



INNOVATE

2013 FFA Chapter Innovators' Guide
Success Stories from Model of Excellence, Model of Innovation and
Outstanding Middle School Chapter Winners and Finalists

Student Development



Chapter Development



Models for Success Read how these 45 FFA chapters developed a well-planned and well-executed Program of Activities.

Community Development



Outstanding Middle School





CONGRATULATIONS

National Model of Excellence and Model of Innovation Winners

Like you, we believe in the future of agriculture.

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

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



Plotting a Course to a National Chapter Award

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

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

National Chapter Awards

In order to qualify for a national award, chapters must first receive a Gold Chapter Award on the state level. A state's top three Gold Chapter Award winners (or a number equal to 10 percent of the state's total number of chapters, if that number is higher than three) are eligible to compete for national awards in the National Chapter Award program.

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

Model of Excellence Award

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

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

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

The chapter selected to receive the Model of Excellence Award – the top chapter in the



nation – is announced on the main stage during the second session of the national convention and expo. This chapter receives a plaque.

Model of Innovation Award

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

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

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

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

National Outstanding Middle School Chapter Award

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

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

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

The chapter selected to receive the National Outstanding Middle School Chapter Award – the top middle school chapter in the nation – is announced on the main stage during the second session of the national convention and expo. This chapter receives a plaque.

All chapters receiving top recognition from the National FFA Organization are those that have identified goals and objectives, created workable plans, and not only achieved results but also learned from their activities.

The finalists and winners of the Model of Excellence Award, the Model of Innovation Awards and the National Outstanding Middle School Chapter Award for 2013 are presented in this guide along with their unique stories about how they pursued and accomplished their goals.



BEST OF THE BEST

Model of Excellence

Pontiac FFA of Illinois

Ashland FFA of Missouri
 Boonville FFA of Missouri
 Brooksville Senior FFA of Florida
 Central FFA of Virginia
 Kathleen Senior FFA of Florida
 Lynchburg-Clay FFA of Ohio
 Marshall FFA of Missouri
 South Callaway FFA of Missouri
 Waupaca FFA of Wisconsin

Model of Innovation: Student Development

Saint Amant FFA of Louisiana

Brooksville Senior FFA of Florida
 Chatham Middle FFA of Virginia
 Covington FFA of Tennessee
 Crowley County FFA of Colorado
 Dassel-Cokato FFA of Minnesota
 Goreville FFA of Illinois
 Hill City FFA of Kansas
 Richland 44 FFA of North Dakota
 Tri-Valley Central FFA of New York

Model of Innovation: Chapter Development

Anna FFA of Ohio

Brooksville Senior FFA of Florida
 Chapman FFA of Kansas
 Dyersburg FFA of Tennessee
 East Jackson FFA of Georgia
 Goreville FFA of Illinois
 Lawrence County FFA of Alabama
 New London FFA of Ohio
 Stillwater FFA of Oklahoma
 Tri-Valley Central FFA of New York

Model of Innovation: Community Development

Richland 44 FFA of North Dakota

Brooksville Senior FFA of Florida
 Chatham Middle FFA of Virginia
 Conestoga FFA of Nebraska
 Kathleen Senior FFA of Florida
 Lehi FFA of Utah
 North Bend FFA of Nebraska
 Owasso FFA of Oklahoma
 Pioneer FFA of New York
 Plainview FFA of Nebraska

Outstanding Middle School

Signal Knob Middle FFA of Virginia

Chatham Middle FFA of Virginia
 Lincoln Middle FFA of Florida
 South Sumter Middle FFA of Florida
 Tomlin Middle FFA of Florida





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Outstanding Middle School



The FFA Mission

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

The Agricultural Education Mission

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

The National FFA Organization is a resource and support organization that does not select, control or supervise state association, local chapter or individual member activities. Educational materials are developed by FFA in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Education as a service to state and local agricultural education agencies.

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Recruit, Retain and Serve

Model of Excellence Winner - Pontiac FFA, Illinois

Members of the Pontiac FFA Chapter in Illinois love to focus on recruitment and retention. “We discuss a variety of activities and then pick one that is most impactful,” senior Jordan John said. “We do activities based on student interest, which helps to make them a success.”

With recruitment a priority, the chapter delivered agricultural education presentations at seven junior high schools. As a result 88 new members have signed up to take the introduction to agriculture class next fall.

Focusing on retention, the officer team developed a Students Taking Awesome Roles (STAR) program. The concept was developed to recognize non-officer FFA members for their efforts and achievements in school and FFA. The STAR program encourages all members to take their studies and FFA participation to the next level.

Another activity that is the result of student innovation is Troop or Treat. This project encourages members to think about service in a fun way. Members collected 260 pounds of candy and goods, as well as cash donations, and provided 12 deployed soldiers with two appreciation packages each.

“All of our activity ideas, the STAR program, Troop or Treat, or giving presentations to the community all come from our students who want to try something, honor someone or

hone their skills,” said agriculture educator Jesse Faber.

Pontiac FFA also spread agricultural literacy through a program they call, P.A.I. L. – Promoting Agriculture in Literature. This year P.A.I.L. reached 1,069 students. The four lessons delivered through the program were written and aligned to standards by members.

“We allow our students to run things; it allows for the needs of the community to be met. We find that students want to start participating in the fun activities and then are willing to put in the work to be successful at the educational opportunities as well,” agriculture educator Parker Bane said.

“Their enthusiasm becomes contagious. We are so proud that we have touched so many people who don’t wear the blue jacket,” Faber said.

Seniors John and Abby Jacobs agree that what they have gained from being in FFA is wonderful. “You can’t put into words what FFA has done for us,” Jacobs said.

