

New VISIONS



The Official Newsletter of the National FFA Alumni Association

Volume 14, Issue 1 • March 2009



Update—National Task Force Strategic Goals

In December 2008, the National FFA Alumni Association gathered approximately 30 individuals, representing a cross section of all Team Ag Ed organizations, for a task force meeting. Their objective was to identify topics or areas the association should review in determining its future direction and its ability to meet these two long-range strategic goals:

Strategic Goals

Goal 1: Every FFA chapter has an active and fully engaged FFA Alumni affiliate at the local level by 2020.

Goal 2: Become leaders in advocacy for agricultural education by 2020.

Task Force Items

Task Force members created 11 initiatives at that initial meeting. Themes were revealed from those original initiatives. National FFA Alumni leaders and staff will now be addressing the following task force items:

1. Data Collection and Research

- Developing a universal database
- Reevaluating traditional association structure, themes, titling “Alumni,” etc.
- Identifying and creating member benefits

2. Marketing of the FFA Alumni Association

- Teacher education programs and local agricultural education programs
 - Exploring integrating FFA Alumni in agricultural teacher education curriculum
 - Developing/brainstorming resources for agricultural educators/communities
- Advocacy
 - Developing strategies and resources for local, state, and national
- General promotion and branding of the FFA Alumni Association
 - Creating resource materials for the purpose of recruiting, retention, and teacher/program support
 - Creating structure of support for local affiliates by strengthening state associations
 - Providing an implementation plan with marketing strategies and materials for the new FFA Alumni

For more information on these strategic goals and initiatives, contact J. Frank Saldaña at fsaldana@ffa.org.

Alumni Newsletter Goes Electronic March 31, 2009: Sign Up Today!



The National FFA Alumni Association newsletter *New Visions* will be offered as an e-newsletter beginning March 31, 2009. If you would prefer to receive the newsletter electronically, please submit your e-mail address to alumni@ffa.org; include *New Visions* e-Newsletter in the subject line. This can also be done by indicating your preference and providing an e-mail address on your membership roster. Remember Blue and Gold make green!

Calendar 2009

Important Dates to Remember
Dates listed are when items must be postmarked to the National Office.

March 31

- Alumni newsletter goes green! E-newsletter now available (participation info on this page)

April 1-June 1

- State Leaders Conference registration open

May 15

- Rosters and dues to qualify for awards and delegate counts
- Legion of Merit applications

July 1

- Local Program Support Grant applications
- Outstanding/Pioneer Affiliate, Outstanding State Affiliate, Outstanding Achievement, Affiliate Newsletter, State Newsletter, Affiliate Website, State Website, and National Distinguished Contributor applications and Scrapbooks
- National FFA Alumni Council nomination applications

July 15

- Auction items to appear in promotional catalog

July 15-18

- State Leaders Conference, Montrose, CO

October 21-23

- Alumni Silent Benefit Auction, Indianapolis, IN

October 22-23

- Alumni Convention, Indianapolis, IN

October 23

- Alumni Live Benefit Auction, Indianapolis, IN

Please visit the FFA Alumni website at www.ffa.org/alumni to download updated award applications. Send requests for forms to pmcdonald@ffa.org or phone 317-802-4332 to have forms mailed via the U.S. Postal Service.

ROUND TABLE

How Young Alumni are Fulfilling the Alumni President's Theme

Interview Discusses the First Segment "Say It"

National FFA Alumni staff member Lucy Whitehead interviewed Jessie Geib for this segment.

Lucy: As an FFA Alumni member, how do you stay involved with FFA in your daily life?

Jessie: The best way I found to stay involved is to let state staff, agriculture teachers, and students know I WANT to help. So often people feel they shouldn't ask for help, so members need to inform these groups that they are willing to help in any way they can. They need to be prepared to share their strengths and interests. By providing my interests or prior experience, I can give leaders a better idea of when to ask for help. Members should not be shy, but express their willingness to help everyone. Many times students come to me to ask for help on a career development event (CDE) or an interview, or to discuss their future choices in the FFA. Let them know you want to help!

Meet Jessie Geib

Jessie Geib is from DeSmet, SD. She was involved in FFA in high school and college, and served as a 2005-2006 national FFA officer. She attended South Dakota State University in Brookings, SD, where she graduated with a degree in Animal Science in May 2008. She currently resides in her hometown where she works on her family's ranch.



