

Making a Difference

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Effectively Managing an Agricultural Education Program



ave you ever sat down and contemplated all the different responsibilities an agriculture teacher juggles on any given day, or have you been too busy just keeping your head above water?

If you find yourself in the latter category, you're not alone. And, when you stop to think about all of your responsibilities, it should come as no surprise. When you consider the long list of tasks and the relatively short period of time teachers have each day when they aren't in class, it becomes clear that the real trick is figuring out how to balance the workload with the time available.

Because teachers must accomplish their tasks within a compressed period of unallocated time each day, the need for strong organizational skills is substantial. A disciplined approach to managing your time is a must. If you don't already have some sort of personal planning system, acquiring one (and the training to implement it) needs to be placed near the very top of your "to-do" list.

Once you have your personal planning system in place, it's time to find a starting point. If you just look at the job in its entirety, it can be overwhelming. However, when you break it down into its component parts, it becomes more attainable. For example, managing

a successful agricultural education program can be segmented as follows:

- Administrative program management (planning, budgeting, school district requirements)
- Classroom/instruction management
- Laboratory management
- SAE management
- FFA chapter management

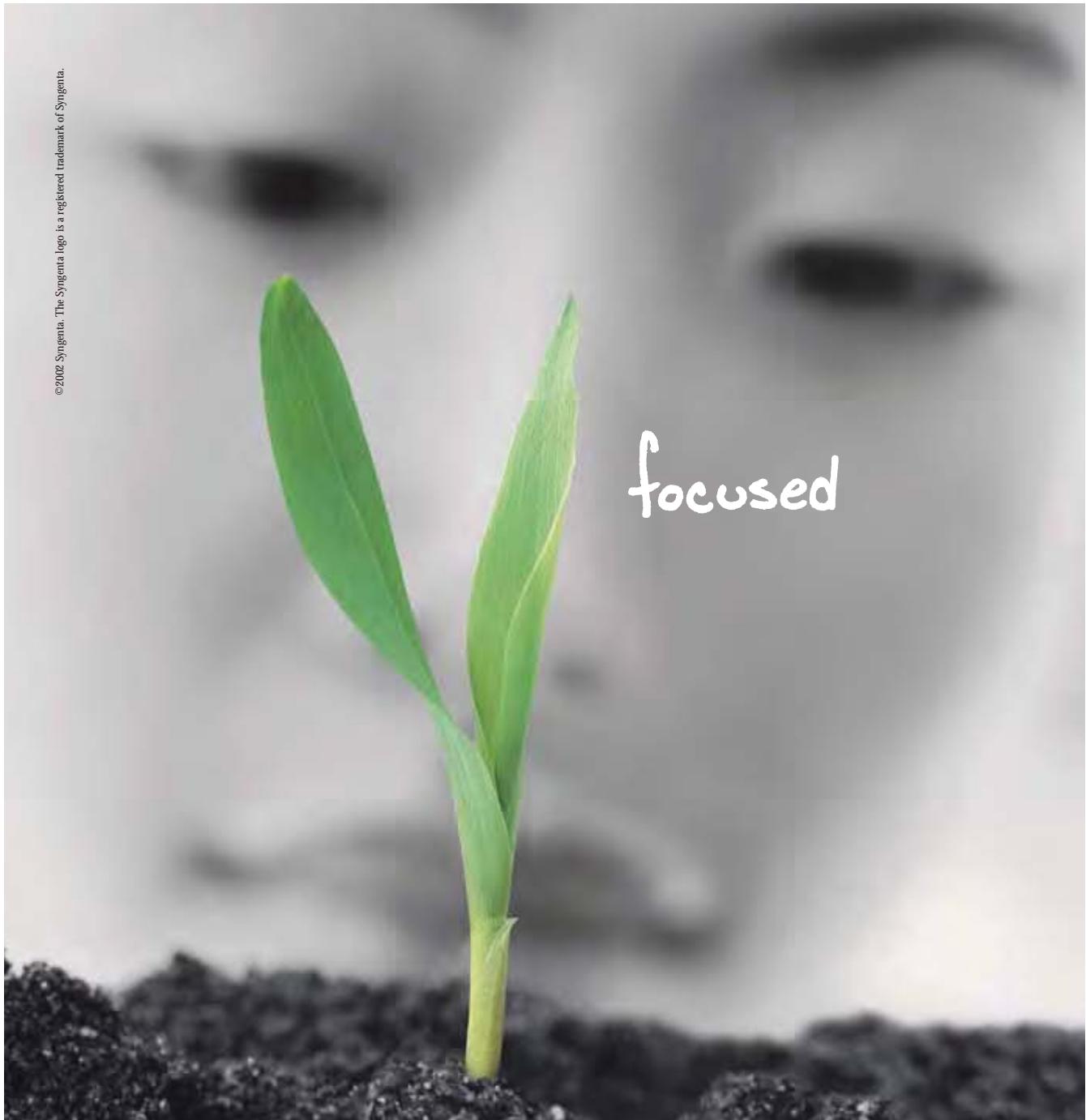
Some programs have additional areas to manage, such as alumni chapters and adult programs. Whatever your responsibilities, you'll need to spend some thoughtful, uninterrupted time planning. First, you'll need to establish your programmatic priorities. Are there activities for which the value just isn't there that need to be eliminated? What new elements might really strengthen your program? You'll probably want to seek input from your advisory council, students, administrators and others to establish the overall program priorities.

Once the priorities have been determined, it's time to place the necessary tasks on a timeline. What will you work on during the periods when classes are in session? What will you tackle during the summer or over breaks? What can you delegate to others? After you've made these decisions and calendared the big chunks, it's time to break them into small, more manageable tasks. What will you do this week? What are the most important three tasks to accomplish today?

This issue of *FFA Advisors Making a Difference* includes tips and tricks from successful agriculture teachers across the country regarding how to effectively manage the various components of agricultural education programs. Turn the page to learn more about how your peers manage their programs!



Program Planning



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The FFA Mission

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

The Agricultural Education Mission

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

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Watch for the LPS Logo



The logo shows how this issue of *FFA Advisors Making a Difference* relates to Local Program Success, a national initiative to strengthen agricultural education programs. You'll see this icon on all FFA materials. The shaded apples show which areas the materials address.

Perspectives

Striking a Balance



By Jerry Schmidt,
Agriculture Teacher
Minneapolis, Kansas

What is the mission of your agricultural education program?

Does it include the three components of classroom/laboratory instruction, supervised agricultural experience (SAE) and the FFA student organization?

The challenge for many agriculture teachers is keeping the three circles or components in balance. Our shared goal is to provide learning opportunities for all levels of students with diverse interests. To determine if you have a balanced program, ask someone what your title in the community is. Would people say shop teacher, vo-ag teacher, FFA teacher, hort guy, agriscience teacher, agriculture instructor or something else?

Do you have the same number of articles in the local paper about classroom instruction, SAEs and FFA activities? One of my goals is to use the local newspaper to highlight where we are teaching the application of math, science, reading and writing skills through the three components of agricultural education.

How do we as a profession juggle our time to keep the size of the three circles manageable? One of the traits of a good teacher is to be organized. In my shop, every tool has a place and every tool is in its place, which saves time for all involved.

A person also has to set limits, which means saying "no" to some activities. Can you continue to add to your program of activities or do you need to

"add by subtracting" to have a quality program? I follow the philosophy of doing one activity well versus several just "OK."