“I am proud of the ownership our students take,” Bane said. “It has been a long road, with people saying that there wasn’t a need for an agriculture program in Pontiac. It is very gratifying to me to be in this position, helping students develop life skills.”

Maximizing Resources

Ashland FFA, Missouri

Members of the Ashland FFA Chapter in Missouri hosted a Supervised Agricultural Experience Night. During the event Greenhand members and their parents met with Missouri University agricultural education majors to discuss SAE opportunities and establish SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-bound) goals toward developing SAEs that meet their interests.

To kick off National FFA Week members hosted a Wild Game Dinner for FFA members, families, alumni and community members. The dinner promoted healthy eating habits and outdoor recreational activities. The meal was harvested and prepared by members.

This year the chapter also specialized in educating the next generation. Connecting elementary students to production agriculture, FFA members presented three different Food For America lessons to second graders.

Local day cares and community members also learned from Ashland FFA this year as they hosted barnyard tours around their agriculture facility. More than 1,300 community members participated in the tour that featured 15 stops devoted to animals, crops, or informational posters. FFA members led the tours and presented different uses for the species and crops and aspects of animal care.



Aim High for FFA

Boonville FFA, Missouri

Members of the Boonville FFA Chapter of Missouri aimed high for FFA. Collaborating with the booster club, they hosted a gun shooting tournament to raise funds to purchase blue jackets and attend leadership events. They worked with the community and local businesses to market the event and provided a meal to participants. During the event they were right on target as they educated the community about FFA while raising \$2,500.

But raising funds didn't stop there; they hosted a Coin War to earn money for their Books for Buddies program. Around the holidays, this program provides a wrapped book for elementary

school students in the free and reduced lunch program. The profit from the Coin War more than doubled their expectations, and the members experienced the lasting impact of giving.

One driving force behind the chapter activities was the executive committee; they were determined to give of themselves and "Team up to Lead." The chapter leadership attended a series of meetings, trainings and retreats to enhance their ability to work cooperatively as a team and learn valuable leadership skills to benefit members.



Kindness and Collaboration

Brooksville Senior FFA, Florida

Members of the Brooksville Senior FFA in Florida started a new fundraiser: a vending machine filled with locally grown Florida's Natural juices. Selling about 250 cans per week, the fundraiser has helped students develop business skills and offered a wholesome drink made of Florida products.

With collaboration in mind the members contacted 15 FFA chapters and 4-H clubs about a cooperative swine program where participants purchased feeder pigs and show feed. Working together and making these large purchases cooperatively saved 52 students \$5,800, which equals a savings of \$111.54 per student.

From show pigs to family pets, the chapter showed their thoughtfulness.

Through their Kibbles of Kindness project, the chapter obtained 15,000 pounds of pet food in torn bags from a local distributor. As a service to the community in hard economic times, the chapter re-bagged the dog, cat and bird food and redistributed it to eight local food banks.

The chapter's community outreach turned to an issue that hits close to home – they made a plan to "Clip Children's Cancer." They received 225 board feet of hardwood as a donation and built 50 clipboards of various sizes. With little advertising all clipboards were sold, and the chapter took orders for the next round. The proceeds were donated to children's cancer research.



Investing in the Future

Central FFA, Virginia

The Central FFA in Virginia knows that the majority of the public is removed from production agriculture: Only 20 percent of their own members have parents or grandparents involved in farming. To boost agricultural literacy, 55 members shared their knowledge with the community by giving animal production demonstrations to more than 200 preschool and first grade students. During this experience members instructed youth in areas of agricultural literacy as well as honed their own career-readiness skills.

Another outreach effort was accomplished through a fishing clinic for sixth graders. They developed and delivered lessons about aquaculture, fishing techniques and food preparation. The FFA members also worked with the sixth graders on how to build personal relationships during the clinic.

Other agricultural literacy outreach included a Food For America program, where the chapter hosted a group of kindergarteners at their nature trail and a group of first graders at their greenhouse to learn about plant production.

To encourage personal development, an FFA Points system was created. Students were rewarded with FFA Points for participation in a wide range of FFA activities. Points could be used to purchase items at an end-of-year auction.





Planting Pride

Kathleen Senior FFA, Florida

Members of the Kathleen Senior FFA Chapter in Florida designed and will now maintain the area around their new school sign, bringing a sense of pride to the entire school. When everyone sees the sign, they will recognize the horticulture design skills and efforts of FFA.

To raise money for their membership dues, the chapter created a discount card fundraiser that offers special deals at local businesses. Because of the success of this fundraiser, 91 students earned their FFA membership and a chapter T-shirt.

The chapter also served the community during FFA Week and hosted four preschools for a workshop and tour. The members developed lessons for the preschoolers, and 92 percent of the chapter's FFA members helped deliver the workshop and gained organizational and public speaking skills in the process.

Joining the social media buzz, the Kathleen Senior FFA public relations committee planned and developed a Facebook page to keep chapter members informed of opportunities and to connect with local businesses, former members and other chapters across the nation.

Preparing Today, for Tomorrow

Lynchburg-Clay FFA, Ohio

Thirty years ago, Greg Wilkin died in a farming accident; as a member of Lynchburg-Clay FFA his legacy lives on. Today the Ohio chapter continues to honor his memory with a memorial alumni basketball tournament. This past year FFA members recruited 112 alumni members to participate in the event; profits went toward a scholarship fund for current senior FFA members.

The chapter also partnered with their alumni this year to host an equipment consignment auction for the community, helping farmers and ranchers sell equipment they no longer wanted and earning money for the chapter. Chapter members learned about auction operations and formed a better understanding of how commission works. There were more than 300 items consigned.