"The best way I found to stay involved is to let state staff, agriculture teachers, and students know I WANT to help."

— Jessica Geib

Lucy: How do you share your message with a non-FFA audience?

Jessie: Without even trying, I seem to end up talking about the benefits of FFA and agricultural education with people. Our educational system has challenges. Many solutions offered follow the same format or idea that we already use in agricultural education and FFA. When discussing issues, I try to bring out these correlations. People are impressed with all that students do in our three-part model of instruction, leadership, and experience programs.

Lucy: How are you currently engaged with FFA?

Jessie: I have helped coordinate the stage and practices leading up to South Dakota FFA convention. It is harder to help now that I am farther away and working full-time, but I still answer questions or provide reassurance. I assist the state association with various activities, including judging events, state officer training, and business and industry tours. I assist with the DeSmet FFA Chapter area CDE competitions every spring. I also try to assist with CDE preparation and attend the chapter banquet. If given the opportunity, I speak about my FFA experiences and what it has given me.

Interview continued on page 3



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FFA Alumni *New Visions* is prepared and published quarterly by the National FFA Alumni Association as an affiliate of the Future Farmers of America in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Education as a service to state and local agricultural education agencies.

Vision

The vision of the National FFA Alumni Association is a world where people and communities grow and develop to their fullest potential.

Mission

The mission of the National FFA Alumni Association is to secure the promise of FFA and agricultural education by creating an environment where people and communities can develop their potential for **premier leadership, personal growth, and career success.**

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Editorial and Production Consultant:
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National FFA Alumni Council Members

Visit www.ffa.org/alumni for contact information and a photo to identify members of the 2008-2009 National FFA Alumni Council listed below:

Sam Atherton, KSPresident
Diane Amara, WIPresident-Elect
Ronnie Ansley, NCPast President
David A. Miller, MDEastern Region Representative
Bob Barton, ORWestern Region Representative
Joy Carter, GASouthern Region Representative
Dan Classen, IACentral Region Representative
Steve Olson, MNMember-At-Large

Anita Schneider, KSMember-At-Large
Brady Revels, FLPast National FFA Officer
Jamie Cecil, COPast National FFA Officer
Kimberly Henderson, ALNational FFA Representative
Emma Davis, NCNational FFA Representative
Dr. John Ricketts, GAAAAE Representative
Chip Bridges, GANASAE Representative
David A. Black, KYNAAE Representative



“Say It, Do It, Live It” at the 2009 National FFA Alumni Benefit Auctions

Wondering how you can implement the three steps of this year’s theme? One way to start is by supporting the National FFA Alumni Benefit Auctions!

Say it: Help spread the word!

The National FFA Alumni Association annually raises thousands of dollars for student Washington Leadership Conference and collegiate scholarships, but it would not be possible without donations and bidders. Encourage your friends, family, FFA chapter, and colleagues to support the FFA and touch the lives of students from across the country. Invite everyone to participate either by donating an auction item or bidding on one. Auction bidding no longer requires you to be physically present at national FFA Alumni convention. Now anyone can participate in the live benefit auction via the Internet!



Do It: Donate and bid yourself!

Your personal involvement in the auction will result in increased revenues and additional support, regardless of whether you are a winning bidder. This annual event will be held from October 21-23 at the national FFA convention in Indianapolis, IN. The live auction will simultaneously be broadcasted via the Internet, so watch for further details on how you can participate in the auction from the comfort of your home!

Live it: Actually “Live It” by hosting your own benefit auction in your state or affiliate!

Remember this important date!

Donation forms received by July 15 will be included in the benefit auction promotional catalog.

Visit www.ffa.org/alumni to download a donation form and to obtain additional auction information, or contact alumni@ffa.org or 317-802-4294.

Guaranteed Income for as Long as You Live

One way to ensure that you never run out of income is to establish a gift annuity. In exchange for a transfer of cash or securities, the FFA will agree to pay a fixed sum of money to you (or to you and another person) for life. Those payments, which are backed by the assets of the FFA, will continue for as long as you live—even if you are one of the fortunate few who reach or live past 100 years of age.

