

# New VISIONS



The Official Newsletter of the National FFA Alumni Association

Volume 8, Issue 1 • March 2003

## Lone Star State "Texas" Hosts 2003 State Leaders Conference



### **WHAT – National FFA Alumni State Leaders Conference**

The National FFA Alumni Association invites you to attend the 2003 State Leaders Conference (SLC) at the Holiday Inn Airport & Conference Center in Corpus Christi, Texas.

### **WHEN – July 22-27, 2003**

Conference attendees should make travel arrangements, so they will arrive prior to 4 p.m. on Tuesday, July 22 and depart anytime on Sunday, July 27. Transportation to and from the Corpus Christi Airport will be provided. The conference kickoff is slated to begin Tuesday at 5:30 p.m. with a dinner and opening session. If you are an FFA Alumni member who desires to attend this year's conference, consider approaching your State FFA Alumni Council or securing a state sponsor to fund your transportation needs. State FFA Alumni leaders have received a fee schedule for state representatives, spouses, and other attendees, including one-day participants.

### **WHERE – Corpus Christi, Texas**

The drive to the Holiday Inn Airport & Conference Center—Padre Island is conveniently located three miles from Corpus Christi International Airport. Offering easy access to the area's famous attractions, the hotel is a few blocks from the greyhound race track, minutes away from the convention center, Texas State Aquarium, USS Lexington, Padre Island National Seashore and Mustang Island State Park. For more information on attractions in the area, log onto [www.walkupright.com/whi/hicorpus](http://www.walkupright.com/whi/hicorpus).

### **WHO – Every Member Welcome to Attend!**

Each State Association is eligible for one SLC grant (\$250) for its official state representative to attend the conference. Additional representatives and Alumni members are invited to attend. Spouses and children are welcome and may attend the conference as "non-participants." Each representative (participant) must pay a registration fee. "Early Bird Registration" (postmarked by June 15) is \$100; registration postmarked after June 15 is \$125. The balance of the conference fee (\$250) is due upon arrival.

### **WHY – Building Partnerships**

You will be given the opportunity to gain and share valuable knowledge to take back to your State Association. Visit our website at [www.ffa.org](http://www.ffa.org) and click on supporters for more information.



We wish to thank our partner Tractor Supply Company for their support of the 2003 National FFA Alumni State Leaders Conference.

## CALENDAR 2003

DEADLINES ARE POSTMARK DATES

### **June 15**

State Leaders Conference  
Early Bird Registration

### **July 1**

Outstanding Affiliates, Outstanding  
Achievement Applications and Scrapbooks  
Council Nomination Applications

### **July 15**

Auction Items to Appear in Catalog

### **July 22-27**

State Leaders Conference  
Corpus Christi, Texas

### **August 15**

Legion of Merit Applications  
Rosters Due to the National Office  
to Quality for Awards

### **September 15**

Chapter Grant Applications

Visit our website at [www.ffa.org](http://www.ffa.org)



**Kuts for Kids Alumni  
Program, see page 4**

# ROUND TABLE

## Are You Ready for This?

### *Implementing a successful volunteerism program*

**W**ithin the near future, the FFA Alumni will be going places it has never gone before. Are you ready for this?

Are you ready to be a pioneer blazing a new trail of discovery? Did that question trigger a picture in your mind of settlers heading West along the Oregon Trail or of astronauts exploring the deep reaches of space? To some my question may have provided a surge of excitement in anticipation of conquering the unknown. For others it may have triggered a sense of fear because for some



blazing a new trail means change, challenges, hard work,

and a very real risk of temporary failure.

Our space program has just suffered a tragic failure. In the aftermath of the Shuttle Columbia disaster, some have said human space travel was too risky. Others grieve for our nation's profound loss, but insist that we must keep stretching the bounds of humanity.

Even though our pioneering forefathers endured hardship and death, they could not be persuaded from their quest to settle the western United States. Likewise our nation will move forward with the exploration of space. You see we really have no choice but to move forward and advance. It simply is not within our human nature to be happy with the status quo.

Your National FFA Alumni Council, working with our Executive Director J. Frank Saldaña, is committed to raising our association to the next level. We are in full partnership with the National FFA to combine our efforts to blaze a new and exciting trail for volunteers.

