



WELCOME!

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.

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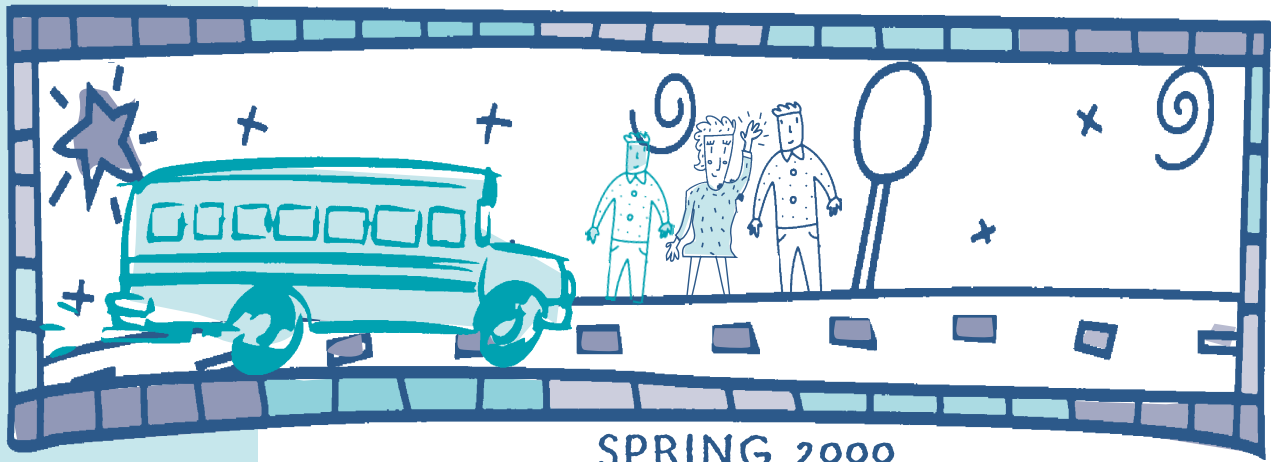
FFA Homepage: www.ffa.org

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SPRING 2000

PAL to PAL

A Newsletter for FFA Advisors and PALS Mentors

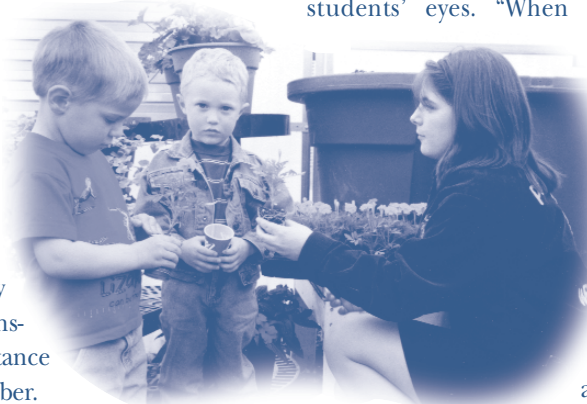
Linking Up with Little People

WHEN THE FFA MEMBERS in Aiken, South Carolina, decide to do a Food For America program, they go all out. For the past several years, they have hosted more than 400 elementary students and walked them through many components of the high school agriculture program.

During the Food For America program, Aiken FFA members work with groups of 20 elementary students at one time. Each group tours the school greenhouse and learns how to transplant plugs into larger pots. They also fish in the school pond, and sometimes, if the weather and timing are right, the elementary students get to help the FFA members plant the chapter's garden. Each elementary student leaves with a tomato plant and a flowering plant they selected and transplanted with assistance from an FFA member.

"It's great to watch my students link up with the little people," says Joe Wilson, Aiken FFA advisor. "I think the high school students benefit from PALS and Food For America just as much as the elementary students. They'll say, 'Oh, the little kids are coming, what a bother.' Then, once the youngsters arrive, they are absolutely enthralled with the whole thing. They find that working with the elementary students is very rewarding. Several of my students have decided to pursue careers working with elementary students because of this experience."

