



ABOVE: Destination Imagination Team Cool members pictured from left: Gideon Storkson, Carter Covin, Jozie Taylor, Samuel Payne, Faith Rogers and Maddie Mezzell. BELOW: During a presentation at Lindale Rotary, Gideon describes the load-bearing structure that Team Cool has invented using only glue, fishing line and wood. It looks like a lightweight but can support more than 400 pounds.



No Suggestions, Please!

There are six seventh-graders in Lindale who have some problems that need solving, but they'll do it themselves, please and thank you very much. They'll also do it with showmanship and hopefully a lot of tension. Yep, tension.

That part needs explaining: These teens call themselves Team Cool, and tension is an admirable quality to display as they compete in Destination Imagination challenges that emphasize science, technology, engineering and math skills.

Maddie Mezzell explains, "Destination Imagination was a huge program in Grapevine, and when we moved here [to Lindale] there wasn't a team, so we decided to start one." The result was Team Cool, made up of Lindale Junior High students Carter Covin, Samuel Payne, Faith Rogers, Gideon Storkson, Jozie Taylor and Mezzell.

DI is a global, volunteer-led organization with the purpose of inspiring students as innovators and leaders. Since 1982, DI has been hosting challenge-based competitions that spur students to think collaboratively and creatively to solve problems. To compete, student teams select one of seven challenges and work together to develop solutions that they will present at tournaments. The tournament winners advance to compete in state and national tournaments with the goal of advancing to compete in the Global Finals—which DI calls "the world's largest celebration of creativity."

Annually, there are more than 200,000 participants that through the years have hailed from 48 states and 30 countries. The kids compete at five levels: early learning, elementary grades, middle school, high school and college. This is the fourth year Team Cool has participated together (adding Covin this year).

They have adult supervision in the form of team managers, parents Sam Mezzell and Nathan Payne. But Payne says, "All of the designs and solutions to the challenges must come 100 percent from the kids." In fact, volunteer team managers must sign a code of conduct that stipulates that they will not offer suggestions for solutions to any of the challenges.

Payne says sometimes this is a hard commitment to honor when he watches the kids work through a challenge, but it's more rewarding to watch them work through their challenges on their own and achieve their own successes through trial and error. Although Payne or anyone else cannot give suggestions on a project, the kids can ask anyone to teach them general skills. For example, Payne has taught them how to safely use a radial arm saw to cut wood at an angle and how to use clamps to get a strong glue joint between two pieces of wood—but only after they asked to learn.

To enter the competition, DI teams choose to compete in

one of six categories: Technical, Scientific, Structural, Fine Arts, Improvisational or Service Learning. Team Cool selected the structural challenge called "The Tension Builds." For this challenge, they were required to build a structure using only



Jozie Taylor, Carter Covin and Maddie Mezzell animatedly act out their skit in front of the backdrop created by Team Cool.

three items: monofilament fishing line, wood and glue. At the competition, this structure is tested to see how much weight it can bear before breaking. The more weight it can hold, the more points it earns. The team also composed a skit with props to perform at the competition. The skit was required to incorporate their structure, and the story line needed to have a conflict, or tension, that got resolved.

To make the most of their varied talents, Team Cool put three members to work on the technical structure design, while the other three worked on the creative skit. Each of these groups met separately to work on their projects and then came together periodically to practice.

Of their strategy, Rogers says, "Everybody has their own way of working, and then we get to combine them." That collaborative attitude and all of Team Cool's practice seems to have paid off, with the group advancing from regionals to state competition. At state, they placed fourth against 22 other teams. This ranking earned Team Cool the right to compete at the global event this summer in Knoxville, Tennessee.

In talking about the creative process, Mezzell says they learned a time-tested technique from her grandfather, a professional artist, for enlarging a graphic for the skit's backdrop. "We used a grid to draw and enlarge our graphics to scale." She



Giddeon Storkson, Samuel Payne, Jozie Taylor, Faith Rogers, Carter Covin and Maddie Mezzell.

also says, “He also taught us how to put in shadows to make it look more realistic.” For the structural part, Storkson says, they have been meeting at least once and sometimes twice a week to work on their project. He also says, “We will probably be tweaking until the last minute.”

