NEW HORIZONS

Spring 2020

WE ARE FFA

INSIDE ONE OF OUR MOST ETHNICALLY DIVERSE CHAPTERS

DIVERSE FFA MEMBERS COME TOGETHER

Of the 2,541 students enrolled in Arkansas' Clarksville school district, 658 students are regarded as active English learners. In other words, English is not their first language. The Clarksville FFA Chapter is recognized as one of the most ethnically diverse in the nation.

Consider this: Clarksville FFA members include a barrel racing champion and a fledgling cattle farmer who are learning about agriculture and developing leadership skills alongside classmates from countries including Mexico, Thailand, Laos, Vietnam and Albania. As it turns out, most members in the chapter are more familiar with growing tropical fruits and vegetables (or have no experience in agriculture at all) than growing cotton and raising cattle.

This creates a rich learning environment with opportunities to foster cross-cultural collaborations and to develop understanding and deep friendships.

Clarksville High School agriculture teacher and FFA advisor Libby Sanderson has adapted her curriculum to reflect the diverse needs of her students, and she values the school's uniqueness.

"We realize that we're all different and we don't look like the other FFA chapters, but I don't want us to look like the other FFA chapters," Sanderson says. "I want us to embrace who we are. We're happy to be us."

You can read more about the ways Clarksville FFA embraces its diversity in "Come Together," page 16.

In this issue, you'll also find articles about National Ag Day, plant-based protein, Black History Month, the 2019-20 national officer team and more.

Enjoy and have a super spring!

Justin Davey

Justin Davey
Editor, *FFA New Horizons*
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CONTENTS

FEATURES

10 MEET OUR NATIONAL OFFICERS
Members of the national convention newsroom crew spent time getting to know the 2019-20 National FFA Officers. Here, they share some highlights.

16 COME TOGETHER
The Clarksville FFA Chapter in Arkansas is considered one of the most ethnically diverse in the nation. Learn about its cross-cultural collaborations and cultural education.

20 OUTSTANDING ALUMNI
How does the Denmark FFA Alumni Chapter (which was recently named the 2019 National Outstanding FFA Alumni and Supporters Chapter) help its local FFA chapter succeed? Read on.

DEPARTMENTS

3 THE FEED
Quick reads about plant-based protein, Black History Month and more.

7 NATIONAL FFA OFFICER Q&A
How has a CDE/LDE impacted our national officers' career interests?

8 AG 101
A look at how the farm-to-school movement is improving communities.

14 PREMIER LEADERSHIP
The Waupaca FFA Chapter in Wisconsin prioritizes community service.

15 CAREER SUCCESS
Sisters credit the success of their ag business, in part, to their FFA experiences.

24 FFA IN THE USA
Spring season updates from chapters across the country.

26 ON THE RECORD
Entrepreneur, author and speaker Michele Payn's career path all started with FFA.

27 AG ANGLE
Alumna Macady Haws shares a tribute to women in FFA.

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Spring 2020
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THE FFA VISION
FFA is providing the next generation of leaders who will change the 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.

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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.

TALKING POINTS:

Plant-Based PROTEIN

FOOD INDUSTRY HEAVYWEIGHTS ARE GETTING ON BOARD WITH THE PLANT-BASED PROTEIN TREND. TYSON FOODS, FOR EXAMPLE, ANNOUNCED THE COMPANY'S ENTRY INTO THE MARKET THROUGH ITS VENTURE CAPITAL FUND. HERE, JUSTIN RANSOM, SENIOR DIRECTOR OF SUSTAINABLE FOOD STRATEGY AT TYSON, GIVES SOME PERSPECTIVE.

Q: WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ANIMAL AND PLANT PROTEIN?

A: Animal proteins are considered complete protein sources, meaning they contain all the essential amino acids our bodies need in adequate amounts and can't make on their own. Most plant proteins like beans, grains and nuts are considered incomplete proteins, which means they are missing at least one of the essential amino acids or do not have them in the correct amounts. (There are exceptions, such as soy.)

Q: WHAT HAS CAUSED PLANT PROTEIN'S POPULARITY?

A: People from all regions of the country are seeking new ways of making protein a bigger part of their diet, including plant protein. Our research shows that 60 percent of people are actively trying to add more protein to their diets, and nearly 40 percent are looking to add more plant protein. Plant protein foods are appealing because people are aware of their positive health benefits.

Q: HOW HAS TYSON FOODS ENTERED THE PLANT-BASED PROTEIN MARKET?

A: We began through venture capital investment in start-ups, then last summer, we launched our first alternative protein products under the Raised & Rooted brand. They include nuggets made with a blend of pea protein, bamboo fiber, egg white and golden flaxseed, and blended burgers that combine 100 percent Angus beef with pea protein isolate. Our nuggets contain 5 grams of fiber and 33 percent less saturated fat than regular USDA white-meat chicken nuggets. The new patties have less saturated fat and fewer calories than a traditional burger. And they taste amazing.

Q: HOW IS THE PLANT-BASED PROTEIN TREND CHANGING THE AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY?

A: Demand for protein is growing, including alternative protein growing double digits. What's most exciting for Tyson Foods is that among the 75 percent of consumers who are open to or actively adding plant protein to their diets, nearly all plan to continue eating traditional meat products. In fact, our initial analysis of buying behavior suggests that the alternative protein category is among the most incremental to our core businesses.

The question becomes, how will the ag industry respond to feeding our growing population and will it do so sustainably? Tyson Foods is convening some of the greatest minds in industry, agriculture and academia around this topic, where designing the most sustainable food system possible across all proteins is the goal.

– By Justin Davey

CALENDAR

Feb. 22-29:
NATIONAL FFA WEEK
Each year, FFA chapters around the country celebrate National FFA Week by sharing what FFA is and the impact it has on members. Visit **FFA.org/National-FFA-Week** for more, including our new FFA Week Implementation Guide.

Feb. 25: GIVE FFA DAY
Make a difference for FFA and agricultural education with a Give FFA Day donation. Participate in the 24-hour online fundraiser at **FFA.org/GiveFFADay**.

Feb. 27: ALUMNI DAY
Celebrate your local FFA Alumni and Supporters! If you are a former student member, let us know at **FFA.org/CheckIn**.

March 1: LIVING TO SERVE DAY OF SERVICE MINI-GRANT APPLICATIONS DUE
Looking for an opportunity to seek funding to support a local service event? Grant applications are due the first of each month. Learn more at **FFA.org/LivingToServe**.

March 24: NATIONAL AG DAY
Every year, producers, agricultural associations, corporations, universities, government agencies and many others join together to recognize the contributions of agriculture. Check out **AgDay.org** for ways to participate.

March 24:
NATIONAL FFA ALUMNI AND SUPPORTERS REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE
Visit **FFA.org/GoToRDC** to reserve your spot at the National FFA Alumni and Supporters Regional Development Conference in Bozeman, MT. Registration closes April 6.

April 30:
LIVING TO SERVE CHAPTER CHALLENGE
Don't miss the opportunity to help FFA reach 930,000 hours of service before the next convention! Check out which state is winning the challenge at **FFA.org/ChallengeAccepted**.

May 1-2:
NATIONAL FFA ALUMNI AND SUPPORTERS REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE
Reserve your spot for this RDC in Munnsville, N.Y. Registration closes April 19. Visit **FFA.org/GoToRDC** for more.

FFA FOR ALL

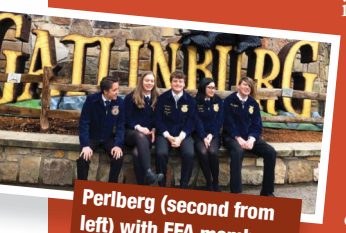
A SPONTANEOUS DECISION LED TO AN INTERNATIONAL INTEREST IN AMERICAN AGRICULTURE.

In the small town of Magdeburg, Germany, Nina Perlberg never planned to take over her father's farm as a career. In fact, less than 10 percent of the German population works in some kind of agricultural field. So, when Perlberg took part in a high school exchange program during her junior year to Kingsport, Tenn., joining the Dobyns-Bennet FFA Chapter wasn't on her radar.