Your payments will not decrease during times when interest rates fall and the stock market declines. While you can outlive the income from every other kind of investment, you cannot outlive the money you receive from an annuity. Because of distribution requirements, you may eventu-

ally exhaust your IRA or other retirement fund, but an annuity keeps on paying. Even more, if it is a gift annuity, it continues to work after you are gone by advancing the mission of FFA. To help with your planning, National FFA Foundation staff would like you to send you a free booklet, *Ways to Give*. To request your copy, contact the foundation office at 317-802-4297 or bdonahue@ffa.org. For more information, visit the foundation website at www.ffa.org and click on the “Foundation” button in the navigational bar.

NATIONAL FFA FOUNDATION



Outstanding Middle/Secondary School Ag Ed Program Winners



This award sponsored by the National FFA Alumni Association recognizes middle/secondary agricultural education programs that are members of the National Association of Agricultural Educators. After completing an application and winning state, regional, and national level competitions, these teachers were recognized for having some of the nation's best programs. FFA Alumni members can nominate their teachers for the award. Alumni leaders are shown here presenting the 2008 winners with their awards (L-R): National FFA Alumni Past President Ronnie Ansley; National FFA Alumni President-Elect Diane Amera; Steve Vernier, teacher, MT; Jacob Larison, teacher, KS; Keith Gundlach, teacher, WI; Lyle Whittaker and Jay Shepherd, teachers, MO; Spring Brindley, Tim Bradford, and Jennifer Snoddy, teachers, TN; Tara Berescik, teacher, NY; and National FFA Alumni President Sam Atherton.

Interview continued from page 2

Lucy: How are you fulfilling the first segment of this year’s theme: “Say It”?

Jessie: I help out monetarily, and not just with my own money! Many of my friends and colleagues have allocated money to spend on youth development activities. I encourage them to sponsor FFA events and thank them repeated-

ly for their sponsorship. One way to show support and appreciation to others that sponsor FFA activities is by doing business with them.

I also try to remember that people associate me with the groups with which I am involved. My actions and words reflect not only on me, but also on the programs that I represent. I want to make sure my own reputation is helping rather than hurting.

You Are Invited to Learn How to ... “Say It, Do It, Live It!”

at the **2009 National FFA Alumni State Leaders Conference (SLC)**
July 15-19, 2009, in Montrose, CO

Sponsored by



All FFA Alumni members are encouraged to attend this dynamic four-day conference designed to gather local and state FFA Alumni leaders for workshops, updates, and idea sharing! With registration, participants will receive conference supplies, local transportation, four nights/five days of hotel stay (double occupancy), and the majority of meals (see fees chart below). Transportation to and from the conference site is the responsibility of each attendee. Each state association may send one official representative who pays a reduced fee; the balance is covered by a \$200 SLC grant awarded by the National FFA Alumni Association. Additional Alumni members are encouraged to attend! Spouses and family members are welcome to attend for a special fee, which includes lodging, tours, group meals, and social activities.

Online conference registration will be available at www.ffa.org/alumni from April 1-June 1. Conference fees must be paid at time of reg-

istration. There will be a \$50 fee for any cancellation received June 2-15, 2009; after June 15, 2009, no refund will be issued. FFA Alumni members are asked to contact their state Alumni leaders or visit the FFA Alumni website at www.ffa.org/alumni for details, including a tentative schedule and registration information.

Making Travel Arrangements

Participants are encouraged to make travel arrangements, so they will arrive at the event hotel between 3 p.m. (hotel check-in time) and 6 p.m. on Wednesday, July 15, and depart by check-out time (Noon) on Sunday, July 19. Air travel should be arranged to Montrose, CO, Regional Airport (Airport code MTJ). The 2009 SLC conference kickoff dinner and the opening session will begin at 7 p.m. on July 15.

Conference Fees (based on double occupancy)

Participant: \$400

Official State Representative: \$200

(A National FFA Alumni grant covers the remaining cost of the conference for one official representative per state. Contact your state Alumni leaders to determine availability.)

Non-Participant:

(Spouses and family members are welcome to attend. Fees include most meals and special events and are based on hotel occupancy with participant.)

- Adult: \$350
- Children 14 and under: \$300

Single Room Occupancy Additional Fee: \$250

2008 SLC Impressions—Washington, D.C.



The Jones family at the WWII Memorial in Washington, D.C.



The Jones family stands on the mall area with the Washington Monument in the background.

