



2014 FFA CHAPTER SUCCESS GUIDE

Stories from Model of Excellence, Model of Innovation and Outstanding Middle School Chapter Finalists and Winners

Models for Success Read how these 46 FFA chapters developed a well-planned and well-executed Program of Activities.



Model of Innovation: Student Development



Model of Innovation: Chapter Development



Model of Excellence



Model of Innovation: Community Development



Outstanding Middle School



CONGRATULATIONS

National Model of Excellence, Model of Innovation
and Outstanding Middle School National Finalists.

Like you, we believe in the future of agriculture.

That's why we're proud to be the National FFA Foundation's longest-running sponsor. Feeding a growing global population requires leadership, critical-thinking skills and collaboration – traits FFA chapters teach every day.

John Deere and FFA – working together since 1944 to prepare the next generation of agricultural leaders.



Plotting the Course to the National Chapter Award Program

An FFA chapter's Program of Activities is a road map that helps to chart the year's events. Chapters build their POA around three major areas called "divisions" – student development, chapter development and community development.

The purpose of the National Chapter Award program is to encourage chapters to develop and use a POA. Each year at the National FFA Convention & Expo, National Chapter Awards are presented to chapters that have successfully planned and met the objectives established in their POA.

National Chapter Awards

In order to qualify for a national award, chapters must first receive a Gold ranking at the state level. A state's top three Gold ranked chapters (or a number equal to 10 percent of the state's total number of chapters, if that number is higher than three) are eligible to compete at the national level.

National-level judging for national awards is held during the summer, when all eligible chapters are rated as Three-Star, Two-Star or One-Star. Each chapter that competes for a national award receives a multi-year plaque and a spur designating their star rating. Chapters that receive Three-Star ratings are eligible to compete for the following awards.

Model of Excellence Award

High school chapters that receive Three-Star ratings during the National Chapter Awards evaluation are also eligible to compete for the Model of Excellence Award.

Based on the overall score of their application, encompassing activities in all three divisions – student, chapter and community development, that was judged during the summer, 10 chapters are selected as finalists for the Model of Excellence Award.

At the national convention and expo, the finalists go through a presentation/interview process – scores from summer judging do not carry forward at this point. Each of the 10 finalists receive a plaque and a cash award dependent upon available funds.

The chapter selected to receive the Model of Excellence Award is announced on the main stage during the second session of the national



convention and expo. This chapter receives an additional plaque.

Model of Innovation Award

Chapters that receive Three-Star ratings during the National Chapter Awards evaluation are eligible to compete for the Model of Innovation Awards. For these awards, judges look for chapters whose activities have the following characteristics: new and different; unique; something old with a creative twist; a step above the ordinary.

Based on the innovativeness of the activity that was judged during the summer, 30 chapters – 10 in each of the three divisions: student, chapter and community development – are selected as finalists for the Model of Innovation Awards.

At the national convention and expo, the finalists go through a presentation/interview process – scores from summer judging do not carry forward at this point. Each of the 30 finalists receives a plaque and a cash award dependent upon available funds.

The top-rated chapter in each division is announced as the Model of Innovation Award winner on the main stage during the second session of the national convention and expo. Each of the three winning chapters receives an additional plaque.

National Outstanding Middle School Chapter Award

Middle school chapters that receive Three-Star ratings during the National Chapter awards evaluation are eligible to compete for the National Outstanding Middle School Chapter Award.

Based on the overall score of their entire application, encompassing activities in all three divisions – student, chapter and community development, that was judged during the summer, five middle school chapters are selected as finalists for the National Outstanding Middle School Chapter Award.

At the national convention and expo, the finalists go through a presentation/interview process – scores from summer judging do not carry forward at this point. Each of the five finalists receives a plaque and a cash award dependent upon available funds.

The chapter selected to receive the National Outstanding Middle School Chapter Award is announced on the main stage during the second session of the national convention and expo. This chapter receives an additional plaque.

All chapters receiving top recognition from the National FFA Organization are those that have identified goals and objectives, created workable plans, and also learned from their activities.

The finalists and winners of the Model of Excellence Award, the Model of Innovation Awards and the Outstanding Middle School Chapter Award for 2014 are presented in this guide along with their unique stories about how they pursued and accomplished their goals.

BEST of the BEST

Model of Excellence

Goreville FFA of Illinois
Marion FFA of Illinois
Pontiac of Illinois
Spencer County FFA of Kentucky
Ponchatoula FFA of Louisiana
Marshall FFA of Missouri
Troy FFA of Missouri
Felicity-Franklin FFA of Ohio
Oilton FFA of Oklahoma
Yelm FFA of Washington

Model of Innovation: Student Development

Oakleaf FFA of Florida
Emanuel County Institute FFA of Georgia
Madison County Middle School FFA of Georgia
Wilbanks Middle School FFA of Georgia
Marysville FFA of Kansas
Academy for Sciences and Agriculture FFA of Minnesota
Kerkhoven Murdock Sunburg FFA of Minnesota
Elgin FFA of Ohio
Felicity-Franklin FFA of Ohio
Oilton FFA of Oklahoma
Kamiakin FFA of Washington

Model of Innovation: Chapter Development

Chicago High School of Agriculture Sciences FFA of Illinois
Cissna Park FFA of Illinois
Scott County FFA of Kentucky
Pearl River FFA of Louisiana
Franklin FFA of Nebraska
Ridgemont FFA of Ohio
Nation Ford FFA of South Carolina
Bradley Central FFA of Tennessee
Weimar FFA of Texas
Yelm FFA of Washington

Model of Innovation: Community Development

Goreville FFA of Illinois
Shenandoah FFA of Indiana
North-Linn FFA of Iowa
Marmaton Valley FFA of Kansas
Ponchatoula FFA of Louisiana
Troy FFA of Missouri
Franklin FFA of Nebraska
Humphrey FFA of Nebraska
McCook Central FFA of South Dakota
Whites Creek FFA of Tennessee

Outstanding Middle School

Altha Middle FFA of Florida
Fort White Middle School FFA of Florida
Lincoln Middle FFA of Florida
Oakleaf Middle School FFA of Florida
West Jackson Middle School FFA of Georgia



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Outstanding Middle School



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 global agriculture, food, fiber and natural resources systems.

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.

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Appreciating Unique Potential

Model of Excellence Winner - **Ponchatoula FFA, Louisiana**

The Ponchatoula FFA Chapter in Louisiana works each summer to create a plan for the year so everyone in the chapter and community can experience activities that enhance personal growth by appreciating diversity and unique potential.

“We assign a committee chair for each category in the National Chapter Award: student, chapter and community,” Kendra Keen, the chapter advisor, said. “It is easy to integrate classroom learning with service-learning and FFA activities; the tricky part at times is making sure our different activities touch on student SAE (supervised agricultural experiences) interest areas throughout the year.”

As affirmation of the relationships that are built through the FFA Buddy Program, a special partnership was formed between FFA members and mentally and physically challenged students who teamed up to train for the Special Olympics. The chapter works to recruit all types of students and give everyone a job and feel valued within the agricultural education program.