"I was speaking to other exchange students and they said the most welcoming club to join was FFA," Perlberg says. "It seemed crazy to join a group of Americans who spent their time studying soil profiles, tree species and milk quality. But it ended up being one of the best decisions in my exchange year."

After joining the chapter, competing in a number of career development events and attending National FFA Convention & Expo, Perlberg knows that taking this one piece of advice has changed her future.

"My FFA advisor became more than a teacher in a short amount of time," says Perlberg, who is now back home in Germany. "She treated all of us like her own children and was always there for us. Everyone in our chapter was always there for each other, and that is one thing that I think makes FFA unique. No matter where you go, blue jackets will always stand together and be open-minded to meeting students from other chapters."



Perlberg (second from left) with FFA members.

FFA chapters across the country have opened their doors to exchange students from all over the world. Perlberg recommends showing extra patience and grace when working with new, international chapter members. Find more resources for promoting diversity and inclusion in your chapter at **FFA.org/Diversity-And-Inclusion**.

– By Bev Flatt

Quiz: AGRICULTURE AND YOU

On March 24, 2020, Americans will celebrate National Ag Day, which exists to recognize and celebrate the contributions of agriculture in our everyday lives. Think you know a lot about agriculture in America? Test your knowledge by taking our quiz.

– By Jessica Mozo

1. How many people does one United States farm feed annually?
2. Approximately how much money do Americans spend on food for their 4th of July cookouts each year?
3. Corn is the No. 1 crop produced in the United States, with farmers planting more than 90 million acres in 2017. How many bushels of corn were harvested that year?
4. The United States is the world's largest beef producer. What was the total number of cattle and calves in the United States in 2018?
5. Textile mills in the United States spin about 3.6 million bales of cotton per year. According to the National Cotton Council of America, how many pairs of jeans could that much cotton make?

A. 750 million
B. 14.6 billion
C. 94.4 million
D. $6.7 billion
E. 166

Answers: 1: E; 2: D; 3: B; 4: C; 5: A

Photography: Courtesy Kerrie Sluder; Getty Images, Katrina Wittkamp

HOW TO CREATE A POWERFUL POA

THE FIVE FFA ADVISORS WHO REPRESENT THE 2019 NATIONAL CHAPTER AWARD WINNERS SHARE THEIR SECRETS TO A SUCCESSFUL PROGRAM OF ACTIVITIES (POA).

"Our committee members come up with all kinds of ideas that would work for different quality standards. We like to keep it that way so we can cover a lot of areas with a lot of activities that interest a wide variety of students."

April Davis, Commerce Middle School FFA (Georgia), Middle School Model of Excellence

"The Waterloo FFA leadership team uses the FFA quality indicators as a starting point to brainstorm and select activities that will be beneficial for our chapter, school and community."

Tim McDermott, Waterloo FFA (Illinois), National Premier Chapter, Growing Leaders

"Our success is driven by our students. Our chapter officers lead in planning our POA, but their insight comes from close relationships with our entire membership. Small groups led by each officer allow members to share input about our activities and goals throughout the year."

Mason Jones, Edmond FFA (Oklahoma), National Premier Chapter, Strengthening Agriculture

"The secret to developing a successful POA for our chapter revolves around three keywords: quality, pride and tradition. We strive to plan, organize, develop and execute activities that are of utmost value that our members and stakeholders appreciate."

Rob Calvin, Troy FFA (Missouri), National Premier Chapter, Building Communities

"ADAPT AND CONQUER WAS A FAVORITE QUOTE OF MY FATHER, WHO WAS MY FFA ADVISOR. THIS HAS IMPACTED OUR SUCCESS BECAUSE I TEACH MY FFA MEMBERS TO MAKE PLANS, YET BE WILLING TO CHANGE AS NEEDED."

Jessica Helsinger, Covington-UVCC FFA (Ohio), Model of Excellence

For more information about POAs, visit the National Chapter Awards webpage on **FFA.org**. Click on the "Resources" button to access the 2018 National Chapter Awards Finalist Recognition and Resource Guide.

MAKING BLACK HISTORY MONTH MEMORABLE

GEORGIA FFA CHAPTER CELEBRATES AFRICAN-AMERICANS IN ENGAGING WAYS.

Americans observe Black History Month every February. The Eagle's Landing FFA Chapter in McDonough, Ga., knows how to make it memorable. The majority (about 85 percent) of the chapter's 140 members are African-American, and they pay tribute to their history every year in a variety of ways.

They have found inspiration in the work of Dr. George Washington Carver, and they've participated in door decorating and display case contests, food presentations and more ways to honor his inventions.

"We have also featured Helen Dubose, owner of Healing Acres Blueberry Farm, located in our own city," says Chansi Coleman, agriscience teacher and FFA advisor at Eagle's Landing High School. "Dubose was noted as the first African-American to receive a degree in agriculture."

Each year, Eagle's Landing FFA hosts guest speakers to highlight minorities in agricultural careers, including a local beef cattle farmer, an attorney who works to protect farmers' land and a food science researcher for Kraft Foods. The chapter also maintains a garden where the members grow vegetables, which they later cook and eat together.

Eagle's Landing FFA has a social media presence, too, and Coleman says when other chapters see their name, they come to know that Eagle's Landing FFA operates a bit differently.

"We move with a little rhythm and sound. If we're not rapping about the FFA Creed or motto, we're acting out photosynthesis or doing a poem with jazz music for plant identification," she says. "It's all about tailoring agriculture to them and promoting it as an amazing industry for future careers or giving them leadership experience while celebrating them as culturally diverse kids."

– By Jessica Mozo

Eagle's Landing FFA members prepare food and eat together to celebrate Black History Month.

Photography: Courtesy Chansi Coleman

REACH for the STARS

The highest honor a member can achieve, the American Star Awards are presented to FFA members who demonstrate outstanding agriculture skills and competencies through the completion of a supervised agricultural experience (SAE). We asked the 2019 Stars for their advice on creating and maintaining a successful SAE.

"The biggest thing is that you can never have enough education. FFA really just emphasizes that you can never know too much about the industry."

Andrew Streff, McCook Central FFA, Salem, S.D., 2019 American Star in Agricultural Placement

"Whatever you research, you have to have a passion for it. Be prepared. Take good notes. Every single day, write down what you did and what you found."

Courtney Cameron, Lowndes FFA, Valdosta, Ga., 2019 American Star in Agriscience

"Don't be afraid to ask for help. Go to everybody. Talk to your ag teachers and let them know you want to do something. They're always willing to help."

Willis Wolf, Merced–El Capitan FFA, Merced, Calif., 2019 American Star Farmer

"Whatever you want to do, do it 110 percent. Give it your all and seek advice. Go to the ag teachers and align with them and get support from them. Reach out to your family and friends to set goals that you can abide by."

Blake Kennedy, Tecumseh FFA, Tecumseh, Okla., 2019 American Star in Agribusiness

Visit **SAEForAll.org** to download SAE Idea Cards, watch video recaps of successful SAEs and more.

#SpeakAg

IF YOU'RE PASSIONATE ABOUT AGRICULTURE BUT FIND IT TOUGH TO SHARE YOUR KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE INDUSTRY, YOU'RE NOT ALONE – AND YOU'RE IN LUCK. READ ON FOR TIPS FROM THE NATIONAL FFA #SPEAKAG AMBASSADORS, MADE UP OF 12 STATE OFFICERS FROM CHAPTERS ACROSS THE NATION, TO HELP YOU ADVOCATE FOR AG – BOTH IN PERSON AND ONLINE.