In managing your program, do you use a Franklin planner, personal data assistant (PDA) or have a system of post-it notes covering the wall? Keeping track of deadlines, processing transportation requests and filling out substitute lesson plans requires the teacher to be organized. I have found that a Palm Pilot works the best for me. I use it to help me prioritize what needs to be completed first in the daily operation of a busy program.

To prevent overload or teacher burn out, we need to learn how to delegate and be willing to partner with the resources in our communities to conduct the best learning opportunities for our students. The support of community patrons for teaching aids, field trips, class speakers and CDE coaches provides the teacher help in educating students about the real world.

Our local advisory council and many former students are very willing to assist in any way if we just ask. Take an objective look at your program. Are the three circles balanced? Are you tapping into your community's resources? If not, there's never a better time than now to start working toward those goals!

Get Organized and Delegate!

as in the majority of the agricultural education programs in the United States, Steve Braun teaches in a single-teacher department. As such, he manages all aspects of the Troy, Idaho, program and likens it to putting together the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle.

"Last year, I was out of the classroom or away from home on weekends for a total of 60 days," Braun says. "That includes attending FFA activities, field trips and professional development and service activities. That much time away requires one to prepare instructional materials in advance and figure out ways to

keep on top of all the mail, phone messages, e-mail and other things that stack up while you're out."

Delegate Responsibilities

The key to retaining his sanity? "Delegate!" says Braun, a strong believer in teaching students how to complete tasks correctly, then making them responsible for shouldering part of the load.

"I usually have two teacher's aides for an hour a day each," Braun says. "I rely on these students to do a lot of the prep work for my classes, field trips and for the FFA chapter. For example, if one of my classes is going on a field trip, I will give my aides the list of materials we need to take with us, and they'll be responsible for gathering all supplies, boxing them up and making sure the materials get on the bus with us."

Braun also has his aides fill out routine paperwork for his review and signature. He gives them a list of students who will be attending the state FFA convention, and they fill out all the required forms, prepare the travel itinerary and other tasks.

The aides are also responsible for generating thank-you notes and letters. "We've created our own Troy FFA Chapter thank-you cards," Braun explains. "At the beginning of each year, I teach my aides how to write a proper thank-you message

and run the prepared cards through the printer. They create all the cards, then get the appropriate signatures on the cards and get them in the mail."

"Some of these young people become unofficial junior advisors," Braun says. "It's a real win-win situation, because they free me from mundane paperwork and learn all sorts of skills in the process."

Get Organized

One critical factor in delegating so much responsibility to others is getting organized. "You have to develop a filing system that is simple enough that others can use," Braun says. "Once the system is developed and you've trained a couple of key people to use it, you can delegate everything from pulling materials for classes to filing new materials and things you've pulled out to use in class."

The same goes for managing all those magazines and other materials that flood every agriculture department with each day's mail delivery. Braun advocates creating an organized storage area for the periodicals, with each title having its place. Then, when a new issue arrives, his aides are instructed to store the new issue and discard the oldest issue in the stack. You can decide how many past issues of each publication are important to have on hand.

And then there is managing the mail. Braun admits to struggling with this task, then offers his two cents' worth. "I really try to file those catalogs and other materials that I know I'll need and use. The marketing materials that stream in that I've never ordered from or don't think I'll use, I discard immediately."

Even with all the challenges, Braun remains exuberant. "I've been teaching for 12 years and it seems more like three," he says. "This is a great profession that I thoroughly enjoy. What we teach is extremely relevant to our students. Each and every day we see the value we bring to young people. I recommend and encourage young people to take the plunge and teach agriculture. It is a very rewarding career."

Eliminating Classroom Chaos

envision an agriculture classroom where all the lesson plans are neatly stored in three-ring binders, and all lab materials are organized by activity in storage containers. The tables are free from clutter, and the students walk into a positive learning environment. Is this nirvana or the Lake Geneva-Badger High School Agricultural Education Department in Wisconsin?

Larry Plapp and Gretchen Brewer are the masterminds behind this well-organized program, and they say organizational systems and being team players are the keys to managing the 175-student program effectively.

"When you look at the big picture of managing an agricultural education program, you realize that keeping it all working effectively is going to take more than just your allotted prep period," Plapp says. "You have to prioritize and decide what you're going to do, what you're going to delegate to others, and what just isn't going to get done."

Make Planning a Habit

Plapp and Brewer are advocates of finding or developing organizational systems that will serve you and your program. "Getting into the habit of planning is essential," Plapp says. "You need to be constantly looking ahead to see what's coming up and get the tasks on your 'to do' list. I don't think it matters whether you use a pocket PC or a software tool like Outlook Express or some other system, but you need to have a series of systems that works for you."

One system Plapp and Brewer have developed and implemented in their program is using tubs to store all their

lab materials. "Over time, we've created a system where each lab we do has a tub that contains all the materials needed to teach that lab," Plapp explains. "Over the summer, we order supplies and organize them into the tubs so that when it's time to teach any given lab, all we have to do is pull the tub off the shelf and go."

Getting Organized

They have also created lab manuals for most of their classes. At the beginning of the term, each student is given a binder containing all the needed paperwork. "Again, we prepare these over the summer," Plapp says. "We organize the materials in advance and place the order with the copy center so all is done ahead of time. Then, we don't have to camp out at the copier each week to prepare. It takes time over the summer, but saves an enormous amount of time during the school year."

Their organizational system also pays off when Plapp and Brewer prepare for being out of the classroom. They have created yearly day-by-day guides for each course. "It's not that we follow them to the day," Plapp explains. "But if we get off track, it's easy to see where we are and how to modify the lessons to get back on track. And, it's great when you're preparing

Having all lab materials organized in advance allows Plapp and Brewer to concentrate on teaching during their time with students.



for a substitute teacher because all the information needed is in the binder."

Sharing the Responsibilities

How did they get so organized? It takes time. Plapp says a good goal is to organize at least one course every summer. In the Lake Geneva-Badger program, they've split many of the responsibilities by subject matter; Plapp manages the plant courses and the greenhouse while Brewer focuses on the animal courses and the aquaculture lab.

Brewer adds, "We juggle lots of the responsibilities – like the FFA chapter, for instance – back and forth, but it all works out. The main thing is to work as a team. You have to believe in yourself and the people you work with. Don't be afraid to try new things, but recognize that you might fail. That's part of the learning process."

Gretchen Brewer and Larry Plapp



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Supercharging Your Program with Synergy

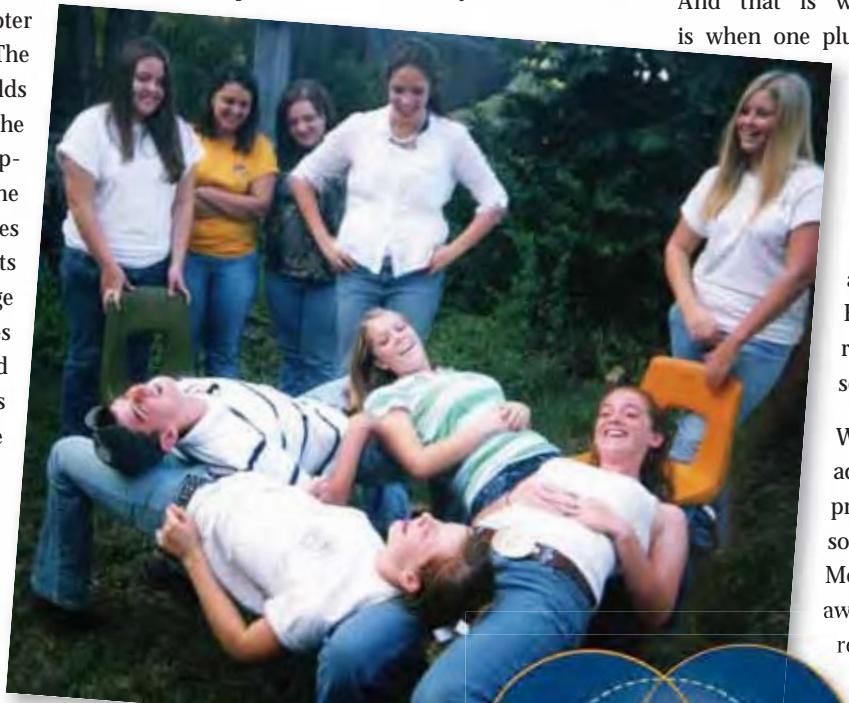
have you ever watched the Models of Innovation awards at the national FFA convention and wondered how in the world the advisors managed all those activities and somehow taught their classes, maintained their overall programs and kept their sanity?