Each of the kids has something to say about how they are benefiting from their participation in DI. Covin says, “We get to do cool and creative projects, and we get to express ourselves more than at school. And I’ve learned teamwork.” Mezzell says, “We get to meet people from other countries.” Rogers likes the fact that “The team gets to build strong relationships and friendships together.” She also says, “We have learned leadership, teamwork, flexibility and creativity.” Taylor says, “It’s a good experience for us.” And Payne says, “We learn more life skills than we would in school.” Storkson, one of the group’s technical wizards, simply says, “Because it’s fun!”

At the state competition, the judges—or as DI calls them, appraisers—commented that they wanted to see “more tension” conveyed in the story line and performance of the skit. So as Team Cool prepares, they are taking that comment to heart.

Their structure made of wood, glue and fishing line weighs only 17.6 grams, but at regionals it supported 400 pounds. That number may go up for Global Finals, depending on the “tweaks,” but the team needs to be able to convey in their skit how tension is disrupting the status quo. So, they have been doing a little script editing, as well as honing their acting skills for some increased “tense” moments at the global meet.

As the team looks at their journey thus far, they all express how grateful they are to the local organizations and citizens

helping them—through donations and by supporting Team Cool at car washes, garage sales and through raffle ticket purchases. Covin sums up their feelings by saying, “None of the accomplishments would have been possible without support.”

Team Cool is anticipating the fun they will have at Global Finals in Knoxville this summer. In addition to their own presentation and watching the other teams’, they are looking forward to seeing exhibits by world-class organizations such as National Geographic, NASA and others.

They are also looking forward to another creative project—making outfits out of duct tape for themselves. These outfits will be worn at the Duct Tape Costume Ball and during an official attempt at Global Finals to set a Guinness World Record for the largest group of people wearing duct tape.

Looking forward, Team Cool is also eyeing the competition. They speculate that some of the international teams will be tough competitors. None of the kids, when questioned, wants to boast about just how well they think they will do, citing the possibility of jinxing themselves. But quietly hopeful, Taylor is willing to simply say, “I think we are going to do pretty good,” as the rest of the team nod in assent.

Above all, Team Cool is welcoming the experience and some stiff competition, and they are especially hoping to present what the judges have ordered: some very tense moments. And that would be “cool,” indeed.

The team members are co-op members, plus Dad and Team Manager Nathan Payne was a past WCEC delegate at the East Texas Rural Electric Youth Seminar, the cooperative leadership camp for teens. And Jozie Taylor is the granddaughter of WCEC Journeyman Lineman Billy Rushing.

Keep Splash Zones Safe

The danger of electrocution is always present around a pool, hot tub, spa or other wet area. Don't take chances with electricity and water.

▶ Pool and spa owners should use extreme caution when using electrical appliances, equipment or tools in the vicinity of a swimming pool. Be careful not to allow extension poles used for rescue or maintenance to come in contact with electric power lines. Don't allow any electrical equipment in the vicinity of the pool.

▶ It is not safe to use a regular "landline" telephone or to place electrically powered appliances, such as radios, fans, light fixtures, CD players or televisions, where they may accidentally fall or be pulled into a pool or spa.

▶ Keep electrical devices away from the pool unless the equipment is approved for poolside use. Approved equipment will have a third-party certification sticker affixed to the outside of the device and will be double-insulated or designed with protective devices to prevent electrical shock.

▶ Don't reach for an appliance that has fallen into the water without first unplugging it from the power source. When you are wet, don't touch an appliance with one hand while touching something metal (such as a pool ladder or rail) with your other hand. Dry off before touching any electrical equipment or appliances in the pool area.



IMAGE SOURCE: WHITE | THINKSTOCK

▶ All electrical receptacles should be 10 feet or more from the pool and should be protected by ground-fault circuit interrupters, which will interrupt the flow of electricity if the cord is accidentally cut or frayed. Regular household uninsulated extension cords should not be used on a pool deck. It's best to use only battery-powered devices near a pool.

