

January 22, 2021

Kyle Thaller

Sir: I was just informed that an article was written about me. Please see the following as well as the link below. Thanks

Kyle Thaller

https://www.pwcs.edu/news/2020-21_news/putting_world_perspective_on_civil_service

Putting world perspective on civil service

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Making a real difference: Patriot High School senior Kyle Thaller assists South Sudan with government development and peace-keeping efforts, and an important health initiative
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Despite the challenges the year presented, Kyle Thaller, a senior at Patriot High School, made the most of 2020. Early in 2020, he served as a U.S. Senate Page on Capitol Hill for Senator Mark Warner. Afterward, he and other former Senate pages completed an impressive project, assisting the minister of federal affairs of the Republic of South Sudan in promoting a federal

government system and developing a new constitution with a goal of mitigating lethal violence in the country. In addition, Kyle was recently honored as the Patriot High nominee for the Harry F. Byrd Leadership Award. Only one nominee is selected per high school who will compete in their school's congressional district.

“Kyle has been doing work in South Sudan since visiting Juba last summer [2019] where he worked to save the lives of children with Type-1 Diabetes,” said Kyle's father, Dr. Mark Thaller. “Since then, Kyle, also a Type-1 Diabetic (T1D), and his organization, Kyle's Campaigns for Change (KCC), have facilitated over \$1M of market-value supplies for T1D children, including insulin. KCC is currently providing the entirety of financial support for the diabetes clinics at Gurei and Malakia in Juba, South Sudan. Kyle's source of funds to do this are from his own earnings as a U.S. Senate Page working at the U.S. Senate this past spring-2020.”

Leveraging his page experience and the Senate page talent pool, Kyle explored potential projects that could make a difference. Thanks to his work in South Sudan, he had an established relationship with South Sudan's minister of federal affairs and a vested interest in supporting the country in need. He brought in fellow pages from across the country and both sides of the Senate, who, from their recent semester working full time on the U.S. Senate Floor, offered a unique perspective on government and legislation and, like Kyle, are driven to positively impact world affairs. Kyle's efforts resulted in an important project never done before in the 190-year history of this program.

With an agreement from the South Sudan government to carry out the project, the group looked to doing whatever possible to help the minister of federal affairs alleviate conflict, violence, and civil war in the country. Via a video conference, the Honorable Losuba Ludoru Wongo Upele, minister of federal affairs, spoke with the former pages about his own goal to implement federalism as the foundational theme for government. Upele asked the pages for ideas that best describe how federalism concepts may apply to South Sudan. After research, their top suggestions, which included using “domestic ambassadors” to work between federal, state, and local governments, creating a balance of power through multiple branches of government, holding popular elections, and having a representative government that includes women, were consolidated and organized into a 110-page report and presentation.

While the pandemic prevented the group trip to South Sudan planned for August, the results were presented via Zoom to the minister, and to South Sudan's first vice president, and other ministers and dignitaries from the country, as well as viewers from other countries across the globe, and representatives from some U.S. Senator's offices. After the students' presentation, the minister acknowledged the challenges his country faces; but he stressed that their great diversity in ethnicity and cultures also define South Sudan's potential for greatness.

Upele said, “It is also important to let you Senate pages know that the minister of federal affairs is one of the new ministries of the revitalized transitional government... This ministry has a very important function, which is to promote participation of the people in the governance affairs and avail opportunities for the government institutions, both at the national and the state level, to work together harmoniously and also to complement each other... I'm so happy with the presentations that each one of you have presented today. This will... motivate the people in order

to reach the level where we enshrine these issues that you have raised into the constitution of the Republic of South Sudan and then to transition this country into a federal government system. I thank all the pages, and in particular Kyle, for organizing us to participate in this Zoom conference. I want to say that you are, already, the ambassadors of South Sudan, for wanting peace, and unity, and prosperity for this country.”

Kyle recently returned from five weeks in South Sudan and Sudan with his dad, where he was able to check up on the diabetic clinics he supports, including a new one in Hasaheesa (near Khartoum), Sudan, and to present the South Sudan Senate Page federalism project in-person to the first vice president of South Sudan.

“I attended Patriot High School online during my entire time there,” said Kyle. “It was challenging, I must admit, since I had meetings all day, and then attended school until nearly midnight each night. The conditions in South Sudan were very tough. Very few roads are paved. I was able to go to a local high school for a full day in Kator, a borough of Juba, South Sudan. It was an enlightening experience. They had a wrecked-up chalkboard, no power, no light, no calculators (only slide rules) and no running water. Yet, some of the classes I attended included European history, calculus, and accounting. Overall, the trip was an incredible adventure that I will never forget.”