“The chapter is always tweaking activities and deploying new ones based on community needs,” Jaci Cooper, a sophomore and vice president of the chapter interested in opening her own vet clinic, said.

“Our projects make a big impact; we know this based on the reaction we get. For exam-

ple we go into the kindergarten classroom and teach them about health and nutrition. They learn so much,” Joshua Isttolito, a junior and secretary of the chapter, said. The chapter has a service committee consisting of students, community members, a principal and alumni. This committee evaluates community needs and reports ideas back to the chapter officers, Keen added.

Another activity with the community in mind was Teen Driver Survivor. During this event participants were challenged to go through a timed obstacle course on a scooter. They then went through the course again while they were distracted by their phones.

“This activity made a big impact on me,” Isttolito said. “I just got my license and now understand how picking up my phone for a few seconds can cause you to miss 100 feet of the road. You don’t know what could be in that 100 feet.”

The chapter also hosts a Greenhand week that gets Greenhands involved and makes them feel at home in the chapter. “As a Greenhand I remember it so clear and loved every minute of it,” Isttolito said. “It was a week of celebration; the chapter officers and upper-classmen made us feel so important and valued as chapter members. I’ll never forget it.”



Standing Out in the Community

Goreville FFA, Illinois

Concerned over growing childhood obesity, members of the Goreville FFA Chapter in Illinois researched possible answers to the problem and presented to elementary students. One of their solutions is "Smiles for Miles." During this exercise challenge, students walked an hour a week for 14 weeks. Throughout the activity, classes logged more than 10,000 miles.

In addition, members worked with fifth grade students to bring attention to bullying and how standing together, students can help eliminate the threat of bullying. The FFA chapter assisted the school district in developing a curriculum to define bullying, the effects of bullying and how to prevent bullying at school and through social media.

FFA members also served as mentors to students in junior high, helping guide students with interests in specific career development events. The members helped students understand CDE areas and plan to assist them in getting involved when they enter high school.

Reaching out to the community, the Goreville FFA worked with Blessings in a Backpack to provide 10 food items for 36 weeks to families that have trouble putting food on the table. Every week a group of 10 FFA members would stay after school to organize, bag and load food items to be distributed to students within their school.



Growing Success

Marion FFA, Illinois

Marion FFA in Illinois conducted two plant sales to provide competitively priced products to the community while raising funds for the chapter and promoting FFA. The sales also allowed members to hone their skills in agribusiness, sales and marketing.

Along with the local FFA alumni chapter, members had the opportunity to use 20 acres of farmland to plant a farm plot. The plot allowed members to interact with alumni while learning about modern production techniques and agribusiness careers that support production agriculture. The chapter also hosted a new event to promote agriculture- and STEM-related careers.

The alumni also partnered with the chapter to host a scholarship review night. Local alumni partnered with senior FFA members to proof-read essays, review scholarship applications and prepare for scholarship interviews.

Past surveys completed by Greenhands have shown two important factors in their involvement: knowing a current or former member and visits by chapter officers to eighth grade classes. Marion FFA officers presented to all eighth grade students, exposing them to the activities and benefits of agricultural education and FFA. These visits positively affected their enrollment numbers the following year.

Building Leaders Via Ag

Pontiac FFA, Illinois

The Pontiac FFA Chapter in Illinois developed a program to provide non-officer members an incentive to develop their leadership and scholarship skills. Through this program, the chapter hopes to groom the next generation of leaders for the chapter.

In addition, the chapter worked to market the agricultural education program to incoming high school freshman by informing them about the Pontiac Agricultural Education Program and FFA chapter through informational presentations during freshman orientation. As a result of the recruitment, 70 members joined in 2014.

Creating awareness on the health benefits of physical activity, Pontiac FFA deployed a year-long program to keep track of all calories burned during the activities. They were able to burn nearly 262,000 calories, which is the equivalent of 75 pounds of fat.

FFA members also built "Ag Peers in Action," a monthly program to spread agricultural literacy. Members developed skill-appropriate curriculum to educate students with mild to severe cognitive and physical disabilities. Eighteen agriculture-themed lesson plans were created.



Focused on FFA

Spencer County FFA, Kentucky

Knowing that entering high school is a difficult transition, members of the Spencer County FFA Chapter in Kentucky decided to make the transition a bit easier through "Freshman Focus Activities." Each month the chapter held events focused on freshman members to build relationships that help members become more self-aware.

The chapter also partnered with the school's popular dance team to offer an FFA dance. Members reached out to community members to participate and encouraged the community to pay the admission fee to attend the event. The committee secured 31 community "celebrities" to attend, including the local sheriff, magistrates and high school administrative staff.

The chapter gave back to the community through "Chili for Charity." FFA members held a chili cook off, and the money raised was used to buy gifts for those in need during the holiday season. Another way the chapter serves the community is through an "Ag Commodity Breakfast." They invited local leaders and residents to enjoy a breakfast focusing on Kentucky commodities.



It's Better to Give

Marshall FFA, Missouri

The Marshall FFA Chapter in Missouri set out to promote the well-being of each member, and in order to do so, they conducted sessions that taught members CPR, basic first aid and accident responsiveness. More than 50 FFA members attended the "Safety First" program.

In addition, to build relationships with the community, the chapter hosted and facilitated the "Alumni Agriculture Skill/Knowledge and Assessment Event." Members worked with local community and industry leaders to develop and maintain positive relationships at this event, which hosted more than 1,300 FFA members.

FFA members displayed their talents and employability skills during trap shooting, public speaking, SAE showcase and bake-off events. In addition they hosted a lock-in where teamwork skills were developed.

"It's Better to Give" is a set of activities designed by Marshall FFA to improve the welfare and well-being of the community. Members helped in three distinct ways: raised a monetary donation for the Special Olympics, donated to a member's family following a fire and created homemade games to be given to an elderly home.

Crusading for Agriculture

Troy FFA, Missouri

Members of the Troy FFA Chapter in Missouri developed a series of agriculture exposure tours and experiences that showcased Missouri's agricultural career opportunities while promoting career success within the chapter. The "Exploring Careers in Agriculture Crusade" informed 96 chapter members about career opportunities.

Members also wanted to raise awareness of the importance of agriculture among younger students; they utilized the "Nutrients for Life" curriculum to educate more than 500 elementary school children about the impact soil nutrients play on our food supply.

Partnering with their alumni, the chapter organized a two-day rodeo to support the American Cancer Society and subsidize the chapter's scholarship fund. Spectators and cowboys wore pink to support the men and women fighting cancer.

Another way Troy FFA positively affected the community was through a "Veteran's Day Celebration." The chapter enthusiastically honored veterans for their service in the military and helped the community understand and appreciate American freedoms.



Here's to the Future

Felicity-Franklin FFA, Ohio

The Felicity-Franklin FFA Chapter in Ohio promoted students' involvement and growth through agriculture-related facility tours and career development activities such as the job interview contest, providing members with new opportunities to increase their career-readiness and strengthen confidence in themselves.

