



NEW

Summer 2018

HORIZONS

FFANEWHORIZONS.ORG

**Students in
Connecticut
plunge into
aquaculture**

**From N.Y.
to Nepal**

How one member
combined her
passions and
developed a
new worldview

A, B, Seas

**SMARTPHONES
GET SMARTER**

**5 WAYS THE
DEVICES ARE
SHAPING AG**

LIVING TO SERVE GRANTS

How will your chapter make a difference in your community?



Important 2018 Dates

Yearlong: \$3,000 - Application due June 15.

Semester-long: \$1,200 - Fall semester application due Sept. 1.

Day of Service Mini-Grant: \$400 - Rolling application due on the last day of every month.

Ideas to Get You Started:



COMMUNITY SAFETY

Need: Fire Safety

One Day: Partner with firefighters to hold a fire safety day with elementary students.

One Semester or One Year: Work with local farmers and first responders to map farms for hazardous and flammable materials.



HUNGER, HEALTH + NUTRITION

Need: Healthy Living

One Day: Hold a "Get Active Day," encouraging everyone in your community to engage in physical activity.

One Semester or One Year: Plant a garden and create a cookbook for healthy microwavable recipes using the produce.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Need: Accessibility

One Day: Help build a ramp at a wheelchair-enabled individual's home.

One Semester or One Year: Conduct an accessibility audit of the community and assist in finding solutions to areas of concern.



ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

Need: Water Quality

One Day: Organize a waterway cleanup to remove trash and debris from local rivers and streams.

One Semester or One Year: Plant vegetative buffer strips near polluted waterways to prevent runoff and improve water quality.

For more information, visit
FFA.org/LivingToServe.

YOUR PLACE IN HISTORY

The FFA story comprises 653,359 individual student member stories, 344,239 alumni and supporters stories, and the stories of those of us who have otherwise been impacted by the organization. It's a story of belonging, friendship, fun and finding your way in the world.

Here's who you are as a collective membership:

- **Residents of the U.S., Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands**
- **65% White**
- **11.5% Hispanic/Latino**
- **3.9% Black**
- **1.7% American Indian**
- **1.01% Asian, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander**
- **3.35% two or more races**
- **55% male, 45% female**

You are geographically diverse, ethnically diverse, gender diverse – and so much more. And your FFA stories contribute to something much bigger.

Diversity and inclusiveness aren't new for FFA. In fact, they've been a pursuit since the early 1930s. A piece of that history is on display at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History as part of its American Enterprise exhibition. There, member Louise Reynnells'

white "Chapter Sweetheart" jacket helps tell the story of teenage life, high school and how FFA changed with the times. "Our chapter probably had more boys overall, so you could tell it was still a newer thing," Reynnells says in "Historymaker," page 20, of the era when women became full FFA members. "But in FFA, we never felt like we were different or that we couldn't do a project just because we were girls. We were lucky."

We are all fortunate to be involved with an organization that strives to build bridges.

In this issue, you'll also find articles about a member's international impact, how smartphones continue to shape agriculture, summer job opportunities in national parks, a Q&A with a Pulitzer prizewinning former member and more.

Enjoy, and have a happy summer!



Justin Davey
Editor, *FFA New Horizons*
ffanewhorizons@meredith.com



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THE FFA VISION

Students whose lives are impacted by FFA and agricultural education will achieve academic and personal growth, strengthen American agriculture and provide leadership to build healthy local communities, a strong nation and a sustainable world.

THE FFA MISSION

FFA makes a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education.

THE AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION MISSION

Agricultural education prepares students for successful careers and a lifetime of informed choices in the global agriculture, food, fiber and natural resource systems.

DIVERSITY STATEMENT

The National FFA Organization affirms its belief in the value of all human beings and seeks diversity in its membership, leadership and staff as an equal opportunity employer.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION STATEMENT

The National FFA Organization is a resource and support organization that does not select, control or supervise state association, local chapter or individual member activities. Educational materials are developed by FFA in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Education as a service to state and local agricultural education agencies.

THE *feed*

Quiz: WE ARE FFA

Test your knowledge of these historic milestones that demonstrate a longstanding commitment to diversity and inclusion.

1. What year did the Future Farmers of America change its name to the National FFA Organization to reflect diversity in agriculture?
 - A. 1988
 - B. 1969
 - C. 1965
 - D. 2003
 - E. 1994
2. When did FFA open membership to include women?
3. What year did FFA merge with the New Farmers of America, a national organization for African-American young men?
4. When was Javier Moreno from Puerto Rico elected national president, becoming the first person with a native language other than English and the first Puerto Rican elected to this office?
5. When did Corey Flournoy become the first African-American to be elected national president?

**COMPLETE THE QUIZ AT
FFANEWHORIZONS.ORG/DIVERSITYQUIZ
AND VISIT FFA.ORG/WEAREFFA
TO LEARN MORE.**

#FFASTYLESQUAD

MEMBERS SHOW HOW THEY INCORPORATE FFA GEAR INTO THEIR DAILY LIVES. BROWSE THE HASHTAG ON INSTAGRAM, THEN JOIN OTHERS BY SHARING YOUR OWN FFA MERCHANDISE WITH #FFASTYLE!



jax.kenney1836

Wanna be as cool as me? Head over to @shopffa and nab one of these sweet jackets!



akj_8

There's no way I would have survived a week of speeches, pageants, schoolwork, and tennis without coffee and my @shopffa_ tumbler.



shopffa_

#FFAstylesquad member
@zachham54
is all smiles because the weekend is almost here. #FFAstyle
#fridayfeeling



CALENDAR

June 1-2:

REGION FOUR (B) ALUMNI AND SUPPORTERS REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE

Visit FFA.org/gotordc to register for a free RDC in St. Johns, Mich. Registration is open.

June 15:

LIVING TO SERVE YEAR-LONG GRANT DUE

Visit FFA.org/LivingToServe to apply for \$3,000 to support a year-long service-learning project.

July 1:

APPLICATIONS DUE FOR NATIONAL FFA ALUMNI AND SUPPORTERS AWARDS

Complete an application at FFA.org/AlumniAwards for a chance to be recognized for your outstanding achievements. There are various awards categories.

July 15:

NATIONAL BAND, CHORUS AND TALENT APPLICATION DUE

Visit FFA.org/Convention to apply for a spot on this year's national convention stage. Be sure to plan ahead – all applications require a recorded audition.

July 31:

LIVING TO SERVE DAY OF SERVICE MINI-GRANT DUE

Apply for up to \$400 to be used on community projects, such as roadside cleanup, public space landscaping and more. Visit FFA.org/LivingToServe for more information.

August 10-11:

REGION FIVE ALUMNI AND SUPPORTERS REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE

Registration opens June 18 for this RDC in Kodak, Tenn. Visit FFA.org/gotordc for more information.

DEDICATION TO EDUCATION

THE CHS FOUNDATION CONTINUES ITS LONGTIME SUPPORT OF FFA WITH A GENEROUS GRANT.

Continuing its more than 40 years of support of the National FFA Organization, the CHS Foundation recently announced a three-year, \$3.8 million commitment to the organization. The CHS Foundation is the charitable giving arm of CHS Inc., the nation's leading farmer-owned cooperative, which provides products and services such as grain marketing, fertilizer and fuel to farmers.

Since the beginning of its support, the CHS Foundation has remained committed to investing in programs that develop a new generation of agriculture leaders.

"One of the best programs that

does just that is FFA," says Nanci Lilja, CHS Foundation president. "FFA members are innovative, creative young people who are passionate about agriculture, and that's exactly what the agriculture industry needs to succeed. The CHS Foundation is really proud of our long-standing partnership with FFA."

The generous \$3.8 million grant will support career and leadership development events, proficiencies, the New Century Farmer program and teacher development through the National Teach Ag Campaign.

"To see the impact National Teach Ag has had on recruiting and retaining ag teachers and

inspiring students to pursue a career in teaching agriculture is truly inspiring," Lilja says.

"The part of the grant we are most excited about is working with the National Association of Agricultural Educators to develop an engaging platform to deliver the cooperative business model to students and teachers," Lilja adds. The "My Local Cooperative" program will educate the next generation about the benefits and opportunities of agriculture cooperatives.