FFA members made an impact on eighth grade students twice in one month to promote agricultural education and FFA. The chapter interacted with up-and-coming students during a scheduling tour of the high school and during a middle school visit. Since implementing these awareness activities, Lynchburg-Clay FFA has seen their enrollment nearly double.



Recruit. Retain. Inspire.

Marshall FFA, Missouri

Members of the Marshall FFA Chapter in Missouri got serious about their well-being this year and started the program Fitness For All. In this program the chapter sponsored five events to help members get active.

One of the events, Walk Across America, engaged 1,370 members of the student body in an effort to collectively walk 2,980 miles, the distance from Maine to California. They also reached out to their community with information about the dangers of childhood obesity and the importance of physical activity.

To recruit members, Marshall FFA hosted a dodgeball tournament for eighth grade students. At the event all dues-paying members were given an FFA T-shirt and new members earned a jump drive. This event helped recruit and retain members.

This year the members also hosted a public relations crusade. They used newsletters, newspapers, radio spots and presentations to educate the community about the impact FFA is having on student lives and around the community. The crusade educated community members on agricultural issues and inspired many to become supporters of FFA.



Community Hunger Stops Here

Waupaca FFA, Wisconsin

The Waupaca FFA Chapter in Wisconsin engaged in an adaptive agriculture program for students with cognitive disabilities. The program gave the students an opportunity to enhance their academic, social and personal skills. Members worked with students through hands-on agricultural projects such as creating animal tracks, preparing nutritional meals and working with animals.

Ten educational stations were offered to 150 Waupaca third grade students during Conservation Day, hosted by the FFA chapter. These activities highlighted experiential learning and new skill sets. Some topics included aging tree cross-sections, skull identification, building survival shelters, bird observation and making animal track cards.

The members also worked to support their community with the BreakBasket initiative where they worked with food science students to purchase, prepare and transport well-balanced meals to 607 less-fortunate community members. The chapter gained 12 new members because of this positive experience.

Bringing awareness to hunger issues in their community didn't stop there. Waupaca FFA also hosted a Kid's Against Hunger program. During this event they educated students and community members as well as packed 35,000 meals, which were distributed to food pantries in the Midwest and shipped to Liberia.

Making a Difference

South Callaway FFA, Missouri

The South Callaway FFA in Missouri worked hard to stay active in the community. They decorated a float for the Mokane World's Fair parade to promote FFA and agriculture; hosted the FFA Week Community Pancake Breakfast to thank the community for their support; and teamed with other student organizations to serve breakfast to veterans on Veteran's Day.

They also participated in the Adopt-A-Highway program and helped clean a one-mile stretch of a state highway, maintaining natural plant life and providing a safer passageway for drivers, bicyclists and pedestrians. They served a local nursing home by maintaining and beautifying the grounds, includ-

ing trimming trees and shrubs, pulling weeds and planting plants from their greenhouse.

The FFA chapter also collected soda tabs at the school. By gathering 7.6 pounds of soda tabs to donate to the local Ronald McDonald House, they helped families with children who are hospitalized for illness or injury.

Not only active in the community, FFA members led active lifestyles as well. Chapter activities encouraged physical activity. Members organized and participated in the Barnwarming Dance, an open-gym meeting, a slow-pitch softball tournament and during FFA Week hosted Hockey in the Shop.



Bowls for Better Living

Student Development Winner - Saint Amant FFA, Louisiana

Members of the Saint Amant FFA Chapter in Louisiana promote healthier living through innovative ways. At the event Bowl for Better Living, each member was given a bowl and allowed to mix and match yogurt, fruit and granola to create their own healthy snack bowls.

“It is the first time we offered the event,” FFA advisor Mandy Delaune said. “With the obesity rates around the country and in our schools on the rise, we wanted to offer something different. We always served the same things at chapter events—cheesy nachos, hamburgers, etc. So we decided to take a fresh look and give them [students] different options. They eat anything we give them, so we might as well make it a healthy option.”

After enjoying their snack bowls, the chapter learned about fitness and stretching from an FFA alumni who is now a physical trainer. The 30-minute presentation discussed the importance of a healthy lifestyle.

“We wanted the students to learn the importance of stretching for physical activities and in general. There are a lot of blue collar jobs in

this area, and so many back injuries could be prevented with regular stretching,” Delaune said.

After the food and learning opportunity members challenged one another at their town’s new bowling alley.

Since this activity the chapter has continued to offer healthy options at chapter meetings. “When we meet, we eat!” Haylie Heath, a senior and the chapter president, said. “Food brings everyone together so it was a great way to incorporate healthy lifestyles. Healthy can be made fun; there are so many ways to make it creative and entertaining.”

FFA members have made fruit kabobs and fruit pizza, just to name a few examples of how the chapter continues to make health and nutrition a priority. Heath and Megan Borblon, a sophomore and the chapter reporter, recommend Pinterest for fun and healthy ideas and look forward to keeping up the tradition in their chapter.



Partners for Brighter Smiles

Brooksville Senior FFA, Florida

Members of the Brooksville Senior FFA Chapter in Florida wanted to keep young smiles bright and healthy, so they created a Health Snacks and Dental Care program. Members worked with Colgate Dental to acquire educational hygiene supplies and information.

The FFA chapter leaders conducted two pre-event workshops to prepare members to present. Using the supplies they were given, the chapter presented to 11 kindergarten classes.

FFA members reached out to more than 200 students, who learned the importance of identifying healthy snacks from fresh agricultural products and about keeping their teeth strong and smiles beautiful. The program left the kindergarteners with a better understanding and appreciation for good tooth-friendly snacks, hopefully affecting their life-long decisions.



