

HERE'S TO OUR HISPANIC MEMBERS

THIS ARIZONA FFA CHAPTER CELEBRATES THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF HISPANIC MEMBERS YEAR-ROUND.

Although the North American Association for National Hispanic Heritage Month is Sept. 15 through Oct. 15, there's no better time than the present to celebrate the growing population of Hispanic FFA members. Hispanic farmers represent a growing sector of agriculture in the United States, and Hispanics are the largest group of minority FFA members. In the 2018-19 school year, the National FFA Organization included more than 100,000 Hispanic

members, representing 14.8 percent of its membership.

The AAEC South Mountain High School FFA Chapter in Phoenix works hard to make sure all of its members, parents and alumni and supporters feel included and valued. More than 82 percent of students at the school come from Hispanic families, and 75 percent of the chapter's FFA officer team is Hispanic.

In 2018, the chapter adopted a bilingual FFA opening ceremony, vowing to

always perform its opening ceremonies and slideshows at its banquet in both Spanish and English going forward. There are two students at each office – one speaking Spanish and one speaking English. Advisor and guest speeches at the banquet are also delivered in both languages.

"We found many of our families are more comfortable with Spanish, and we noticed that while parents would attend our events, they were often lost

as to what was happening and didn't understand why their child was being recognized," says Kevin Norris, the agricultural education teacher and co-advisor for AAEC South Mountain FFA. "It became our goal to ensure every parent and alumni and supporter had a seat at the table and felt included."

To learn more about National Hispanic Heritage Month, visit HispanicHeritageMonth.org.

— By Jessica Mozo

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