"Being part of a cooperative is pretty cool, and we're excited to share that message," Lilja says.

— By Jessica Mozo



EVERY GENERATION NEEDS ITS LEADERS.

As a farmer-owned cooperative, we help lead the agricultural industry by promoting the most innovative, responsible farming practices available today. And we want to make sure that the next generation of leaders is well trained for tomorrow. That's why we proudly support youth leadership programs like FFA. It's also why we've invested in scholarships and countless land-grant university initiatives across the country. At CHS, we know every generation needs its leaders. And every potential leader needs a little help becoming one.

Visit chsinc.com/stewardship to learn more about our ongoing commitment to leadership.

AVOID THE *Summer Slump*

HERE'S HOW FFA ALUMNI AND SUPPORTERS CAN STAY CONNECTED WHEN STUDENTS ARE OUT OF SCHOOL.

1. SUMMER LEADERSHIP CONFERENCES

Thousands of FFA members take part in summer leadership events – from state FFA camps to the Washington Leadership Conference.

Contact a conference organizer to discover ways to volunteer, such as managing a registration table, providing guest speakers, or donating bags of marshmallows for evening campfires.

2. SAE PROJECTS

A successful supervised agricultural experience (SAE) program happens year-round. Reach out to your local FFA chapter to learn how to get involved. This can include offering your yard for turf grass management, buying flowers from a greenhouse sale or volunteering to visit a project and take pictures for members.

3. FAIR ACTIVITIES

The local, county or state fair can be the culmination of countless hours of hard work for FFA members. Talk to the

fair committee to find out if it needs volunteer judges, award presenters, live demonstration presenters or sponsors during the event.

4. INTERNSHIPS AND AG PLACEMENT

Not all FFA members spend their summers on the farm. If your workplace offers student internships or volunteer opportunities, connect students to agriculture through practical, hands-on experience during the summer months. These opportunities can contribute to a member's agricultural placement SAE.

5. BACK-TO-SCHOOL BASH

Summer break can fly by. Welcome FFA members back to school by planning something special. This could be showing up on the first day of school with breakfast, writing notes of encouragement or helping the local FFA advisors prepare their rooms and laboratories for the start of school.

– By Bev Flatt

Why I'm a MEMBER

FFA MEMBERS SURE ARE PROUD OF THEIR PLACE IN THE ORGANIZATION. HERE'S WHY SOME CHOSE TO DON THE BLUE JACKET.

"FFA builds people and turns them into better leaders and better people. It also gives us tools to help shape America."

– Seth Bauerle, Hiawatha FFA, Hiawatha, Kan.

"I am an FFA member because I want to make a difference in my community and to further improve the image of American agriculture in the public's eyes."

– Hannah Giddings, Sumner FFA, Sumner, Wash.

"With my dad being an ag teacher, I have been involved in FFA for as long as I can remember. Watching kids grow into young leaders and helping them find what they want to do in life is what I want to do. Being an FFA member is just the beginning of it."

– Zach DeAtley, Mowrystown FFA, Mowrystown, Ohio

Share your reason for joining at
FFANewHorizons.org/Submit-Your-Story.

FUNDING OUR *Foundation*

FFA THANKS JOHN DEERE FOR 75 YEARS OF VALUABLE SUPPORT.

Marking 75 years of FFA support in 2018, John Deere is the longest-running continuous corporate sponsor of the organization. The company made its first financial contribution to FFA in 1944, but John Deere began a friendship with FFA even before that. When FFA was founded in 1928, John Deere immediately began furnishing new FFA chapters with engraved models of the walking plow.

The chapters, “meeting once a week, meet on the sign of the plow, and that plow, incidentally, has John Deere cast into the handles,” wrote H.M. Railsback, John Deere’s director of advertising, in 1945.

Since 1944, the company has contributed more than \$13 million to the National FFA Foundation. Those gifts have supported career and leadership development events, proficiencies, state and National FFA Officer programs, and leadership training and seminars that enhance FFA members’ personal development. In 2017, John Deere awarded 139 college scholarships to FFA members, valued at more than \$278,000.

“There is a natural fit between our purpose and

commitment to those linked to the land and FFA’s commitment to preparing students for careers in agriculture through classroom education, hands-on experiential learning and premier leadership,”

says Amy Allen,

manager of corporate sponsorships for John Deere.

John Deere was the second group to start a nontraditional FFA alumni and supporters chapter.

“We are very proud of the fact that nearly 400 John Deere employees are members,” Allen says. “Their focus is primarily on supporting state FFA chapter needs in Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, Kansas and North Carolina.”

— By Jessica Mozo

Want to learn more about John Deere? Watch a Virtual Field Trip of its Waterloo, Iowa, facility on demand at [AgExplorer.com/virtual-field-trip](https://www.agexplorer.com/virtual-field-trip).



HOW TOMORROW PROVIDES

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HOW TOMORROW MOVES



NATIONAL FFA OFFICER Q&A



BEING A NATIONAL OFFICER REQUIRES CONFIDENCE. AFTER ALL, YOU MEET WITH MEMBERS FROM ACROSS THE COUNTRY, GIVE MANY PRESENTATIONS AND REPRESENT THE ENTIRE ORGANIZATION AROUND THE GLOBE. WHAT ARE YOUR TIPS FOR DEVELOPING CONFIDENCE REGARDLESS OF THE SITUATION?



Breanna Holbert



NATIONAL FFA PRESIDENT

Set goals! When I was a shy freshman, my chapter advisor and I developed a set of goals for meeting other people. For example, if I was attending a leadership conference, Mrs. Freeman would make it a priority for me to meet three people. Not just meet them, but know their name, chapter, and a fun fact or two. After the event, she would have me recite them back to her. These gradual steps helped boost my confidence.



Erica Baier



NATIONAL FFA SECRETARY

I've found that having a phrase I can hold onto helps. For me, it's "Never perfect, strive for excellence." Knowing

I'll never reach perfection has given me the confidence to go forth with the strengths and gifts I have been given. Whether meeting a group of people for the first time or giving a keynote speech, saying this phrase to myself reminds me to pursue the opportunity with clear eyes and a full heart.



Ian Bennett



SOUTHERN REGION VICE PRESIDENT

For me, confidence is all about preparation. I've never been nervous going into something that I felt fully prepared to do. Obviously, I can't be prepared for everything, and in those situations I always remind myself to slow down and think it through. A few deep breaths go a long way to boost my confidence.



Gracie Furnish



EASTERN REGION VICE PRESIDENT

I always try to take a deep breath, collect my thoughts and just do it! I can get caught up in my nerves, but recently I heard a podcast about the 5 Second Rule. If there is something I want to do, I count down from five and go for it! I also have to be true to myself and remember my purpose is serving others in all I do.



Piper Merritt



CENTRAL REGION VICE PRESIDENT

Developing confidence takes patience, consistency and time. Although we wish to become self-confident overnight, it's often the result of small things that add up to a significant change. We can start building our confidence by stepping out of our comfort zones at school, being outgoing at an FFA event or by simply making a new friend. We all can take these small steps to better raise our self-confidence, no matter the situation!