“SLC offered us a chance to meet others who care about young people like we do. It has enabled us to be a part of a nationwide network of FFA Alumni so we could share ideas, challenges, and solutions. This past year we took our daughter Jessica to SLC so that she could see firsthand why it is important for her to remain involved with FFA even though she has graduated from high school. We also wanted her to understand that it doesn't matter what age one is, because there is always something someone can do for the nation and its people.”

— Johnny, Mona, and Jessica Jones, Georgia

Alumni News

WLC Scholarships

The 2009 National FFA Alumni Washington Leadership Conference (WLC) scholarships were mailed to local and state FFA Alumni associations at the end of January. This year the association is presenting 156 WLC scholarships to FFA members based on local and state FFA Alumni membership totals from the previous membership year. To view the scholarships received in your state and the state contact to whom the scholarships were sent, visit www.ffa.org/alumni. Encourage FFA members in your state to apply for these scholarships and contact the state FFA Alumni leaders for application procedures and deadlines. The National FFA Alumni Association’s goal is to award all 156 scholarships to FFA members who will make a difference in their chapters and communities!



Alumni Intern Needed!

The National FFA Alumni Association is seeking a qualified individual for a six-month internship (approx. June through December) at the National FFA Center in Indianapolis, IN. The position offers a student the opportunity to work on nationally-coordinated programs such as the Million Can Challenge, assist with the State Leaders Conference, and coordinate many facets of the national FFA Alumni convention. The job description for the position and applications can be found at www.ffa.org/alumni. Applications must be received by **April 15, 2009**. Due to financial unpredictability, this position is subject to change. Visit the above website to determine the position’s status.



Council Nominations

Applications are currently being accepted for the Eastern and Southern Region Representative positions on the National FFA Alumni Council. The three-year terms run from 2009 to 2012. Additionally, with the election of Diane Amera to president-elect the position of Central Region Representative will be open for an indi-

vidual to complete the last term year from October 2009-2010. That individual will be able to run for a full term for that position if desired. Elections for these positions will be held at the national convention business session on Friday, October 23. For a summary of responsibilities and required meetings, contact alumni@ffa.org or 317-802-4332. To obtain an application, visit www.ffa.org/alumni.

Convention News

Convention Judge Nominations

The National FFA Organization is accepting volunteer judge nominations for Teacher Awards and National Chapter Awards at the 2009 National FFA Convention in Indianapolis, IN. The judging for these events will take place from Wednesday, October 21 to Friday, October 23. (Convention judging is voluntary. FFA is unable to cover expenses for the judges.) Click on www.ffa.org/documents/conv_judgenomform.pdf for a nomination form. Mail completed forms to the National office by **June 1, 2009**.

Housing Update

The national FFA and FFA Alumni conventions will soon be here. If you are planning to attend, you can make your hotel reservation beginning May 1, 2009, (please do not make reservations before this date). FFA Alumni members are encouraged to secure housing with their local FFA chapters.

Convention Rotation

The National FFA Organization has announced that its annual convention will rotate between Louisville, KY, and Indianapolis, IN, starting in 2013. Louisville will share hosting duties with Indianapolis on a three-year rotational basis: Louisville from 2013-2015 and Indianapolis from 2016-2018. The annual national FFA convention (and Alumni convention by extension) is currently under contract with Indianapolis through 2012 and generates an estimated annual revenue exceeding \$40 million. Visit www.ffa.org for more information. For more convention news, visit the website above and click on the “National Convention” link on the left hand side of the page.

Other News

Paint a Barn, Change a Life

Campbell Soup Company and the National FFA Alumni Association are celebrating the success of the Barn Preservation Project and looking forward to the next year of barn restoration. Each barn preservation will enable farming families to update and revive their planting and harvesting processes, while providing an educational opportunity for FFA members and mentorship opportunities for FFA Alumni members. Five barns will be selected for 2009-2010. Applications are available at www.ffa.org/alumni and must be submitted by **May 15, 2009**. To learn more about the project or to follow the progress of each barn restoration, visit www.helpgrowyoursoup.com.



National, state, and local FFA officers join the effort to restore a barn for the Riordan family near Reddick, IL. About 70 students and Alumni members cleaned, painted, and landscaped the site. After two days, this hard-working crew made a lasting impression on all the participants and the sponsor Campbell Soup Company.

For other valuable and timely updates and information, monitor the National FFA Alumni website at www.ffa.org/alumni.