Wilson enjoys watching the lights of learning blink on in the elementary students' eyes. "When they're in the greenhouse, you can tell some of these kids have never done anything like this," he says. "The look on their faces gives it away."



Continued on page 4

ACTIVITIES

Look for more ideas in the PALS Activity Handbook.

SOY BOY Soybean Babies

OBJECTIVE:

High school students work with their elementary PALS to “plant” and germinate a soybean. They’ll see how moisture and warmth stimulate the bean to grow.

SUPPLIES:

Each PALS pair will need the following items.

- SMALL, TRANSLUCENT PLASTIC JEWELRY BAG (SIMILAR TO A VERY SMALL ZIPLOC® BAG)
- COTTON BALL
- SOYBEAN (OR OTHER LARGE SEED)
- STRING LONG ENOUGH TO BE TIED LOOSELY AROUND THE NECK

The group can share the following tools:

- SMALL SINGLE-HOLE PUNCH
- SMALL DISH OF WATER (WITH WHICH TO DAMPEN COTTON BALLS)

INSTRUCTIONS:

Each PALS pair should gather their supplies. The high school students should briefly discuss plant life and germination with their elementary PALS, including the importance of moisture and heat in the process.

The high school PAL should punch a hole in the top of the jewelry bag.



The elementary PAL should dampen the cotton ball, then place it in the jewelry bag. Next, place a seed in the bag with the cotton ball, squeeze the excess air out of the bag and seal it.

Thread the string through the hole in the top of the bag and tie it around the elementary PALS’ neck like a necklace. Place the bag underneath the shirt and instruct the student to keep it there. The warmth of the body heat along with the moisture will make the seed sprout in approximately 24 hours.

If possible, reassemble the group the next day to see the results. Discuss the different parts of the plant and the jobs they do (leaves absorb sunshine for fuel, roots absorb water). After the seeds have germinated, you may encourage the youngsters to transplant them into pots or dispose of the bag.

Source: Dr. John Hillison, Professor, Agricultural Education, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Virginia



SALAD IN A GLOVE

OBJECTIVE:

High school students work with their elementary PALS to “plant” and germinate several different types of seeds. They’ll see how moisture and warmth stimulate the seeds to grow and the different types of plant each seed produces.

SUPPLIES:

Each PALS pair will need the following items:

- A CLEAR, DISPOSABLE PLASTIC GLOVE
- 5 DAMP COTTON BALLS
- A VARIETY OF SEEDS (LETTUCE, RADISH, TOMATO, PEPPER, CARROTS, ETC.)

The group can share the following supplies:

- SMALL DISH OF WATER (WITH WHICH TO DAMPEN COTTON BALLS)
- SMALL-TIP PERMANENT MARKERS (SUCH AS SHARPIES®)

INSTRUCTIONS:

Each PALS pair should gather their supplies. The high school students should briefly discuss plant life and germination

with their elementary PALS, including the importance of moisture and heat in the process. They should also discuss the importance of eating enough fruits and vegetables, mentioning that salads are a great way of “getting their vegetables.”

Working together, the PALS should select what vegetables they like and which seeds to “plant.” Using a black marker, the high school student should write both PALS’ names on the glove along with the date. Then, write the name of each vegetable chosen on one of the gloves’ fingers (lettuce on the thumb, tomato on the first finger, etc.).

The elementary PAL should dampen each cotton ball and place one in each of the glove’s fingers. Place 2-3 seeds on each cotton ball (as marked on the finger). Lay the glove flat in a warm place. In about three days, the seeds should swell and begin to sprout. Note the differences in germination time, leaf shapes, etc. The plants can be transplanted into pots for further growth, or the entire glove can be disposed.

Source: Dr. John Hillison, Professor, Agricultural Education, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Virginia



PALS

PERSONAL GROWTH

Separating for the Summer



AS THE DAYS GROW LONGER AND THE SUN WARMS THE EARTH, students and teachers alike get anxious for summer vacation to begin, but along with summer fun comes the closure to many PALS relationships and a little sadness, too. It is critical to prepare both elementary and high school students for this change.

