

GEMC

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Georgia[®]

MAGAZINE



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Why should you apply to go on the 2019 Washington Youth Tour?

See the next two pages!

2019 tentative itinerary

- **June 13:** Kickoff banquet, Atlanta
- **June 14:** Team-building activities; flight to Washington, D.C.

Dates TBD for the following activities

- Tour and lunch at Mount Vernon; dinner at Union Station; evening guided tour of memorials, including World War II, Martin Luther King Jr., Franklin D. Roosevelt and Thomas Jefferson; photo op at White House
 - Guided tour of Lincoln, Korean War and Vietnam Veterans memorials; guided tour of Arlington National Cemetery; lunch at the Kennedy Center; dinner performance of "Grease" at Toby's Dinner Theatre in Columbia, Md.
 - All-states assembly; tour Smithsonian Institution museums; U.S. Archives; dinner in Old Town Alexandria, Va.; cruise on Potomac River
 - Tour Supreme Court, Newseum and Washington National Cathedral; Sunset Parade at U.S. Marine Corps War Memorial (Iwo Jima statue)
 - Meet with Georgia's congressional delegation; tour U.S. Capitol and visit House and Senate galleries; all-states farewell event
 - **June 20:** Return flight to Atlanta
- Note: Itinerary subject to change*

Contact your electric cooperative for information about the Washington Youth Tour!

Washington Youth Tour delegates wear Georgia Grown pride on their sleeves

The term "Georgia Grown" usually brings to mind something edible, perhaps peanuts, peaches or pecans. But it also refers to apparel, including Georgia Grown T-shirts, which were highly visible in the nation's capital last June during the annual Washington Youth Tour (WYT).

"We thought it would be special for our students to not just wear a shirt with our Georgia logo on it but to actually have that shirt be a product made of Georgia cotton—'grown and sewn' in Georgia and printed in Georgia too," says Georgia EMC's Gale Cutler, senior WYT director. Delegates on the 2019 Washington Youth Tour will wear the shirts as well, Cutler adds.

The state's more than 100 delegates wear the Georgia Grown shirts on the day of the all-states gathering, when students representing electric cooperatives from across the country have an opportunity to exchange views and pins and learn about one another. Other states' delegates also wear their state shirts that day.

Under the Georgia Grown logo on the sleeve is the phrase "Our dirt grew this shirt." The cotton for the shirts is grown in South Georgia and ginned at Osceola Cotton Co. in Irwin County. The finished product is produced at Platinum Sportswear's plant in Wilkes County.

Agriculture Commissioner Gary Black sees the shirts as an avenue to get out the message about Georgia agriculture. "It's far more than a one-shot promotion," he says. "I firmly believe it's a business opportunity."

Versions of the shirts are available for sale at the Georgia Grown store on georgiagrown.com. Georgia Grown, a marketing and economic development program of the Georgia Department of Agriculture, partnered with local screen printers, including the Georgia Industries for the Blind, to complete the design process.



Sporting their Georgia Grown shirts for a cruise on the Potomac River during the 2018 Washington Youth Tour are, from left, delegates Anna Handley (Carroll EMC), Adam Bellow (Ocmulgee EMC) and Elle Jacobsson (Coastal Electric Cooperative).

BYRON MCCOMBS

BYRON MCCOMBS



BYRON MCCOMBS

10 REASONS

TO APPLY FOR THE WASHINGTON YOUTH TOUR

You could stay home this summer, or you could kick it off with a seven-day trip to Washington, D.C., with more than 100 peers who quickly become close friends. On the Washington Youth Tour, you'll laugh until your face hurts, sing songs on a tour bus, crane your neck to look at tall buildings, stand humbled by national memorials and be inspired by leaders. You'll love it so much that you'll cry when it ends. Need more persuading? **Check out these 10 reasons to apply!**

1 You'll get to travel.

You visit the nation's capital and leave your summer job, siblings and routine behind for a week. (For some delegates, the Washington Youth Tour is the first time they've flown.)



CHELLIE PHILLIPS

2 You'll go on a classic American adventure.



BYRON MCCOMBS

The whirlwind week in Washington, D.C., is full of stops at iconic locations, such as the White House.

3 You'll make new friends.



BYRON MCCOMBS

More than 100 Georgia delegates begin the week as strangers. By the end of the tour, they have developed close bonds that can last a lifetime.