Low Calorie Drama

Chatham Middle FFA, Virginia

“Low Calorie Drama,” developed by members of Chatham Middle FFA Chapter from Virginia, entertained and educated the student body on the importance of nutritious eating. The drama was presented during National School Lunch Week in October.

Working with the school’s cafeteria manager, the chapter developed and presented five skits. They featured in-

formation on locally grown foods and each day performed lunch-time dramas explaining healthy food choices and food facts.

On the last day, they also distributed fun food fact cards to each student as they exited the cafeteria. For many students, the skits brought the process of farm-to-fork to life.

Proficiency Lock-In

Covington FFA, Tennessee

Members of the Covington FFA Chapter in Tennessee know it takes a lot of hard work and dedication to encourage student success and for it to be recognized. To showcase their SAEs and build team spirit, the chapter hosted an FFA Proficiency Lock-In.

During the lock-in, the chapter completed 34 proficiency applications from 21 different students. Members, advisors, administrators, parents and community members worked together to host and execute the lock-in. Along with giving the chapter time to fill out the applications, the event also created strong

bonds between FFA members, administrators and community members. The process of filling out the applications allowed members to showcase accomplishments.

Covington FFA believes the lock-in was a huge success; friendships were strengthened. Because of this event, the chapter had 10 state winners and 12 regional winners, along with multiple second and third place awards at the state level.



Polite and Promising

Crowley County FFA, Colorado

A lull in ethics, manners and etiquette among the student body was noticed by members of the Crowley County FFA in Colorado. So, they took action. The chapter decided to teach the code of ethics to their FFA members and then make sure they were creating an example for members and non-members alike.

FFA members worked with their advisor to spend time in class learning the FFA Code of Ethics and created a recognition system. Members caught setting a good example were given blue and gold cards that they could trade in for prizes.

As they began to implement and practice the code of ethics, the members continued to gain favor with local business leaders and received many compliments during events about members being respectful and polite. Their methods are working, and the chapter hopes this is making them more work-force-ready.



Smiles for Miles

Goreville FFA, Illinois

The Goreville FFA Chapter in Illinois knew local elementary school teachers had a growing concern about the childhood obesity epidemic. FFA members decided to help make health and fitness fun for the younger students and developed Smiles for Miles.

FFA members challenged kindergartners through fifth graders to log 28 miles of activity over the course of 14 weeks. Each Friday during physical education time, FFA members set up a track around the gym and tracked student progress. To incentivize students, one iPod Nano was given to the member of each grade who logged the most miles.



Stretch Your Mind and Body

Dassel-Cokato FFA, Minnesota

Members of the Dassel-Cokato FFA Chapter in Minnesota were concerned about the amount of time students spent watching television and wanted to do something to get people moving.

The chapter worked with their physical education department to start a Superstars program that challenged people both physically and mentally. The chapter's healthy lifestyles committee designed T-shirts, ordered food, created awards and organized supplies. Dassel-Cokato's eight chapter officers contacted 32 potential sponsors to contribute to the event.

The day of the event, there were 14 teams and 140 people who were put to the test through 30 different events. These events tested the participants' ability to stretch their mind, body and teamwork capabilities. Plans are already underway for next year's event.

By the end of the 14-week period, elementary students participating in Smiles for Miles logged a total of 9,744 miles. One class had logged more than 1,900 miles, and overall students averaged three miles per week.



Murder Mystery

Hill City FFA, Kansas

The Hill City FFA Chapter in Kansas wanted to offer its members a safe, fun activity that would help develop their critical-thinking skills while allowing time for them to get to know one another. They were able to achieve this goal by hosting a murder mystery party.

The setting allowed students to use their individual creativity to dress in their character's part in the Old West saloon, interact with other guests participating in the mystery, develop their public-speaking skills as well as their creative minds and critical-thinking skills.

The chapter's entertainment committee worked to make sure it was a fun and safe activity for all members as well as four district officers and three alumni who participated. The murder mystery party was educational in teaching students that they could have fun while honing skills in a safe environment.

Put me in, Coach

Tri-Valley Central FFA,
New York

When members of the Tri-Valley Central FFA Chapter in New York heard that the Bear Cub basketball league was having difficulty finding coaches, they decided to step in and help. Eighteen teams of elementary students needed coaches and volunteers in order to make sure all could play during the season.

FFA members worked together to develop a schedule and ensured that each team had two coaches. They then developed 20 lessons as a guide for future coaches and volunteers. The lessons are intended to give all players the same foundation of sportsmanship, teamwork and basketball knowledge.

FFA members and alumni ran drills, promoted team spirit and taught good sportsmanship skills while encouraging the youth to stay active throughout life.



On-A-Roll

Richland 44 FFA, North Dakota

Members of the Richland 44 FFA Chapter in North Dakota wanted to recognize students who were improving their grades but may not necessarily make the honor roll, so they developed the On-A-Roll program.

Every student who was on the honor roll or improved from the second to third quarter received a free roll or doughnut. The FFA chapter worked with area bakeries to solicit donations and then

worked with the administration for a list of students who were eligible.

They were able to award 113 rolls to students at the end of the third quarter. Student moral was boosted as 85 percent of the student body was recognized for earning good grades or showing improvement.





SUBWAY WHERE WINNERS EAT

May 7th at Anna Elementary

KETTLE 8

Full-Circle Service Learning

Chapter Development Winner - Anna FFA, Ohio

A service-learning project that touched on all three components of agricultural education and provided a service to the community was a rewarding learning experience for the members of Anna FFA in Ohio. The chapter conducted chicken feed trials; once they were completed, the chapter used the chickens to feed attendees at the school's Veteran's Day Service.