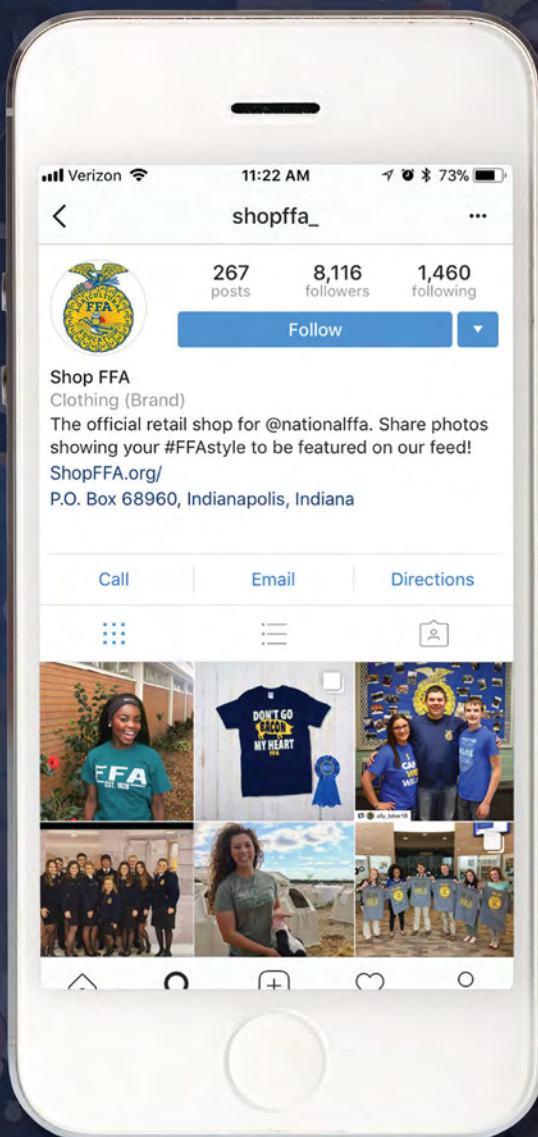
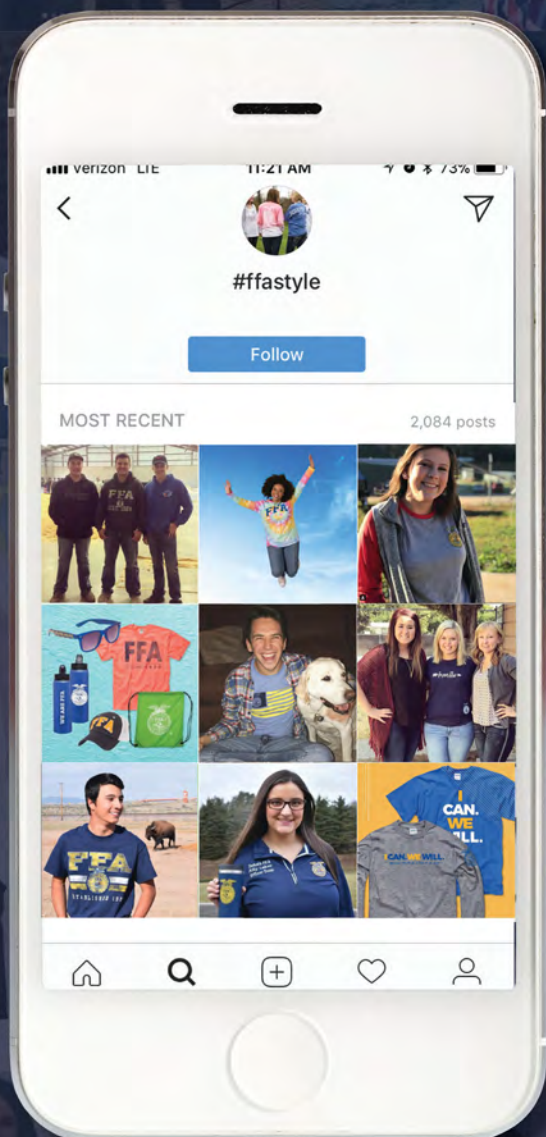
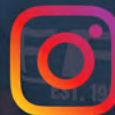
Bryce Cluff



WESTERN REGION VICE PRESIDENT

Confidence is certainly key in many situations. To help feel more comfortable in front of groups of all sizes, I tend to allow my personality to shine through in the words I say. If I'm speaking from the heart, it's hard to worry about being on stage.

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FFA MISSION: FFA makes a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education.



AG 101 SMARTPHONES

Smartphones have become the ultimate multitool. The devices expand our senses. They are a window to the world. An entertainment center. A line of communication to family and friends. A supercomputer to run a farm and business.

And smartphones keep getting smarter. This year, you likely will see devices with bigger screens, better cameras, faster charging speeds, and lower prices for some models. Face ID will undergo new development. Artificial intelligence and virtual reality will continue to evolve. Mobile apps will be refined in their ability to help you manage your business, personal life, education and career.

Here, some of the brightest minds provide an overview of the ways smartphones are shaping agriculture.

1 FARMING BEFORE THE SUN SETS

Doug Adams uses his smartphone to organize a busy life as a sixth-generation Iowa farmer, USDA-NRCS employee and father of four. He uses a suite of Google apps on his phone to keep spreadsheets on the farming operation. Other apps are used to track crops from planting through harvest, to gauge rainfall amounts and to follow the markets. Twitter enables him to share ideas with others. "With my smartphone, I'm better able to document issues in the field, look up info online and make decisions sooner," he says. "Being employed off the farm, I need to be very efficient with my scouting after work – before the sun sets."

2 ALL THAT INFO

The smartphone has transformed ag, in large part, because of all the information we can carry with us, says Jesse Vollmar, CEO of the agricultural software company, FarmLogs. "We just simply know so much more about the conditions in our fields — weather, crop health, nitrogen levels, soil type — all easily available on demand." For example, in one cool feature of the FarmLogs app, "Farmers can push a button and have access to satellite images taken of their fields just a couple of days ago," he says.



GET SMARTER



3 WHAT'S INSIDE?

Much of the agricultural utility of a smartphone is powered by its physical sensors, including its GPS, camera and accelerometer. Smartphones also contain a gyroscope, magnetometer, barometer and other sensors. To date, the GPS and camera are the most popular sensors used in ag applications, university researchers say. But developers will increasingly use other smartphone sensors in ag applications, and smartphones will communicate with sensors placed on equipment like autonomous equipment, vehicles and ag robots more and more.

4 EXCITING INNOVATIONS

Two of the most exciting innovations in smartphones are augmented reality and image recognition via artificial intelligence, says Mark Young, chief technology officer of The Climate Corporation. "Smartphone-based image recognition can enable weed, pest and disease recognition in the palm of your hand. Simply frame the subject using the smartphone's camera and the application will identify a diseased plant, weed or pest," he says. "With augmented reality (still in prototype stage), imagine viewing a field through your smartphone camera and seeing data automatically display about the season's rainfall, latest nitrogen status, field notes, etc."

5 FUTURE FOCUS

Smartphones of the future may look a lot like they do now, in part, because "that screen is a great way to get things done," says Brian David Johnson, a futurist who works in ag. "But the next smartphones will be moving past current uses and into interaction with smart things and smart environments," he says. "You will have an increased ability to talk to your smartphone and will have more voice-based interactions." Johnson expects "smart young kids coming out of schools to create start-ups that will develop many new applications for agriculture."

BY JOHN WALTER

ILLUSTRATION BY PAUL LANGE



A NEW WORLD VIEW

AFTER JOINING FFA AS A HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR, BELLA CULOTTA FOUND A PASSION FOR AGRICULTURE ON A GLOBAL LEVEL.

STORY BY JESSICA WALKER BOEHM

The phrase “better late than never” perfectly describes Isabella “Bella” Culotta’s FFA experience, which almost didn’t happen at all.

Culotta’s high school in Ithaca, N.Y., didn’t offer an FFA program, and she didn’t know much about agriculture. However, that all changed when she had the opportunity to become an FFA member during her senior year, after being accepted into the Tompkins-Seneca-Tioga (TST) Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) New

Visions in Life Sciences program at Cornell University.

Along with making the most of her short time in the organization, she made memories and connections that will likely last a lifetime and – thanks in part to FFA – is now on a path to pursue a career in global agriculture.

THE FFA JOURNEY BEGINS

In 2016, Culotta started attending courses at the TST BOCES New Visions in Life Sciences program, a full-year program for high-achieving high school seniors from nine Ithaca-area schools. The program enables participants to explore their interest

of life processes and the world around them from a biological and social perspective through both classroom and experiential learning opportunities.

The program required her to join the TST BOCES New Visions FFA Chapter, and Culotta was elected co-president by her 13 fellow chapter members.

“Bella is a great listener, which is one reason she’s such a strong leader,” says Michele Kline, agricultural sciences teacher and FFA advisor for TST BOCES New Visions in Life Sciences at Cornell University. “She is confident, well-spoken and capable of inspiring change. As co-president,



Culotta (the second woman from the right) stands with women and children in Nepal, where her team was trying to secure a grant for a solar water pump.