You can help ease this transition by hosting an end-of-the-year PALS activity and giving everyone a chance to express their appreciation for each other, exchange addresses and phone numbers (if appropriate) and say goodbye. Some chapters host a “spring fling” picnic with games for the participants and their families.

Consider working with your elementary and high school guidance counselors to develop an activity in which the PALS can share their feelings about the end of the program. The FFA members should be aware that some of their mentees might be apprehensive about separation because they’ve felt abandoned in the past. As a result, it is important to openly address these tender issues with the youngsters and discuss their fears. Graduating seniors should assure their mentees that they’ll write or otherwise keep in touch if they’re going off to college or leaving the community.





THE MANY USES OF SOYBEANS

Q I DON'T KNOW THAT I'VE EVER EATEN A SOYBEAN. WHAT ARE THEY USED FOR?

A Soybeans are a member of the legume family, which means the plants absorb nitrogen in the air through their leaves and "fix" it in the soil for other plants to use. Soybeans are used for a wide variety of things, but the two biggest uses are for cooking oil and as a protein source for both people and animals. In the United States, soybeans provide 82 percent of the edible consumption of fats and oils.

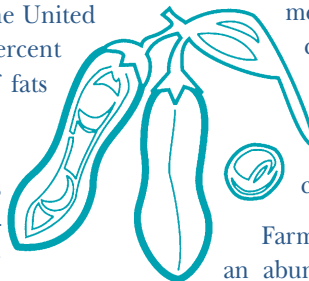
Many of your favorite foods contain soy products, you probably just didn't know they were there. For instance, most commercial mayonnaise contains soy oil as do many other sandwich spreads and salad dressings. The protein portion of soybeans can be found in many bakery ingredients, cereals, noodles and candy products.

Beyond human consumption, soybeans are also used for livestock feed and indus-

trial purposes. Some soybean oil is used to make a more environmentally friendly fuel called "biodiesel." Many books and magazines are printed using ink partially made from soybeans. Look for the "soy ink" symbol on your printed materials!

Soy proteins are used in adhesives, antibiotics, asphalt emulsions, cosmetics, plastics, pharmaceuticals and many other products.

There is a growing nutritional supplement market for some soybean components, such as natural Vitamin E, which is found in soy oil. This growing group of nutritional supplements is called "nutriceuticals."



Farmers in the United States grow an abundance of soybeans and sell them to countries around the world. In 1998, 55 percent of the world's soybean trade originated in the United States. China and Hong Kong are the U.S. soybean farmers' largest customers. In 1998, they purchased \$456 million of soy oil, \$274 million of whole soybeans and \$160 million of soybean meal.



PAL to PAL is the newsletter of PALS (Partners in Active Learning Support), the National FFA Mentoring Program.

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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\$25 for Your PALS Program!

We pay \$25 for each idea we publish! If you have an activity idea to share with other PALS programs, send it to *PAL to PAL*, National FFA Organization, P.O. Box 68960, Indianapolis, IN 46268-0960. We hope to hear from you!

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LINKING UP WITH LITTLE PEOPLE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Wilson says that once his students become involved with the PALS Program, they frequently want to do more. "Sometimes I think that if it were up to my students, all we'd do is PALS activities," Wilson says.

Like many programs, the Aiken chapter's biggest challenge with the PALS Program is logistics. "We have to bus the students from the elementary school," Wilson says. "Keeping it all within our local guidelines is very difficult, but the outcomes are worth the effort."

SUMMER SUGGESTIONS

GREAT PALS PROGRAMS DON'T JUST happen overnight. They take time to plan and build. Summer is a great time to get your PALS team together to discuss what worked well last year and what didn't. In addition, you can begin planning next year's activities. By working this far ahead, you'll be able to identify activities and get things on the school calendar.

This planning can happen separately

or in tandem with development of your chapter's Program of Activities (POA). Either way though, your PALS plan should be included in the overall chapter POA. Planning this far in advance also gives you the opportunity to develop a budget early and raise extra funds (if needed) through car washes and other summertime activities. You might also want to consider promoting the PALS program at local events such as county fairs and community celebrations. Now, get to it! Go have some summer fun!