The Aiken, S.C., chapter is a prime example. The chapter consistently fields state-winning teams in the horticulture CDEs and top-notch contestants in the leadership areas; provides a PALS program for its members; grows a large garden and contributes its bounty to a local food bank; has lots of students growing crops in the school's greenhouse for their SAEs; and, in general, is always in motion. Joe Wilson, who has been teaching 33 years, advises this program and offers a few thoughts.

Delegate Responsibility

"How do we do it year after year? One step at a time," Wilson grins. "We build a solid foundation and count on the members to carry the load. I'm a firm believer in delegating responsibilities to students. Giving the students responsibilities is a win-win situation because it creates a sense of ownership in the students—they learn much more when they know they are responsible for the outcomes—and it allows me to concentrate on those activities that require my attention."

As an example, Wilson gives responsibility to students for everything from managing greenhouse crops to fund-raising activities. "I show them the basics, then monitor closely and advise as needed," he explains. "Sometimes they will lose focus and need to be redirected a bit, but it is very much worth the effort. If I had to show them every step, they wouldn't have the same pride of ownership, and it would require much more of my time."



Aiken, S.C., students form a "human table" in a teamwork demonstration.

So, how do you move your students along the responsibility continuum?

How do you grow them to the point where you can delegate those types of responsibilities? Wilson advocates attending every available FFA activity to build their skills and level of self-confidence.

"I take students to everything I can – Made For Excellence, Advanced Leadership Development and Washington Leadership Conferences. I've found that having

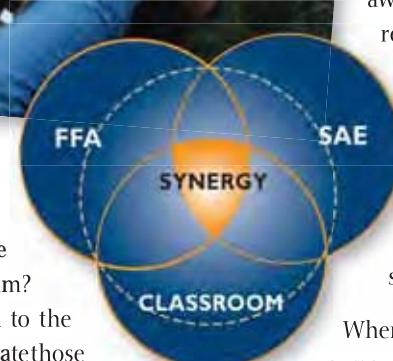
younger students work with older students is a great training method, and it works to build not only your chapter, but your overall program. All you need is one or two upper-level students who understand whatever the topic is. Give them the responsibility, and they'll train the rest of the students and learn while doing it."

Wilson adds, "Whether you formally call it mentoring or not, that is, in essence, what occurs. You foster a culture of mentoring that moves freely from the classroom to FFA activities and beyond."

The Magic Formula

And that is when it happens. That is when one plus one starts adding up to more than two. That's when the program really hits on all cylinders, and all the students pull together as a team—whether for a class assignment, an FFA activity, a fund raiser or a community service activity.

When that synergy is added to an agricultural program's equation, all sorts of great things happen. Members start winning awards. The community recognizes the services the chapter provides. Administrators hold the agricultural education program up as a positive example of effective educational strategies and tactics.



When you look at it, this is the same phenomenon that occurs in the center of those three circles where classroom instruction, FFA and SAE come together. Think about your program and how you can, by taking it one step at a time, develop that synergistic effect. It isn't a secret and it isn't fairy dust—it's the way top-performing programs are developed and managed.

Utah Teacher Blends Cultural Differences

imagine trying to teach science and agriculture in a culture embedded with its own traditions and customs. Jack Seltzer does just this at Monument Valley High School on the Navajo Indian Reservation near the Utah-Arizona border.

Seltzer is the science teacher as well as the agriculture teacher and FFA advisor. "Teaching both science and agriculture allows me to integrate them together." He incorporates many projects into the program.

Hands-on Learning

Seltzer's primary goal is to ensure the Navajo traditions are not lost as the elders pass on. He established a garden as one of the many projects for his students. "The garden is oriented toward Navajo people and their culture," Seltzer says. The garden is divided into five plots.

- **Ethno botany plot** — Indigenous plants are grown and tested to preserve native plant species.
- **Dye plot** — Plants that produce natural dyes are grown.
- **Propagation plot** — Native plants are propagated for use in traditional projects. For example, the Sumac is used for weaving baskets.

• **Medicinal plot** — The natural resources class grows the plants and works with their medicinal characteristics.

• **Vegetable plot** — Edible plants are grown and sold to the Navajo people.

In the vegetable garden, the students grow mostly Navajo varieties of typical garden plants. Some of the crops include corn, squash, zucchini and melons. Seltzer and his students introduced "Navajo melons" into the garden this year.

"One of the Navajo melons is yellowish in color with bright green stripes," Seltzer explains. "It is said to be similar, but sweeter, than a traditional watermelon." The students sell the products from the garden to the elders at a reduced price. The elders were particularly excited about the melons; many of them had not seen these melons for many years.

Teamwork

The Monument Valley students work on all of these projects together. "With the Navajo people, the students' projects would be at the school anyway," says Seltzer. He estimates in the spring they spend about 50 percent of their time outside of the classroom in the learning lab.

To fund these projects, the students sell hay to the Navajo people. It is not uncommon for the students to sell 20 tons of hay a week. "It is kind of like an entrepreneurial program for these kids," says Seltzer. "The bulk of the money goes back into the other projects."

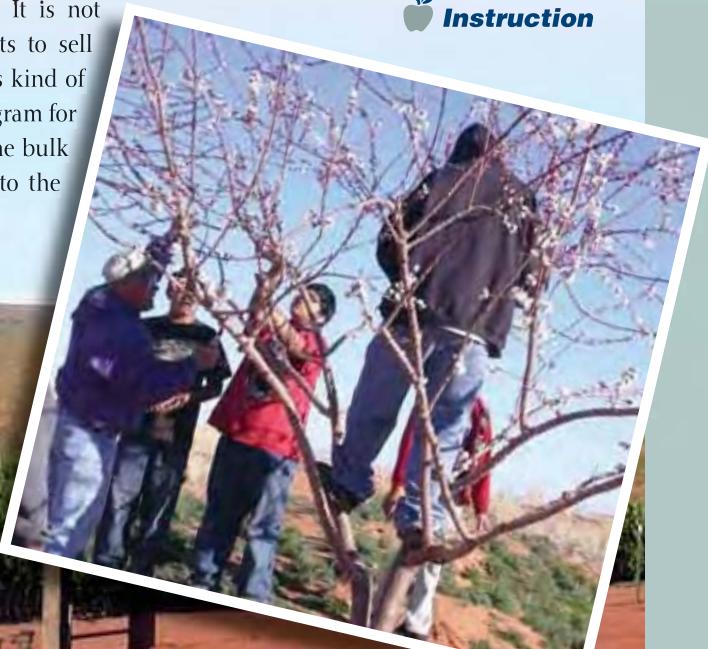
Seltzer faces many challenges that most teachers don't have to consider. He has adapted his program to incorporate native customs into his teaching. For example, in the Navajo nation it is customary for the women to do the planting. Seltzer implements this strategy by allowing the men to prep the ground while the women place the seeds. By doing this, Seltzer's modern gardening techniques, such as using drip irrigation, have become more widely accepted among the Navajo.