▶ Call a qualified and licensed electrician to perform electrical repairs on pool equipment. Don't attempt to make the repairs yourself, and don't allow an unqualified pool serviceman or a friend to do any electrical work.



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We Live in a Different World

50 years ago, the Civil Rights Act paved the way for blacks in America to dream of a better life

BY LEWIS YOUNG
AS TOLD TO ASSOCIATE EDITOR TOM WIDLowski

This month marks the 50th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act, signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson. Lewis Young, 82, a Wood County Electric Cooperative director since 1981 and the board secretary/treasurer since 1998, shares his thoughts about what the Civil Rights Act meant to him. Young was born and raised in Van Zandt County and was a teacher in the Canton Independent School District for 36 years.

THE 1960S WERE TURBULENT YEARS FOR the United States, to be sure, and the civil rights movement turned countless participants into public figures—some tragic and some heroic.

However, most Americans, black and white, were merely bystanders to history. We were students, workers, parents—just regular, everyday people living regular, everyday lives in a country simmering with social change.

I was a teacher with a young family in Van Zandt County in Northeast Texas, where I grew up, when President Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act on July 2, 1964. I was far removed from the front lines of the civil rights movement, and yet I knew precisely what the activists were fighting for and how adamant the opposition was in attempting to preserve the status quo.

As a teenager, I was rebuffed in my attempts to land a job. There weren't any jobs out there for black kids, and you just accepted it.

When I joined the Army in the mid-1950s, I experienced the sting of segregation while traveling with a busload of draftees, headed to Fort Bliss in El Paso.

As a black man, I stayed in a segregated hotel. We stopped to eat in Abilene. The white men ate in the dining room, with its fine white linens. I was sent to the kitchen, where I sat on a stool. We were all serving the same country, but I lived in a different world. That's the way it was.

Later, as I was trying to start my teaching career, my first interview was set up with the county superintendent. I went to the district office, and when I walked in and explained why I was there, I was not offered a seat to wait. Then the superintendent came to the door and told me he had never hired a black person. That was the end of that. It was very degrading.

Three years later, that same district tried to hire me three years in a row.

I was instrumental in helping a rural water system get started in this area. Many times, as I tried to enlist customers, white people turned me away. They refused to drink water from lines that would serve black people.

These were the times we lived in: Blacks had their place in society, and whites tended to make sure we didn't transgress the boundaries of our place.

That changed with the Civil Rights Act. This piece of legislation affirmed that I am as good as the next person—no better, but as good. It instilled in me a sense of pride.

When I was a child, I didn't think about what it meant to be black or about racial differences. It wasn't something my parents talked a lot about. They were concerned about education more than anything else. They were determined that their children would get an education. I'm



MAKING HISTORY: President Lyndon B. Johnson signs the Civil Rights Act on July 2, 1964, as Martin Luther King Jr. and other dignitaries look on. Inset: Wood County EC Director Lewis Young

one of seven children, and we all finished high school. That was a must.

Two of us became teachers. It seemed like most black people back then had two choices—preach or teach.

I worked in an integrated school system for 30 years. I didn't see any difference in any child. I didn't see color, even though I was the only black teacher. I can count on one hand the problems I had in the classroom. I had no sense that white students or their parents had a problem with me because of my race. I had one child tell me that I was the only person to make him feel like a person. That was after I let him help me pass out papers one day. He was white.

Today, when I meet former students, we talk about the times in my classroom and share funny and heartwarming stories—not about race, but about life and fond memories.

When I think of the Civil Rights Act, I think of LBJ, who also was so instrumental in bringing electricity to the countryside. Co-ops owe a debt of gratitude for the improvements he delivered to their members' lives.

I also think about Martin Luther King Jr. and the work he did to bring about social change. He was a great man. I believe he was touched by God for this moment in history. He was one of the great leaders of that era whose life was cut short. John F. Kennedy was another. We lived through a lot of tragedies, and I guess those

We believe that all men are created equal. Yet many are denied equal treatment.