They continued to grow themselves by hosting a Felicity FFA "U R More" girls' empowerment night. Seventy-nine girls in grades eighth - 12 attended and were shown ways to boost their peers' self-esteem and their own self-image.

The recruitment committee also held an eighth grade "Ag Olympics" to promote FFA and encourage future participation in the chapter. Current members served as facilitators to the fun, but competitive, activities.

Agricultural literacy activities helped the public become better informed about the food system at a farm day hosted by the membership. The educational day benefited 570 visitors who toured 20 agricultural stations.

"Felicity FFA Harvest for America Food Drive" helped members learn about the needs in their community and improve the welfare and well-being of those around them. Through this service-learning project members built character and promoted citizenship, volunteerism, and patriotism.



Rockin' and Rollin' for FFA

Yelm FFA, Washington

Members of the Yelm FFA Chapter in Washington wanted to recruit and educate new members; what better way to do that than by holding an “FFA on Tour”? This program consisted of five workshops that targeted different aspects of becoming an FFA member. Separate sessions were held for students and parents. Ninety percent of those who attended then became members.

The chapter also raised money for the year through their annual FFA plant sale. The four-day sale generated more than \$20,000, while teaching members valuable horticulture skills, marketing strategies and sales techniques.

“Rock’n’Roll Rumble” was an activity designed to develop teamwork among members and challenged both their physical and mental skills. Teams rotated through seven timed events, with the lowest total combined time winning. The rumble established member bonds and well-being.

With assistance through the FFA: Food For All Grants, Yelm FFA donated 2,269 pounds of fresh produce to the local food bank. The campaign was kicked off by a 5K run/walk that provided 2,230 cans of food to also be donated. Members took an active role in all aspects of the project and promoted the campaign at the county fair and local home and garden show.

A Wii Bit of Fun

Oilton FFA, Oklahoma

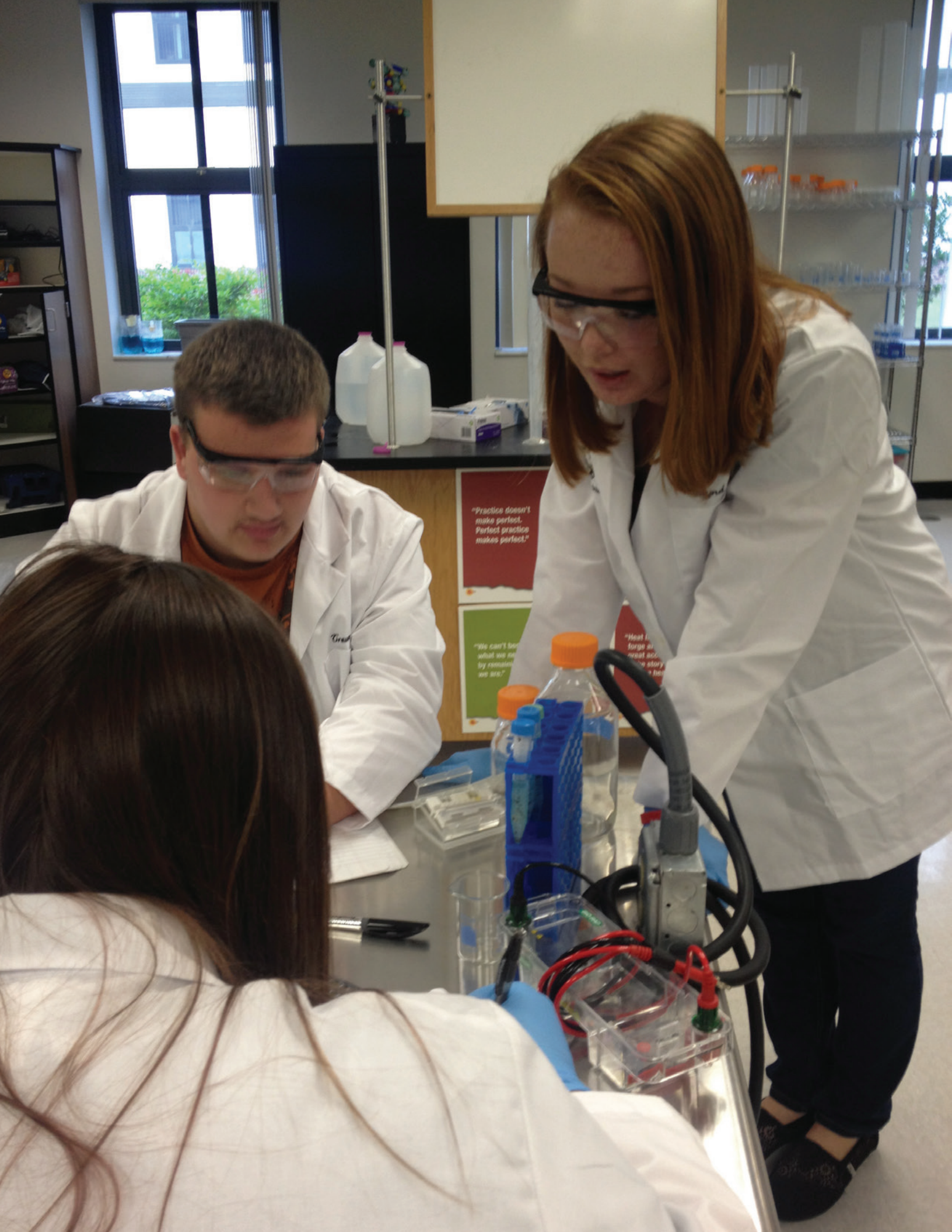
Members of the Oilton FFA Chapter in Oklahoma wanted fellow students to realize the dangers of texting and driving, so they held a “Wii Mario Kart Tournament” where students raced their cars while texting. The students soon realized how difficult this was, and it brought awareness to the dangers of texting while driving.

To engage members, the chapter hosted a CDE and SAE Fair. During the fair, students visited 15 stations, each with an education board explaining the setup of the event as well as careers related to the contest area. The stations also included a mini contest for students to compete and win prizes. Students then evaluated each of the CDE areas and determined which fit their interests.

As a way to reach out to younger students, members hosted an FFA petting farm during National FFA Week. Students in kindergarten through eighth grade learned how to handle livestock during a show and then tried it for themselves.

With an alarming poverty rate in the community, FFA members educated the public on ways to produce their own food. Utilizing an FFA Food For All Grant, the chapter raised broilers and laying hens as well as produced vegetables in the garden. Hosting educational workshops and donating the food helped the chapter close the gap of the community needs.





Lab Coating Ceremony

Student Development Winner - **Oakleaf FFA, Florida**

Oakleaf High School in Florida offers a Plant Biotechnology Academy, and the FFA chapter has initiated a unique way to recognize FFA members who made the grades to be part of the academy.

