

# Comal Independent School District

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **CHS JROTC students build unity at Newk's**

It's hard to think of a better way to discover leadership qualities in a student than asking them to jump from 50 feet in the air.

Finding out exactly what roles his Canyon High JROTC students fit into is the reason CHS instructor Kevin Cregier has taken his cadets to the Newcombe Tennis Ranch in New Braunfels for the last 10 years.



CHS students weren't practicing their serves or backhands to perhaps one day become Wimbledon champions on the tennis court, but instead had to overcome obstacles and fear factors on Newcombe Ranch's many ropes courses.

"This is truly a great place for our seniors to practice their leadership skills," Cregier said. "They use the type of communication that is necessary here in everything they do in and out of the classroom as JROTC cadets."

CHS students participated in multiple challenge ropes courses and in a maze rope course where the only way out is to make logical team decisions while trusting your classmates.

“This is always a great trip for us,” said CHS senior Julisa Sanchez. “You really get motivated when you face the challenges the ropes courses present.”

One of the most demanding experiences CHS students faced at Newcombe Ranch was the aptly named “screamer” in which they jumped from 50 feet in the air and slid down a zip line.

Trained Newcombe Ranch staff closely supervised each drill and students had safety harnesses on at all times.

“This is very important for our new cadets, because we get to see who has physical strengths, who might be more of a follower and who might turn into a leader,” Cregier said. “This is the first time all of our classes are together and by the time they leave here they are truly a team.”

CHS freshman Abby Dunkin said it was great to get to know everyone in the JROTC program better.

“This was a great way to build trust in one another,” Dunkin said. “Communication is key at a place like this.”

Sanchez said she’s seen fellow JROTC students gain confidence at the Newcombe Ranch from year to year.

“Last year, one of our cadets wasn’t able to finish one of the high ropes courses,” Sanchez said. “This year she was able to complete it, and we were all rooting for her. That’s what this place is all about, giving a person a chance to overcome their fears, build self-esteem, and trust in their fellow cadets.”

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IN PHOTOS: Canyon High sophomore JROTC student Miranda Padilla gets a little encouragement from assistant ropes course director Vicky LaBonte before jumping off the “screamer” zip line at the Newcome Ranch.

Canyon High sophomore Daniel Lang shows he has no fear as he hangs upside down high in the air on one of the many ropes courses at the Newcombe Ranch.