"The front of the FFA jacket says who you are and the back says where you came from, but nowhere does it say where you're going – so go the extra mile. Share your passion for agriculture and use it to educate others." – Mallory Anderson, @mallory_10

"Advocating for agriculture can be as simple as passing along an ag-related news article or sharing your background in agriculture." – Joe Schlies, @joeschlies22

"Seek to understand all sides of an issue. You can only bridge gaps when you know what people believe and why they believe it." – Devin Rossa, @devinrossa

"As you make connections with others, take the opportunity to share your unique insights about agriculture." – Michelle Stangler, @sizzlinwithagriculture

"Be fearless. Passion and knowledge about the industry are important, but you have to be brave enough to tell your story." – Emily Nave, @emilynave_speakag

"Advocacy requires two things: confidence and accurate knowledge." – Dekota McGee, @mcgeedekota

"The most important part of advocating is listening before speaking." – Hope Showalter, @hope_showalter

"Share your story about how agriculture has impacted your life. People don't always connect with facts or statistics, but when you tell them a story, they're likely to become interested." – Grace Long, @_grace_long_

"When advocating for the ag industry, focus on what you're most passionate about." – Connor Sawyer, @COnn0r55

"Surround yourself with seasoned agriculture advocates by joining industry groups, commodity groups or local ag organizations. When it's your turn to speak up, you'll know exactly what to say." – Andrew Moore, @amoore_ffa

"There is no greater tool than storytelling when it comes to advocating for agriculture." – Bethany Starlin, @bethanystarlin

"Speak to engage, not to educate." – Savannah Aanerud, @savannahaanerud

The National FFA Agricultural Literacy and Advocacy Platform is sponsored by Domino's, Merck, Smithfield, Bayer, Growth Energy and Valent.

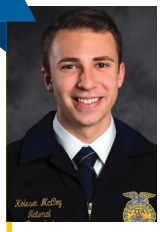
– By Jessica Walker Boehm

NATIONAL FFA OFFICER Q&A

MEET OUR NEW NATIONAL OFFICERS ON PAGE 10.

Q: CAREER AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT EVENTS HELP MEMBERS DEVELOP VALUABLE SKILLS FOR COLLEGE AND THEIR CAREERS. HOW HAS A CDE/LDE IMPACTED YOUR CAREER INTERESTS?

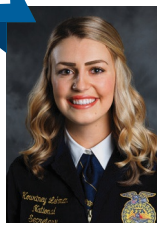
Kolesen McCoy



NATIONAL FFA PRESIDENT

One of my favorite CDEs was extemporaneous public speaking. It was one of the first times I stepped beyond my comfort zone. I had a great mentor and agriculture educator who said I should go for it. I did it, and since then, I've been on this incredible journey of personal growth, acquiring new social skills and interacting with the people around me. Now, I'm able to represent our industry on the national level.

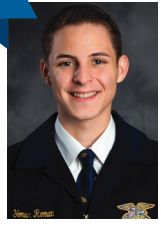
Kourtney Lehman



NATIONAL FFA SECRETARY

I was lucky to have two amazing agriculture advisors who did their best – like ag advisors do – to encourage me to do things I didn't want to do. I was terrified of public speaking, so they threw me into Creed speaking, and that's where my passion started. I can imagine both my advisors knew that the more I did, the more experiences I would have, and that's why I'm here today.

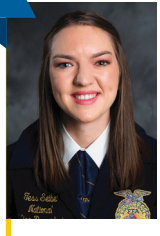
Yomar Roman



SOUTHERN REGION VICE PRESIDENT

Competing in a CDE and LDE has allowed me to grow not only as a leader but also as a person. I am able to articulate my love for agriculture to others, and I continue to be an advocate. Also, it taught me how to work harder and more diligently in anything I do.

Tess Seibel



EASTERN REGION VICE PRESIDENT

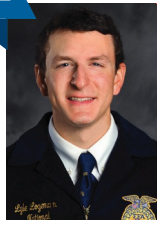
I competed in the agriscience fair starting in middle school, then I competed all the way through high school. Asking questions and looking to improve efficiency helped me grow as an individual and make a unique impact. So my decision to go into nursing was sparked by that unique path within FFA, competing in the agriscience fair. I realized if I just ask questions, science can lead to the answers a lot of times.

Mamie Hertel

CENTRAL REGION VICE PRESIDENT

I started out doing Creed speaking in seventh grade, and that kick-started my journey. I fell in love with it and knew I wanted to keep going, so I got into extemporaneous public speaking. That's taken me to where I am today – being able to interview, think on my feet and adapt to whatever situation I'm in. I'm also incredibly grateful for the employment skills LDE. It's one of my favorite competitions.

Lyle Logemann



WESTERN REGION VICE PRESIDENT

In our preferred fields, we have to be able to communicate. What the prepared public speaking LDE did for me was give me the ability to formulate an opinion and deliver it in a convincing manner. I was very much a prepared public speaker, and because of that, I wanted to develop messages where I made every sentence count. It meant a lot to me, and it made all the difference.

Photography: Copyright © FFA

AG 101

From Farm to School

According to the National Farm to School Network, more than one in five children are at risk for hunger. Access to fresh, healthy foods and nutrition education is key to improving children's health and cultivating vibrant communities. Here's a look at how the organization is working to change food inequity and how local farms and FFA chapters are improving their own communities.

- By Lauren Denton

The Work

The National Farm to School Network's implementation includes one or more of the following:

1.

Schools serve foods from local farms.

2.

Students participate in growing the food.

3.

School programs teach about agriculture, health, food and nutrition.

Illustration: krugli, Enis Aksoy, Mai Vu all Getty Images

The People

Teamwork makes the dream work. These three groups (and more!) can play a role in farm-to-school program implementation:

1.

- ***50+ Core Partners***
  State agencies, universities or nonprofits that spearhead their state's efforts.
- ***150+ Supporting Partners***
  Education, agriculture and nutrition organizations that support their state's efforts.
- ***20,000+ Network Members***
  Anyone who practices or supports the National Farm to School Network mission.

2.
Local Farmers

Schools buy and feature locally produced, farm-fresh foods such as fruits and vegetables, eggs, honey, meat and beans on their menus. This food is purchased from farms in the community, and that offers farmers a new revenue opportunity.

3.

- ***Plainview/Elgin-Millville FFA*** *(Plainview, Minn.)* tends a raised-bed garden and supplies the produce to the school cafeteria and local food pantry.
- ***South Central Agri-Science Academy FFA*** *(St. Peter, Minn.)* hosts a Farm to School cafeteria lunch. The chapter serves pork and tomatoes raised by FFA members and leads an agriculture trivia game.
- ***Fromberg FFA*** *(Fromberg, Mont.)* solicits donations from local beef and hog producers to provide its cafeteria with quality protein sources for lunches.

The Impact

A community-based strategy can help create a healthy school food environment and improve local economies. The National Farm to School Network has seen the following impact:

$1
…to the National Farm to School Network = 60¢ to $2.16 to local economy

One
…more serving of fruits and vegetables per day per student

44.2%
…of students in schools with gardens eat more fruits and vegetables

33.1%
…of students in schools that serve local food eat more fruits and vegetables

- **Reduced food waste, emissions, screen time, diet-related diseases and health risks**
- **Improved ag awareness, willingness to try new foods, grades, test scores and hands-on experiences**

MEET OUR SIX STUDENT LEADERS

Photography: Copyright © FFA

THESE INDIVIDUALS FROM ALL OVER THE COUNTRY – AND PUERTO RICO! – WILL DEVOTE A YEAR OF SERVICE TO THE NATIONAL FFA ORGANIZATION.

The journey starts similarly for many FFA members – as Greenhands in an ag classroom reciting the FFA Creed or learning about FFA history. Then, after years of development and leadership, a select few rise to become National FFA Officers. They don new blue jackets – ones that no longer have their chapters named on the back, as they now represent all FFA members – and set out on a year of service that includes more than 100,000 miles of travel each. They're humble leaders who want to make their marks and leave the organization even better than how they found it. The 2019-20 National FFA Officers rise to the occasion.

Members of our national convention newsroom crew spent some time getting to know our new national officers. Here, they share some highlights.

KOLESEN MCCOY, National FFA President
FFA CHAPTER: Global Impact STEM Academy FFA, Ohio
COLLEGE: Ohio State University
MAJOR: Agribusiness and Applied Economics

The experience that made FFA more than just a school organization for Kolesen McCoy was attending the National FFA Convention & Expo for the first time in Louisville, Ky. There, he witnessed the organization's reach beyond his own chapter.