Scroll down to the “Update” section.

Spring Marks Membership Recruitment and Retention Time

Vision Key to Alumni Volunteer Recruitment

This article originally appeared in the April-May 1996 issue.

Is your Alumni affiliate constantly recruiting new people because current members or volunteers are leaving? Do you find it difficult to get members involved? There are right—and wrong ways—to ask people to join and keep them motivated, says Susan Ellis, author of *The Volunteer Recruitment Book*.

Recruitment Is Last Step

While most affiliates experience a rise and fall in membership periodically, the key to retention seems to rest with how and why people were initially recruited.

As an internationally-known volunteer leader and presenter for more than 20 years, Ellis says the trouble starts when “organizations jump the gun, spreading word of their hope for volunteer help or members prematurely.”

“Without preparation,” she continues, “they run the risk of bringing out people who do not really meet their needs and are wrong for them.”

Local affiliates that don't know why they want volunteer members may find recruiting difficult, Ellis suggests.

First Step: Set a Vision

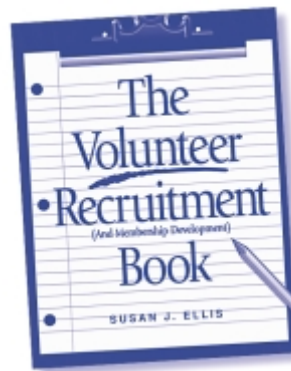
Having members or volunteers is not an end unto itself, cautions Ellis. “They are a resource and a strategy for fulfilling the Alumni's mission.”

Here are some suggestions:

- Take time to write down your affiliate's reasons for involving members and make sure everyone—advisor, officer team, and recruitment committee—agrees.
- Review the Alumni mission and determine what mem-

bers are expected to do.

- Set specific goals and objectives for members. Ask: How will they make a difference in supporting agricultural education in my community?
- Annually review and revise your affiliate's goals and objectives for member participation. “Raise your affiliate's vision about the potential for Alumni members,” Ellis asserts. “Expanded vision produces expanded results.”



Finding Members

“It is not enough to say we need members,” Ellis adds. “Developing specific jobs to recruit different types of volunteers can help gain and retain members long-term.”

For example, if you are looking to raise funds for new computer equipment, search for someone whose occupation involves computers and proposal writing.

Creating job descriptions for volunteer members can provide needed focus. A committee of

advisors, Alumni, and FFA officers, and others who will eventually work with members need to develop these assignments.

“Allow the work to direct you to potential members,” she advises. “That's a lot better than following the maxim, ‘You've got a pulse, you're in.’”

Reasons for Volunteers

There are many reasons for having members who eventually volunteer their time and resources. Though limited money is a valid reason for asking people to join, “never say the volunteers ‘save’ money because it's not true,” Ellis says. Rather, describe membership as a means to “stretch the budget.”

Alumni members and volunteers help local programs in the following key ways:

- They build the credibility of your program. Community involvement often equals credibility and legitimacy in the minds of local administrators, legislators, and business leaders.
- They increase the influence and impact of the local program in the community. Volunteers who are community leaders can act as successful advocates for your program.
- They can focus their specific skills on specific projects that support FFA locally. By doing so, they can offer a greater service to the FFA.

National Membership Calendar, Procedures

September 1: Membership year begins

November: Affiliate Excel rosters sent to state leader for distribution to local affiliates

May 15: Rosters due to National office to qualify for grants, awards, and delegate counts (contact your state leaders for state deadlines and submission procedures)

August 15: Any additional rosters due to national to be included in the current membership year

August 31: Membership year closes



Susan Ellis
author of *The Volunteer Recruitment Book* and
volunteer leader-
presenter

Ideas, Activities to Boost Local Support for Agricultural Education

At the 2008 National FFA Alumni Convention, the Suwannee FFA Alumni of Live Oak, FL, was chosen as one of the most successful affiliates in the nation. The National FFA Outstanding Affiliate Award recognizes affiliates for their accomplishments in support and service to agricultural education and FFA.

The Suwannee affiliate has 40 annual members and 42 life members. Some of Suwannee's key unique activities are listed below in hopes that they might offer other Alumni members and affiliates additional ideas on how to boost local support. The other top affiliates will be featured in future issues of *New Visions*.