NEPAL

security, and I realized for the first time how important agriculture is," Culotta says.

As a result, it's no surprise she was interested in attending the World Food Prize in Des Moines, Iowa, an event that emphasizes the importance of a nutritious and sustainable food supply for all people.

FROM FFA TO ANYWHERE

With Kline's support, Culotta applied for and won an all-expenses-paid trip to the three-day Global Youth Institute hosted by the World Food Prize Foundation in the fall of 2016.

At the event, Culotta interacted with Nobel Prize and World Food Prize laureates, and exchanged views about pressing food security and agricultural issues with international ex-

perts during roundtable discussions. In addition, she met FFA members from around the U.S. and presented a paper on the theme "Feeding Innovation, Fighting Hunger" to a group of 300 attendees while wearing her blue FFA jacket. Culotta says it was a special, unifying experience that she will never forget.

"It was at the World Food Prize where I saw how impactful FFA really is, and I felt honored to wear the blue jacket and be part of this incredible community of supportive, passionate people," she says. "At the World Food Prize, I began to understand how the agriculture industry works in our country and beyond as I connected with people from all over the world. It was an amazing experience, and I left with so much motivation to learn as much as I could about agriculture."

That motivation spurred Culotta to apply for the Borlaug-Ruan International Internship, a prestigious opportunity available to students who have participated in the World Food Prize Global Youth Institute.

Bella facilitated many discussions that enabled our chapter to accomplish its tasks and goals, and she was an excellent presenter of the group."

Having been part of the Ithaca High School Model United Nations Club, Culotta had an existing interest in international policy and development, but it was FFA that opened her eyes to the world of agriculture and how the two concepts tied together.

"I saw a huge connection between international development and food

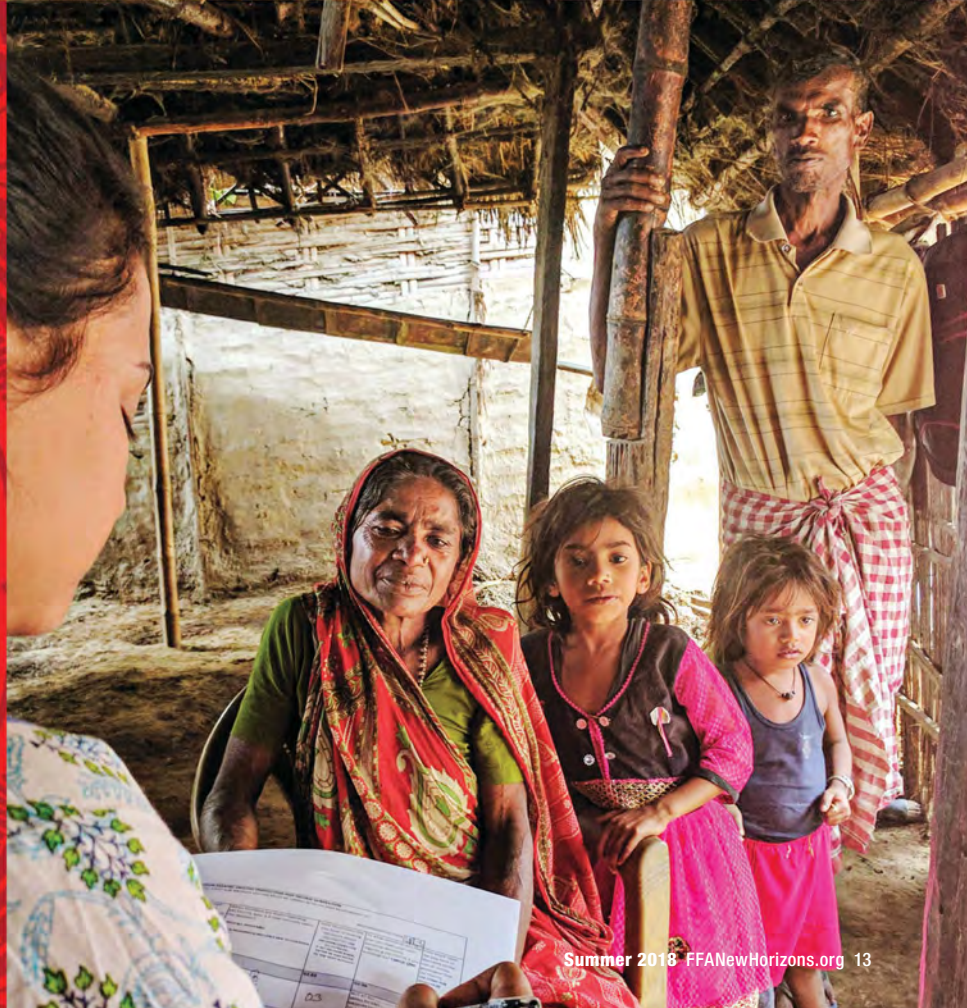


Above, left: Culotta interviews a husband and wife in the Saptari district of Nepal. Above, right: Culotta helps locals study a questionnaire that they will help researchers administer. Right: Culotta conducts research in the field with a Nepali family.

She was selected for an internship and spent eight weeks in Nepal during the summer of 2017. During her internship, Culotta worked at the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development, a regional intergovernmental learning and knowledge-sharing center in Patan. Her work focused on a solar-powered irrigation pump project designed to improve rural women's lives in the region.

After coming home from what she calls a "life-changing experience," Culotta was invited to discuss her time in Nepal at the 2017 World Food Prize as a student delegate with the New York Youth Institute Seeds for Change program.

"I encourage everyone to be open to whatever comes across his or her path, and to remain a humble and





Culotta was invited to discuss her time in Nepal at the 2017 World Food Prize in Des Moines, Iowa.

curious sponge of information,” she says. “You never know where life might take you. I never saw the World Food Prize or the Borlaug-Ruan Internship on my path, but I love how it’s all unfolded, thanks to TST BOCES New Visions in Life Sciences and FFA.”

THE FUTURE LOOKS BRIGHT

After she returns from several months abroad, which will include time working on developing farms in East African villages, Culotta plans to attend Cornell University this fall.

She is currently considering double majoring in applied economics and management, and she aspires to work as an agricultural development consultant and, eventually, teach others about the global food system while inspiring them to get involved.

“Bella wants to make a difference

in the world, and I have no doubt she will,” Kline says. “She sees that things are not equitable in many areas of society, especially when it comes to food security, and she wants to do what she can to improve the problem both domestically and globally.”

Although her time as FFA co-president has come to an end, Culotta is a member of the New York FFA Alumni Association and continues to encourage others to join FFA if they have the chance.

“Being part of FFA is a really good way to take what you know and apply it to something because it’s hands-on education, which is so valuable,” Culotta says. “Plus, you meet great people, and you have an instant bond with other FFA members who might even become lifelong friends. There are seemingly endless opportunities in FFA; you can do and see so much with the blue jacket, and that’s not something to take for granted.” •

IT'S A WIDE WORLD

If you’re looking for opportunities to see the world while learning more about ever-changing global food systems and becoming more culturally aware, consider applying for one of the organization’s global programs.

For example, there’s the annual International Leadership Seminar for State Officers (ILSSO), which is open to current and past state officers. Previous ILSSO trips have included journeys to South Africa, Taiwan and Thailand, and participants typically spend about two weeks visiting farms and agribusinesses as well as sharing in the local culture.

Another international opportunity is the National FFA Officers Global Experience that takes place each January and is available to the six national officers. In the past, the officers have traveled to Japan for 10 days to hone their leadership skills and learn about Japanese agriculture while interacting with Future Farmers of Japan members and teaching Japanese students about FFA and American agriculture. Additionally, attendees get a true taste of the country’s unique culture by staying with Japanese host families and participating in traditional Japanese events and ceremonies.

To learn more about the ILSSO and the National FFA Officers Global Experience, visit FFA.org/global. You can see snapshots of this year’s ILSSO trip by searching for the hashtag “#ILSSO18” on Twitter and Instagram.