"It opened up my eyes," he says. "It's such a diverse group of students who share various passions, and I was thrilled to be a part of that mission of the blue jacket from all portions of our country."

During his time as a National FFA Officer, McCoy is excited to talk with students from all around the country and inspire them to pursue more through FFA. One way to do that is through mentorship, McCoy says, from friends, FFA advisors, industry professionals and other educators.

"Look to those mentors, gain insight from them and, I promise you, your journey will be heightened immensely within this organization," he says.

McCoy found his own mentorship experience through his agriculture teacher, who encouraged him to get involved in the extemporaneous

speaking leadership development event (LDE), which helped McCoy develop public speaking skills he will use in his year as national FFA president.

While McCoy looks forward to interacting with FFA members while in office, don't challenge him to a doughnut-eating contest. He'll probably win.

"I'm a huge fan of Krispy Kreme doughnuts," he says. "My record is a dozen in 8½ minutes."

– By Dené Dryden

KOURTNEY LEHMAN

National FFA Secretary
FFA CHAPTER: Baker FFA, Oregon
COLLEGE: Oregon State University
MAJOR: Agricultural Business Management

When she wasn't spending time learning to play the accordion or helping out on the family farm in Oregon, Kourtney Lehman was spending time outside her comfort zone.

"I was terrified of Creed speaking," Lehman says. "My advisors threw me in, and that's where my passion started."

After her first experience with FFA, she went on to try every leadership development event and career development event she could – with nudges from her advisors. She attributes her success as an FFA member and National FFA Officer candidate to their dedication.

Throughout her year as national FFA secretary, Lehman is looking forward to seeing agriculture across the nation and the world. She is excited to learn from new experiences and members from various places and backgrounds, while fully realizing the importance of the National FFA Organization. During her travels and encounters, she hopes to help members realize their worth.

"I think the best advice that I could offer is to know that you are enough," Lehman says. "That's what my dad told me when I started my run for national office. He'd say, 'No matter what the outcome, you are enough for the person you are.' I would like FFA members to know that whatever CDE or LDE they go to and whatever chapter event they're at, they are enough for the person they are."

– By Macey Hurst

TESS SEIBEL

Eastern Region Vice President
FFA CHAPTER: Lord Botetourt FFA, Virginia
COLLEGE: James Madison University
MAJOR: Nursing

Tess Seibel is the daughter of an agriculture teacher, and she started attending the Virginia FFA state convention at 3 years old. "I joined FFA because it was a family tradition, but I stayed because of the people," she says.

She went on to serve as a state officer there, which helped prepare her for national office. "We have a lot of FFA history in Virginia, and with that comes heart," she says. "I wouldn't want to call any other state my home."

Though FFA is practically in her DNA, Seibel figured out her place in the organization through trial and error. "I remember competing in the poultry judging CDE," she says. "I figured out during my first competition that I was terrified of chickens!" However, Seibel's advice to FFA members is to try new things. "It could turn out to be a passion of yours or maybe a future career," she says.

Seibel is excited about much of her upcoming year as a National FFA Officer. Among the most exciting prospects, "I want to learn about people's stories," she says. "I am excited to be impacted by FFA members, to learn about them, to learn about their passions and to learn how I can share their stories."

– By Jessica Wesson

YOMAR ROMAN

Southern Region Vice President
FFA CHAPTER: Padre Anibal Reyes Belen FFA, Puerto Rico
COLLEGE: Universidad de Puerto Rico
MAJOR: Animal Science

Becoming a national officer was a mere dream for Yomar Roman, who grew up on a farm in Puerto Rico. But with the help of his family and FFA chapter, and fueled by his own determination, that dream became a reality. In the process, Roman realized he was born to serve.

Roman recalls a particularly challenging and helpful conversation with his grandmother during a difficult time that ultimately opened his eyes to the value of helping others. "She asked me, 'Yomar, who is your biggest enemy?'" he says. "Then she answered for me. 'It's you.'" It was that kind of support and insight that spurred Roman along, and it has helped him see that others need to be encouraged, too.

"Every time I give a speech or spend time with others, I want them to say, 'Hey, someone believes in me and I'm not alone. There is a national officer fighting for me!'" he says. "My goal as a National FFA Officer isn't that members remember me; it's that

Photography: Copyright © FFA

they remember the mark I made."

This year, the college sophomore is looking forward to meeting members and encouraging them to pursue greatness. He'll be cheering them on along the way.

– By William Gaspard Jr.

MAMIE HERTEL

Central Region Vice President
FFA CHAPTER: Moore FFA, Montana
COLLEGE: Montana State University
MAJOR: Financial Engineering

Mamie Hertel lives by a simple piece of advice her mother gave her: Whether you think you can or you think you can't, you're right.

With only 11 students in her graduating class, Hertel had small-town beginnings. Her FFA journey began like many others – with the Creed speaking leadership development event. She says the contest kick-started her passion for FFA and turned her can'ts into cans. After competing for three years, she knew she wanted to continue developing her speaking skills, so she began extemporaneous public speaking. She said it gave her the ability to interview, think on her feet and adapt to changing environments – all skills she used to make it to national office.

As national FFA central region vice president, Hertel looks forward to many things, particularly meeting members.

"My life motto is that there's more to it all, and I'm excited to share that with members and tell them that there is more to their lives," Hertel says. "There's more to this blue jacket that they haven't found yet, and there's more to everything that they do."

She plans to maximize her coming days in FFA, and she encourages members to do the same.

"My advice to all members would be to make the most of this next year," she says. "Realize that you can seek out opportunities and you can seek out moments, and I hope every member knows that."

– By Macey Hurst

LYLE LOGEMANN

Western Region Vice President
FFA CHAPTER: Elida FFA, New Mexico
COLLEGE: Eastern New Mexico University
MAJOR: Agricultural Education

In 2015, Lyle Logemann's FFA journey changed course when he received a small act of kindness from former Western Region Vice President Caleb Gustin. At the New Mexico FFA state convention, Logemann sat by himself while other FFA members danced and chatted. Gustin saw that Logemann was alone and sat with him. Logemann wore his grandfather's ring, which he still wears now, and Gustin noticed that it was a bit large on Logemann's finger.

"I had a piece of tape under it so it wouldn't fall off," Logemann says. "Caleb looked at me and said, 'Well, I've got something for you that'll fix that.' He took a spacer off his national officer ring and he gave it to me."

Logemann felt validated by the experience. The fact that a busy FFA leader would take the time to connect to a shy freshman was valuable to Logemann. Today, Logemann holds the same leadership position as Gustin, and he wants to give back to members in the same way a national officer gave kindness to him while he learns more about agricultural education.

"I want to look for all the different opportunities I can to model myself in the classroom," he says. "Also, that way, members know, 'This guy's here for us.'"

As an aspiring ag educator (and auctioneer!), Logemann finds his drive to serve with simple acts of kindness and love that keep darkness out of peoples' lives.

– By Dené Dryden

COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTIONS

By prioritizing community service, this Wisconsin FFA chapter embodies and embraces the idea of living to serve.

Waupaca FFA members in east-central Wisconsin organize Farm Fest and Day on the Farm to engage and entertain community members of all ages.

For the Waupaca FFA in east-central Wisconsin, serving others and building a stronger community isn't just a concept – it's a way of life.

One way the chapter accomplishes its goal of living to serve is by organizing and presenting free community events each year, including Farm Fest and Day on the Farm, both of which are designed to engage, educate and entertain residents of all ages.

Taking place during the fall, Farm Fest is a daylong event that draws more than 1,000 people from across the Waupaca community. The 2019 event was held at Turners Fresh Market, where guests enjoyed autumn activities such as hayrides, pumpkin picking, corn maze exploration and gourd decorating. A shuttle took attendees to the nearby Riley Crest Farms, a working dairy farm that offers opportunities for milking cows and goats, and features a petting zoo and educational booths.