Adding Value

While agriculture was the Navajo people's mainstay for many decades, in more recent years, it hasn't been economically viable on the reservation. It is important for Seltzer to show his students and the community that they can make a living in agriculture. For example, Seltzer has developed a Churro sheep project—a breed long shepherded by the Navajo. He encourages the students to add value by weaving the wool into rugs that can be sold for thousands of dollars, rather than just selling the raw wool for a small fraction of that amount.

Seltzer received the National Education Association's Leo Reano Memorial Award for his work securing educational opportunities for American Indians. "Navajo people are really great; they are very patient when I'm working with them," said Seltzer. "When I make a mistake, they take time to work with me."

Instruction



Former FFA Member in Key Education Post



FA and agricultural education have a new advocate within the U.S.

Department of Education. On May 8, President George W. Bush nominated Dr. Troy R. Justesen for the position of assistant secretary for vocational and adult education, and he was confirmed by the U.S. Senate on July 26.

Justesen hails from a Hereford ranch near Orangeville, Utah, where he was an agriculture student and FFA member at Emery County High School during his formative years. Justesen feels his experience in FFA and agricultural education helped prepare him for his career in public service.

"Like many young people, I learned about *Robert's Rules of Order* in my ninth-grade agriculture class," Justesen says. "I can't tell you how important that is to what I do now."

More specifically, what Justesen does now is serve as the principal adviser to Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings on departmental matters related to career, technical and adult education, high schools, lifelong learning, and community colleges as well as workforce and economic development.

"I'm a teacher," Justesen says. "All of my degrees are in education, and teaching is the hardest job I've ever had. We in the Department of Education know that what teachers do every day in their classrooms and communities is critical. The work teachers do is vitally important to our country."

Justesen continues, "What we are trying to accomplish is to help all students be successful. With NCLB, we're focusing resources on areas where we can improve

all students, and we're raising the bar on expectations in math, science and reading to improve our nation's global competitiveness."

He adds, "I think FFA and agricultural education have a really important role to play in this effort. I know some teachers are concerned because they specialize in agriculture, rather than math or science. However, that doesn't mean they aren't important. Agriculture teachers help their students connect what is being learned in math and science classes to the real world."

Justesen reaches back and draws from his high school experience. "I didn't meet any practitioners in my chemistry class; I met them in my agriculture class. In ag, I learned how to apply chemistry and physics in real-world applications. We need more teachers to teach using these types of practical applications."

Assistant Secretary Justesen will be in Indianapolis for the 79th National FFA Convention. He'll deliver remarks from the main stage at the fourth general session, 8 a.m., Friday, Oct. 27, and will also speak at the School Official's Luncheon later that day.

You can learn more about Justesen by visiting the U.S. Department of Education website at www.ed.gov/news/staff/bios/justesen.html. For more information on the Office of Vocational and Adult Education, visit www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/index.html?src=oc.



FFA Appearance

Just two days after his confirmation, Justesen took the opportunity to attend the FFA State Presidents' Conference and speak to the participants.

"I was really impressed with this group," he says. "They were so respectful of each other and the dignitaries in their midst. I had forgotten that young people can be so interested and engaged in the discussion. Another thing that struck me was how these young people understood the importance of what their FFA experience means. Whether they go into agriculture careers or not, they have the skills and the knowledge to contribute to world issues. They understand they have a responsibility to serve, and they take it seriously."

Unique Program, Universal Techniques

edmond, Okla., is home to a rather unique agricultural education program. The Edmond Public Schools Agriscience Facility serves three high schools and is a centrally located stand-alone campus.

Ted Arthur, Kenny Leatherwood and Jeremy Cowley manage the program and work as a team to teach the courses, advise the FFA chapter, oversee SAEs, manage the facilities and provide discipline. They agree that the key to keeping the program working effectively is no secret – it's teamwork and solid communications.

While they each have specific teaching responsibilities and manage the associated labs, they share responsibilities for

managing the FFA chapter, SAE visits and the school's livestock facility. However, within those domains, there is still a division of responsibility. For example, while all three share FFA chapter advising duties, Cowley focuses on the leadership events and managing the officer team.



Kenny Leatherwood, Jeremy Cowley and Ted Arthur work as a team to manage the Edmond Public Schools Agriscience Facility

Communicating is Key

"We meet every day over lunch to review where we are and keep each other up-to-date on all the details," Leatherwood explains. "We have made an effort to create a team spirit and to avoid rigid boundaries. We encourage input from each other and from students in an effort to provide the best possible learning environment for our students."

Arthur adds, "Our primary concern and interest is serving our students. We push each other to excel and concentrate on providing our students with skills that will lead to career success. When we focus on that, who does what seems to fall into place."

Cowley offers, "Communicating effectively is what keeps it all working smoothly. Communicating with each other, with our students, their parents, our administrators and the communities we serve."

Managing E-Mail

Electronic communications can play a vital role in keeping everyone on the same page; however, managing your e-mail can become a time-consuming task. Effective e-mail management is built on filters, filing and ruthless use of the "delete" key. Here are some tips for staying on top of the e-mail torrent.

- Use whatever filters are available to you via your server or e-mail program to screen out junk. For starters, set your filter to accept mail from everyone in your address book. Suspected spam, including any e-mail containing viruses, should be sent to a trash folder. Also, set the filter to automatically delete any e-mail that contains terms you'd expect to find in sexually explicit spam.
- Create folders to separate important messages, and file them as they arrive. For example, you may want an "urgent" folder for top-priority tasks along with subject matter folders for your FFA chapter, each of the courses you teach, your advisory council and your school district. Don't let anything stay in your inbox permanently—stick to the rule of file it or delete it.
- Use the "two-minute-rule" for to-do items. If the task/request outlined in the e-mail will take two minutes or less to complete, even if it means getting out of your chair, do it immediately and delete the message.



**Don't miss the first issue of *ENGAGE*,
A Newsletter for Chapter Officers!
Pull it out and share it with your
chapter officer team today!**

ENGAGE

A Newsletter for Chapter Officers



Take ACTION!

Plans...they're everywhere!

Blueprints, football plays, to-do lists, even your FFA chapter's Program of Activities...they are all plans. A plan is important because it helps guide us and prepare us for what we will do in the future. But it's important to remember that simply having a plan isn't enough. A plan is no good unless you put it into action!

How do you as a chapter officer put a plan into action? Keep reading for practical strategies on making your chapter goals a reality, making the most of your officer year, and keeping the year action-packed for members of your FFA chapter!



In this Issue

- Making chapter goals a reality
- Growing as an officer
- Cool chapter meeting ideas
- Leadership is an attitude

National convention is coming soon!

Convention will be packed with plenty of opportunities to help you connect your chapter's plan with action. Check out the Student Leadership Workshops, make connections at the Career Show, sit in as leaders from across the nation make decisions for our organization at delegate sessions, and experience everything the city of Indianapolis has to offer! Visit www.ffa.org for more information.

What's THE POINT?

MAKE IT HAPPEN!

By Marty Tatman, Past WLC Presenter

Before you begin each year, you take time to determine what you want to accomplish as a chapter. As chapter officers, it is your job to help ensure that the chapter's plan — set up as goals in the Program of Activities (POA) — is put into action! While you may always have the best of intentions to follow through on the POA, too many times those intentions are lost to classes, homework, sports, family, friends and other commitments after school starts.