William Donaghy, FFA president and district secretary, is a member of the academy. "Two of last year's officers attended a U.S. Veterinarian Coating Ceremony with our agriculture educator. They came back with the idea to initiate students into the program with an official ceremony." Donaghy plans to attend college and major in agricultural education.

Since biotechnologists wear lab coats in the industry, it was decided to have a lab coating ceremony for those second-year FFA academy members who have taken the agriculture foundations class, before they are eligible for their first biotechnology course.

The event is open to the community; school board members, the superintendent, administrators, parents and alumni were in attendance. The high school principal had the honor of "coating" the members.

The ceremony is "a great tool to make students feel like they are part of something bigger than themselves and part of one unit," Cooper Thornton, a junior and chapter reporter who plans to major in turf management, said.

In the lab students are always wearing their coats and showing pride in the program and science. Donaghy and Thornton hope the chapter continues the ceremonies each year and challenges themselves to innovate other activities and events that are just as impactful.



Yaking for FFA

Emanuel County Institute FFA, Georgia

Members of the Emanuel County Institute FFA in Georgia wanted to learn about the history of Georgia State Parks as well as how to become physically fit. They were able to achieve this through kayaking around the George L. Smith State Park and Mill Pond.

In addition, they picked up trash around the pond area, giving back to the community while they were “Yaking for FFA.” Participants explored lessons around natural resources and how important it is to keep the community and world pollution-free.

FFA members secured funding for the trip by selling raffle tickets. After the trip 20 members joined FFA and many decided to join the student development committee to help plan future activities to involve more students in community events.

Coasting to a Healthy FFA

Madison County Middle School FFA, Georgia

To help promote a healthy lifestyle, the Madison County Middle School FFA in Georgia rented the Skate Inn for more than two hours. This activity allowed students to have an effective cardiovascular workout and provided strength training to build endurance. Roller skating uses almost every muscle in the body. Because it's indoors, it was a great winter activity.

The rink staff gave the members a brief training on the benefits of skating and demonstrated the proper techniques on how to lace and tie skates and assume the right body posture while skating. In total the chapter estimated they burned 40,000 calories while having fun at an FFA meeting.



Recipe for Success

Wilbanks Middle School FFA, Georgia

Wanting all FFA members to have the opportunity to try locally grown fresh fruit and vegetables, the Wilbanks Middle School FFA in Georgia hosted “A Taste of Fresh Food.” Once a month, local farmers committed to bringing fresh fruit and vegetables for members to try. Twenty-three parent and community volunteers conducted the monthly taste tests.

Local farmers provided enough food for each student to try a sample once a month. They also created a recipe book, “Cream of the Crop,” at the end of the year, compiling all of the recipes prepared for the students. The booklet can be accessed through the school’s website and hard copies are available at the school’s front office.



The Great Pumpkin Contest

Marysville FFA, Kansas

Marysville FFA in Kansas created the “Great Pumpkin” project to offer SAE opportunities to members. Pumpkin plants were started in April, and at the end of May, all plants were given to FFA members and eighth graders with a challenge of who could grow the largest pumpkin.

The chapter wanted to encourage eighth graders to get involved in FFA though the contest. Their efforts paid off; 65 percent of the eighth grade class joined FFA as freshmen. The contest was a great way for members to apply what they learned in class while taking care of their pumpkins and gaining insight into other SAE possibilities.



In the Name of Science

Academy for Sciences and Agriculture FFA, Minnesota

Members of the Academy for Science and Agriculture FFA in Minnesota wanted to help improve the underclassmen's understanding of the agriscience fair. To do so they developed a science fair mentor program. The program helped students understand how different elements of their research applied to a scientific report and display.

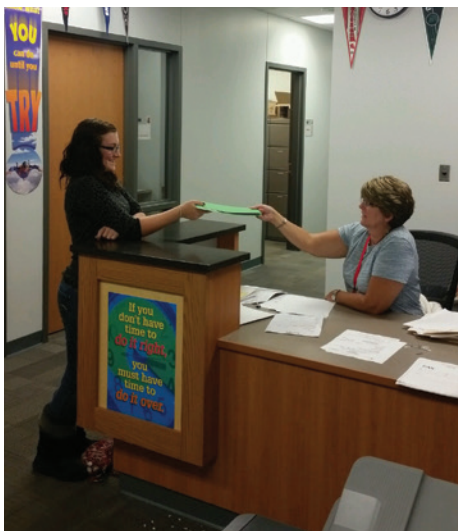
Each mentor was assigned two underclassmen. The program resulted in higher quality science fair projects and provided a unique experience for the development of relationships between novice and experienced FFA members. The chapter hopes to continue the mentor program and get even more students involved as they grow and develop the rigor of their agriscience fair.

Friday Fun with Agriculture

Kerkhoven Murdock Sunburg FFA, Minnesota

Members of the Kerkhoven Murdock Sunburg FFA in Minnesota wanted to get their fellow students engaged in agricultural activities. Their solution? "Friday Fun with Agriculture." Every other Friday, the members held an agricultural-themed activity during the lunch hour. These activities engaged the student body physically and mentally.

One such activity was a cookie race. To educate about agriculture, the chapter posted facts about chocolate production around the school and in the daily bulletin. These facts created positive buzz around the school about that day's lunch activity. During the cookie challenge, students were timed on how long it took them to get a cookie from their head to their mouth without using their hands. The winner received a T-shirt.



Model Behavior

Elgin FFA, Ohio

The Elgin FFA Chapter in Ohio wanted to help the freshman class live up to their potential as leaders. To help achieve that, they wrote a script to promote good behavior and recruited upperclassmen to perform the skit.

The chapter then worked with students to complete five team building activities that emphasized cooperation. FFA members led by

example and demonstrated the importance of employability skills and being respectful. They also facilitated teamwork skills to be used inside and outside the classroom. The chapter felt confident in making a positive impact and plans to continue the series of activities with any other classes struggling with behavior issues.



U R More

Felicity-Franklin FFA, Ohio

Members of Felicity-Franklin FFA in Ohio wanted to encourage girls' self-worth. To do so they created the "U R More" girls' empowerment night. Seventy-nine girls in grades eighth - 12 attended. Demonstrations were centered on boosting their peers' self-esteem as well as their own self-image.

Each guest received a hand-made, personalized invitation. RSVPs were gathered one week prior to the event. The evening consisted of a fashion show, dinner, speaker and door prizes for all attendees. Girls were encouraged to provide positive comments to peers to help boost self-esteem and encourage each other to positively redefine their own self-image.

Don't Text and Drive

Oilton FFA, Oklahoma

Knowing that more than 60 percent of teenagers text and drive, members of Oilton FFA in Oklahoma brought community awareness to the problem. More than 50 percent of the chapter members will be receiving their driver's license in the next two years.

To educate students on the dangers of texting and driving, the chapter hosted "Wii Should Not Text and Drive." Students participated in a Wii Mario Kart tournament where they had to send three text messages during the course of the race. Students then discovered how difficult it was to steer the car while sending a text message.