"Along with planning Farm Fest with both Turners Fresh Market and Riley Crest Farms and collaborating with them to put it together and make it successful, our chapter promoted the event and did our best to draw as many community members as possible," says Everlah Riley, president of the Waupaca FFA and chair of the 2019 Farm Fest. "We see this event as a great way to share agriculture with Waupaca, and we're proud to be part of it."

Held in the spring and promoting agricultural literacy, the Day on the Farm event gives approximately 180 fourth-graders from the school district of Waupaca the chance to get hands-on farm experience.

According to Waupaca FFA advisor Hannah Waldron, the chapter has organized a Day on the Farm outing for 20 years, with the goal of providing a way for the community's elementary school students to connect with production agriculture in new ways.

"Farm Fest and Day on the Farm are our chapter's biggest community service events each year, and they require our members to put in a significant amount of work," Waldron says. "Our members are passionate about giving back, because they love this community and want to do their part to make sure everyone – no matter what age, background or income level – has access to something fun that will enrich his or her life."

In addition to organizing Farm Fest and Day on the Farm, the Waupaca FFA has helped tend to a community garden that supplied produce to an area food pantry and local senior care facilities, and the chapter plans to continue finding opportunities to give back to the community going forward.

"I continue to be amazed and impressed by our members' selflessness and willingness to volunteer their time and energy for the benefit of others," Waldron says.

– By Jessica Walker Boehm

Photography: Courtesy Hannah Waldron

Living to Serve

Join FFA chapters across the country in our challenge to complete 930,000 volunteer hours by the 93rd National FFA Convention & Expo. Visit **FFA.org/FFA-Challenge-Accepted** to participate.

THE FFA ROOTS OF A GARDEN PARTY

Mary Coombs (left) and sister Dawn Clark.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY IS CELEBRATED IN HUNDREDS OF COUNTRIES AROUND THE WORLD ONCE A YEAR. THESE SISTERS WILL CELEBRATE WITH THE CONTINUED SUCCESS OF THEIR TWO AGRICULTURAL BUSINESSES.

At age 16, many FFA members celebrate the earning of a driver's license, the transition to becoming an upperclassman, or even the earning of their first college credits. For sisters Mary Coombs and Dawn Clark, 16 was the age they found their passion for floriculture and the beginning of a successful career in horticulture. After enrolling in agriculture classes at Woodstown High School in New Jersey, Coombs and Clark competed in the floral design career development event (CDE). After winning the competition, Coombs was offered a job at a local flower shop where she cultivated her passion for entrepreneurship and floral design for the next three years.

"Without the early exposure to this craft during our agricultural education courses, who knows where we would be," Coombs says. "The real-life experience offered through FFA led us to great opportunities at a young age."

Today, the sisters own a full-service floral and event design company called A Garden Party. Together, their business produces more than 100 events per year, and the sisters are known for their from-the-garden approach. Staying true to their agricultural background, they emphasize the importance of using homegrown and locally produced blooms and foraged materials in all of their designs. Recently, this duo opened a new division of the company by renovating the family milking parlor into an events space.

"During high school, we wrote grants and completed applications to help our FFA chapter grow and develop," Clark says. "While in college, we drafted a business plan, which gave us the confidence to launch our company upon graduation. Thirteen years later, our business is still growing and flourishing because we are dedicated to continuing our education and keeping the business fresh and evolving."

As lifetime members of National FFA Alumni and Supporters, Coombs and Clark attribute much of their success to the solid foundation built as FFA members. Through competing in CDEs, acting as leaders in their chapter and pursing their agricultural passion, they learned the value of making a plan, saving money, being patient and working hard.

"Success is born from hard work and staying power that comes with experience and education," Coombs advises. "We used our FFA experience to craft a vision for our life's work. This hit us at such an early age that we had a great advantage starting our businesses young. Out of our eight team members, six of them were FFA members. It can be an influential resume builder!"

– By Bev Flatt

A FUTURE IN FLORICULTURE

Teachers, get lesson plans and classroom resources about floriculture in the Educator Resources section of **FFA.org**. Members, visit **AgExplorer.com** to see what careers interest you.

Photography: Grove Photography

In the Clarksville FFA Chapter, students from very diverse backgrounds share a love of agriculture.

By Jodi Helmer • Photography by Dan Videtich

COME TOGETHER

Members of the Clarksville FFA Chapter include a barrel racing champion and a fledgling cattle farmer who are learning about agriculture and developing leadership skills alongside classmates from countries including Mexico, Thailand, Laos, Vietnam and Albania. As it turns out, most FFA members of the Arkansas chapter are more familiar with growing tropical fruits and vegetables (or have no experience in agriculture at all) than growing cotton and raising cattle.

"We live in a small town, but within our population of 9,000, we have a huge diversity of people and cultures," says Libby Sanderson, the agriculture teacher and FFA advisor at Clarksville High School. "We all learn from each other."

Of the 2,541 students enrolled in the Clarksville School District, 658 students are considered to be active English learners, or students whose first languages are not English. The Clarksville FFA Chapter is recognized as one of the most ethnically diverse in the nation, which creates a rich learning environment with opportunities to foster cross-cultural collaborations and develop understanding and deep friendships.

DESIGNING A DIVERSE CURRICULUM

At the same time students born outside the U.S. are learning about how food is grown and raised here, American-born students are learning about food and agriculture in other countries. The students have gone out to dinner together at several restaurants, sampling carne asada with tortas at a Mexican restaurant and pho, a traditional broth soup, at a Vietnamese restaurant. Even foods served in the school cafeteria were unfamiliar to some of the students.

"Our school lunch program was quite a shock to them," Sanderson recalls. "Seeing a chicken nugget for the first time, when you have not seen chicken in that form, was scary to them."

INGRID ORDAZ, 16, grew up in Mexico and had never tried Vietnamese foods before. She liked the bubble tea but admits that the pho was not her favorite.

For American-born students, the experiences with unfamiliar foods lasted just a few meals. For students such as Maree Voie, Kmwee Paw and Aw Mee, all members of the Karen

ethnic group who grew up in Thailand, living in Arkansas requires near-constant introductions to new foods.

At the Arkansas State Fair, the stands selling pizza, corn dogs, nachos and deep-fried candy bars were overwhelming. Most of the Karen students packed their own lunches, and one student worried he might get diabetes from eating the foods at the state fair.

AW MEE, 18, of the Karen tribe in Thailand, confesses that she didn't like pizza the first time she tried it. "We usually eat rice and vegetables," she says.

Hot peppers are another essential ingredient in Thai food, and students from the Karen tribe like to see how their classmates with sensitive taste buds react to the extreme heat. Sanderson jokes that her Thai students like to sneak hot peppers into foods and offer them to classmates. "When I ask what they want to grow, my students from Thailand always bring in hot pepper seeds," she says.

Clarksville FFA members are also willing to test their taste buds. **EH KA PAW, 17,** counts FFA judging competitions among his favorite and most memorable activities. The event gave the Thai student a chance to sample unfamiliar foods, including cheese.

"Karen people don't eat cheese," he says. "I learned a lot of stuff and had a lot of fun."

CULTIVATING A CULTURE OF LEARNING

Thanks to their differences, **JESSIE GARRISON, 16,** a sixth-generation Arkansas farmer who participates in cattle roping and barrel racing events across the country, thinks the chapter offers more robust opportunities to learn.

"I joined FFA because I wanted to meet different people," she explains. "I think the chapter is special because we can learn so much from other students."

Sanderson developed the curriculum to honor those differences. In lessons about plant science and agriculture mechanics, she invites students to share information about how their families raised animals, grew crops or built and repaired farm buildings and equipment in their countries of origin. Student interests also help guide the lessons.

> "WE REALIZE THAT WE'RE ALL DIFFERENT AND WE DON'T LOOK LIKE THE OTHER FFA CHAPTERS, BUT I DON'T WANT US TO LOOK LIKE THE OTHER FFA CHAPTERS."
>
> – LIBBY SANDERSON

"A lot of the students from Thailand like to hunt and are into conservation; they think Americans waste a lot and they don't like to waste anything," Sanderson says. "I thought, 'We're on to something here.'"