Not eligible for the ILSSO or the National FFA Officers Global Experience? You can also work with your FFA chapter to create global travel opportunities. Consider discussing the possibility of an international agriculture trip with your chapter’s advisor, officers and alumni and supporters chapter, and, if necessary, organize a fundraising committee to garner financial support. Visit FFA.org/localengagement to see if any of the grants, retail programs or other fundraisers work for you. •

PREMIER leadership

Cooking Up *Change* **IN OUR COMMUNITIES**

Participating in The Domino's Transformation Experience helped three FFA members promote healthy eating at home.



In October, five-star FFA sponsor Domino's invited 10 students to its Ann Arbor, Mich., headquarters to participate in The Domino's Transformation Experience, a partnership program with AdVenture Capital designed to nurture the next generation of social entrepreneurs.

Domino's executives helped students develop business plans and pitch their ideas. At the end of the three-day event, students were given \$2,000 grants to implement their programs.

Three FFA members who participated in The Domino's Transformation Experience share the projects they're cooking up in their communities.

EASTON WAGONER

Easton Wagoner spends one afternoon a month leading agriculture classes for elementary school students.

"A lot of students don't know where their food comes from," he admits.

Wagoner, 17, developed the curriculum as part of his Living to Serve project. The Domino's Transformation Experience inspired the student from East Wilkes High School in Ronda, N.C., to think bigger.

"It was great to be around students who had great ideas and huge goals," he recalls.

With the grant funds, Wagoner

plans to build a school garden in the hopes that letting kids grow their own food will generate excitement about healthy eating.

The experience has also helped Wagoner envision his future.

"I plan to teach [agricultural education] as a career, and this is giving me a lot of experience," he says.

KALEB KRZYSZTON

Waumandee, Wis., might be a food desert, but Kaleb Krzyszton believes local farmers produce enough healthy foods to feed the community.

Krzyszton, 17, planned a Stone Soup event to kick off the 2018 FFA Week at Cochrane-Fountain City High School. He reached out to local farms to source ingredients that will be used to make soups for the event. Educational programming will highlight the importance of eating locally.

"My goal is to show people how we can build connections with our neighbors and stimulate the local economy," says Krzyszton.

During The Domino's Transformation Experience, Krzyszton learned about using social media to generate buzz.

"We've already posted to Facebook and Snapchat several times, and people are getting really excited about the event," he says.

ELISABETH WATKINS

When Central Catholic High School opened a new health and fitness center on its Modesto, Calif., campus, Elisabeth Watkins believed something was missing: a school garden.

"I thought that growing fresh foods could improve healthy eating at school," says Watkins.

During The Domino's Transformation Experience, Watkins, 16, learned how to pitch her idea and put together the team to make it happen.

Watkins collaborated with the school chef to choose a location for the garden and to develop a plant list. This spring, she'll help build the garden and plant vegetables for healthy cafeteria meals.

"Sometimes the kids here just eat french fries for lunch," Watkins explains. "The garden will give them healthier options. Even if they still choose french fries, they'll have a better understanding of where their food comes from."

— By Jodi Helmer

Visit [FFA.org/LivingToServe](https://www.ffa.org/LivingToServe) for details about the Living to Serve platform, then conduct similar projects in your community.

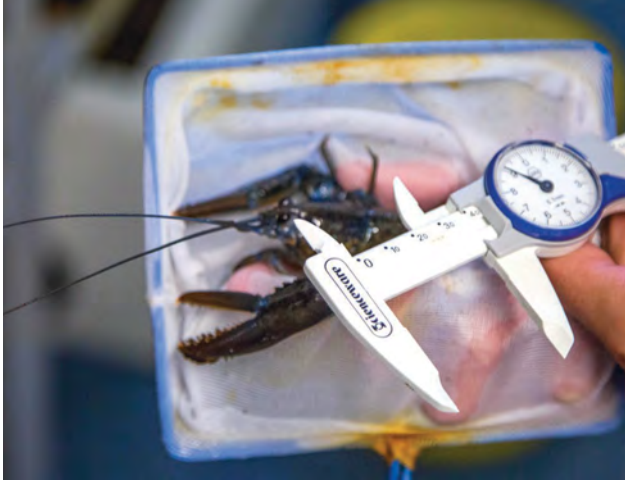


AG UNDER WATER

**This school
dives deep into
aquaculture to help
students discover
personal growth
and career
success.**

**Story by
Justin Davey**

**Photography by
David Ekstrom**



Large tanks bubble as koi do slow, meandering laps. Aquariums gurgle while lobsters peer through the glass. Vats of seaweed prepare to be processed. Elsewhere, fiberglass bends over a wooden frame and a boat hull starts to take shape. Cabinets are filled with beakers for tomorrow's experiments. Several research vessels sit at a dock outside, ready for their next venture to the Long Island Sound.

For a high school student interested in aquaculture – that is, the farming of aquatic organisms such as fish, mollusks, crustaceans and aquatic plants – this setting might sound like a dream. After all, the facility houses an aquaculture lab, a computer-assisted design lab, a boat construction lab, a ship bridge simulator and more. It appears to be a lair used by professional scientists, but these tools and others are available to scientists in training – students of the Bridgeport Regional Aquaculture Center, or Aqua, for short, in Bridgeport, Conn.

SPECIALIZED SCIENCE

At Aqua, students from school systems in the region can enhance the traditional high school curriculum with unique aquaculture classes. Students get the opportunity to study marine ecology, seafood science, biology, chemistry, physics, marine design, coastal navigation/piloting and more. It's a combination of world-class facilities, diverse coursework and great teachers that causes many students and families to make every effort to participate.

"Students come from seven school districts for two-hour blocks," says Liz Kranyik, the ag biology and seafood science teacher and FFA advisor at Aqua. "Most students really want to be here. They want experiences they won't get elsewhere, so our emphasis is to try to get them to use all of our facilities in some way."

Students share the same impression.

"I initially went to a different school for science classes, but I transferred to Aqua based on the school's reputation," says Casey O'Connor, an Aqua graduate and former Bridgeport Aquaculture FFA chapter president who now studies biochemistry at New York University. "The environment was fast-paced and hands-on. The chemistry labs have instruments often only offered in college."



Top, left: An Aqua student measures a lobster. **Top, right:** Aqua graduate Kyle Rosenfeld was a Bridgeport Aquaculture FFA member through high school. "We won our state agriscience fair one year; then we went on to place fourth nationally," he says. **Above:** Students of Aqua's seafood science course prepare algae, which they harvest on the Long Island Sound, for sale at the school's seafood market, Angie's at Aqua.



Clockwise from top left: Adjustments are made to a remotely operated vehicle. Liz Kranyik is the ag biology and seafood science teacher, and FFA advisor. Boat frames take shape in an Aqua lab. Graduate Casey O'Connor was drawn to Aqua by its fast-paced and hands-on environment. Kelp turns from brown to bright green after it is processed. Graduate Cassidy Fawcett says she enjoyed working on the water.



“In one of my classes, we went out on the boat once a week to do hands-on lab work on the water,” adds Cassidy Fawcett, who graduated from Aqua last May and also served as a Bridgeport Aquaculture FFA chapter president. She’s now studying political science and biology at Salve Regina University in Newport, R.I.

One of the school’s most unique opportunities is a seafood science course that uses the school’s 56-foot research vessel, the *Catherine Moore*, to harvest algae. Teachers and students take the boat to the school’s seaweed farm on Long Island Sound and pull long ribbons of kelp onboard. The product is then noodled, blanched, vacuum sealed and sold along with other seafood at the school’s seafood market, Angie’s at Aqua, which is open to the public each week. “We are the only high

Cool Aquaculture Schools



aquaculture is one of the fastest-growing food-producing sectors, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. As the demand for farmed fish continues to grow, so does the demand for experts to work in aquaculture.

These five schools offer programs in aquaculture to prepare students for careers in the field.

The Sound School: Curriculum at the New Haven, Conn., high school includes credits in aquaculture. Vocational classes are taught in a maritime environment to prepare students for careers in aquaculture.

Ocean Springs High School: In addition to classroom lessons, students get hands-on experience maintaining tanks of

fish and crabs. It’s the only high school aquaculture program in the state of Mississippi.