"This is such a great project because it has something in it for everyone, from the production kids to those who know very little about agriculture. We built rations, created pens, conducted feed trials, and harvested the birds, all while working with the support of our school and strengthening community relationships," agriculture educator Sarah Heilers, said.

The feed rations project was mainly done in the sophomore animal science class, but they pulled in as many students as possible to be engaged in different elements from start to finish.

"I learned how to develop proper feed rations and how to properly care for chickens," senior Katelyn Brunswick said. "I also developed a research paper about what I learned, organizing all the steps of the project into a paper others could learn from. My favorite part was seeing the project full-circle from raising the chicks to learning about processing them to actually getting to serve the community with

the protein source."

The Veteran's Day Service is a joint program between the schools in the district. "Early in the day the veterans go to the elementary school for a musical program and then come to our school where the middle school students greet them and the high school FFA members mingle with them and serve them lunch," senior Dominic Becker said. The 190 pounds of shredded chicken fed 97 veterans and more than 500 students.

"It was a great feeling to have so much support from the community in getting supplies and then seeing the months of work and being able to pay it forward to the veterans. It was a cool experience," Becker said.

"At Anna we pride ourselves on strong SAEs and we are competitive in events without letting the classroom aspect fall through the cracks," Heilers said. "Michelle Brusnson, my predecessor, helped this chapter be successful at the national level."

"The support from the community and administration is fantastic," Tim Zimpfer, an agricultural education teacher at Anna High School, said. "But most of the credit goes to the students — we have a great group of driven individuals in our program."



Tagging Technology

Brooksville Senior FFA, Florida

The Brooksville Senior FFA Chapter in Florida noticed that getting information to potential buyers of their livestock projects was a challenge. So members researched technology “tags,” and developed two, one for cattle and one for hogs. These tags allowed the public to use tablets and smartphones to access information on the Internet about the animals being sold prior to the sale.

Chapter members met with two local feed stores and were able to place their tags in both stores’ print advertising. They also had their eye-appealing advertising with the tags placed on the counters of three cooperating sponsors.

Making the technology available to all chapter market animal exhibitors, they had 13 steers and 20 swine exhibitors featured. Because the chapter saw an increase in traffic to their website, they plan to use the tag technology again next year.



Camouflage Cooperation

Chapman FFA, Kansas

Members of the Chapman FFA Chapter in Kansas worked together with the 5/4 Cavalry Unit based in Fort Riley, Kan., to create the leadership event Camouflage Cooperation. Twenty-one members of the chapter’s leadership team participated in teamwork drills and developed trust.

The 5/4 Cavalry Unit taught the team the U.S. Army’s 11 leadership principles, enabling members to gain additional leadership skills such as goal setting,

team building, non-verbal communication, cooperation, risk management and decision-making skills.

The activity helped each participant recognize the unique strengths and qualities of each team member. As a result the leadership team has been able to positively affect 100 percent of the chapter’s members by integrating team-building drills into many chapter activities.

Little Lamb Camp

Dyersburg FFA, Tennessee

Little Lamb Camp, a four-day adventure hosted by the Dyersburg FFA Chapter in Tennessee, brought the chapter and community together. Children in kindergarten through third grade were invited to attend the camp and learn about raising a lamb. This year 82 campers took advantage of this opportunity.

Little Lamb Camp culminates on the last day when the campers showcase their new and improved skills and participate in a show for their families.

The campers' fee to attend goes back to the FFA members to help ease the financial burden of feeding and taking care of their own lambs throughout the summer as well as the costs of exhibiting. Some of the proceeds go toward maintaining and purchasing chapter equipment such as lamb stands and clippers.



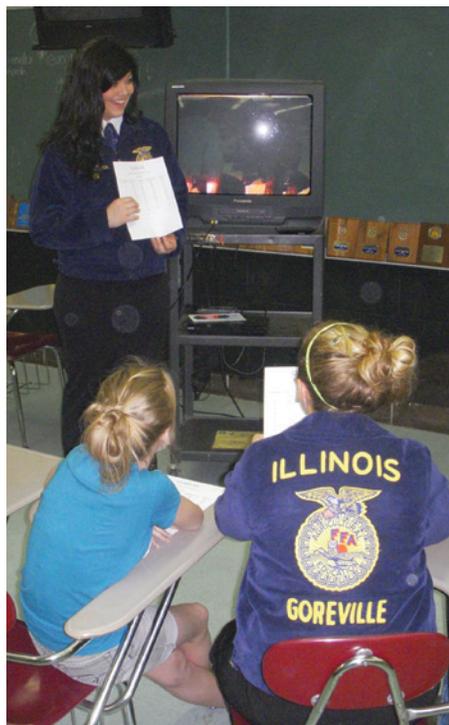
Wreath Designing

East Jackson FFA, Georgia

Members of the East Jackson FFA Chapter in Georgia mingled with community members this year as they offered a Mesh Wreath Design Class for adults. The design class allowed floral design students to showcase their skills and teach members of the community the latest trends in floral design.

FFA members promoted the opportunity with a flyer and registration form they designed and distributed to alumni members, the local newspaper, school webmaster, school listserv and county farm bureau.

Community members paid to attend the class, and proceeds went toward paying for materials used in their floral design class and training materials for the floral design career development event team. Participants were impressed with the FFA member's knowledge and were excited to display the wreaths in their homes for years to come.



Gamer Changer

Goreville FFA, Illinois

The first Johnson County FFA Antique Tractor Show was a game-changer for the Goreville FFA Chapter in Illinois. Members of the chapter worked with the community to advertise and organize the event, which educated attendees about FFA and the heritage of agriculture.