Going back to your days as a Greenhand member, you know that The Creed begins with, "I believe in the future of agriculture..." If you truly believe in that statement, then you know that it's your job, as chapter officers, to continually work on putting your goals in the POA into action in order to assist in making the national organization stronger, thus ensuring the future success of the agriculture industry.

Here are a few tips for taking action and making your POA a reality:

- **Set SMART goals** – Set up your POA based on Specific, Measurable, Attainable and Realistic goals that are based on a Timeline.
- **Create buy-in** – Make sure everyone in the chapter knows what is in the POA and their role in making it happen.
- **Ask for help** – Don't be afraid to ask your advisor, alumni, parents or others to help you work through your POA.
- **Post it** – By posting the steps you need to take in order to complete your POA, you will have a constant visual reminder.
- **Cross it off** – Once your chapter has completed a section of your POA, take time to cross it off and celebrate your success.

SMART Goals

By now we know our goals should be SMART, but what makes each element of SMART so important in putting your goal into action?

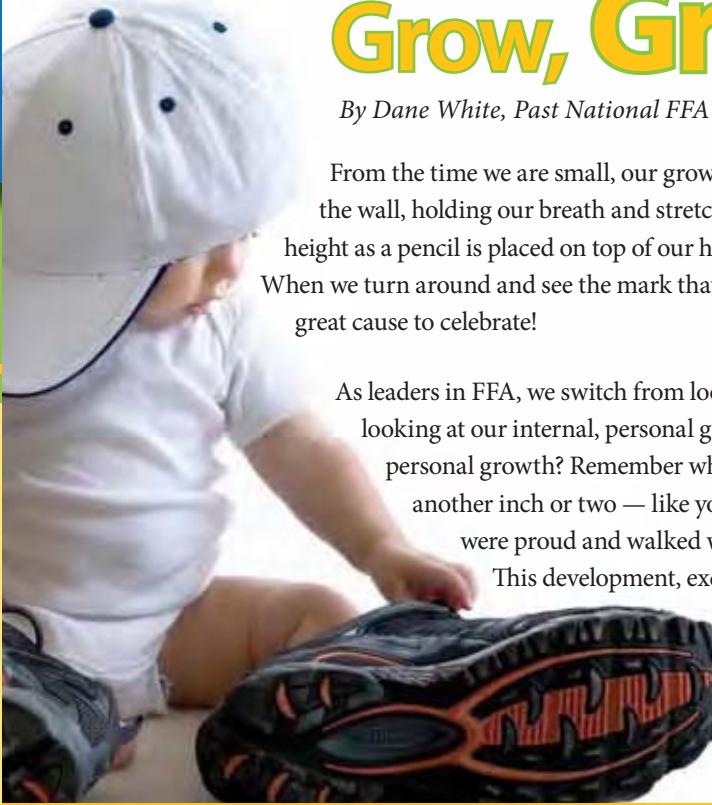
Specific: By creating a goal that is well-defined, everyone involved in the project will know exactly what the group is working toward.

Measurable: Your officer team must be able to gauge when the goal has been achieved... Then you can celebrate!

Attainable: Your goals should be challenging — just one step higher than you think you can reach — but still within your grasp when you work hard and follow a plan.

Realistic: By setting goals that you can reach with your available resources, knowledge and time, you are setting your chapter up for success!

Timeline: When your chapter is working on a deadline, but still has enough time to reach the goal, people are driven to complete the task.



Grow, Grow, Grow!

By Dane White, Past National FFA Officer

From the time we are small, our growth is measured. We stand against the wall, holding our breath and stretching our bodies to their ultimate height as a pencil is placed on top of our head and a definitive line is drawn. When we turn around and see the mark that indicates our growth, we have great cause to celebrate!

As leaders in FFA, we switch from looking at growth on the outside to looking at our internal, personal growth. Why should we focus on personal growth? Remember what it felt like when your body grew another inch or two — like you really did something great? You were proud and walked with a little bit more confidence!

This development, excitement and celebration all occur when we grow. We also become better leaders for our FFA chapters and communities. Create a plan for personal growth and put it into action today!

Seven Ways to... Grow as a Leader

1. Seek advice from leaders whom you respect.
2. Read books about leadership.
3. Seek feedback from advisors, teammates and friends.
4. Listen more than you talk, and ask questions.
5. Create and use a time management system.
6. Invest time in building relationships with others.
7. Make morally sound life decisions.

T3 THINGS TO TRY

Encourage FFA members in your chapter to take action by involving them in the planning and execution of chapter meetings. Allow members to sign up to be on committees for each meeting. Try a welcoming committee to greet guests as they arrive, a set-up committee, a refreshment committee or a special feature committee to plan some type of activity during the meeting. This means less work for you and more action for your members!

Submit your coolest ideas for making chapter meetings exciting and action-packed. Those entries published each month will win \$50 for their FFA chapter to spend at wwwffaunlimited.org! Submissions should be emailed to rdurham@ffa.org.



Want
50 FFA
Bucks?



Be There!

National Leadership/WLC Dinner

What? An exciting jam-packed event where you'll experience leadership and connect with leaders from across the country!

When? National FFA Convention – Friday night, October 27

Who? Chapter officers, WLC, ALD, MFE and EDGE participants, and others interested in leadership!

How? Your advisor can order your tickets at the on-line convention registration site, or you can buy them when you get to Indy!

See you there!



For a closer look at Chevrolet, visit the displays at the 79th National FFA Convention. Chevrolet will showcase the highly anticipated, all new 2007 Chevy Silverado along with many other models from the Chevrolet family.



"Leadership is an attitude," Peper said. He shared his operating philosophy, called "Peper's Values":

- 1. Have a great attitude.**
- 2. Be a great communicator.**
- 3. Work hard and go fast.**
- 4. Empower your people and hold them accountable.**
- 5. Deal in evidence, not anecdotes.**
- 6. Be aggressive!**
- 7. Challenge teams to be creative.**
- 8. Encourage alternative points of view.**



Chevrolet Leadership is an Attitude

The history between Chevrolet® and the National FFA Organization dates back to 1945. Back then, Ray Firestone personally recruited Chevrolet to become a national sponsor. Sixty years later, Chevrolet is still a strong supporter of the National FFA Organization. Chevrolet's support and funding make key programs, including LifeKnowledge, many FFA collegiate scholarships, multiple proficiencies and PAS Awards, the State Presidents' Conference, and the Convention Concert Series possible. Recently, Ed Peper, General Manager of Chevrolet, attended the State Presidents' Conference in Washington, D.C., to demonstrate Chevrolet's commitment to the National FFA Organization.

Mr. Peper shared his insight on leadership and how Chevrolet gained market leadership in 2005. He referred to the relationship between

Chevrolet and the National FFA Organization as one of the division's longest-running partnerships and as one of Chevrolet's proudest. When asked why, Mr. Peper replied, "Because this organization represents the future of this country; your spirit, your drive and your undeniable commitment to leadership serve as a guiding force for the youth of America."

*... your spirit,
your drive and your
undeniable commitment
to leadership serve as
a guiding force for
the youth of America."*

Peper demonstrated how Chevrolet is a leader. In 2005, Chevrolet sold more vehicles than any other automotive manufacturer. Chevrolet is also a fixture in the winners' circle in motorsports, with a dominant array of drivers in NASCAR® and the American Le Mans Series. Chevrolet is a technological leader with nine out of 10 car models that get 30 miles per gallon or better on the highway. And, with more than 1.5 million vehicles on the road that can run on E85 ethanol, Chevrolet is also leading the way in renewable fuel solutions.