All we need is YOU! Please join our

group by taking action. Become involved in your community and make a difference in someone's life! We need YOU to spend your TIME and TALENTS to make a lasting difference in the life of at least one young person. You can do this by using your skills to improve agriculture education and by helping to develop the leadership skills of youth who will be the next generation of great American leaders.

This will be a give-and-take relationship. We promise to give you the necessary training and tools to prepare you to be a skilled volunteer. You in turn can take pride in knowing you have made a difference. You may receive the appreciation, admiration, and love that comes from a young person whose life has been transformed.

**“We need YOU to spend your TIME and TALENTS to make a lasting difference in the life of at least one young person.”**

Of course there are risks, challenges, and hard work ahead. We are certain to encounter some road blocks and suffer some setbacks. The future of our children and our nation rests on our being a positive influence for them. They are counting on US!

The FFA Alumni will not be dissuaded from implementing a successful volunteerism program. To really get involved, contact your local FFA Alumni affiliate or us at [www.ffa.org/supporters](http://www.ffa.org/supporters).

Dale Beaty, Vice President  
National FFA Alumni Association



VOLUME 8, ISSUE 1

MARCH 2003

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

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Petra Communications  
Production and Editorial Consultant

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# Statement Of Activities for Period Ending January 31, 2003

	YTD Actual Jan. 31, 2003	YTD Actual Jan. 31, 2002
<b>General</b>	<b>(67,798)</b>	<b>(56,362)</b>
<b>Convention</b>	<b>23,815</b>	<b>45,318</b>
<b>Auction Live</b>	<b>13,412</b>	<b>56,068</b>
<b>Newsletter</b>	<b>(17,082)</b>	<b>(12,669)</b>
<b>Auction Silent</b>	<b>5,228</b>	<b>(4,405)</b>
<b>State Leaders Conference</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>(1,200)</b>
<b>Alumni Chapter Grant</b>	<b>(14,923)</b>	<b>(12,110)</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>(57,103)*</b>	<b>29,280</b>



*\*NOTE: The investment portfolio has seen continued losses on paper of \$37,000 due to the instability of the stock market. In addition, the hiring of a full time executive director and a \$30,000 decrease in revenue from the 2002 auction are reflected in this total. The overall activities still look good.*

## FOLLOW THE MONEY



### Grant Enhances Classroom Instruction

*Projector opens world of learning to Clear Lake teacher and students*

The Clear Lake, WI, FFA Chapter received \$1,000 from the Local Chapter Grant Program for the purchase of a projector to enhance classroom instruction. The projector, says Clear Lake instructor Tim Wyss, will allow him to make Power Point® presentations from the computer.

"There are many great computer presentations available for classroom instruction from sites on the Internet," he explains. "Up to this point, I have been unable to incorporate them into my class lessons due to the lack of equipment."

The Clear Lake FFA Alumni affiliate has pledged to cover any equipment costs over the \$1000 provided by the grant. Local members

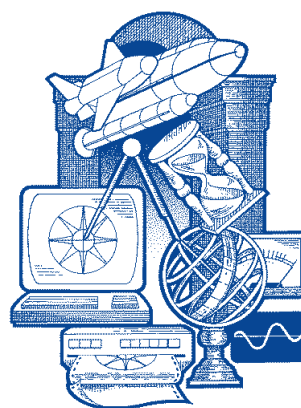
are conducting an equipment and cost analysis to offer recommendations on the best projector to purchase.

Wyss says the affiliate and chapter completed a grant application because this piece of technology was a major need in the local agricultural education department. "We have computers and the school has a great lab, but there is only one of these projectors in the entire district. Now we will have two. I plan to have the projector mounted from the ceiling of my room and have the capability of moving it from there for the banquet slide show," Wyss adds.

"The grant application is very simple," Wyss says. "If an affiliate

and chapter can identify a legitimate need, I can't imagine not applying for it."

*For more information, contact Tim Wyss at [twyss@clearlake.k12.wi.us](mailto:twyss@clearlake.k12.wi.us).*



There are many great computer presentations available for classroom instruction from sites on the Internet. The new projector will allow instructor Tim Wyss to incorporate them into his classroom lessons.