The antique tractor show was the largest event in their county, hosting 40 tractors and a pedal pull for kindergarten through third graders. Goreville FFA had 100 percent of its members actively involved in the event; members took ownership in the areas of set-up, parking, selling T-shirts, registration, parking tractors, announcing the show, running the pedal pull and cleanup.

As a result the event helped form an active FFA alumni. The chapter has also seen a 12 percent increase in agricultural education enrollment and they earned enough money to send 14 members to the National FFA Convention & Expo.

Cow Patties

Lawrence County FFA, Alabama

Getting the entire school involved in FFA Week was the goal of the Lawrence County FFA Chapter in Alabama. The activity that did the trick was Cow Patty the FFA Officer, where officers were challenged to go all day without talking.

If an officer talked, the person who made them do so got a certificate to give the officer a “cow patty” in the face the following day at a school-wide assembly. If an officer made it all day without talking, they got to cow patty the FFA advisor.

At the assembly, seven of the 11 officers were hit with a cow patty, which was a delicious mixture of chocolate pudding and oatmeal. During the assembly other activities for faculty and the student body included FFA Fear Factor and teamwork games. This activity was effective in recruiting and promoting for the FFA program.



Carnations for a Cause

New London FFA, Ohio

Members of the New London FFA Chapter in Ohio sponsored their annual Valentine’s Day Carnation sale to raise money for Ohio Children’s Hospital. One hundred percent of the members helped.

The earning and savings committee collaborated with others to organize the event, delegating jobs in areas such as contacting businesses, designing and executing advertising, selling and taking orders, collecting money and delivering carnations. The sale went off without a hitch.

In their communications and leadership class, the members prepared a letter to accompany the donation of \$250 to the children’s hospital. The chapter hopes these funds will help children fight life-threatening diseases and receive medical assistance.

FFA Goes Global

Tri-Valley Central FFA, New York

The Tri-Valley FFA Chapter in New York provided a global opportunity for their members and alumni. In March, 15 members and 16 alumni took an agricultural trip to Ireland and Scotland.

Prior to the trip, the chapter worked to have the trip approved by the board of education, met with alumni to discuss the trip and held informative meetings. Students were also offered an international agricultural class prior to the trip.

The community was invited to attend as long as they were dues-paying members; out of the 16 adults on the trip only two were alumni members prior to this experience. On the trip, participants toured local farms and learned about the international economy. The trip opened the members' eyes to different aspects of agriculture and its world-wide impact.



Illuminating Livestock

Stillwater FFA, Oklahoma

The Stillwater FFA Chapter in Oklahoma was asked to bring the spirit of the holidays to the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry by designing and building Christmas decorations for the department's lawn.

Members enrolled in the agriculture power and technology class submitted plans to be approved by the department, then they got to work.

FFA members built life-size luminaries of a lamb, goat, pig and cow. Attaching more than 300 feet of white lights to complete the three-dimensional animals was a highlight of the year. Bringing cheer to the community, the chapter was highlighted during the annual Christmas tree lighting at the state capitol.





Boards for Boredom

Community Development Winner - Richland 44 FFA, North Dakota

At Sanford Children’s Hospital in North Dakota, many ill children spend hours in their hospital room, enduring test after test and boredom as they stare at the same four walls. Wanting to remedy the boredom, the members of the Richland 44 FFA Chapter put their heads together on how they could help.

Richland 44 has a long history of community development (they have collected soybeans from local farms for Harvest for Life and participated in toy drives); but this time they decided to use their skills to build checkerboards for the children’s hospital, FFA advisor Tony Boehm said.

The chapter built 27 checkerboards using aspen and oak, two coats of varnish and lots of sandpaper to help alleviate the hospital boredom. “The chapter thought building games would be better than raising money; we could actually help to reduce the problem of boredom,” Zac Miller, a senior and the chapter’s community relations chair, said.

Teaming with the Family, Career and Community Leaders of America organization, FFA members sewed small fabric bags with

drawstrings for the checker pieces. “Working together brought cheerful moments to the children. We try to team up for community projects and work together,” said chapter secretary Ellie Krupich, who is also the president of her school’s FCCLA club.

“We brought the boards to the hospital and had the opportunity to take a tour of the hospital and learn about the daily operations; it was pretty neat,” freshman Jenna Anderson said.

Miller said that the positive response has inspired the chapter to double the number of game boards for next year.

“I’ve been in the hospital with family before and so have many of the students. A game provides some relief to those who have an extended stay and can help patients and family members get their mind off the problems,” Boehm said. He is proud of his members’ carpentry skills and their ability to work together and think of others.



Clip Cancer

Brooksville Senior FFA, Florida

With several connections to childhood cancer among them, the members of the Brooksville Senior FFA in Florida decided they were going to help “Clip Childhood Cancer.” Working with their alumni and community donors, the chapter was able to get 225 board feet of hardwood donated to the cause. Because of their success, members only needed to purchase the clips and finishing supplies to construct clipboards of different sizes.

Brooksville Senior FFA built 50 clipboards: legal, letter and note. Using email marketing, the chapter quickly sold the first 50 clipboards and took orders for the next batch. All profits were donated to “clip” children’s cancer. Over the years, the chapter has had several cancer survivors as members, making this project truly a labor of love.



A Good Start

Chatham Middle FFA, Virginia

Chatham Middle FFA Chapter in Virginia provided lessons on crop and animal production to local preschool students attending the Pittsylvania County Head Start Program. The program has a high percentage of students living in poverty.

The lessons taught by FFA members gave the kids opportunities to see where their food comes from and better understand how to select and grow their own food at home to benefit their overall health.