Sanderson transitioned from classes in plant science to a curriculum focused on natural resources. Agricultural education students learn about land use, stewardship, water quality and energy, and the ways their actions influence the natural world.

ISABEL GONZALEZ, 17, signed up to be part of the new Arkansas Stream Team, a program of the Arkansas Game and Fish

CLARKSVILLE: BY THE NUMBERS

The Clarksville School District in Arkansas has a total population of 2,541 students who speak more than 10 different languages at home, including Spanish, Sgaw Karen, Marshallese, Vietnamese, Albanian, Hmong, Gujarati, Filipino and Laotian.

The FFA chapter at Clarksville High School is one of the most diverse in the nation. In the 2019-20 school year, 52 students signed up to participate in FFA, including 10 Hispanic students, 10 Asian students and three African-American students.

Although the students come from different backgrounds and have varied experiences with agriculture, advisor Libby Sanderson says all of the FFA members have one important thing in common: a desire to learn.

"I'm teaching some kids who know a lot about agriculture and some who don't speak a lot of English, but these are kids who come to class in the morning and ask, 'Miss, what are you going to teach us today?'" she says. "They are hungry for knowledge."

Commission that invites citizens to participate in stream and watershed conservation.

"I signed up for the Stream Team because it was a new opportunity and I wanted to see what it was all about," Gonzalez explains. She has already learned how to dissect a crawfish.

Clarksville High School students might tease each other about their food preferences, but among the good-natured ribbing, the teens are learning about agriculture, connecting to the sources of their food, developing leadership skills and making friends.

Left: Agriculture teacher and FFA advisor Libby Sanderson shows Clarsksville High School students how to transplant cuttings. Above: Pa Sei and Alec Remick test water quality at the Clarksville School District Twin Ponds Nature Trail.

LAYKIN WILLIAMSON, 14, runs a commercial cattle business. Although the first-generation farmer raises a herd of 36 registered Angus, she knew that joining FFA would expand her knowledge of agriculture and allow her to develop leadership skills.

"I wanted to join FFA to further my leadership skills," Williamson says. "I wanted to learn to relate to people who come from different backgrounds to learn how what we do [with food and agriculture] is different from what they do, and understand how we can still come together to share our experiences and enjoy agriculture. I've made some good friendships with people who come from different backgrounds, and we're all starting to understand each other."

As Williamson prepared for a Creed speaking leadership development event competition, she decided to ask classmates and FFA members who spoke Spanish and Sgaw, the language of the Karen tribe, to translate the Creed after her reading. The invitation, Sanderson says, reflects the ways that students look for opportunities to weave all of their cultures into FFA chapter activities.

At the Arkansas FFA state convention, students from Clarksville FFA appreciated opportunities to share how the diversity in their chapter enhanced both their classroom learning and their leadership skills. Sanderson encouraged students to be proud of the ways their chapter stood out.

"We realize that we're all different and we don't look like the other FFA chapters, but I don't want us to look like the other FFA chapters," Sanderson says. "I want us to embrace who we are. We're happy to be us." •

WATCH OUR VIDEO

Hover your phone's camera over this code to learn more about Clarksville FFA members.

Wisconsin's Denmark FFA Alumni takes top honors (again!) as the Outstanding FFA Alumni Chapter.

By Jessica Walker Boehm
Photography by Bob Stefko

Seriously **Successful** Supporters

Laying claim to more than 600 lifetime members and nearly 100 associate members, the Denmark FFA Alumni in Denmark, Wisc., is clearly strong in numbers.

However, the chapter's true strength lies in its ability to pull together and serve both Denmark FFA members and its local community, and that's why it was named the Outstanding FFA Alumni Chapter at the 92nd National FFA Convention & Expo in 2019. It's the 14th time the chapter has received the honor to date.

"As alumni members, we want to help our FFA members in every possible way," says Lester Schlies, 2017-18 president of the Denmark FFA Alumni and former member of the Denmark FFA. "We've seen so many young people find their place and their passion as they've gotten involved with FFA – whether that's through speaking contests or working in the greenhouse – and before we know it, they're blossoming into leaders before our eyes. That's inspiring, and it's definitely something worth supporting."

EFFECTIVE FUNDRAISING MEETS QUALITY MENTORSHIP

One of the most important ways the Demark FFA Alumni, currently led by Jeremy Krerowicz, supports FFA members is through fundraising. A substantial portion of the money raised is dedicated to offsetting students' costs of attending regional and national events like the Wisconsin State FFA Convention, the 212° and 360° Conferences, and the Washington Leadership Conference in Washington, D.C.

The alumni chapter's biggest fundraiser is the Denmark FFA Alumni Food Booth at the Brown County Fair. The booth first appeared about 15 years ago, and it is operated by FFA alumni, community supporters and Denmark FFA members who volunteer their time to cook and serve foods like breakfast sandwiches, hamburgers, bratwursts, nachos and cream puffs. In 2019, the booth's total profit was just over $29,000 – all of which will be poured back into the Denmark FFA.

"The food booth has grown by leaps and bounds since it first began, and it's now a huge part of what allows us to continue supporting our FFA like we do," Schlies says. "We couldn't do it without the dozens of people who volunteer to help prepare for the event and to cook and serve the food. I think that shows how much our community believes in FFA and the young people who are part of it."

In addition, the Denmark FFA Alumni has helped fund the creation of the chapter's

Denmark FFA Alumni members in Wisconsin join with Denmark FFA members to make and deliver pizza and fruit for an FFA fund-raiser. The chapter was named the 2019 Outstanding FFA Alumni Chapter.

state-of-the-art greenhouse through a $50,000 donation, and the alumni chapter recently purchased a 15-passenger van for transporting FFA members to and from events and competitions.

"Our alumni chapter is always willing to help us out, and I know I can count on them," says Denmark FFA advisor Mary Handrich. "They help judge speaking contests, provide transportation and support us financially, and that's just a sampling. There's nothing they won't do for us, and we are truly fortunate to have such a hardworking alumni organization."

The Denmark FFA Alumni also awards scholarships to Denmark FFA members pursuing postsecondary education. In 2018, the alumni chapter gave $12,000 to qualifying seniors.

"It feels great to have such a strong support system behind our chapter," says Denmark FFA Vice President Lashawna Vogel. "We receive so much from our alumni members – mentorship, scholarships, assistance with planning our own fundraisers and events – and their help makes it possible for each member of our chapter to reap all the benefits FFA has to offer."

Along with providing financial assistance, the Demark FFA Alumni members volunteer their time to assist with students' supervised agricultural experience projects and help members prepare to compete in career development events (CDEs) and leadership development events (LDEs).

In fact, Denmark FFA President Katrina Hoesly credits alumni and supporter members with helping launch her FFA journey as they coached her to success in Creed Speaking.

"Several alumni helped me prepare for my first Creed Speaking LDE when

"To say our alumni chapter is generous is a complete understatement." - Mary Handrich

I was a freshman," Hoesly says. "Thanks to all of their guidance and advice, I did well, and that kick-started what has been an incredible journey in FFA. I can't thank them enough for all they've done for me."

It's certainly a group effort, but one alumni member has been a perennial leader. Mark Olsen has served as the chapter's dairy judging coach for the past 15 years and was recognized as one of only three National Outstanding Achievement Award recipients at the 2019 National FFA Convention & Expo.

COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTIONS SET EXAMPLE

The work of the Denmark FFA Alumni goes beyond FFA and into the community as a whole.

For example, the chapter purchased and distributed 1,300 cartons of milk and 7,000 dairy promotional materials during two area parades in 2018, with the goal of advocating for the local agriculture industry and showing appreciation for residents' ongoing support of FFA. Denmark FFA members got involved, too, helping pass out milk, cheese curds and other items to parade-goers as a way of expressing thanks.

"We want to give back to our community and thank them for supporting both the Denmark FFA and the Denmark FFA Alumni," Schlies says. "It's important for us to make face-to-face connections with the people who are so willing to share their resources with us."