# PROMISING PRACTICES

Offering Ideas, tips and practices from across the nation.

## Greene County Tech Parent Center Programs

*Outreach program nurtures children's social and academic growth through community volunteers*

**F**our years ago Greene County Tech (GCT) Primary School created an outreach program to nurture children's social and academic growth through community volunteers. The program strives to improve student performance and self-esteem, while raising their achievement levels. A state grant funded the Parent Involvement Center. The school district currently funds the salary of the center's coordinator. Due to the lack of funds for the center's programs, local FFA Alumni and FFA members have generously given to the center through their monetary donations and volunteer service. "Without this support," says center coordinator Rebecca Murry, "our program would not exist today."

### PROGRAMS:

The **Tutoring Program** brings community volunteers into the school once or twice weekly for 30 minutes to tutor students one-on-one. This program purchases resource materials for use in the tutoring sessions. FFA Alumni and college students have served as volunteer tutors.

A **Lunch Buddy Program** was developed to build children's self-esteem. In the last two years, 32 FFA members served as lunch bud-

dies to primary and intermediate students once or twice a week. Both high school and elementary students have benefited from the visits. Primary students spend quality time each week with a "big sister" or "big brother." Their self-esteem soars from the attention of an older student. High school students build a sense of responsibility, learning how to manage and express their feelings. They also gain a greater sense of awareness of other students' needs.

"We have found that primary children tell older students things they won't share with adults," explains Pam Jumper, volunteer. "This provides an avenue for counselors to understand and talk over potential issues with the children before they become problems."

**Kuts for Kids** is a recent program designed to provide free haircuts to children in need during the school year. This program is managed by licensed beauticians within the community who volunteer their services to the school on a monthly basis. The program began out of a hygienic need and blossomed into a self-esteem booster for children. Funds from the GCT FFA Alumni purchased initial program supplies for the primary and intermediate buildings.

The largest of the center's programs is the **Clothing Depot**. The depot serves the needs of

the entire school campus. It provides replacement clothing and shoes for children who experience playground, lunchroom, bathroom, and any other kid-type accidents that occur during the school day. The depot provides a resource for families experiencing financial difficulties by supplying clothing and other items to needy families.

"We feel that we are providing the basics and encouraging good grooming and from that comes self-esteem," Murry explains. "We started the depot with \$100, one clothing rack, and six candy boxes. An Alumni member donated a "dressing screen" for children to try on their selected clothes. FFA members cleaned a gymnasium storage room for the intermediate clothes depot.

"Our state review was great!" Murry says. "We currently have several surrounding schools in this area developing programs modeled after ours. The Parent Center has the continual support of FFA Alumni, FFA members, school administration, and community volunteers."

*By Parent Center Coordinator Rebecca Murry and National FFA Alumni President Pam Jumper*



A **Lunch Buddy Program** was developed to build children's self-esteem. In the last two years, 32 FFA members served as lunch buddies to primary and intermediate students once or twice a week.

**A note from Pam Jumper:** *Mother, volunteer, GCT FFA Alumni member, and National FFA Alumni President*

The Parent Center theme is the "**Starfish Story**." Alumni members and parents may not be able to care for all the children in Greene County, but they have begun one child at a time.

The Starfish Story goes as follows: As the old man walked the beach at dawn, he noticed a young man picking up starfish and flinging them into the sea. Finally catching up with the youth, he asked him his reason for his actions. The answer was that the stranded starfish would die if left until the morning sun. "But the beach goes on for miles and there are millions of starfish," countered the other. "How can your effort make any difference?" The young man looked at the starfish in his hand and then threw it to the safety in the waves. "It makes a difference to this ONE," he said.

# Alumni Offers Real-World Support

*Affiliate alleviates local teacher's stress*

**F**or teacher John Schut of Lowell, Michigan, local FFA Alumni members help him keep his sanity by assuming responsibility for program needs. In fact, the precise reason behind the 1995 chartering of the affiliate was to alleviate the local teacher's stress.