FFA members also assembled 125 crop and animal production kits to give to the students. The production kits were about ice cream, fresh herbs, strawberries, aquaculture and soil pudding. These kits were delivered to children so they could carry the knowledge home. This project had great community outreach and educated youth about food, fiber and natural resources systems.

Nature Night

Conestoga FFA, Nebraska

The Conestoga FFA Chapter in Nebraska worked with the Lower Platte South Natural Resources District as well as the Nebraska Game and Parks Division to provide an evening of fun and education for elementary students and their parents.

Through this collaboration, the chapter hosted Nature Night. This community event developed a sense of servant leadership in the FFA members as they worked together to make learning about

the outdoors appealing in a world of video games, iPads and Facebook.

Nature Night increased the community's environmental awareness by having 22 fun, interactive educational booths that featured activities such as building a butterfly, playing with dung beetles and identifying pelts from animals native to Nebraska. The FFA members hope Nature Night sparked participants' interest in the outdoors.



Build a Bike

Kathleen Senior FFA, Florida

Many local elementary students ride their bikes to school, but some can't afford a bike. Kathleen Senior FFA Chapter in Florida saw an opportunity to raise money and provide this mode of transportation for students in need.

The chapter contacted the elementary school counselor who identified four deserving economically disadvantaged students; two in first grade and two in third grade. Working together the chapter sold Build a Bike donation cards for \$3 each and raised \$276 to purchase bikes.

Along with the money members' raised, the local Walmart donated an \$80 gift card to be used toward the purchase of the bikes. With these additional funds, helmets and knee pads were purchased for the students.



Growth and Development

Lehi FFA, Utah

The Lehi FFA Chapter in Utah used agriculture as a tool to encourage sensory skills, communication and cognitive growth in hearing and visually impaired preschool students while teaching plant and soil science concepts.

Twice a month Lehi FFA helped these preschoolers better understand the world around them and form mentor relationships. Working with the Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind, the chapter created measurable lessons, gauging students' rate of growth and development using observation notes and video.

The FFA members also gained an awareness and understanding of students with disabilities as they facilitated agricultural literacy stations. Lehi FFA is excited that they have been granted permission and the funding to continue the program next year.

Post-holiday Pick-up

North Bend FFA, Nebraska

The North Bend FFA Chapter in Nebraska took the initiative to serve their community after the holiday season. Seeing that many in the community still used real Christmas trees, FFA members decided to advertise a tree pick-up service and keep organic waste out of landfills.

After the holidays, chapter members collected real Christmas trees from 23 households in less than two hours. Not only was this serving the community, they also made plans to use the trees to provide fish habitats in local ponds.

The chapter selected two members' ponds to be the recipients of the trees. Using baling twine, they tied cement blocks to the base of each group of trees before releasing them into the water.



Everybody Shows

Owasso FFA, Oklahoma

The Everybody Shows livestock show hosted by the Owasso FFA Chapter in Oklahoma encouraged citizenship in members and the community. With the help of FFA members, special Olympians participated in the livestock show and paraded around three species of livestock while a crowd of more than 250 community members enthusiastically encouraged them.

At the show Owasso FFA raised more than \$1,500 for the special Olympians in attendance to fund their trip to the State Special Olympics in Stillwater, Okla.

During show preparation, participants' families were also able to learn from the FFA members about agriculture and the show animals. The event brought the community together and was a great opportunity to promote agricultural education.



Tractor Parade for Life

Plainview FFA, Nebraska

A tractor parade? That's right! The Plainview FFA Chapter in Nebraska hosted a Tractor Parade for Life. The purpose of the parade was to collect donations and spread awareness for the American Cancer Association's Relay for Life.

FFA members learned to promote and organize a community event. About 100 entries in the parade included chapter members, local community members and residents of surrounding towns. Participants brought tractors, ATVs and even horses to parade through town.

Thanks to the chapter pooling its resources and marketing the event, FFA members raised \$1,700 for cancer research. The parade impacted the entire chapter and community by extending their knowledge and awareness of cancer and supporting local cancer patients.



What's the Buzz?

Pioneer FFA, New York

One hundred percent of second grade classrooms in their community now know more about bees thanks to the Pioneer FFA Chapter in New York. The chapter developed and facilitated a 30-minute agricultural literacy program.

During the program members read the book "The Beeman" to the second graders and provide hands-on activities. At the end of the program, students re-

ceived coloring books and enjoyed honey sticks.

Working with the Cornell Cooperative Extension, the chapter was able to leave behind a packet for the second grade teachers to further educate their students about the bee industry. The chapter also donated the book they read to the elementary school library.



Bettering Community, Chapter and Self

Outstanding Middle School Winner - Signal Knob Middle FFA, Virginia

Members of the Signal Knob Middle FFA in Virginia honed their life skills through a three-day retreat at Yogi Bear Park. The retreat focused on personal and chapter goals; skills in self-organization, time management, communication and teamwork; and anti-bullying.

Jaclyn Roller is the agriculture educator at Signal Knob. She organized the chapter's executive committee to have a vice president in three areas: student, chapter and community. "This allows students to focus on and improve in specific areas," she said. "Letting the committee chairs choose which committee they want to chair allows the passion and excitement to shine through."

Once they developed their own leadership skills, the members were ready to serve the community. The chapter saluted veterans by volunteering at the National Veterans Wheelchair Games and hosting a breakfast and Veteran's Day program for sixth, seventh and eighth graders. "One of our staple events is the Veterans Day program," Roller said. "It is eye opening for the students, and the veterans in the community have come to expect the fun day of interaction."

"Our community is full of unsung heroes who don't receive enough recognition for everything they have done for our country," Signal Knob FFA President Nathan McDonald said. "Also, I have learned to have a greater sense of patriotism. It fills me with pride when the veterans stand during their part of the Armed Forces Salute."