The Denmark FFA Alumni also engages with the community during events such as the Denmark FFA Alumni Appreciation and Recruitment Party, hosted by the Denmark FFA Alumni Board Officers. In honor of Denmark High School's animal science lab that opened in 2018, the alumni group hosted a grand opening geared toward drawing new FFA members and sharing agriculture with the public.

"To say our alumni chapter is generous is a complete understatement," Handrich says. "Not only have they done wonders for our school's agriculture program, but also they've committed to serving our community in countless ways, and I think that's valuable for the students to see."

All signs point to that generous spirit living on, especially if Schlies has anything to do with it. The former president of the Denmark FFA Alumni plans on continuing to serve as long as he can. He says he can't think of a better cause to contribute to than the Denmark FFA.

"My son, Joe, graduates this year, and he's the last of my four children to be in the Denmark FFA," Schlies says. "But am I finished working with the alumni chapter? Absolutely not. I'm going to stay involved and keep supporting FFA." •

Fundraising is key to the success of the Denmark FFA Alumni. A substantial portion of the money raised by fundraising efforts, such as the pizza and fruit delivery event shown here, is dedicated to offsetting students' costs of attending regional and national events. Alumni have also helped fund a greenhouse, a van and more.

More Award Winners

More than 500,000 FFA Alumni and Supporters work with FFA chapters across the nation each year, volunteering their time and energy to serve as mentors, coaches and chaperones, as well as hosting fundraisers and planning community service events. And that's just a small slice of their many contributions. In fact, most FFA members and advisors say their alumni and supporters play pivotal roles in their chapters' successes and help take them to new heights.

Here are the alumni and supporters who were lauded for their achievements at the 92nd National FFA Convention & Expo.

Outstanding Achievement Award Recipients
- Mark Olsen, Denmark FFA Alumni (Wisconsin)
- Janet Schneider, Campbellsport FFA Alumni (Wisconsin)
- Jodi Hassan, Ohio FFA Alumni Association

Outstanding Collegiate FFA Alumni and Supporters Chapter
Northeast Mississippi Community College (NEMCC) FFA Alumni and Supporters

Largest FFA Alumni and Supporters Chapter
Alpha Gamma Rho Fraternity, 49,518 members

Top 5 Largest FFA Alumni and Supporters State Associations
Texas – 85,971 members
California – 76,507 members
Missouri – 68,456 members
Georgia – 26,493 members
Ohio – 23,270 members

FFA *in the USA*

FROM CAPITOL VISITS TO DUCK RACES, SPRING IS THE PERFECT TIME TO SHOW OFF YOUR FFA PRIDE. READ HOW FFA CHAPTERS ACROSS THE COUNTRY USHER IN THE SEASON. — Compiled by Julie Woodard

ALABAMA

Alabama FFA participates in FFA Day on Goat Hill, where members gather on the steps of the state capitol and meet with the governor and state legislators.

ALASKA

In a show of unity, FFA members around the state don Official Dress for Wear Blue Wednesday and share pics on social media.

ARIZONA

This spring, along with career development events, the Arizona FFA will offer conferences focusing on teamwork, leadership and agricultural advocacy.

CALIFORNIA

Some schools work hard to retain the freshmen in their agriculture programs and host special leadership events in the spring to get freshmen signed up and ready for their next year in FFA.

COLORADO

Plateau Valley FFA raises grass-fed cattle to sell to the community and school cafeteria. The chapter buys cattle from local members so the community can eat FFA-raised beef.

CONNECTICUT

Southington FFA grows more than 500 four-o'clock flowers from seeds in its greenhouse for Michaela's Garden Project, part of the Petit Family Foundation. The plants are then planted in one of the nine gardens statewide.

DELAWARE

Caesar Rodney FFA holds a Blue and Gold Livestock Show for students with disabilities in the district. Showmen are assisted by FFA members and are awarded prizes for their efforts.

FLORIDA

Florida FFA has partnered with the Florida Department of Education to offer FFA memberships free of charge to students in 31 rural school districts.

GEORGIA

The Georgia FFA Foundation will host a fundraising gala in March to support the more than 43,000 FFA members across the state.

IDAHO

Mackay FFA incorporates aquaculture into its curriculum by utilizing its new aquaculture facility. Aquaculture is an important commodity to Idaho, as the state is No. 1 in trout production.

ILLINOIS

In March, for Agriculture Legislative Day, FFA members flood the state's capitol to deliver gift baskets full of agricultural commodities to legislators and to advocate for agriculture.

INDIANA

FFA members speak with legislators on agricultural issues during Agriculture Advocacy Day in March.

IOWA

Osage FFA worked with its subdistrict to host a celebration of women in FFA. Members listened to speakers, participated in workshops and learned how to tell their stories and take opportunities.

KANSAS

Many Kansas FFA chapters provide Aggie Breakfasts for all teachers in their high school to encourage camaraderie.

KENTUCKY

LaRue County FFA dedicated part of its National FFA Week to packing meals for Feeding America-Kentucky's Heartland.

LOUISIANA

Franklin FFA hosts its Barnyard Bash. More than 1,500 young students from 15 schools participate in a day that enhances their ag literacy and Louisiana agriculture knowledge through experiential learning.

MARYLAND

In April, Queen Anne's County FFA members partner with other local and state agricultural agencies to host an Agriculture Awareness Day for seventh-grade students. More than 250 students from four county middle schools learn about careers in ag tech, leadership, grains production, animal science, plant and soil science and aquaculture.

MASSACHUSETTS

Bristol FFA hosts a Spring Expo to highlight ag businesses and organizations. The expo features vendors, animal exhibits, food trucks and live entertainment, as well as student-grown produce, flowers and shrubs.

MINNESOTA

Several chapters organize an Urban Ag Day event where 1,200 fifth-graders are engaged through fun, interactive activities that teach them about where their food comes from.

MISSISSIPPI

More than 600 Mississippi FFA members, legislators, supporters and guests celebrate FFA at breakfast during National FFA Week.

MISSOURI

In January, Missouri FFA officers travel the state for Greenhand Motivational Conferences, facilitating workshops and giving speeches in more than 16 locations to thousands of members.

MONTANA

The Montana FFA Jitterbug Contest is held annually at the state convention. Members show off their swing dance skills to win FFA merchandise and bragging rights.

NEBRASKA

Many chapters volunteer to mow lawns and clean up winter debris for community members in the spring. Ainsworth FFA does this right before graduation to improve the aesthetic value of the community for visitors.

THANK YOU, STATE OFFICERS, FOR PROVIDING NEWS AND EVENTS FOR YOUR STATES.

Images: Westend61, mphillips007, LaInspiratriz, SCIEPRO, Getty Images

NEVADA

Numerous chapters partner with governmental agencies to help with the revegetation efforts of native plants after destructive wildfires.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

New Hampshire FFA started the year with statewide CDEs in dairy showmanship, dairy judging, forestry, horticulture and forages. These competitions were held at a local fair and the University of New Hampshire.

NEW JERSEY

Cape May Tech FFA members are building osprey nests to help grow the birds' populations. Once the nests have been built, they will be placed in local marshes.

NEW MEXICO

Each year, state officers establish a legacy platform. This year's platform, "Take the Step," is centered on opportunities available to each member within ag. Members take to social media to share how they #TakeTheStep toward improvement in personal growth, agricultural endeavors, community involvement and other areas.

NEW YORK

In April, FFA Camp Oswegatchie will hold its annual Adironduck Race when 1,000 rubber ducks will be raced down a river to support the capital campaign, the camp's building project.

NORTH DAKOTA

North Dakota FFA raised more than $50,000 and worked with 1,000 members to package up to 200,000 meals that will be distributed to more than 200 food pantries throughout the state.

OHIO

A.B. Graham Ohio Hi-Point FFA has been busy thanking everyone in its high school. From giving cupcakes to custodians to passing out ice cream to bus drivers, these members have shown their appreciation to the people working hard for them every day.

OKLAHOMA

Oklahoma FFA partners with Food Banks of Oklahoma to support Oklahomans who are food insecure. To support the backpack program, FFA members donate livestock projects to be turned into meat sticks.