Some students shared personal stories about texting and driving accidents. The activity served to increase awareness and instill good habits in students all while helping them stay safe behind the wheel.



Iron Works

Kamiakin FFA, Washington

Members of Kamiakin FFA in Washington co-hosted a statewide metal art competition to allow students to demonstrate skills and raise funds for Washington State FFA Foundation. Members had six hours to create a project from conception to finish. Money raised from the sale of the products went to the state foundation.

The chapter reached out to businesses to support the competition; they received monetary support and items to be given as prizes.

The project provided a means for students to learn and evaluate their teamwork and metal-working skills. The chapter benefited from the promotion of the shop classes and metal sales within the community.



Pig Races

Chapter Development Winner - Nation Ford FFA, South Carolina

Members of the Nation Ford FFA Chapter participated in the South Carolina Strawberry Festival in Fort Mill to advocate and raise awareness and funds for the South Carolina Multiple Sclerosis Society.

In the children's area of the festival, members interacted with the festival attendees, sharing facts and information about the hogs and hosting pig races and getting the crowd involved.

"The pigs were paid for by sponsors who donate money to help raise them. This project brought in a lot of community support, from a talk radio show to real estate agents," Lee Petitgout, the chapter advisor, said.

All the profits from the festival, beyond what it cost to raise the eight hogs, were donated to the society.

"The gentleman who is the director of the strawberry festival came to us with the idea of the pig races. He thought it would be a good way to raise money for our chapter," former chapter member Courtney Petitgout, now a sophomore at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College, said. The chapter decided not to keep the money for themselves.

"He has been our biggest supporter since our chapter began six years ago," Courtney add-

ed. "We wanted to find a way to give back. His wife suffers from MS, so we thought what better way than to honor her."

"We donated the money earned from the pig races to support MS research and everyone who has the disease," Dalton Taylor, a former chapter member and a sophomore at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College, said.

"Because we are a young chapter, being recognized in the community is a great way to tell we are impacting it," Courtney said. "We really are doing something to make a name for ourselves. This national recognition is also a great recruitment tool. The fact that we can say to potential recruits that we were recognized on a national level, members who are just like them, members of FFA who worked hard. Nothing spectacular got us to where we are today, just hard work."

"I know we make a difference by the way our programs affect the community. We aren't in a big agricultural area, but we see the community's growing appreciation for agriculture every time we go out to do something," Taylor said.



Better Ways through Better Days

Chicago High School of Agriculture Sciences FFA, Illinois

Members of the Chicago Agriculture Sciences FFA Chapter in Illinois designed a living history museum called “Better Ways through Better Days” to show members and teachers the importance of agriculture throughout the years.

The event was designed to occur during National FFA Week and included 10 agriculturalists from history and the contributions that they made. Chapter officers took on the roles of agriculturalists such as John Deere, Henry Wallace, Norman Borlaug and George Washington Carver. In doing so they practiced public speaking and improvisational skills.

The event impacted 656 members of the chapter and collaborated with their social studies classes. The chapter was able to practice their writing and research skills.

Hall of Ag Fame

Cissna Park FFA, Illinois

The Cissna Park FFA Chapter in Illinois wanted a way to honor those who have made a contribution to agriculture on the local level. As a result, they created the Agricultural Hall of Fame and welcomed 15 members into the hall of fame last fall. Members were selected for being strong former members or supporters of the FFA program, as well as playing a key role in agriculture.

The inductees were honored with a special ceremony and presented a plaque. Their picture is also featured on a new permanent display in the high school and in the Crescent City Community Center. The ceremony was attended by more than 300 FFA and community members, resulting in increased FFA alumni membership and monetary donations to support the active chapter.



Spreading the Word on FFA

Scott County FFA, Kentucky

Members of the Scott County FFA in Kentucky wanted Scott County residents to know the impact of FFA in their community. By developing an FFA literacy campaign during National FFA Week, they educated the public about the local FFA chapter using an eight-page insert in a local newspaper.

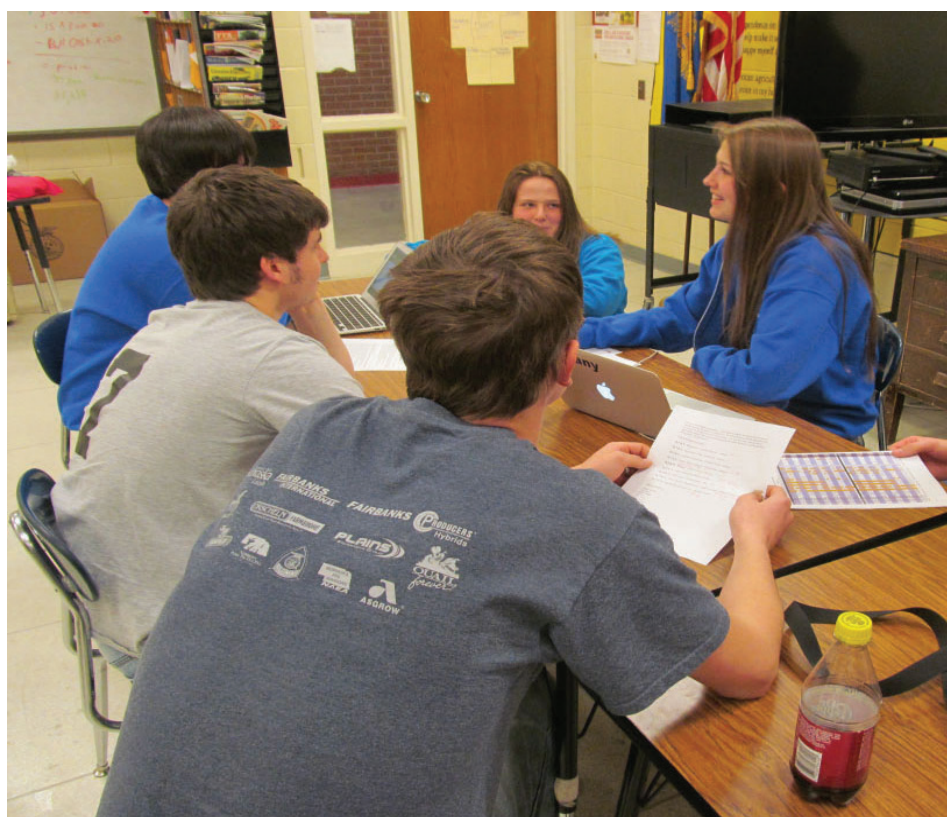
FFA members wrote and edited the feature articles and provided accompanying photos. Working with the local paper, members called and secured more than 20 sponsors to advertise in the insert. With more than 14,000 subscriptions to the paper, they were able to spread the word about all the great things the chapter does to develop students and benefit the community.

Spicy Success

Pearl River FFA, Louisiana

Four years ago members of the Pearl River FFA Chapter in Louisiana developed a dry rub to be used in the meat center. This past year the executive committee decided to begin paying members' dues whenever possible, enabling all agriscience students to benefit from FFA. They took the success of Rebel Rub and began selling it retail and wholesale to make money.