Signal Knob also gives back with their time visiting residents in an assisted living home. Each year they visit the home, but when they go and what activity they do with the residents is different each year based on member input.

"When preparing to go to Greenfield Assisted Living, we first contact the assisted living home to work out a date that works for them as well as us. While on the phone we ask how many residents, the number of male and female residents and how many male and females are diabetic," McDonald said. After they get this information, the chapter can plan an activity that will be fun for the members and residents.

The chapter is also busy organizing fundraisers. This year they did a citrus, meat and cheese fundraiser along with a strawberry fundraiser, Spirit Night and a Valentine's dance.

"With all of our events and especially fundraisers we focus on people skills. Our members' enthusiasm coupled with communication skills always impresses our community," Roller said. "If someone comes in to pick up their order, a student greets them, problem solves issues with their order if needed and completes the necessary transaction. People in the community appreciate that the members are doing the work."

"I am so proud when they take advantage of opportunities to learn more and better themselves," Roller said.

Healthy Choices

Chatham Middle FFA, Virginia

Members of Chatham Middle FFA in Virginia invested in the students at their school by presenting skits to all grade levels during National School Lunch Week. The chapter promoted healthy food choices and showcased locally grown foods on the school's menu.

Interacting with younger students in the school district is also a priority for FFA member recruitment. The chapter toured all five elementary schools and shared with the students the benefits of learning about food, fiber and natural resources as well as about the unique activities they do in FFA.

In the community they hosted a bag-a-thon at the local Food Lion grocery store, where the community came together and helped the FFA chapter raise money for cystic fibrosis research. One hundred percent of the donations were sent to aid in research.

Members of the chapter were also encouraged to grow personally by improving their identity and self-awareness as FFA members. They were challenged to select an SAE that would reflect their unique talents and reinforce their personal and employability skills.



Broadcasting the Silent Industry

Lincoln Middle FFA, Florida

Living the last line of the motto, "Living to Serve," the Lincoln Middle FFA Chapter in Florida does this inside and outside of their school. Members served their chapter by developing the Member-to-Money Incentive Program, where they created and maintained a wall chart to track members' participation in chapter activities with points and awards related to specific point benchmarks. This engagement program is also linked to their alumni scholarship application.

Members fostered their future through a recruitment program to promote enrollment from three feeder elementary schools as well as created a 15-minute video, "Broadcasting the Silent In-

dustry." This endeavor allowed them to reach a broad audience with a message about agriculture and agricultural education, as well as the opening of their new Academy of Agrisciences. The video featured demos on classroom learning, land lab stations, SAEs and CDE mock competitions and is now posted on the school's website.

Members also served at the Palmetto Historical Park Agricultural Museum during Christmas in the Park, interacting with more than 3,000 community members and sharing the message of agricultural education while helping guests make take-home bird feeders.



The Best Me

South Sumter Middle FFA, Florida

The event The Best Me Is Drug-Free, hosted by the South Sumter Middle FFA in Florida, raised awareness among the student body about the negative impacts of drug abuse. During the week-long event, students were asked to dress up based on different themes and remain drug free, with more than 100 students dressing up each day.

As a recruitment effort, members of South Sumter Middle FFA served as group leaders for students during their school open house prior to school starting. This service allowed more incoming students and their parents to familiarize themselves with agricultural education. The members also made bank on BBQ; once a month the FFA chapter prepared

and sold barbecue lunches to the faculty and staff to raise funds to support chapter activities. The members also started a Keeping It Green program to recycle aluminum at the school. They distributed fliers and recycling containers to each classroom, and FFA members worked as a team to empty the containers.

Reaching out to the community during FFA Week, the members hosted a canned food drive. At the end of the week they donated 264 pounds of food to a local food bank.



Grow, Learn, Serve

Tomlin Middle FFA, Florida

Members of the Tomlin Middle FFA Chapter in Florida gained management and marketing skills as they took care of their one-acre crop field. Practicing decision-making skills and commercial farming, the chapter made \$500 from the onions and \$4,500 from the strawberries they grew.

Focusing on the skills they learned in the classroom, Tomlin FFA members participated in 20 CDEs throughout the school year, with 44 students participating at the district and state level. Putting an emphasis on CDE participation opened the members' eyes to new opportunities and also helped them gain teamwork, public speaking, study and technical skills in new hands-on ways.

The chapter also hosted a Christmas Food Drive with the Parent, Teacher and Student Association. Members collected food at their FFA Christmas party. Together they packed 125 bags for families in their school district.

Members also assisted the community by volunteering at the Museum of Science and Industry to help restore and beautify the museum's butterfly gardens by removing invasive weeds and cleaning garden beds to restore habitats for butterflies and other wildlife.



Achieving Success



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

1. Follow the developmental process outlined in the 2012-2016 National Chapter Award Program handbook, which is online at www.FFA.org. Identify measurable and realistic goals. Develop an educational plan that meets the chapter's goals. Evaluate the results and member benefits. Include information on how the activity affected members, the chapter, the school and the community.

2. Include facts about the percentage of members that participated and accomplishments.

3. Keep a file of activities and notes on areas for improvement within each activity. Students can use this information for Program of Activities planning.

4. Take note of ideas that spring to mind when completing the application. Jot down these ideas to use during the next POA planning session.

5. Ask an English teacher or someone you trust to edit your application. They'll learn more about FFA, and you will submit a better application.

6. Don't attach information or materials not requested. Points may be deducted or an application may be disqualified for including supplementary materials not specifically requested in the application.

7. Review the application checklist. Follow the instructions carefully. Please use the FFA award application folder as loose pages may be lost.



Eight Steps to Development

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

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





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