PENNSYLVANIA

Members interested in state office can attend Regional State Officer Candidacy Schools, where they learn from current state officers about what an officer does and the interview process.

RHODE ISLAND

At this year's state convention in April, members will build a fire to resemble the convention theme, "Stoke the Fire, Ignite the Change."

SOUTH CAROLINA

Each spring, FFA chapters across the state bring their finest plants, flowers and shrubs to the South Carolina Statehouse to show off their prized plants to the legislature.

TENNESSEE

David Crockett FFA hosts an annual plant auction to raise money for chapter activities. The auction raises an average of $6,000 each year and features up to 1,000 plant specimens.

TEXAS

Nestle Waters North America and Ozarka Bottled Water Company reached out to Hawkins FFA to start a bee apiary on their 3,000-acre property in Texas. The goal is to attract the bees away from the bottling facility to the fields that have an abundance of natural springs. Scan this code to read more!

UTAH

How do you spell *springtime*? For members of Salt Lake Tech FFA, it's P-U-P-P-Y L-O-V-E. With spring comes the welcoming of new pups into their thriving guide dog program.

VERMONT

Vergennes FFA hosts local preschool and elementary school students in May for a fun morning of animals, agriculture activities and SAE displays.

VIRGINIA

Virginia FFA will host six area rallies where members can showcase their skills and knowledge by participating in CDEs and LDEs at the local level. In some parts of the state, members will participate in Food for America and donkey basketball.

WASHINGTON

The fifth annual Little Farmers Ag Classroom state service event will be held during state convention in May. More than 300 area third- and fourth-graders will learn about the state's top nine commodities.

WISCONSIN

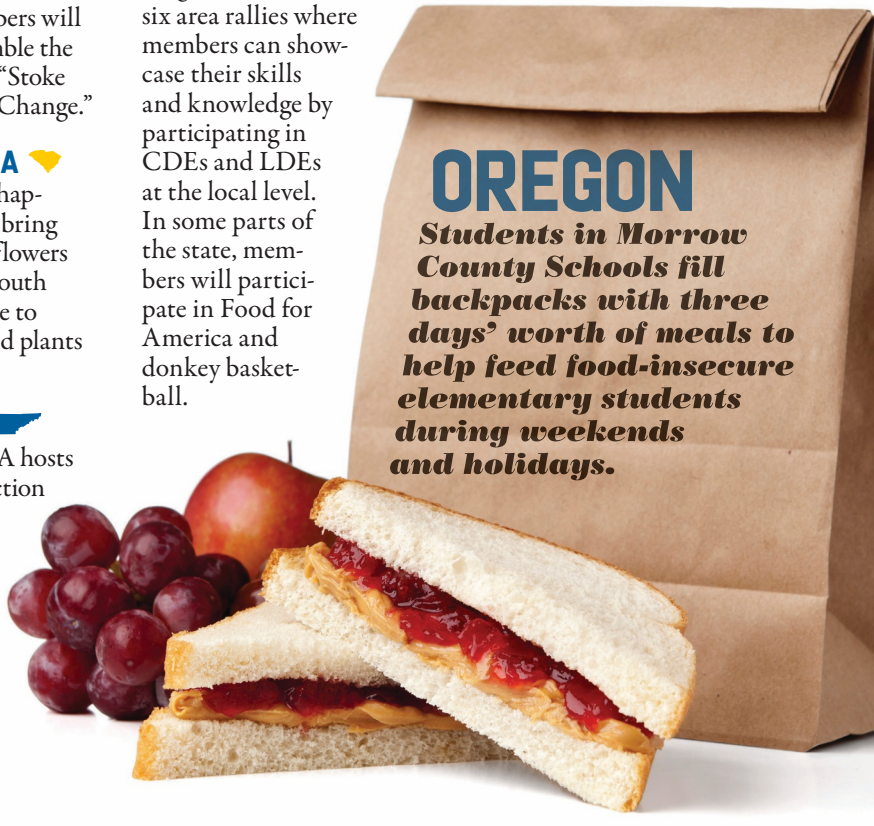
Wisconsin FFA hosts an EDGE (Experiencing Discovery, Growth and Excellence) Conference for more than 250 junior high and middle school members to learn how to develop and maintain a positive outlook on life, deal with negative peer pressures and motivate themselves and others.

WYOMING

The Greybull FFA Chapter works together with a local special education program to care for the local Buff Ranch, which includes two greenhouses, a barn, a shop, a tractor and classrooms.

OREGON

Students in Morrow County Schools fill backpacks with three days' worth of meals to help feed food-insecure elementary students during weekends and holidays.



MEMBERS, SUBMIT YOUR CHAPTER UPDATES AT FFA.ORG/SUBMIT-YOUR-STORY.

Michele PAYN

Michele Payn has created a thriving career in the agriculture sector that's far from typical, and it all started with FFA when she was a farm girl growing up in Michigan. Today, she is an entrepreneur, author and speaker who is a passionate advocate for global agriculture, as well as a wife and mother whose daughter is carrying on her legacy in FFA.

On the RECORD

Q: WHEN DID YOU BECOME INVOLVED IN FFA, AND WHAT ARE SOME OF THE HIGHLIGHTS FROM YOUR EXPERIENCE?

A: I started my FFA journey as a high school freshman when I joined the Litchfield FFA. I earned the American FFA Degree and served as the 1988-89 Michigan FFA state secretary. As an adult, I worked for the National FFA Foundation as a regional director across 15 states – so it's safe to say I love FFA and all that it stands for.

Q: WHAT LED YOU TO START CAUSE MATTERS CORP. IN 2001, AND WHAT HAVE YOU ACCOMPLISHED WITH THE COMPANY?

A: My goal has always been to connect farm and food at causematters.com, and I've done that by writing three books: *No More Food Fights!, Food Truths from Farm to Table* and *Food Bullying.* I also share my message as a professional speaker and recently launched the Food Bullying Podcast.

Q: HOW DID YOUR FFA EXPERIENCE HELP PREPARE YOU FOR YOUR CAREER?

A: The blue and gold jacket gave me my voice. I went from being a young girl who couldn't stand in front of her peers without crying when asked to speak to competing in the Greenhand Public Speaking Contest at the Michigan FFA state convention. When I competed in a Prepared Public Speaking Leadership Development Event later in my FFA career, I realized I wanted to be a professional speaker.

Q: WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE STUDENTS ABOUT PURSUING THEIR OWN CAREER PATHS AND FINDING SUCCESS?

A: No matter which industry you're in, it's important to understand that leadership is more than a title, award or even being the loudest voice. At its core, leadership is about impact and influence; those who can influence others are typically the best leaders and can make the greatest impact.

Q: HOW DO YOU RECOMMEND THAT FFA MEMBERS MAXIMIZE THEIR TIME IN THE ORGANIZATION?

A: Don't limit yourself. Take advantage of every opportunity available to you because that's how you'll grow as an individual and help make FFA even stronger. The harder it is for you to do, the greater the opportunity to grow.

– By Jessica Walker Boehm

> "AT ITS CORE, LEADERSHIP IS ABOUT IMPACT AND INFLUENCE; THOSE WHO CAN INFLUENCE OTHERS ARE TYPICALLY THE BEST LEADERS AND CAN MAKE THE GREATEST IMPACT."
>
> – MICHELE PAYN

Photography: Courtesy Michele Payn

Ag Angle

MACADY HAWS

LOCATION: Erda, Utah
FFA CHAPTER: Former member, Grantsville FFA
WEBSITE: macadyhaws.com

It's clear that the all-female officer team from the Stansbury FFA Chapter radiates love for each other and for FFA. One of the greatest things about FFA is that it provides the opportunity to form lasting relationships, just as these young women have done, and that was something I wanted to display. FFA has played a huge role in my life, and I am forever grateful to the women who came before me who paved the way to acceptance and inclusion of females within the organization.

SHARE YOUR AG ANGLE WITH US! It's as simple as completing the submission form at **FFA.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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