We believe that all men have certain unalienable rights. Yet many Americans do not enjoy those rights.

We believe that all men are entitled to the blessings of liberty. Yet millions are being deprived of those blessings—not because of their own failures, but because of the color of their skin ...

But it cannot continue. Our Constitution, the foundation of our Republic, forbids it. The principles of our freedom forbid it. Morality forbids it. And the law I will sign tonight forbids it.

President Lyndon B. Johnson
Excerpt from his speech before signing the Civil Rights Act, July 2, 1964

tragedies were for the betterment of mankind. I used to tell my students that great leaders don't live long.

I also give Thurgood Marshall a lot of credit for the integration of this country. He fought his battles through the courts. Before President Johnson appointed him to the Supreme Court, Marshall won perhaps the most important legal case of the century in 1954, *Brown v. Board of Education*, ending the legal separation of black

and white children in public schools.

I remember seeing Marshall in Tyler in October 1956. He was there fighting efforts by the state's attorney general to shut down the NAACP and the Legal Defense Fund. Marshall had to stay in a private home because as a black man, he couldn't stay in a hotel room.

I see the effects of the Civil Rights Act in my own family. I taught for many years and worked hard to save money. I was able to put my children through college, and when they graduated, they had no debt from student loans. They entered adulthood in a world that had changed since I got out of college. They didn't have the limited choice of "teach or preach."

My son, Reggie, is a business development manager in crop protection for DuPont. My daughter, Djuana, is the executive director of admissions at the University of Houston.

The Civil Rights Act meant opportunities for me and my children and my children's children. It's part of LBJ's legacy. Even as the debate continues about whether the Civil Rights Act has brought about enough social change or has done it fast enough, I am confident it ensures that more Americans, through persistence and determination, will continue to achieve their dreams.

Lewis Young and Clotene, his wife of 56 years, live in the Prairie Creek community, where he grew up.

Save Money with Appliance Efficiency

Home appliances account for 13 percent of the average home's utility bill. Appliance savings can have a large effect on overall energy costs.

If you are in the market for a new appliance, look for the Energy Star label. The label guarantees that the appliance uses at least 20 percent less energy than appliances that are not Energy Star-approved. The initial cost of an Energy Star product is sometimes more expensive, but in the long run you will realize savings through decreased energy bills.

Wood County Electric Cooperative and SafeElectricity.org offer the following efficiency tips for your major home appliances:

Refrigerators and Freezers

- ▶ A refrigerator's temperature should be 37 to 40 degrees. If your fridge has an attached freezer, it should be set to 5 degrees. A separate freezer should be kept at 0.
- ▶ Cover and wrap foods. Uncovered food releases moisture, which makes your refrigerator work harder.
- ▶ Regularly defrost your freezer. If you have more than a quarter of an inch of ice, it is time to defrost.



In addition to looking for the Energy Star label, you should review the EnergyGuide when buying new appliances to determine the most efficient model.

Washers and Dryers

- ▶ The biggest trick to washing clothes efficiently is to use less water and use colder water.
- ▶ Wash full loads when possible. Washing machines use about the same amount of energy regardless of load size. If you are doing a smaller load, adjust the size on the machine to use the appropriate amount of water.
- ▶ Do not waste energy by overdrying laundry. If you have a moisture-sensing option, use it.
- ▶ Use high-speed spin cycles to help remove excess water and reduce drying time.
- ▶ Use a drying rack or dry clothes on a line when possible.
- ▶ Clean the lint trap after every use and routinely clean the dryer vent to promote circulation and prevent fire hazards.

Dishwashers

- ▶ Air-dry dishes instead of using the drying cycle.
- ▶ Use the shortest cleaning cycle possible.
- ▶ If you have a newer dishwasher model that does not require prerinsing, take advantage of it.