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.



Sponsored by Chevrolet as a special project of the National FFA Foundation.



LifeKnowledge **AT WORK**



A **Free** Monthly E-Newsletter Written **by** Teachers **for** Teachers



Regular features include:

- Strategies for student engagement
- Tips for **LifeKnowledge** integration
- Agricultural industry's employee needs
- Trends in education and policy

Sign up now for the free newsletter by visiting www.ffa.org and clicking on Ag Educators, then LifeKnowledge.

www.ffa.org/ageducators/lifeknowledge

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Local Program Success

Effective Program Management



ven though agricultural education programs are very diverse, one common challenge we all face on a day-to-day basis is program management.

When you first consider what activities make up a program—from-day-to-day instruction to arranging travel for various activities to making SAE visits—how do you decide what it is you do first? When I taught, I always tried to place all of my responsibilities into three categories:

1. Things that have to be done.
2. Things that need to be done.
3. Things that I would like to do.

As you consider these three categories, don't be too quick to think that you can easily put all the things you do into each category, or that everything you do fits into the first category. Are you sure about the priorities of your program? Who determines what priority you place on an activity? When it comes down to "crunch time" and you cannot be in two places at once, how do you decide?

Now the second piece of program management comes into play. You should ask yourself three key questions:

1. Who decides what activities/experiences are part of an agricultural program, and who is responsible for coordinating and executing those activities/experiences?
2. Who are the decision makers and stakeholders in your community you should listen to?
3. At the same time, who thinks they should have a say in your program that, truthfully, shouldn't?

By **Jeff Papke**
LPS Specialist
National FFA Organization



program. Educate your administrators on what an agricultural education program is and what the normal operation of an agricultural program looks like. Invite administrators to functions.

After listing and prioritizing your program's activities and functions, now you need to execute them. Again, this can be accomplished in part by involving others. Present your activities and functions to your alumni chapter and work with them to assist in implementation. FFA alumni affiliates are there to support you, your students and your program. Make them aware of what you are doing and ask for assistance. Use your advisory committee's and alumni's connections in the community. They will sometimes be able to find resources you did not know were available.

As agriculture teachers, we need to realize that sometimes we can provide a better education and more opportunities to our students when we involve outside individuals in our programs. We can better manage our programs when we ask for assistance and engage individuals and stakeholders in our schools and communities to deliver a high quality systematic program of instruction to our students.



Program Management: A Must for Success

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fter rising early, our attention usually quickly turns to the day at hand. Some of us might pull out our trusty NAAE diary or, if we are “tech savvy,” slide out the personal digital assistant to see what is on the agenda for today. Regardless of the method used, program management is the single most important item that will result in success or failure of any program. How we effectively manage our total program—the classroom, labs, FFA activities, SAE requirements—along with sometimes having to be out of school for different reasons, presents quite a challenge.

I find it necessary to make a constant effort to stay on top of things by keeping a list of activities close by and planning, planning, planning. Although many of us can say we have been in the business for more than 25 years and know the curriculum forward and backward, we don’t know those new students coming into our programs each semester. Each group of students is different, and we

must adjust to their needs, which takes planning and management.

Each fall, my goal is to get to know my students’ strengths and weaknesses as early as possible. My school district uses the TABE competency test to determine student performance in the basic academic areas. I use this information to manage my instruction time to provide remediation

By Lee James,
Agriculture Teacher,
Weir, Mississippi, and
President-Elect,
National Association of
Agricultural Educators



and enrichment activities to ensure each student is learning.

Sound management also includes managing students in my FFA chapter. Having chapter officers and members conduct routine chapter activities allows me to devote more time to other tasks. In addition, this responsibility helps those members develop better leadership skills.

All of us have different ideas when it comes to management of the total program, but I think the bottom line for success has to be planning and implementing those plans.

Preparing for a Substitute Teacher

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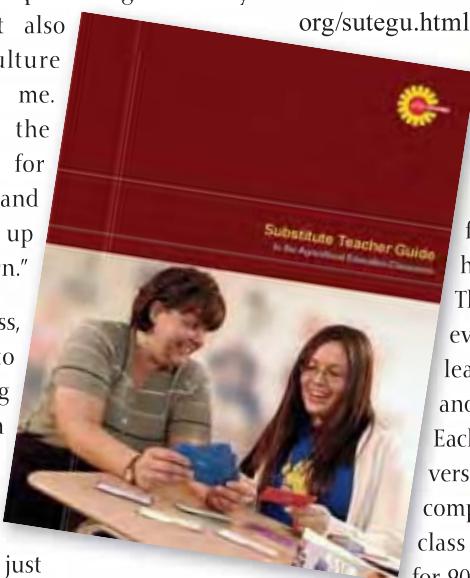
griculture teachers, because of the nature of what they teach and the FFA chapter they advise, tend to be out of the classroom on a semi-regular basis. How can you best prepare for a substitute, and set your students up to experience success in your absence?

Christine White, who taught at Hanover High School in Mechanicsville, Va., and recently accepted an education specialist position with the LifeKnowledge Center for Agricultural Education, has a few ideas. “First, you want to provide as much information as possible to whomever will be substituting for you,” White says. “If possible, contact that person and discuss your expectations and the materials you will be leaving for them.”

White encourages substitute teachers to run the class as close to “normal” as possible to provide continuity for the

students. She also prepares her students for the time she’ll be away by establishing high expectations. “I remind my students that they are representing not only themselves, but also their agriculture program and me. I establish the consequences for bad behavior and then follow up when I return.”

One key to success, according to White, is making sure you assign meaningful work. “Students will rebel if they perceive you’re just giving them busy work. Have them work on poster projects or group activities, and make sure their work will be graded. They need to know that it counts.”



The National FFA Organization recently released a helpful resource specifically for this purpose. The *Substitute Teacher's Guide*, available online at wwwffaunlimited.org/sutegu.html for \$30, is a turnkey

resource for keeping students active and engaged while you're out of the school. It contains 46 lessons – half for grades 7-9, the other half for grades 10-12. The lessons cover current events, career exploration, leadership development and personal development. Each lesson contains several versions – one that can be completed in a 50-minute class period, one intended for 90-minute blocks, and one that can be used as a three-day series. A related LifeKnowledge lesson is also referenced for each lesson to extend and enrich students' learning.

The National FFA Day of Service

Thursday, October 26 at the
79th National FFA Convention

Sign Up Today!

With the help of Indianapolis civic leaders, the National FFA Organization developed this community component to promote civic engagement through agricultural education, service learning and FFA member participation. Registration for these activities will occur through the online convention registration system and each site only has a limited number of slots available.

KEEP INDIANAPOLIS BEAUTIFUL - PARTNERS IN EDUCATION

Anticipated Total Number of FFA Participants: 150

Shift A: 7:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. (100 participants)
Shift B: 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. (50 participants)

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

Anticipated Number of FFA Participants: 260

Shift A: 7:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. (130 participants)
Shift B: 12:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. (130 participants)

GLEANERS FOOD BANK

Anticipated Number of FFA Participants: 150

Shift A: 7:30 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.
(50 participants)
Shift B: 10:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
(50 participants)
Shift C: 2:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
(50 participants)

INDY PARKS KESSLER BEAUTIFICATION PROJECT

Anticipated Number of FFA Participants: 260

Shift A: 8:30 a.m. - Noon (130 participants)
Shift B: 1:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. (130 participants)

NEW FEATURE
TO THE
NATIONAL FFA
CONVENTION.



