

## Strope selected as OC-ADCAT Student of the Month

By: Neal A. Johnson | Source: Unterrified Democrat

Fatima senior Cody Strope is a two-time state wrestling runner-up and took third. He's eyeing a return to the state championships and winning a title this season.

Staying away from drugs and alcohol and his quiet but strong leadership led to his selection as the Osage County Anti-Drug Community Action Team (OC-ADCAT) Student of the Month for January.

As the last in the long line of Comets wrestling brothers — Kurt, Corey, Aaron, Ryan, and Jason — Cody has looked up to them and is driven to succeed.

"They pushed me to be a good wrestler," Cody said. "I kind of wanted to do better than them."

Cody added that his brothers echoed the lessons learned from their parents, Mike and Irene. "They helped me and made sure I wasn't doing anything that would hurt me," he said.

Chemistry teacher Kurt Strope nominated his youngest brother for his leadership, noting Cody has been a team captain of the wrestling team since he was a sophomore.

"Cody took on leading those guys and being a good role model for them," Kurt said. "He takes on that same role, I think, within the school building, being a good role model. He does the right thing, staying away from drugs and not going out and partying or things like that. I think that's a good influence and something the kids here at school can look up to and learn from."

Biology teacher and former wrestling coach Marc Bridges agreed. "Cody's a good kid, student, and leader around the school," he said, adding his nomination of the senior. "He leads by example and doesn't get into trouble. Cody doesn't use drugs or alcohol. Cody has things that are important to him, like wrestling and school, and he doesn't let those other things distract him. And I think he's an excellent example for other students. Cody is a good student, makes good grades, and takes his schoolwork very seriously. Everybody knows Cody for his wrestling, but he's just as serious in the classroom.

"He's also the best-looking Strope," Bridges quippily added.

High School Principal Matt Verslues said Strope is a great ambassador at Fatima. "He's not a kid that will try to find a shortcut when nobody's looking. Teachers know they can rely on Cody to follow through on something he's agreed to do, and he doesn't need a lot of reminders because he's self-motivated. He wants to exceed expectations. It's not just finding the quick, easy way out. Cody's focus is to go above and beyond. He represents Fatima in a positive way." Cody has a relatively small circle of close friends who understand how he feels about drugs and alcohol. "We don't talk about it much, but they know," he said.

Cody avoids feeling pressured to participate by staying home and not attending parties. "You just say no and try your best to keep away from it," he added, advising against using drugs and alcohol, noting it could lead to addiction

and a negative impact. "That stuff can completely change your life forever."

As the oldest sibling, Coach Strobe has watched all his brothers come through Fatima and the wrestling program. "It's very rewarding to look back to see your brother doing the right things," he said. "That's awesome. Sometimes, you don't get that; you can tell someone as much as you want, but sometimes they don't follow through. Cody follows through, and that's outstanding."

With a 3.38 GPA, Cody participates in the A+ Program and said he'll probably attend State Tech to study HVAC.

"No matter what he chooses to pursue, he will be successful," said Coach Strobe.

OC-ADCAT Executive Director Lorie Winslow will present Strobe with a certificate, and he will be eligible to apply for the annual Student of the Month Scholarship.

"I am so excited to showcase our seniors who have chosen to live a drug- and alcohol-free life," said OC-ADCAT Education Committee Chairperson Charlotte Bellsmith. "I know this is not an easy thing to do. The pressure on our teens to drink while still underage is still pretty severe."

For more information about OC-ADCAT, visit <https://www.ocadcat.org>.