San Lorenzo Valley High School: Students raise tilapia in the hands-on program. The Fenton, Calif., school has a focus on aquaponics, connecting fish tanks to beds of herbs and vegetables, using fish waste as fertilizer.

Auburn University: The School of Fisheries Aquaculture and Aquatic Sciences offers undergraduate programs in fisheries science. Classes include fish hatchery management, commercial aquaculture and fish population assessment.

University of Rhode Island: One of the oldest aquaculture programs in the Northeast, the school offers undergraduate and graduate programs, including a bachelor of science in aquaculture and fisheries technology. — **By Jodi Helmer**



school that processes algae for public sale,” Kranyik says. The sugar kelp sells for \$3.95 a pound.

“We aim for a student-run market, so the students have a lot of input in what we have here,” she says. “They are responsible for helping decide what we sell and then for pricing it. Students in other classes are responsible for working with the fishes to bring them to market size.”

FANS OF FFA

What’s more, 217 of the school’s 410 students are currently members of the Bridgeport Aquaculture FFA.

“I think membership is so high because the school offers so many opportunities,” says Kyle Rosenfeld, an Aqua graduate and current student at the University of San Francisco. Rosenfeld was a Bridgeport Aquaculture FFA member through high school and served as the chapter reporter and secretary. “We won our state agriscience fair one year; then we went on to place fourth nationally. Our project looked at the effects of eutrophication (excessive richness of nutrients in a body of water, frequently due to runoff from the land) on Long Island Sound.”

FFA allows students to explore career interests, and the programs offered at Aqua enhance that, Kranyik says. “In our seafood science class, we talk a lot about the allied industries that may never touch the food, yet, they are the support staff.

“The students also grow personally here, and it’s a way to bolster their self-confidence,” she adds. “They are responsible for dressing the fish however the customer wants.

“They apply all of the skills they’ve learned in our programs, and they put their best faces forward with the customers,” she

says. “If they can interact with the community here, then they can go talk to other people and take what they’ve learned to their first job. Their education becomes a real stepping stone for them.” •

Watch Online! To learn more about the education offered at the Bridgeport Regional Aquaculture Center, watch our video at FFANewHorizons.org/Aqua.

GIVE IT A TRY!

There are many opportunities for students and teachers to engage with aquaculture. Here are three ways to incorporate it into your life.

- **Buy farmed fish:** Shop the seafood aisle in the supermarket and look for farmed tilapia, oysters, shrimp and other seafood. Choose foods with the Aquaculture Stewardship Council label. The designation is given to fish farms that meet standards for responsible aquaculture.

- **Set up a mini system:**

Desktop aquaculture setups that combine a fish tank and herb garden are great for the classroom. The closed-loop system offers a lesson in how the fish waste fertilizes the plants and the plants clean the water.

- **Schedule a tour:** Many aquaculture facilities welcome group tours. A field trip will introduce FFA members to commercial-scale aquaculture and provide insight into getting a fish to the table.

— By Jodi Helmer



HIS TOR YMA KER

**THIS TRAILBLAZING
ALUMNI MEMBER AND
HER WHITE JACKET
REFLECT FFA'S STRIDES
TOWARD DIVERSITY.**

STORY BY **ABBIE NICKEL**

THERE ARE FIVE FFA JACKETS ON DISPLAY

at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History as part of the American Enterprise exhibition, but only four of them are blue.

There's a special story behind the single white one. The jacket was given to Louise Rogers Reynnells when she was a high school student in San Bernardino, Calif., in the 1970s, when her FFA chapter selected her to be their "Chapter Sweetheart." Some perceived the honor as a beauty pageant of sorts, but in reality, it was a privilege that was voted on by her peers. The individual who earned the rare white jacket served as the hostess of chapter events.

"I remember being taken aback by it all because I was such a tomboy," Reynnells laughs. "The recognition wasn't about a pageant. It was about what you knew about FFA and your chapter. You were basically becoming the chapter spokesperson."

Today, as a technical information specialist at the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Agricultural Library, Reynnells' job is to provide assistance to anyone who requests it on agricultural topics and essentially share agriculture's story with the world. That's why when a colleague suggested she tell her FFA story and donate a jacket to the Smithsonian, which



was running a new exhibit on FFA stories, she knew the white jacket could serve as a teaching moment.

“When I started going through my old jackets, I remembered the white one and knew that would be interesting,” Reynnells says. “I thought, ‘Now, that would tell a different story.’ FFA is not just one story, and the white jacket symbolizes that for me.”

Now an alumni and supporter, Reynnells says sharing her role in the broader organization’s story – and how it shaped her story – has created more than one “pinch-me” moment. She hopes it inspires even more history to be made.

“I get goose bumps every time I think about it,” she says. “FFA is a door opener, and it’s always been a privilege to share the story of how it opened mine.”

BUILDING A FOUNDATION

Growing up, Reynnells remembers always having a love for animals and plants, and her interest in agriculture was piqued during a horticulture class



“FFA is not just one story, and the white jacket symbolizes that for me,” Reynnells says of her donation to the Smithsonian.

in middle school.

The area she grew up in had been rural, but it was steadily becoming a large city. Even so,

her high school’s agriculture department was still fairly large with barns, shops, greenhouses and pastures.

It wasn’t long before Reynnells found herself right at home in her high school’s vocational agriculture classes. Sometimes, she was having too much fun to realize she was learning some of her greatest life lessons.

“The most incredible part about FFA is you are always learning something, even when you don’t know it,” Reynnells says.

She got her feet wet in animal science by showing one of her high school’s sheep and later raising more at her home, which was four houses down from the high school.

Whether working on small engines in the classroom, caring for livestock or

learning Robert’s Rules of Order, she notes that all of her FFA experiences – especially with her teachers – helped prepare her for the future.

“The teachers, by far, had the greatest impact,” she says. “Their leadership was outstanding, and they wanted to see us succeed.”

Reynnells says she wouldn’t have chosen to study animal science had it not been for her instructors. She earned her degree at California State Polytechnic University at Pomona and credits her instructors for that, too.

“I would have never gone there or pursued those dreams if it wasn’t for them,” she says.

BREAKING STEREOTYPES

Reynnells was in FFA in the late 1970s, shortly after girls were fully permitted into the organization in 1969. She remembers the ’70s as a transitional time for all women, not just those in FFA.

“Our chapter probably had more boys overall, so you could tell it was still a newer thing,” Reynnells says of the changing tide. “But in FFA, we never felt like we were different or that we couldn’t do a project just because we

THE PATH TO FFA INCLUSIVENESS

The evolution of women’s membership in FFA is just one of many momentous examples of the organization’s actions for diversity and inclusiveness. Here’s a time line of many other significant events.



1932

A charter is granted to the Puerto Rico FFA Association.



1965

New Farmers of America, a national organization for young African-American men, merges with FFA.

1969

FFA opens membership to girls, making it possible for them to hold office and participate in competitive events at regional and national levels.



1970

New York’s Anita Decker and New Jersey’s Patricia Krowicki become the first two female delegates to the national convention.

1971

The girls’ blue jacket is offered for the first time in the 1971-72 FFA Supply Catalog. The standard jacket originally cut for males is redesigned for female members.



1973

National FFA Secretary Fred McClure from Texas is the first African-American elected to a national FFA office.



1976

Julie Smiley from Washington is elected national FFA vice president and is the first female to hold a national FFA office.

were girls. We were lucky.”

She credits FFA for the self-assurance she needed when she first entered the workforce. “When I first entered the field of agriculture, it was not uncommon for me to be the only woman in the room,” she says. “FFA gave me the self-assurance to enter a room full of men and feel confident and secure. I still have that confidence.”

Reynnells’ first job after college was with the University of California at Riverside working with poultry.

“It was a dream job,” she says. “I was outside working with animals, and I was inside part of the day doing research. I used my degree and my FFA experience every day, and that’s also where I was introduced to my husband.”

The couple moved to the Maryland area after they married, and Reynnells landed a job with the USDA Library, where she’s been for over 30 years.

Her career with the USDA has taken her all over the world, and she’s continued to break stereotypes along the way.