4 You'll learn a lot.

You are surrounded by venues that highlight science, art, history, space, American culture and so much more. Plus, meeting people with diverse backgrounds helps you learn something about them—and yourself.

BETH McMILLAN



5 YOU can make your VOICE heard.



DANIEL PECK STUDIO

You spend a day on Capitol Hill, meet your elected officials and get a chance to discuss issues important back home.

6 You'll practice teamwork and gain leadership experience.

Being around a group of driven peers motivates you to develop your capabilities even further. One student from each state is elected by his or her peers to the Youth Leadership Council and returns to Washington, D.C., in July for a leadership workshop.



ERIN COOK

7 You'll connect with opportunity.

You get plugged in to the electric cooperative community and are in a great position to learn about scholarships, internships and jobs offered through this network.

8 You'll take time to reflect.

Stops at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial wall, World War II Memorial, Korean War Veterans Memorial, Arlington National Cemetery and other sites offer an opportunity to acknowledge the sacrifices made for freedom.



BETH McMILLAN

9 You can put it on your resume.

When you apply for college or a job, Youth Tour can help you stand out. Experiences on the trip can shape your college application, essays and career path. "It opens *so many* doors in the future," one former delegate says.



DANIEL PECK STUDIO

10 It's fun!



KATHRYN CLAXTON



With Hayden Johnson, right, in this 2016 family photo are, from left, sister Taylor, father Kyle, brother Carson and mother Kay.

Former WYT delegate's gift keeps on giving



During the 2014 Washington Youth Tour, Hayden Johnson, left, poses with Flint Energies delegate Sarah Wilcox with the Capitol as a backdrop.



It's not uncommon to hear of Washington Youth Tour alumni who go on to lead lives of service and sacrifice. Hayden Johnson, a 2014 delegate from Marietta-based Cobb Electric Membership Corp. (EMC), took it to a new level.

On June 19, 2015—the Friday before Father's Day—Johnson donated a kidney to her father, Kyle, who had been on dialysis for five years and on a kidney transplant list just as long. By that time, she says, “multiple family members and close friends tested to be his kidney donor, but none made it very far through the testing process.”

A month before she turned 18 (the minimum age to be a donor), Johnson began the long, arduous process of testing to see if she was a match.

“It starts with a blood test, and before that day I had said that never in my life did I want to have any surgery or even get blood drawn,” she recalls. “Funny to look back at that now, and it is such a testament to the Lord’s grace and power.”

Part of the testing included a two-day stay at Piedmont Hospital in Atlanta, where Johnson met with a nephrologist, surgeon and living-donor coordinator. It also involved a session with a psychiatrist to see if she was emotionally prepared for the transplant.

Johnson says when she told her parents she wanted to be tested, “they were shocked, to say the least”—especially considering her aversion to pain. “But I explained that God had placed this on my heart and I had been thinking and praying over it for a while, and so I finally got their permission. However, they made sure that I knew I could back out at any point.”

Once Kyle Johnson received his daughter’s kidney, it started working immediately. “Since then, his creatinine numbers [a measure of kidney function] have been great,” she says. “We are very thankful.”

Hayden Johnson’s body adapted well to having only one kidney, and she is in excellent health. Running was one activity she has curtailed since the surgery.

“The recovery process was definitely long and hard and caused some muscle atrophy, and I just didn’t enjoy running as much after that,” she says. “I still run occasionally, but I have found other ways to stay active, like yoga and hiking.”

A senior at Anderson University in South Carolina, Johnson is on track to graduate in May with bachelor’s degrees in communication and theater. She is interested in a career in social media management, arts marketing or corporate communications.

Johnson and her family do something special every year to mark the transplant anniversary.

“The first year, we went on a mini-vacation to Barnsley Gardens in Adairsville and celebrated with a nice dinner,” she says. “The second year I wasn’t living in Georgia, so my parents sent me an Edible Arrangement at work. In 2018, I went out to dinner in Atlanta with my parents a couple weeks before and also had a daddy-daughter dinner date on the actual day. We also occasionally do small gifts, so it really is like another holiday for us.”

Johnson calls her time on the 2014 Washington Youth Tour “a truly unforgettable week” and says she’s grateful for the opportunity to represent both Cobb EMC and Georgia. “I’ve seen God use that experience and turn it into two internships [at Cobb EMC and Georgia EMC], multiple scholarships, freelance work, countless learning opportunities, a greater appreciation for EMCs and the opportunity to meet some wonderful friends and role models.”