The 25-member affiliate is currently comprised of former members, parents, and business and community leaders. All are state and/or national life members. While its numbers may be small, the Lowell FFA Alumni plays a vital role in the local agricultural education program. Members assist with leadership career development events and fair supervised agricultural experience programs. Others help with scholarship interviews and chaperone students. Besides supporting the local program in these typical ways, Alumni members serve as classroom guest speakers, provide agriculture placement opportunities for students, review degree and award applications and assist with the PALS program.

All of these activities have been designed to bolster the existing Lowell program and FFA chapter. While the affiliate meets annually in the spring and fall, Schut draws upon the specific talents of individual members throughout the year as warranted.

"I have learned that one person cannot, will not and should not do it

all," Schut says. "Superman/woman is a character in the comic books. I teach in the real world where superhumans don't exist."

The Lowell administration is very supportive of Alumni efforts and has a positive regard for members because they function as a support group of the school system, something strongly needed in today's often precarious educational environment. Alumni members have fortified their support for the local program by maintaining active participation in other school booster groups.

Schut's preference for an Alumni affiliate is a product of his secondary education at Hopkins, MI. There his teacher and mentor, Comer Skinner, had instituted a successful program built upon the support of a strong affiliate. Schut likewise initiated an Alumni affiliate while teaching at Montague, a small town located along the eastern shore of Lake Michigan about 50 miles northwest of Lowell. As a result, he offers this sage advice based on his experience to any teacher who may be contemplating chartering an affiliate to assist with the work load of running a program:



John Schut

1. Begin by involving a small core of volunteers.
2. Develop a list of specific tasks for them based on your needs and their interests. (See article "Local Needs Key to Recruitment" on page 6.)
3. Focus on these volunteers as potential members and as assistants in the program. Don't worry so much about organizational structures, rules, and regulations initially. These details will come in due time.

*For more information on the affiliate or its activities, contact John Schut at [JSchut@lowell.k12.mi.us](mailto:JSchut@lowell.k12.mi.us).*



**"I have learned that one person cannot, will not and should not do it all. Superman/woman is a character in the comic books. I teach in the real world where superhumans don't exist."**

John Schut

***We are interested in hearing about your successful ideas! Please send them c/o  
National FFA Alumni Association  
6060 FFA Drive  
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***or fax them to 317-802-5292  
or send them via e-mail to [fsaldana@ffa.org](mailto:fsaldana@ffa.org)***

# Among Friends

**“Successful recruiters are those that focus so specifically on local tasks that only qualified volunteers come forward.”**

## PART II

### Local Needs Key to Recruitment Efforts

**S**uccessful recruiters are those that focus so specifically on local tasks that only qualified volunteers come forward, says Susan Ellis, author of *The Volunteer Recruitment Book*. To Ellis, this approach will ensure that local affiliates recruit the type of people needed for the association to survive. It will create less work for you as a recruiter. “Instead of a cast-the-net campaign,” she explains, “you become a diagnostician, creating satisfied members and meeting agricultural education’s long-term needs.”

#### ANALYZING NEEDS, SETTING OBJECTIVES

To start, avoid asking questions such as “Who do we know who can do this?” Rather, seek out people you don’t already know!

Identify your local agricultural education program, FFA chapter, and community needs. Sit down with the agriculture teacher and list all types of projects, including your “wish lists.” While it’s not a guarantee you’ll find volunteers to do the work, this process will provide a strategy for recruiting the types of volunteers able to handle most tasks. Start by asking these four questions:

- What are we currently doing that we want to do more of?
- What unmet needs do the local program and FFA

chapter have that we can do something about?

- What would support agriculture teachers or advisors in their work?
- What might we do differently if we had more skills and time available to us?

#### BE REALISTIC

Knowing what you expect of members can serve as a foundation in recruiting presentations. “A good way to attract members is to be specific and up-front about commitment,” Ellis adds. “Though members pay dues, they are more apt to say yes if you give them real and challenging work to do.”

As prospects consider membership, they will want to know what you are offering them in exchange for their time and dues. “As you develop member job descriptions, articulate what the benefits are for each assignment or task,” she explains. “Use this information to explain what they can expect to receive.”



Susan Ellis, author of  
*The Volunteer Recruitment Book*

Benefits can be tangible such as the *New Visions* newsletter or discount auto rentals. Intangible benefits would include the following:

- An up-to-date understanding of agricultural education, FFA, and agriculture.
- Training for a specific skill.
- New friends.