“If you had told me when I was 17 that I would be working at the USDA in a library, I would have said, ‘You have got to be kidding me.’ People

think if I work in a library, I’m wearing my hair in a bun, wearing glasses and telling people to be quiet,” she says. “But people also have a similar stereotype about agriculture. Agriculture can take you anywhere and everywhere – even libraries.”

For Reynnells, FFA was the beginning of everything. She says the organization helped her view the world through a “different lens,” and she still

sees how FFA influenced her both personally and professionally every day.

“Agriculture and FFA have a way of doing that,” she says. “You view things differently, and FFA fulfilled me in ways I never imagined. It certainly helped shape my story. There are times where someone asks me something and I stop myself and think, ‘Oh yeah, I learned that in FFA.’ It builds a foundation for the rest of your life.” •

SEE THE SIGHTS

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN EXPERIENCING THE SMITHSONIAN NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AMERICAN HISTORY’S AMERICAN ENTERPRISE EXHIBIT? VISIT [AMERICANHISTORY.SI.EDU/AMERICAN-ENTERPRISE](http://SI.EDU/AMERICAN-ENTERPRISE) TO START EXPLORING TODAY, OR TO PLAN A SUMMER TRIP TO WASHINGTON, D.C.



1982

Jan Eberly from California becomes the first female national FFA president.

1988

The Future Farmers of America changes its name to the National FFA Organization to reflect the growing diversity in agriculture.



1991

FFA chapters in the U.S. Virgin Islands and Guam (pictured here), along with five chapters in Micronesia, are chartered.



1994

Corey Flournoy from Illinois is the first African-American to be elected national FFA president; he is also the first urban student leader.

1998

Jose Santiago from Puerto Rico is elected national FFA vice president. He is the first member from Puerto Rico to serve as a national FFA officer.



2002

Karlene Lindow from Wisconsin is named American Star Farmer. Lindow is the first female to receive this award. She donated her FFA jacket to the Smithsonian exhibit in 2014 (pictured here).

2003

Javier Moreno from Puerto Rico is elected national president; he becomes the first person with a native language other than English and the first Puerto Rican elected to this office.

2017

Breanna Holbert from California is the first African-American female to be elected national president.

The National FFA Opening Ceremony is amended to include the U.S. Virgin Islands.

THE FOURTH ANNUAL FFA TEE



TEE18 | \$12.50

BACK

In celebration of our revered history and the countdown to our 100-year anniversary in 2028, FFA has created the *LEARN, LEAD, SUCCEED 2018-2019 Annual Tee*.

Add to your collection with this year's tee! It honors the values of our organization and the members who rise to the challenge of Learning to Do, Doing to Learn, Earning to Live and Living to Serve.



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2016-2017

2017-2018

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FFA MISSION: FFA makes a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education.



WORK IN THE *Wild*

FFA members can learn valuable skills and prepare for future careers while helping improve U.S. forestland.

Thanks to the U.S. Youth Conservation Corps (YCC), FFA members across the nation can see firsthand what a career in natural and cultural resources might look like.

YCC is a summer youth employment program that engages young people between the ages of 15 and 18 in meaningful work experiences in national parks, forests, wildlife refuges and fish hatcheries from coast to coast. Operated by the National Park Service, the USDA Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Bureau of Land Management, YCC offers work opportunities that generally span eight weeks. The USDA Forest Service also offers residential work opportunities for a shorter time frame.

Although work opportunities vary, many YCC program participants build trails, maintain fences, clean campgrounds, improve wildlife habitats, restore streams and preserve historic buildings. In addition, the YCC program requires participants to engage in service learning and career awareness activities one day per week.

As a result, YCC exposes teenagers to careers in natural and cultural resources such as conservation, forestry and hydrology, while giving them an opportunity to help conserve forestlands, eradicate invasive species and restore native species.

“We host about 1,500 young people on YCC projects every summer,” says Merlene Mazyck, acting deputy director of the USDA Forest Service, Office of Recreation, Heritage and Volunteer Resources. “The work they do is critical for our ability to improve trails and public access to forestlands.”

SERVICE SUPPORT

Due to the success of YCC and similar initiatives such as the 21st Century Conservation Service Corps (21CSC), which offers work opportunities on public lands for young people and adults ages 15 to 30 and veterans up to age 35, the USDA Forest Service invested \$13 million in 2017, which was matched with \$7 million from partners to fund 4,000 work opportunities. Approximately 20 percent of opportunities funded were YCC jobs, and about 25 percent of all projects funded supported high-priority trail maintenance and improvements.

“Along with doing meaningful work, many YCC and 21CSC program participants who haven’t spent much time outdoors get to experience the diverse recreation activities available in a forest,” Mazyck says. “While they work, they learn, and some of them will undoubtedly become the next generation of natural and cultural resource professionals or develop a lifelong stewardship ethic.”

— By Jessica Walker Boehm

To apply for or to learn more about YCC work opportunities,

visit fs.fed.us/working-with-us/opportunities-for-young-people and visit 21csc.org to find out how you can be a part of 21CSC. Additionally, you can discover more careers in the natural resources industry and related supervised agricultural experience ideas at AgExplorer.com.

FFA *in the* USA

LOOKING FOR IDEAS ON HOW YOU CAN LIVE TO SERVE? CHECK OUT WHAT YOUR FELLOW FFA MEMBERS AND CHAPTERS ARE DOING ACROSS THE COUNTRY. AND DON'T FORGET TO VISIT FFA.ORG/LIVINGTOSERVE TO FIND OUT HOW YOU CAN FUND YOUR SERVICE PROJECTS. — Compiled by Julie Woodard

ALABAMA

Albertville FFA is adding a hydroponics system to grow fresh produce to be donated to students and community members in need.

ALASKA

Silent Springs FFA will join state troopers to use a televised public service announcement to reduce the number of distracted driving accidents.

ARIZONA

Desert Edge FFA will address the lack of access to fresh, nutritious food for senior citizens in the community by raising laying hens and donating the eggs.

ARKANSAS

Genoa Central FFA is working with neighboring FFA chapters, other school clubs, nonprofits and businesses to stock the newly established Miller County Food Bank.

CALIFORNIA

With more than 100 miles of horse trails in the city, Norco FFA will join other service organizations to host a trail cleanup and repair event.

COLORADO

The Rye FFA Chapter is planning a day of service inspired by late member Aspen Jones. Chapter members will pump gas and wash windows for tips, which will be donated to charity.

CONNECTICUT

The Sound School FFA Chapter will establish an apiary on campus to address

the area's honeybee loss. It will host an after-school beekeeping program for students and two community education days.



DELAWARE

Delaware FFA members participated in a day of service at the Delaware FFA Convention in March. Members packed about 20,500 meals to give to those in need.

FLORIDA

Hernando High FFA is restoring coastal wetlands within the community, and educating and engaging community members on the county's Noxious Plant Control ordinance.

GEORGIA

Eastside FFA will work with the Newton County Extension Office to create a seed library for the community to use. The chapter will also host two free workshops on gardening.

HAWAII

Oahu FFA members created a demonstration garden with raised beds to help local families learn about gardening.

IDAHO

An FFA Living to Serve grant will help Idaho FFA members fund Blessing Bags for the state's foster children and Operation Gratitude boxes for U.S. military members.

ILLINOIS

Section 3 FFA puts on a clothing drive every year to support those in need. Last year, more than 1,000 items were donated to local pantries.

INDIANA

With the number of city volunteer firefighters down by 50 percent, Westville FFA will landscape, clean and paint the fire department's facilities to boost community morale. The chapter will also help the department conduct two fire safety classes.

IOWA

Linn-Mar FFA will collect oral histories and photographs from local families to preserve and highlight the community's agriculture heritage and traditions. The chapter will also host three gallery exhibits to showcase its research.

KANSAS

With the 90th Kansas FFA Convention quickly approaching, the state plans to celebrate by using a Living to Serve grant to package 90,000 meals for Kansas food banks.

KENTUCKY

Western Hills FFA participates in the Reforest Frankfort Project to plant trees around the city of Frankfort, the state's capital.

LOUISIANA

Stanley FFA will open its doors to elementary students from across the district. The kids will learn shop safety skills while

constructing projects for their families.