The certified Cajun rub can now be found in six local grocery stores as well as on Amazon. Generating a lot of good press for the chapter, it has been featured on the local news, Internet and in Rouse's sale circulars. In the process, members have honed skills in food development, business skills and marketing.



Pods of Leaders

Franklin FFA, Nebraska

Members of the Franklin FFA Chapter in Nebraska wanted to ensure that every member of the chapter was feeling included and gaining leadership skills in FFA. To achieve this, they created the chapter pod system. This system pairs chapter officers with select chapter members who are then responsible for various chapter activities.

The chapter created four groups and assigned different activities from the Program of Activities to each of those groups. They also created a points system for each group to earn. Each month the points for each group were posted in the agriculture room and the FFA secretary announced the trip-winning pod at the chapter banquet. This system helped officers identify problems, potential strategies to solve problems and implement effective solutions.

Bridging the Gap

Ridgemont FFA, Ohio

Members of the Ridgemont FFA Chapter in Ohio worked with The Ohio State University to train chapter members in “The BRIDGE: Issue Analysis Process.” This training taught students methods to analyze issues, determine solutions, create action plans critical to today’s workforce and foster connectivity in their communities. They learned to design new strategies to develop and maintain positive relations among FFA members, parents, community leaders and industry.

A grant allowed all junior and senior members to attend the training; a couple members then facilitated the BRIDGE process for the Wyandot County Young Professionals. The training yielded four new strategies for the chapter to pursue as they worked to build relationships and connect to the community.



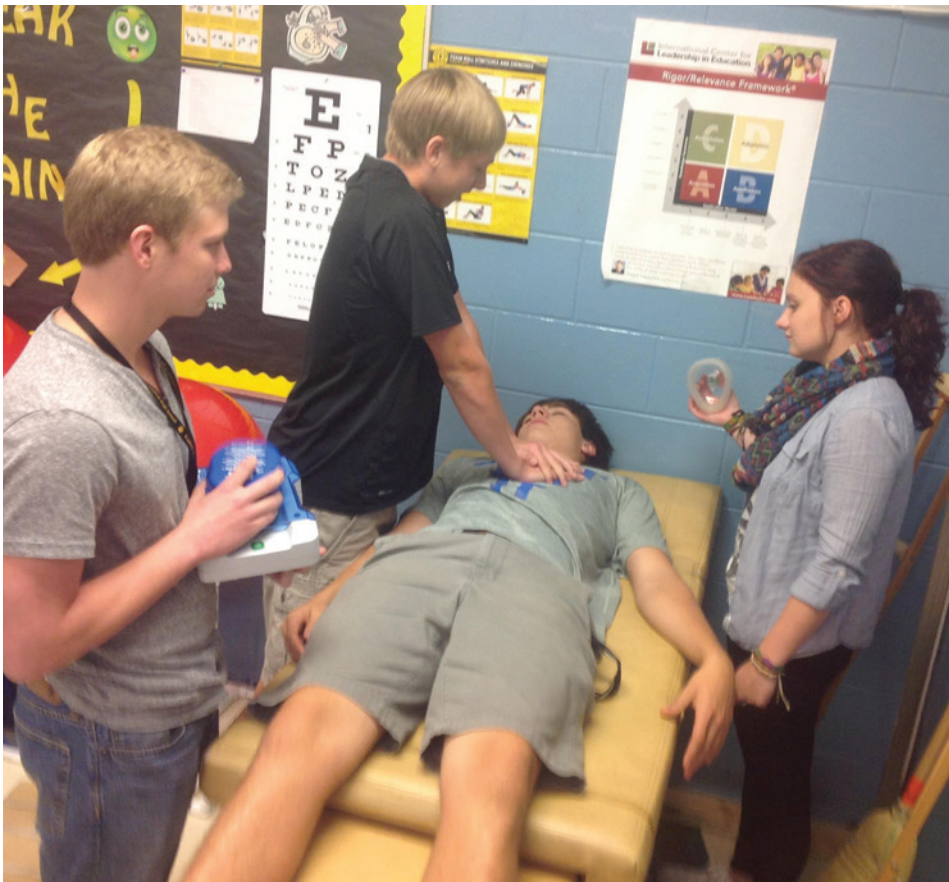
CARE and First Aid – FFA Style

Bradley Central FFA, Tennessee

Working with other career and technical student organizations, members of the Bradley Central FFA Chapter in Tennessee participated in CARE and First Aid—FFA style. CARE stands for compress, airway, rescue breathing and external defibrillation.

The goal was to increase the number of Bradley FFA seniors with first aid certification for 2014, as well as increase the percentage of students graduating who can be workplace responders and professional rescuers. Working with Health Occupations Students of America and Skills USA, almost 40 students were instructed in life-saving skills.

These skills are a valuable asset to FFA members as they gain employment in the diverse and sometimes hazardous industry of agriculture. Next year they hope to involve more Bradley CTE student organizations.





FFA Day of Service

Weimar FFA, Texas

Members of the Weimar FFA Chapter in Texas left behind a sense of service and compassion in Dallas, the host city of their state convention. The chapter sponsored a Weimar FFA state-wide day of service. They contacted agencies and three agreed to work cooperatively with members to develop sites and opportunities suitable for the age demographic and given timeframe.

While developing and participating in this day of service, FFA members gained an appreciation for the vast amount of agencies that must work together behind the scenes to keep a city running. Texas FFA members volunteered at three agencies—Mission Arlington, The Salvation Army and the North Texas Food bank—providing more than 1,900 volunteer hours.

Fast Pass to Membership

Yelm FFA, Washington

The Yelm FFA Chapter in Washington provided students and parents a fresh look at the benefits of FFA membership. They developed a membership card to serve as a visual representation of FFA membership benefits and a recruitment tool. This \$20 resource known as the “Backstage Pass” lists FFA activities that are free to members and incentive discounts valued at \$105.

As a result the chapter gained a more active membership and an additional 46 members, which made serving a larger population and providing more services to the school and community possible. The chapter plans to continue offering the pass in future years with modified activities based on the POA to engage and appeal to a wide variety of students.





An Evening in the Old West

Community Development Winner - **Shenandoah FFA, Indiana**

Members of the Shenandoah FFA in Indiana have a passion for working with those who are disabled. They planned a prom for these individuals, and in doing so created an opportunity for FFA members to interact with the disabled members of the community.

“Throughout the school year it takes the entire chapter to pull off these events,” Melissa Lovett, the chapter advisor, said. “In class we learn about how to be a leader and the members put it into action, organizing and executing all of the activities. For this activity we take the people skills and put them to use, helping the developmentally disabled of the community have a good time.”

When asked to describe the event, Sydnee Kirby, now a freshman at Ball State University, said, “It is more of an experience; you have to be there to understand. You have to see their faces when they walk in, hear them sing along to every word coming out of the speakers.”

