPTION:** Red delicious  
**SIZE:** Approximately 3 inches in diameter  
**WEIGHT:** Approximately 6 ounces  
**LAST SEEN:** May 25, 2026  
**LAST SEEN LOCATION:** Engstrom's Table

IF YOU HAVE ANY INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT

**Dm @theapple 2026 on instagram**