“Make joining a status symbol besides what’s in it for members,” she suggests.

#### CHECKING YOUR EFFORTS

If you have difficulties recruiting prospects or keeping current members, Ellis suggests conducting a focus group with 10 people who have said “no” to membership recently. You can do the same with recent high school graduates.

“It may be wrong timing or just that recent graduates view membership at age 20 as continuing their high school experience,” she predicts.

Some key questions you may want to ask:

- Why don’t you want to be active members?
- What would make the FFA Alumni more appealing to you?
- What specific concerns do you have about joining?

“Once you have the answers you can either adjust your approach to explain the benefits better or address what they want,” she explains. “If there is such a large age gap in membership, you may need to develop projects that specifically appeal to recent grads. Chances are they will eventually join once common ground is established.”

*Editor’s Note: The final segment in this three-part series on recruitment will focus on motivating and retaining local Alumni members.*



# FFA Alumni Key to Local Program Success

*Alumni, along with other volunteers, are key to assisting local programs*

**Y**ou may have heard of the Local Program Success Initiative. Even if you have, you may have wondered what it is and, even more importantly, what role does the FFA Alumni play in this important initiative?



Kevin Keith

The focus of Local Program Success is providing resources for building quality local agricultural education programs. It is also an initiative that emphasizes local participation in determining state and national agendas for agricultural education. It offers state and local leaders direct contact to experienced agricultural education staff at the national level. The idea that local and state leaders can have access to “one-stop shopping” in seeking information, facing challenges, identifying resources, and solving problems is unique. The benefits of such contact are efficiency, increased communication, and an understanding of the special situations in which agricultural education programs exist from state to state and from locality to locality.

The FFA Alumni along with other local support groups play a key role in assisting local programs by providing outside resources to enhance the LPS program. This approach is better known as Team Ag Ed.

## ALUMNI ARE PARTNERS FOR SUCCESS

One way FFA Alumni can make a difference is by being aware of the challenges staff experience. One big challenge agricultural education faces at the local and state level today is funding issues. School districts and state departments responsible for agricultural education are having to make very difficult decisions to balance financial budgets. It would be extremely difficult to cut a program when the school board and administrators are aware that a local program has meaning and a connection with the community and is viewed by residents as essential to making a positive difference for local youth.

FFA Alumni, either as a coordinated effort or as individuals, can write a letter once or twice a year to the school board and district administrators or to the state agency housing agricultural education, which extols the virtues of agricultural education and cites the value of these programs. The impact of

receiving positive feedback in a world of complaints would speak volumes for the local program and make it very difficult to target with the budget ax. To be most effective, this effort must continue regardless of the economic situation.

It is critical for FFA Alumni to be represented “at the table” as key members of Team Ag Ed meet at the local and state level. Knowledge of the needs of a local or state program are key to being able to work together in a positive manner. Help build the capacity of agricultural education by becoming aware of the needs of the program. Help those involved with managing the program feel the difference of strong support. This will help FFA Alumni members to become integral to classroom instruction, supervised agricultural experience, and the FFA.

*By Kevin Keith  
Local Program Success Specialist  
National FFA Organization*

**“Knowledge of the needs of a local or state program are key to being able to work together in a positive manner.”**



## 2003 Alumni Council

*Names, faces and electronic contact information*



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Not pictured – Dr. Jim Knight

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NEWSLETTER

**Local Program Success**  
Building quality programs and putting school to work in action

**7 Keys to Success in Agricultural Education**

Program Planning

<b>3 Components</b>	<b>3 Strategies</b>
Instruction	Partnerships
SAE	Marketing
FFA	Professional Growth

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**DODGE TRUCKS.** You'll brag about it to your friends. And at Dodge, we brag about being a proud sponsor of the FFA for over 50 years. We also boast about our long-lasting Dodge trucks—the most powerful line of trucks on the road. But, when you produce like we do, why not? For more information, visit [dodge.com](http://dodge.com) or call 877-ON-THE-JOB.

GRAB LIFE BY THE HORNS



# THERE'S ALWAYS THAT ONE ANIMAL THAT PRODUCES MORE THAN THE REST.