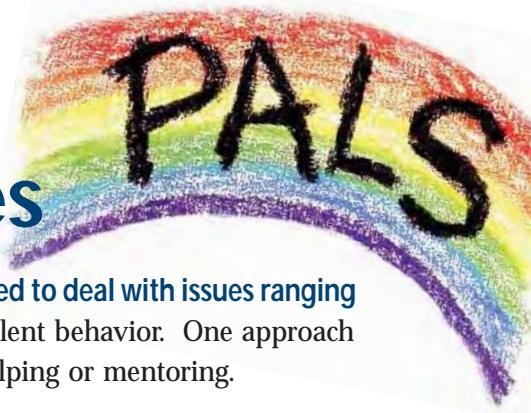
Living to Serve



79th National FFA Convention, Indianapolis, Indiana

Questions can be directed to Joe Martinez at 317-802-4316 or jmartinez@ffa.org

PALS Enhances Programs, Students' Lives



With all of today's social pressures on young people, schools are forced to deal with issues ranging from bullying and unhealthy lifestyles to poor attendance and violent behavior. One approach that has proved effective in improving all of these areas is peer helping or mentoring.

Partners in Active Learning Support (PALS), the National FFA Organization's mentoring program, pairs high school FFA members with elementary students. These high school peer helpers mentor younger students by being healthy role models and teaching agriculture-related skills and/or concepts, as well as providing tutoring, social/recreational activities and opportunities for community development.

Research Results

FFA chapters that have implemented PALS within their programs consistently report positive results. In a 2005 study commissioned by the National FFA Organization and conducted by Drs. Judith Tindall and David R. Black, the majority of PALS mentors and mentees reported positive gains in social skills, school attendance, academic success, healthy lifestyle practices, attitudes toward self and cultural awareness/appreciation for diversity.

More specifically, the research found:

- PALS provided troubled students motivation to graduate from high school.
- PALS provided a win/win situation for all involved.
- Elementary students, teachers, mentors and administrators all gave the program high marks. One common statement indicated having a PALS program provides great public relations opportunities.
- Success stories included how mentors gained the trust of their mentees; anecdotes of how advisors witnessed the impact PALS made in a short time; testimonials from PALS alumni; how attendance, self esteem and math test scores for mentors and mentees improved; and how suicide rates declined.

Examples of how the PALS program helped the local community and school include:

- a positive and distinguished reputation accorded to the mentors
- broader and genuine teacher interest in program participation
- increased recruitment into the agricultural education program
- increased awareness of FFA among community members

In summary, the study found PALS is not only an excellent recruitment tool for agricultural education programs, but also provides a mechanism for building strong leaders and good community citizens. The program indirectly supports each school's No Child Left Behind efforts by increasing student retention, student achievement and classroom relevance. The mentors developed invaluable caring and empathy skills for younger pals and learned the importance of serving as role models.

- on the PALS CD provided to teachers in the red "REV It Up" kits distributed last summer at state inservice meetings and available online at www.ffaunlimited.org/palscdrom.html
- at www.ffa.org/programs/pals/index.html

Workshop/Training Opportunity

At this fall's national FFA convention, Drs. Judith Tindall and Randy Black and Mr. Damon Spight will be conducting an evaluation workshop, which will delve more deeply into the power and benefits of the PALS program as evidenced by the assessment and research. Most importantly, they will introduce a new, user-friendly online peer mentoring evaluation form that can lead to your PALS program becoming a nationally certified peer helper program through the National Association of Peer Programs. The workshop will be held at 8 a.m., Wed., Oct. 26, Indiana Convention Center Room 101 and 102. For more information and to register, please contact Damon Spight at 317-802-4402 or dspight@ffa.org.

Getting Involved

Interested in learning more about how implementing PALS might enhance your agricultural education program? You can find more information:



Learn more about making diversity work for your program at teacher and student workshops during the 79th National FFA Convention.



Student Workshop

Diversity: Learning to Do, Doing to Learn

Sat., Oct. 28, 8:30 – 9:30 a.m.

Indianapolis Convention Center, Room 210

Presenter Hannibal Johnson, a graduate of Harvard Law School, consultant and author, will teach students how to:

- Lead others to recognize and celebrate core commonalities and shared differences
- Pose questions and develop diversity goals with other young role models from across the nation
- Be involved in role plays and "speak outs!" to foster awareness and appreciation for togetherness
- Share openly and honestly
- Formulate creative, collaborative solutions to emerging diversity issues
- Examine your own background and use it to empower others to give and gain respect

To pre-register for the student workshop, please send the student's name, school name, chapter name, address, city, state, zip, advisor's name, advisor's phone number, advisor's e-mail address and principal's name to hosargent@ffa.org or fax the information to 317-802-5402 by October 16. Onsite registration will also be available.

Teacher Workshop

Touching the Spirit: Effective Strategies and Practices for Educating Diverse Learners

Saturday, Oct. 28, 10 – 11:30 a.m.

Indianapolis Convention Center, Room 211

Dr. Patricia Payne, director of the Indianapolis Public Schools Center for Multicultural Education and Crispus Attucks Museum, will lead this workshop. Participants will learn to:

- Infuse contemporary cultural concepts, themes and perspectives into traditional curriculum
- Develop lesson plans combining a student's cultural orientation with the school's educational strategy
- Utilize cultural orientation in combination with multiple intelligences and learning styles

Participants will also gain:

- Increased awareness of the importance of students seeing themselves and their experiences mirrored in classroom instruction.
- Insight on promoting and practicing social justice skills to motivate students to become change agents and positive role models

To pre-register for the teacher workshop, please send the attendee's name, school name, chapter name, address, city, state, zip, phone number and e-mail address to hosargent@ffa.org or fax the information to 317-802-5402 by October 16. Onsite registration will also be available.



The H.O. Sargent Diversity Award is sponsored by Monsanto as a special project of the National FFA Foundation.

The workshops are FREE with your convention registration, but you must register to attend!

Send information to: hosargent@ffa.org, or fax that information to 317-802-5402 by October 16.

Onsite registration will also be available.

TeacherResources

Tree ID Online

Looking for good sites to teach woody plant material identification without having to collect live samples every day of class?

Take a browse at these two sites, which contain good libraries of tree identification photos. The NRCS site http://plants.nrcs.usda.gov/cgi_bin/link_categories.cgi?category=linkphotos#Ref154 contains 100+ links to regional and state sites of good photos of native tree, grass and wild flower species.

The site found at <http://botit.botany.wisc.edu/> contains a library of numerous tree species photos, including different seasons as well as close-ups of twigs and buds. There are also microscope slide photos of plant structure that work great to teach plant structure without a classroom set of microscopes.

Welding Lesson and More

Lesson plans, industry links, math and science applications for all the numerous welding processes found in industry can be found at www.khake.com/page89.html. This site has hundreds of links to teaching materials from stick to MIG and TIG to underwater welding. If there is a welding process you want to teach, this site will have the information you need.

Food Science Through History

Take a look at the Living History Farms website at www.livinghistoryfarm.org/farminginthe30s/IrScience03.html#part3 to find good lesson plans on food science



taught as history in the 1920s, 30s and 40s. Each of the five lessons are cross-referenced to science standards and based on the scientific method of investigation. The site also contains lesson materials for social studies, reading, science and math as well as art. The lessons are written for grades 5-8, but could be adapted to older grades with little work.

Food Science Lessons

Another good site for multiple sources of food science lessons can be found at www.foodscience.psu.edu/outreach/fun_food_science.html. From the Department of Food Science at Penn State, this site contains lesson plans for multiple age groups as well as experiments for teaching science concepts through food.

