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FEBRUARY 19-26

NATIONAL FFA WEEK

A tradition unlike any other

By Bailey Schneider, 10th grade

This week marks such a celebratory time for FFA members. It is FFA Week! In honor of this time, FFA members all around the country will spend this week participating in community service activities, spirit days at their schools, and celebrating being part of one of the greatest high school organizations in the world.

Now, some of you may be wondering, why is FFA so influential and celebrated in our community? All FFA does is teach farm kids how to judge slabs of meat and identify crops. However, even though we do teach kids about those specific skills, FFA is so much more than the saying, “sows, cows, and plows.” FFA is dedicated to educating students about the importance of agriculture and helping them develop skills that will help them in their future careers.

I personally believe in this. I joined FFA my freshman year of high school, fully expecting to just increase my knowledge in the ethics of farming and other jobs in agriculture. I had no idea the depth of lessons that FFA taught students. Since joining the organization, I have learned how to advocate for agriculture, how to speak publicly, and how to become an effective leader. These skills are forming me into who I want to become in the future, and I am forever grateful for it.

This organization is more than dirt, tractors, and barns. FFA is an organization for anybody. You can come from 5 generations of agriculturalists, or you can be from New York City and still learn about everything that FFA has to offer. That is why we celebrate FFA this week. We do not just celebrate the organization itself, we celebrate the amazing members that have made FFA what it is today. Happy FFA Week Warren County!



PUBLIC SPEAKING INSTITUTE — Pictured, from left, Warrenton FFA members Bailey Schneider, Mark Jaspering, Kelsey Miller and Leah Guss attended the Missouri FFA Public Speaking Institute. Submitted photo.

FFA members attend public speaking institute

By Bailey Schneider
WARRENTON FFA CHAPTER
REPORTER

Recently, four Warrenton FFA members had the amazing opportunity to attend the Missouri FFA Public Speaking Institute at Bradford Research Farm in Columbia, MO. Freshman member Mark Jaspering, sophomore members Leah Guss and Bailey Schneider, and junior member Kelsey Miller spent the day attending several sessions about public speaking. Each session highlighted a different speech category. For example, there were sessions about prepared public speaking, extemporaneous public speaking, how to overcome nerves, and how to write an effective speech. They were all taught by author and former FFA national officer Andrew McCrea and six Missouri FFA State officers.

Members all learned great tools, especially Guss, who says, “I learned when you’re in the middle of your speech it is ok to just pause and get back on track. Judges like when you can make a clean recovery without using ‘um’ or ‘like.’ I really enjoyed how the FFA members were split up from their individual chapters so we could meet and mingle with different members throughout the whole day.”

Schneider learned a substantial amount as well. “Being able to learn from Andrew and fellow FFA members really inspired me to overcome my fear of extemporaneous speaking,” she said. “Also learning about how to write a professional speech and deliver it effectively is a very helpful tool for me, especially since I enjoy prepared public speaking”.

For Jaspering, it was the first time he had ever learned about public speaking skills. “I like how they gave us new techniques to start out our speech and methods to keep us going with our speech and how not to stutter,” he said.

The skills that the members learned will all be used for FFA contests this year, and for the rest of their lives.

“This conference truly opened my eyes about all the important things that go into creating a speech and delivering it. I would recommend any FFA member to attend this event because these skills that we all learned are not just for contests only, they are skills that will help us become successful in the future,” Schneider said.

Ag education and FFA go hand-in-hand

By Grant Buechner, 11th grade

The first agriculture education class I attended was Intro to Ag in eighth grade. I really just needed another class to fill my schedule and didn’t think much else. However, this class would change the trajectory of my high school career. I greatly enjoyed every section of the class, but especially the parts discussing animal breeds and efficient and economical crop production. The class was one of my favorite parts of the day in middle school and opened up the whole FFA world to me.

When I entered high school, there were even more opportunities awaiting me. My personal favorite part of FFA is the trapshooting team, which is a sport that I find challenging and rewarding. In addition, I have learned information about food production and where my food comes from since joining the FFA. My Ag business leadership class has exponentially increased both my leadership and speaking skills. I really don’t know where I would be without FFA.

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Anthony Lombardo, a student in Greenhouse Management class, is busy planting hanging baskets for the upcoming plant sale in April that community members are invited to attend to purchase plants for their spring planting needs. Submitted photo.

FFA WEEK FEBRUARY 19-26, 2022

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The National FFA Organization, formerly known as the Future Farmers of America, was founded by a group of young farmers in 1928. Their mission was (and still is) to teach and prepare the youth who will feed our future. Currently, there are more than 760,000 student members nationally.

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My FFA jacket

By Doralynn Lee, 10th grade

To most people, a jacket is something they take for granted — just another thing in their closet. Most people grab a jacket and don't even think about what the jacket has been through, but not me. My FFA jacket is something special - something that can never be replaced. My blue corduroy FFA jacket holds so many memories and so many future opportunities. This is no ordinary jacket — this is my FFA Jacket.

Since I first put my FFA jacket on freshman year, I had this rush of emotion. I am carrying on a family tradition. I am making my future the best it can be. I am doing what I love. This jacket will take me places. In the future, I can see myself walking across the stage at the National FFA Convention in Indianapolis, Indiana getting the highest degree that FFA has to offer, the American Degree. I can see myself laughing so hard at the other members I can't breathe. I can see myself playing my saxophone in the National FFA Band at the National FFA Convention. I can see my future within an article of clothing. I can see the challenges I will have to face to make my dreams come true, but that jacket will always be there through thick and thin. It will literally always have my back when things get hard, and will always be a cherished, sacred thing I hold near and dear to my heart. The power that a single jacket can hold is hard for most people to grasp, but this FFA jacket can do so much for me.