Ovens

- ▶ Use a microwave when possible. Microwaves cook more quickly and use less energy than stovetops or ovens. Using a smaller toaster/convection oven is also a more efficient option. A smaller space to heat results in more energy saved.
- ▶ Do not frequently open the oven when it is in use. It causes warm air to escape and the temperature to decrease. Your oven has to use more energy to raise the temperature back up.



How you use your thermostat is key to energy efficiency.

Summer Energy Efficiency: Myth vs. Fact

MYTH: When I'm not home, keeping my air conditioner at a lower temperature throughout the day means it doesn't have to run harder to cool my home when I return.

FACT: To save energy, set your thermostat to a higher temperature (85 degrees is recommended) when no one is home, and lower it to 78 degrees when you return home.

MYTH: Running ceiling fans will help keep empty rooms cooler.

FACT: Ceiling fans generate a wind-chill effect, cooling people, not rooms. Just like the lights, you should turn ceiling fans off when you exit a room.

MYTH: Time of day doesn't matter when it comes to running my appliances.

FACT: Time of day does matter when running electrical loads. To avoid peak times of use and save energy, take advantage of the delay setting and run your dishwasher at night after 8 p.m.

MYTH: Bigger is always better when it comes to cooling equipment.

FACT: Too often, cooling equipment isn't sized properly and leads to higher electric bills. A unit that's too large for your home will not cool evenly and might produce higher humidity indoors.

Energy-Saving Tips for Summertime

The average home requires hundreds of dollars a year to pay for energy costs. Smart habits can lower your energy bills and help save the environment.

- ▶ Turn up your thermostat. Set your thermostat to 78 degrees when you are home and 85 degrees or off when you are away. Using ceiling or room fans allows you to set the thermostat higher because the air movement cools the room. Always take into account health considerations and be sure to drink plenty of fluids in warm weather.
- ▶ To help minimize peak loads for your electric cooperative, avoid running your appliances during peak hours, 4 to 8 p.m.
- ▶ Do your laundry efficiently by using the warm- or cold-water setting for washing your clothes. Always use cold water to rinse clothes.
- ▶ Line-dry clothes whenever you can. When you need to use the dryer, run full loads, use the moisture-sensing setting, and clean the lint trap after each use.
- ▶ Operate swimming pool filters and cleaning sweeps efficiently. Reduce the operating time of your pool filter and automatic cleaning sweep to four to five hours during off-peak time.



Using a microwave oven instead of the stove cuts cooking time and energy costs.

- ▶ Turn off appliances, lights and equipment when not in use.
- ▶ Unplug electronic devices and chargers when they aren't in use—most new electronics use electricity even when switched off. Turn computers and printers off at a power strip.
- ▶ Unplug and recycle any spare refrigerator in the garage if you don't really need it.
- ▶ Opt for a microwave. Nothing is more energy efficient for cooking than your microwave. It uses two-thirds less energy than your stove.
- ▶ Push a button to wash your dishes. It may come as a surprise to know that your dishwasher can use less water than washing dishes by hand. But remember to only wash full loads and then let dishes air-dry to save even more.
- ▶ Fill up the fridge. Having lots of food in your fridge keeps it from warming up too fast when the door is open, so your fridge doesn't have to work as hard to stay cool. The same is true for the freezer, too.



A Reminder

Our rebate program, Great Rebates, starts July 1, 2014, making it easier than ever for our members to conserve on their energy bills. If you're thinking of buying new appliances, think Energy Star-rated ones for continued savings, and Great Rebates for a \$50 credit on your bill.

But don't stop there! Get your duct-work cleaned, have an HVAC tuneup or install a little insulation, which are all good things to do to save on your energy bill. Then submit the appropriate form to earn valuable rebates in the form of bill credits. To participate in one of the 18 rebate offers is simple. Active members can earn up to \$2,000 annually in bill credits. Great Rebates is a first-come, first-served program and will run until the money is gone.

Go to WCEC.org under Member Services and select the GREAT REBATES tab for details.



**This nation will remain
the land of the free only
so long as it is the home
of the brave.**

—Elmer Davis

*Wishing all a safe
and meaningful
Independence Day.*