“I can tell you, I was changed when I attended for the first time,” Nathan DeYoung, also a freshman at Ball State University, said. “It brought me a whole new perspective to what I do, how the developmentally and physically

disabled are looked at, even avoided, and not treated the same as you and me. It gives me a new level of respect to them as individuals.”

“It is amazing to talk with the members after the event as we clean up, discussing what they experienced and then seeing them truly changed. They talk about how amazing it was to help or to dance with the developmentally disabled, it brings a new sense of respect to life,” Lovett said.

“We live in a small community so we know everybody and we can reach out to meet our communities needs and the surrounding communities,” said Kirby. “Our community will never be let down by Shenandoah FFA.”

The chapter applied for a county grant, collected private donations and contributed money from their fruit fundraiser to put on this event.

Lovett shared that they are planning to host another event with the developmentally disabled community members in the spring. “We want to continue to strengthen the bonds of friendship they have made.”

Where Heroes Walk

Goreville FFA, Illinois

Many members of the Goreville FFA in Illinois have served in the military over the years, and the chapter sought to recognize their service. This goal resulted in the “Where the Heroes Walked” display. The chapter sent home information sheets with each student in the school district. They requested a picture and the form to be filled out about a family member or friend who served in the military.

There were more than 50 photos and information sheets returned. The veterans ranged from World War I to Iraqi Freedom and were recognized for their service on a wall in the school. Nineteen of the submitted veterans were former FFA members. The project brought respect and recognition to everyone who served in the Armed Forces.



Dollars for Dogs

North-Linn FFA, Iowa

Members of North-Linn FFA in Iowa decided to make a difference in the lives of servicemen and women who are suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder and mobility issues. The chapter planned fundraisers for Paws and Effect, an organization that provides service dogs to military personnel suffering from PTSD.

The chapter's program, “Dollars for Dogs,” constructed dog houses and auctioned them off along with donated pies; the proceeds were sent to Paws and Effect. In addition, 53 fleece dog toys were made by the members, which were used in training the service dogs. Paws and Effect used their Facebook page to thank the North-Linn chapter members for their diligence in conducting the fundraising activities.



Red, White and Blue Pride

Marmaton Valley FFA, Kansas

The Marmaton Valley FFA in Kansas promoted a sense of pride for the men and women who serve our country with a flag retirement ceremony. This event was conducted by the VFW, National Guard and enlisted FFA members. It increased the understanding within the student body and community of the importance of retiring an American flag and an appreciation for those who serve.

The ceremony was conducted in the common area of the school. The flags were presented and the Color Guard led the procession outside for the burning of the flags. A serious sense of reflection from the student body was witnessed by the community. The ceremony retired more than 75 flags.

Saving the Environment

Ponchatoula FFA, Louisiana

With their school district sitting on Louisiana wetlands, members of the Ponchatoula FFA in Louisiana established a wetland plant nursery. Here they planted and raised more than 450 Louisiana native trees. Members planted these trees in a coastal habitat restoration location identified by Louisiana State University Ag-Center representatives.

The location was chosen because it had been over-harvested, and erosion threatened a local neighborhood. Members participated in restoring native paddlefish and wetland trees, making a positive contribution to Louisiana's environment and becoming empowered to continue their efforts to improve the environment. Students gained horticulture skills, such as growing tree seedlings in a can yard, and aquaculture skills, such as examining water quality and fish biology.



A Veteran's Day to Remember

Troy FFA, Missouri

Members of the Troy FFA in Missouri demonstrated their appreciation for the men and women serving in the military through their "Veteran's Day Celebration." The ceremony recognized each veteran who was present, while a few shared their experiences in the service.

The chapter's Greenhands were responsible for the production of this elaborate school assembly. Sixty-three veterans attended the celebration. They were welcomed with a standing ovation and presented a certificate and lower, symbolizing that they'll never be forgotten.

The proceeds from the ceremony ticket sales allowed the chapter to sponsor a community member to attend an "honor fight" for his courageous service as well as provided more than 200 canned food items to the local food pantry.



Lending a Helping Hand

Franklin FFA, Nebraska

Members of the Franklin FFA in Nebraska partnered with the local 4-H community for the "Holden Bruce Benefit." Together, the organizations raised money to cover surgery needed for Holden, who was suffering from a three-time recurring malignant brain tumor.

The two organizations held a silent auction, T-shirt sales and a donation baked potato bar to raise money. Several items in the silent auction brought in more than \$1,000. This project was an incredible showcase of teamwork; the benefit was organized from start to finish in less than a month. The benefit brought together the community and school, showing members the importance of being generous to others in need. The chapter is happy to report that Holden is doing fine, with no recurrence.

Tech Collecting

Humphrey FFA, Nebraska

To ensure that unwanted and non-functioning electronics are disposed of properly, members of Humphrey FFA in Nebraska held an "Electronics Collection." Members helped unload, sort and load items into trailers.

FFA members included interesting electronic recycling facts in an article that was published in the local paper and on the school website two weeks prior to the collection day. The event was a success, with three 20-foot goose-neck livestock trailers being filled with more than 400 electronics to be recycled.

The chapter and community continue to benefit from this activity year after year as they educate the community and help to keep electronics out of landfills.



Life-Saving Kits

McCook Central FFA, South Dakota

Working with their student council, members of McCook Central FFA in South Dakota made a winter survival tote for every high school student. These totes held materials necessary to survive if stranded during a winter storm, along with instructions on how to properly use the items in the tote.

The chapter received two grants to assist in making purchases for the survival totes. They packaged a total of 110 kits for distribution. The chapter brought in the County Emergency Director, who spoke at an all-school assembly about how to properly use the kits to potentially save lives. These kits gave parents and staff a little peace of mind while their children travel during winter months.



From Soybeans to Biodiesel

Whites Creek FFA, Tennessee

After making biodiesel from soybeans, the members of Whites Creek FFA in Tennessee drove across the state. Using their mobile alternative energy laboratory and the school's truck, the chapter stopped at two schools to teach students about alternative energy sources. They also made a media stop where they were greeted by two media outlets and the Metro Board of Education.

The chapter received the soybeans from an FFA alumni member. They processed the soybeans in their alternative energy class, making 22 gallons of biodiesel.

The chapter was featured in both state and national television news outlets and was honored with the Governor's Environmental Stewardship Award for their efforts in making biodiesel and educating FFA members across the state.



Service and Sacrifice

Outstanding Middle School Winner - **Altha Middle FFA, Florida**

Altha Middle School in Florida was chartered just five years ago, and this was the first year they filled out a National Chapter Award application. “We decided that we really wanted to make an impact on our community and a name for ourselves,” agriculture educator Erin Walker said. “Many in our small chapter and community don’t have agricultural experience. We try to plan things that will benefit them the most.”

Chapter members hosted a career day to inform students about agriculture. Along with posting flyers around the campus, members dressed as agriculturalists on career day. This research and demonstration project allowed students to gain further insight into a wide variety of agricultural careers.