MAINE

Members will read the book *Applesauce Day* to elementary students across the state as part of the state's Read ME Agriculture program managed by Maine Agriculture in the Classroom.

MARYLAND

Frederick CTC FFA is addressing the monoculture facing pollinators by helping to design and plant pollinator gardens around the county.

MASSACHUSETTS

Essex Technical FFA will plant a 50-foot-wide vegetative buffer zone along an impacted section of the campus stream to improve water quality.

MICHIGAN

Perry FFA members will donate chickens raised for the state broiler contest to families in need.

MINNESOTA

The LeRoy-Ostrander FFA Chapter participated in a polar plunge in 15-degree weather to help raise money for Special Olympics.

MISSISSIPPI

Greenville FFA partnered with Mississippi Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks to introduce second-grade students at Trigg Elementary School to native Mississippi animals.

MISSOURI

Mt. Vernon FFA organized a school-wide service day where 380 students devoted 1,600 hours to assist local organizations. Activities ranged from washing fire trucks to visiting local nursing homes.

MONTANA

Each spring, Choteau FFA members plant a community garden with local elementary students to teach them about agriculture. The chapter hopes to incorporate the produce into school lunches.

NEBRASKA

Wood River FFA members will install and maintain bird feeders at the town's nursing home and low-income housing units to help beautify the area.

NEVADA

Sierra Nevada FFA is featuring a movie night; the ticket admission of new socks and underwear will go to the homeless. Additionally, proceeds from snack sales and raffles will help support an FFA chapter in Puerto Rico.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

The Alvirne FFA Chapter recently raised more than \$9,000 for a local animal shelter.

NEW JERSEY

Middlesex East Brunswick FFA volunteered time to collect and dispose of trash and recyclables along the shore of the South Amboy Waterfront Beach.

NEW MEXICO

Project Linus provides homemade tie blankets and afghans to sick, traumatized children in need. Las Cruces FFA will host a day when it ties fleece blankets for donation.

NEW YORK

DeRuyter FFA and the local fire department will install easy-to-identify emergency signs on mailbox posts and fire hydrants to help reduce the response time for first responders.

NORTH CAROLINA

In conjunction with the county livestock show, Franklin FFA offers a popular special needs show for local students. The chapter provides the goats and student guides.

NORTH DAKOTA

More than 100 FFA members completed a coloring book care package service project during the state's Winter Leadership Conference. Gifts were donated to children in need of a smile.

OHIO

Norwayne FFA hosted Lungs for Larissa to help a member of the community with cystic fibrosis. The event raised more than \$37,000 for a lung transplant, and more than 700 people came out to support the cause.

OKLAHOMA

Sapulpa FFA celebrated Valentine's Day by delivering greeting cards to its local nursing home.

OREGON

Members of North Powder FFA created and delivered wreaths to those who were alone during the holiday season, free of charge. Talk about holiday cheer!

PENNSYLVANIA

During the Pennsylvania FFA State Legislative Leadership Conference, nearly 500 members and teachers spend four hours engaging in community service at 19 area locations.

RHODE ISLAND

Over the winter, members from across the state came together to celebrate the holidays with a local nursing home.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Cheraw FFA is raising laying hens to provide fresh

eggs to the local food bank and to students in need. The chapter will also host workshops to teach community members how to start a backyard flock.

SOUTH DAKOTA

During Agriculture Day, King City FFA teaches local sixth-graders about technology in agriculture and inspires the next generation of our country's leaders to pursue their interests in agriculture.

TENNESSEE

Siegel FFA is participating in a community cleanup at the historic Walter Hill Dam. The chapter will also help improve wildlife habitat and water quality.

TEXAS

Weimar FFA will provide routine assistance with home maintenance, lawn care and more to elders in its rural community.

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS

Amid efforts to rebuild after Hurricane Maria, state officers hosted a fun day for the public, educating island youth and families on agricultural careers and activities.

UTAH

JATC FFA is partnering with local organizations to reduce the number of feral cats in the community. The chapter will help provide spay and neutering services, and do outreach education to feral cat caretakers and domestic cat owners.



VERMONT

During the holidays, Woodbury FFA hosts a pet adoption for local dogs and cats that need a good home.



PUERTO RICO

Domingo Aponte Collazo FFA is turning to aquaponics to provide vegetables and fish to the community. The chapter will also offer workshops on the importance of healthy eating.

VIRGINIA

Junior and senior FFA members from across the state attended the first-ever Virginia Leaders Summit, where members packed more than 25,000 meals for families in the community.

WASHINGTON

Willapa Valley FFA works with its local Anglers Club to repair and reclaim salmon habitats in Pacific County by planting willow starts along the streambeds.

WEST VIRGINIA

Through the project Sustain BU, Upshur County FFA will host workshops to teach local low-income families how to produce and preserve fresh vegetables.

WISCONSIN

Wisconsin FFA's annual Day of Service event is celebrating 10 years and takes place the day before the annual state convention.

WYOMING

High Plains FFA and Frontier FFA teamed up to serve veterans with free fresh vegetables from the local farmers market.



Nicholas KRISTOF

The two-time Pulitzer prizewinner, *The New York Times* columnist and CNN contributor got his start on a sheep and cherry farm in Yamhill, Ore., where he was a member of the Yamhill Carlton FFA Chapter. Looking back on the thrill of competing in the parliamentary procedure leadership development event, Kristof knows his time in FFA helped shape every aspect of his life.

“THE MOST IMPORTANT THING YOU WILL GET OUT OF FFA ISN'T THE SKILLS FROM SOIL JUDGING OR RECORD KEEPING, BUT IT'S THE SENSE OF LEADERSHIP THAT COMES FROM IT ALL.”

— NICHOLAS KRISTOF

Q: HOW HAS BEING A PART OF FFA INFLUENCED YOUR WRITING?

A: My experiences in growing up on a farm and being in FFA have shaped a lot of my views and understanding. I think that background has profoundly molded the issues that I am interested in. I am proud of having grown up on a farm, and it makes me a bit different than the other national journalists. I like to highlight that point.

Q: WHAT SKILL DID YOU GAIN FROM FFA THAT HAS BEEN THE MOST BENEFICIAL?

A: Simply put, FFA equipped me with an understanding of rural America. I grew up on a sheep and cherry farm, but in FFA, I visited wheat farms, cattle ranches and grass seed operations. In agriculture, we tend to know our own community. But through FFA, I gained a deeper appreciation of agriculture that has stuck with me. I know that agriculture is a source of strong values that we cherish and deeply admire.

FFA also equipped me with important leadership skills. FFA was the only place where I received any kind of formal training in public speaking. Every time I go on CNN, I am leaning heavily on skills I learned in FFA.

Q: WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO CURRENT MEMBERS?

A: The most important thing you will get out of FFA isn't the skills from soil judging or record keeping, but it's the sense of leadership that comes from it all. It's from trying to figure out how to win votes when running for office. It's forcing yourself to memorize the FFA Creed. The sense of relying on yourself and your peers to grow is the single-most important thing that I gained from FFA, and I think that is the greatest support that FFA offers for people 40 years after they wore their blue jacket.

— By Bev Flatt

Ag Angle

JENN SMITH

LOCATION: San Martin, Calif.

FFA MEMBER: Mike Thorp

FFA CHAPTER: King City High School FFA

INSTAGRAM: @spadeandplow

FACEBOOK: Spade and Plow Organics

WEBSITE: spadeandplow.com

This photo shows the curious and eager nature of a child (my 4-year-old nephew, Theo Van) who wants to learn and explore, and the pride of a family who is happy to pass down its knowledge.

"There's nothing better than having multiple generations of family involved in our farm," says Mike Thorp (pictured, right). "It's neat to think about how FFA — along with my family — offered me some direction in my younger years and to see all of that come full circle."



* **SHARE YOUR AG ANGLE WITH US!** It's as simple as completing the submission form at FFANewHorizons.org/submit-your-story. The editors will review all entries and publish one in each issue of *FFA New Horizons*. All material submitted becomes the property of the National FFA Organization. If your idea is used, you give FFA the right to use it in any manner.

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