Instructional Activities

Conducted for the instructional benefit of students and FFA members

- Assisted with training and/or transportation for livestock, dairy, horse, and forestry judging; agricultural communications; and parliamentary procedure CDEs*
- Helped FFA members with preparing 22 SAE proficiency applications**
- Supported students in producing and processing cane into syrup

* CDE is career development event

** SAE is supervised agricultural experience

Cooperative Activities

Conducted in partnership with the FFA chapter.

- Helped high school and middle school chapters with set up and clean up for awards banquets
- Assisted chapters with teacher appreciation luncheon during FFA week
- Assisted chapter with cake auction
- Helped chapter with FFA Greenhand member induction
- Collected Christmas gifts for Toys for Tots
- Prepared food baskets for local shelter

Fundraising Activities

Conducted to help finance FFA or Alumni activities.

- Donated \$100 Walmart gift card to state auction
- Helped harvest and sell vegetables to raise funds for convention attendance
- Held a cake give-away at each Alumni meeting
- Conducted annual FFA Alumni golf tournament
- Contributed to scholarship fund as memorials for deceased Alumni members

Social Activities

Conducted to create a bond of fellowship between FFA and Alumni members.

- Helped chapter with fall round-up (annual beginning of year kickoff meeting and meal)
- Played softball during FFA week (Alumni versus chapter)
- Hosted winter social and meal
- Assisted with chili cook-off
- Prepared meals at each monthly chapter and Alumni meeting

Ideas continued on page 8



Suwannee FFA member Katie Melland smiles for the camera with her cake bought by Alumni member Don Boyette. More than 250 Alumni, FFA members, and community leaders participated in the cake auction, which raised nearly double the funds than originally planned.

Catch Alumni Fever!



2007-2008 National FFA Officers



You can have your own FFA Alumni gear.

The Blue Catalog has everything for Alumni from official dress to coffee mugs.

Visit www.ffaunlimited.org.

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Ideas Unlimited

“Ideas Unlimited” is a column designed to provide useful ideas, tips, and advice to build strong Alumni affiliates that support agricultural education programs and FFA chapters.

Ohio: Sausage Stand

The Paulding FFA Alumni affiliate conducts a hog sandwich concession stand at the county fairgrounds. With assistance of the high school industrial arts department, community supporters, and local police/sheriff departments, the affiliate constructed and set up a steel building on the fairgrounds, which was insulated, wired, and plumbed by FFA and Alumni members. It also houses propane and electric grills along with other equipment used to sell the sausage sandwiches at the fair and fall festivals. To date, the affiliate has sold over 3,000 pounds of whole hog sausage sandwiches. The funds go toward an Alumni college scholarship fund and for assisting the local chapter with expenses to conventions and leadership conferences.

Contact Lexie Poulson, 419-445-9303 or ohffa_alumni@hotmail.com.

At the 2008 National FFA Alumni Convention, attendees were asked to submit their “Best Practices.” Four best ideas were

selected from the entries and the winning affiliates received a personalized FFA Alumni banner. One idea will be published in each of the next four issues of *New Visions*.

DeLand, FL: Duck Races

The DeLand FFA Alumni affiliate of DeLand, FL, holds an annual duck race fund-raiser. FFA members have 30 days to sell rubber ducks for \$5 a piece. Each duck has a number on its underside and each purchaser is given the corresponding number. On race day, the ducks are placed in a local river. The purchaser of the winning duck receives \$250; second place, \$100; and third, \$50. Concessions with drinks and hot dogs are sold on race day. Besides serving as an excellent fund-raiser, the event also offers a fun time for participants and organizers alike.

Contact Nancy Goodfellow, 386-734-2622 or goodfellowcfa@prodigy.com.



Ideas continued from page 7

Recruitment Activities

Conducted to recruit members for the chapter or affiliate.

- Established an e-mail system to send meeting reminders to members
- Set up recruitment table at fall round-up (chapter kickoff meeting)
- Distributed Alumni membership flyers at awards banquet
- Mailed renewal letters, monthly newsletters, and calendars to current members
- Hosted a hamburger cook-out for agricultural students and parents during FFA week
- Distributed flyers and refreshments to buyers at county fair

For more information about these activities, contact Kim Boatright at 386-364-1944 or kboatright@suwannee.k12.fl.us.

You are encouraged to share your ideas, tips, and local success stories by sending them to Lucy Whitehead at lwhitehead@ffa.org.