Graham Brunner, an eighth grader and treasurer of the chapter, said his favorite community activity is Service and Sacrifice. “During this program we honored veterans in the community and affected community members of all ages with 17 veterans in attendance and over 200 elementary students participating in a coloring contest.

“We honored veterans and were able to teach elementary school students citizenship,” Brunner said. “The day had a lasting impact on me as well.”

Brunner hopes to run for a district office in Florida next year and expand his boundaries

of reach in FFA and one day serve as a state officer.

To serve the school, members worked to create a paper recycling program. Recycling containers were placed in key areas and emptied by members once a month. By the end of nine weeks, the chapter had recycled more than 200 pounds of paper.

Max Scott, also an eighth grader, enjoys organizing Farm Day, another service to the community. “It is really unfortunate that most elementary students don’t know where their food comes from; food doesn’t magically appear at the grocery store. Someone has to work hard to produce it,” Scott said. During this activity FFA members discuss with young children where their food and fiber resources come from.

Scott, like many eighth graders, hasn’t decided what he wants to pursue as a career. He hopes to continue in FFA, and then, with the help of his advisor and parents, decide on a career path.

“Each year we try to do a little more, see what didn’t work and tweak the activities,” Walker said. “Our goal is to support our school and community; we work hand-in-hand with the high school chapter. Our chapter sparks an interest in our students and enhances participation in the high school chapter.”

Wonderful Works

Fort White Middle School FFA, Florida

Members of the Fort White Middle School FFA in Florida know that students face peer pressure each day concerning alcohol and drug abuse. This past year, they participated in “Red Ribbon Week,” where they challenged fellow students to take a drug-free pledge. The campaign resulted in 350 students writing their names on a star and placing it on a banner, pledging to be drug- and alcohol-free.

In the community, FFA members shared information via different stations on “Water Wonder Saturday.” The chapter offered participants experiential learning demonstrations on how fertilizers, pesticides, oils and other chemicals can contaminate our ground water.

The chapter spread agricultural literacy throughout the school by creating and displaying agricultural history posters in the library. The project allowed students and faculty members to learn about inventions that have directly impacted lives.

Working with their alumni, members prepared a Florida agricultural facts poster to be placed in the livestock barns at the Columbia County Fair. The chapter also partnered with many other groups to celebrate National FFA Week by hosting an agriscience department breakfast, decorating the school and planning a “Fear Factor” competition between FFA members, Health Occupations Students of America and the student government association.



S'More Good Deeds

Lincoln Middle School FFA, Florida

Members of the Lincoln Middle School FFA in Florida worked with a local retirement community to help start small, urban garden plots for the community's residents. Members also taught a two-hour garden seminar to the residents.

To help create a more diverse chapter, members planned a variety of activities that helped students understand diversity, improve communication to non-traditional members and create a culture of tolerance and anti-bullying. They had chapter guidelines, forms and resources translated into Spanish, resulting in Hispanic membership increasing by 167 percent.

Another recruitment campaign, “S'Mores for More” was created to celebrate the first semester benchmarks and fuel the spring membership campaign at a time of year when momentum normally plummets. Old, new, and potential members munched on s'mores and hot dogs as they mingled with FFA alumni.

Determined to hone their gardening skills and increase partnerships within the community and the industry of agriculture, the chapter hosted a “Garden Gala,” a Saturday festival focusing on how to grow food on less land, proper and safe use of plant nutrients, and healthy lifestyles.



All in for FFA

West Jackson Middle School FFA, Georgia

Wanting all members to participate in supervised agricultural experiences, the West Jackson Middle School FFA in Georgia provided several after-school work days so FFA members could get in needed SAE hours. This was especially important for members who live in subdivisions and are unable to have a traditional SAE.

Creating custom wreaths was the biggest chapter fundraiser; most wreath sales happened during peak holiday times, but the chapter also created wreaths for various occasions such as baby showers, football season, and local school spirit. The chapter also provided wreath-making classes. Community members who attended obtained new skills and connected with other participants.

To highlight the work of the chapter, a reporter's book was compiled that included published newspaper articles, newsletters and online publications. This book served as a way to keep members, parents and supporters informed. The compilation was also entered at the division level and went on to be judged at state.

As part of the horticultural unit and a way to give back to the community, members created floral arrangements that were then delivered to a local assisted living facility, brightening the day of many residents.

Give Back the FFA Way

Oakleaf Middle School FFA, Florida

Using choosemyplate.gov, members of the Oakleaf Middle School FFA in Florida developed a workshop that explained the importance of healthy eating and how to make healthy food decisions.

To help in the local community, members partnered with the local farm bureau to promote agricultural awareness while collecting food for the local food pantry throughout February. Breakfast with Santa was a success because of the chapter's partnership with FFA alumni, offering attendees breakfast and pictures with Santa. Each child was given a book to promote literacy in the community.

Oakleaf FFA members volunteered at Veteran's Farm, a land lab where veterans learn to plant

crops and use farming as therapy to cope with life after serving in the military. The training also provides veterans with a form of income as they sell their produce. Members helped clean up the farm and prepare for the next planting season, along with veterans and volunteers.

To educate students on conservation and composting, FFA members made commercials for the school news and sent flyers home to the families in the community to promote the importance of recycling and composting. To demonstrate, they used a compost bin in the school garden with a collected supply of food left on students' trays.



Achieving Success

National FFA staff, judges, advisors and others involved in the selection process for national awards and recognition offer these valuable suggestions:

1. Follow the developmental process outlined in the 2012-2016 National Chapter Award Program handbook, which is online at www.FFA.org. Identify measurable and realistic goals. Develop an educational plan that meets the chapter's goals. Evaluate the results and member benefits. Include information on how the activity affected members, the chapter, the school and the community.
2. Include facts about the percentage of members that participated and accomplishments.
3. Keep a file of activities and notes on areas for improvement within each activity. Students can use this information for Program of Activities planning.
4. Take note of ideas that spring to mind when completing the application. Jot down these ideas to use during the next POA planning session.
5. Ask an English teacher or someone you trust to edit your application. They'll learn more about FFA, and you will submit a better application.
6. Don't attach information or materials not requested.
7. Review the application carefully. Follow the instructions carefully. Please use the FFA award application folder as loose pages may be lost.



Eight Steps to Development

Award-winning FFA chapters develop a strong Program of Activities, which emerges from a process and structure involving every member in setting chapter goals. Once the goals are set, activities are planned and carried out.



1. Organize standing, executive and special committees to address areas of student, chapter and community interest and development. Each member serves on at least one committee.
2. Each committee identifies goals and activities related to its purpose/area.
3. Committees present their selected activities, including estimated income and costs, to the entire chapter.
4. Approved activities and a combined chapter calendar of events are published in a written program of activities and distributed to members.
5. Committees and sub-committees develop detailed plans for each activity.
6. Members implement the plans.
7. Committees report results and evaluate the activities. They prepare written final reports for each activity, noting costs, income, accomplishments and recommendations.
8. Chapter leaders refer to the POA and its results to prepare and application for the National Chapter Award program.

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