Food Facts & Information

BestFoodNation.com offers the facts about the U.S. food supply, which offers the safest, most affordable and most abundant food in the world. The food and hospitality industries have joined together to tell their story—the positive impact made by each participant along the chain, to separate fact from fiction, and to set the record straight about Best Food Nation.



Marketplace for the Mind

The unique, educational resource, located at www.marketplaceforthemind.state.pa.us/m4m/lib/m4m/homepage.asp, was created by the Pennsylvania Dept. of Agriculture in cooperation with the Pennsylvania Dept. of Education. Here you'll find a bounty of current agricultural education materials aligned to academic standards, and a wide variety of useful information on Pennsylvania agriculture and agribusiness. Take a look at the many resources that can be used in your agricultural classes



Dr. Dirt on Soils

Struggling to make your soils lessons interesting and understandable to your students? Take a look at the suggestions from Dr. Dirt at <http://www.wtamu.edu/~crobinson/DrDirt.htm>. These resources have been developed primarily for K-8 teachers and students. Hands-on, exploratory learning activities based on methods of scientific inquiry will encourage interest in science, soil, engineering, agriculture and natural resources. The activities could easily be adapted and extended to challenge students in grades 9-12. The pages on plows and irrigation provide information on historical and current cultivation and irrigation methods. There is even the recipe for the ever-popular dirt pudding that every agriculture student should learn to prepare.

Civic Engagement for the 21st Century Conference



A National Youth Conference and Dialogue

Come to Learn – Leave to Serve



Conference Topic Areas

Philanthropy
Hunger Relief
Democracy
Character Education
Asset Development
Peace & Justice
Violence Prevention

Youth Empowerment Through Civic Engagement and Leadership

October 25, 2006
National FFA Convention
Indiana Convention Center
Indianapolis, IN
9:00 – 11:30 a.m.

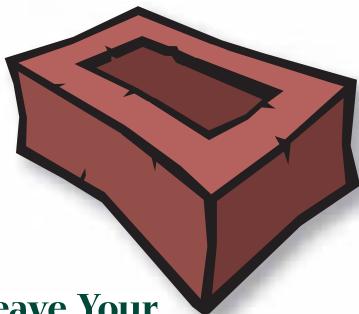
No Charge. Limited Availability.
Register now at 317-802-4402
or dsplight@ffa.org



2006 WLC Attendees

The Living To Serve Plan Grant Program makes its debut this year. Students can now win up to \$1,000 to fund their Living To Serve plans! FFA will be giving away up to \$55,000.00 in grants. For more information and an application, visit WLC Online at www.ffa.org/wlconline/. Applications are due Nov. 20.

Also available on WLC Online, students have the chance to continue their leadership experience all year long! It is a fun, interactive web experience with a picture gallery, fun challenges, articles, "Ask the Expert" feature, mind-teasers and discussion boards. Participants are eligible to win great prizes for completing the challenges and can also be recognized for their accomplishments with their LTS plan on the Student Success Story page. For login and password information, e-mail wlc@ffa.org.



Leave Your Mark – Buy a Brick!

You have an opportunity to make your mark in the courtyard at the National FFA Center! Honor an individual, an agriculture teacher, chapter, officer team, or create a memorial tribute by purchasing your very own brick. For \$250, you can purchase a 4-by-8-inch brick with a two-line inscription. For \$1,000, you can purchase a larger, 8-by-8-inch brick with up to four lines inscribed. With the national FFA convention moving to Indianapolis, thousands of FFA members, advisors and friends of the organization will be touring the Center for the next several

years. The bricks in the courtyard serve as a visible reminder of the far-reaching support for FFA and agricultural education. Add your name, chapter name or the name of a loved one to this special place while supporting FFA members through the National FFA Foundation. You'll be in good company! To purchase a brick, visit the National FFA Foundation web page <http://www.ffa.org/foundation> or call 317-802-4234.

Teacher Workshops and Interactive Classrooms

Make your time at the 79th National FFA Convention valuable to you as well as your students. Make sure you spend some of your time in Indianapolis improving yourself as a teacher. The interactive classrooms in the Career Show and the teacher workshops in the Marriott Hotel offer professional development on a variety of topics. Stop by and see agriscience in action being taught by the agriscience ambassadors at the DuPont classroom. Learn the latest on how to use the Internet to teach agriculture management in the DTN classroom, and listen to presentations ranging from reading strategies to livestock rations and raising insects in the classroom at the teacher workshops. Additional information, times and locations can be found in the *Second Edition Advisors Planning Guide* and the Convention Guidebook.



Core and LifeKnowledge Classrooms

Come see the newest modifications to LifeKnowledge! Experience the online student evaluation tool, the coaching guide and all

the other new features found in LK 3.0 at the LifeKnowledge classroom in the Career Show. Learn how to take LifeKnowledge to the next level, and be able to individualize your leadership program. Sessions will be offered multiple times each day Wednesday through Friday during the national FFA convention. While you are there, stay and learn about the numerous resources that are available to agriculture teachers through the *Core* catalog. Take a moment to evaluate the new materials that have been added to the catalog, and give your input on development of new products for the agriculture classroom. More details are available in the *Second Edition Advisors Planning Guide* and the Convention Guidebook.



School Officials Luncheon at Convention

If you're bringing your school administrator, counselor, board member or advisory council member with you to the national FFA convention, don't forget to register them for the School Officials Program on Friday of convention. This event is designed to provide school officials the opportunity to experience a convention session from the VIP section, guided tours of the Career Show, as well as a free luncheon banquet with Dr. Troy Justesen, assistant secretary, U.S. Dept. of Education, as the keynote speaker. Following the luncheon, participants will have the opportunity to participate in an educational round table discussion led by fellow administrators. For more information, see the flyer from the *Second Edition Advisors Planning Guide* or check out www.ffa.org/convention.

Collegiate FFA Career Expo

attention all teachers with FFA members who are in college! The third annual Collegiate Career Expo will be a great opportunity for students to find internships and full-time positions.

The expo will be increasing the number of corporate participants this year and will feature even more opportunities in the industry of agriculture. If you have any collegiate students who are planning to attend the national FFA convention, please alert them to this opportunity. Here are the specifics:

- **When:** 8 a.m.-noon, Saturday, Oct. 28
- **Where:** Indianapolis Convention Center, rooms 101-106

A special note to advisors with American FFA Degree recipients: Don't worry! There will be plenty of time before and after

your students receive their awards to make it to the expo.

The first 500 students to register online for the Expo will receive a leather portfolio and 20 business cards created specifically for them. When they arrive at the Career Expo registration desk, they will be able to pick up their gifts and detailed information about all of the internship and full-time positions available from the companies exhibiting. They may also find many of the positions available posted on the Collegiate FFA website at www.ffa.org/collegiate.cfm.

Essentials for Success

- Register for the Career Expo online at www.ffa.org/collegiate.cfm for special gifts or on-site the day of the expo
- Arrive early to meet with companies of your choice

FREE
TO FIRST 500
TO REGISTER
ONLINE

- Professional or Official Dress is requested.
- If you are under 18, a college ID is requested.
- Bring 20 copies of résumés for companies' review.
- Pick up registration packet on-site.
- Identify key companies of interest.
- Find your dream internship or job at the Collegiate Career Expo!



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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20202-7322

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Look for

your next issue of *FFA*

Advisors Making a Difference in late November. It will feature stories about student recruitment and retention, as well as provide teaching resources and FFA news.