This jacket is more than a piece of me. This jacket is a piece of my family history. I am part of the third generation in my family to proudly wear a blue corduroy FFA jacket in the Warrenton FFA. I am continuing a family legacy of agriculture, and that is something I am very proud of. I am part of the fourth generation in my family to live on our farm. Raising animals and selling crops is a huge part of my ancestry. Knowing that I am continuing the legacy my family has left for me is something that I will never, ever take for granted. This jacket doesn't just show me my future — it is showing me my past. Who knew a single jacket could do all that?

Even though I am only a sophomore, this jacket has done so much for me, and it will continue to do so much more for me in the years to come. I wear my FFA jacket with pride, and that is something that will never, ever change!



WARRENTON FFA CHAPTER — These Warrenton FFA members attended the annual discovery, greenhand, and chapter degree initiation ceremony last October. The Warrenton FFA Chapter consists of 110 students that are enrolled in the Warren County R-III School District. Submitted photo.

FFA for the future

By Nyco Gonzalez, 9th grade

FFA is helping me with career success and helping me grow leadership skills. I am a young entrepreneur and am responsible for NA Mechanics. FFA is giving me the opportunity to speak with future business owners and successful students. I am able to build relationships and build good social skills with the people I'm surrounded with. FFA involves us with SAE projects that are for individual students to track their progress, finances, and every record to do with income and expenses.

I can track all of my profit that my business generates and build my company. My record book will be tracking my progression for the next four years. After high school FFA will have provided me with everything that I need to be successful and responsible; also it will build my personal assets and inventory. Joining ag classes has changed my future for the better. If anyone would have the thought of joining agriculture classes or FFA I would highly encourage them to do so.

Why I joined FFA

By Harley Taylor, 10th grade

I'm not going to lie, I was nervous to join FFA. I'm not one for trying new things, and knowing that I would have to talk in front of people made me hesitant to join.

All of my friends had joined before me and they all told me I needed to join, and I would be crazy if I didn't, because I would love it. I told them all no, because I was too nervous.

After thinking about it over the summer, I decided to join, and I could not be more happy that I did. I've met new people, made new friends and have had some amazing experiences, not to mention I get to go on some cool field trips. Being in FFA, I have gained not only knowledge about agriculture, but I have also gained knowledge about life and I learn something new every day.

The FFA motto is "Learning to Do, Doing to Learn, Earning to Live, Living to Serve." My favorite line is Living to Serve, because we should all serve our community. Serving our community is a big part of FFA, and we do many activities to do so. That is why I joined FFA. Being a part of this amazing organization has been the best part of my year and I can guarantee that I will be in FFA again next year.

FFA is one big family

By Hailey Cary, 9th grade

You would be surprised if you knew how many times I've gotten asked "Why are you in FFA?"

My answer is always the same: I'm in FFA for more reasons than you could ever imagine. I am only a freshman, so I have only been involved in FFA for about 6 months, and the amount of positive experiences I have had are countless. I have already learned so much about agriculture, working with others, and how to be the best version of myself. One thing that really sticks out to me about FFA is how we truly learn with hands-on experience, and everything we are taught will help us in the real world and on our career path.

Something I really enjoy about FFA is how much we help our community. Since I have joined Warrenton FFA, we have already done so much community service. Some different things that we have done are adopting a highway, where we picked up trash and debris in town; visited a nursing home and sang Christmas songs to the elderly who live there; and hosted a sock and canned food drive. Those are just some that I could think of off the top of my head, but we do so much for the people of Warrenton, and that is why I love FFA so much.

FFA is like a big family. I have met many amazing people and I would definitely recommend looking into FFA for incoming and current high school students.



Addison Phillips and Autumn Bledsoe construct boutonnieres in floriculture class. Students love to apply what they have learned in the agriculture classroom to a job-ready skill. Submitted photo.



Seth Rugh, Senior FFA member, earned first place in the Outdoor Recreation Area Proficiency Award competition in February. He earned this honor through his two years of work at Benchrest Gun Club, which he did as his Supervised Agricultural Experience project. Rugh will be recognized at the Missouri State FFA Convention in April. Submitted photo.

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It's been a good four years

By Stephanie Nunez-Cruz
WRIGHT CITY FFA PRESIDENT

Being a part of FFA for four years has been an exciting experience and truly has become the main area that has made me grow into who I am. I have met so many amazing people who are skilled in areas that I never knew about and never had thought of ever meeting.

The Wright City FFA chapter has helped me to learn how to incorporate agriculture into my own life and how to be involved in my own community. Not only have I accomplished several hours of community service, but I

have also been given the opportunity to attend the National FFA Convention and Expo in Indianapolis and to be involved in an FFA volleyball game between the Warrenton and Wright City FFA chapters over the years.

Being a part of the chapter has also tested me to explore outside of my comfort zone through interacting with students and community members. I have also been part of three different contest teams, which has helped me explore other areas of agriculture.

Overall, FFA has been an exciting experience for me and has introduced me to many people who have made my four years of high school memorable.



TEAM BUILDING — Wright City FFA members participate in a rope course team building exercise. Submitted photo.



WRIGHT CITY FFA — Members of the Wright City FFA Chapter gathered for a group photo during a visit to the National FFA Convention. Submitted photo.

Looking forward to my time

By Leon Schrader, 9th grade

My experience in FFA has been good. This is my first year doing FFA and I am enjoying it. My first experience for team building was helping with sorting and putting together fundraising orders this past fall. Cold, chaotic and fun is what I

will call it.

My favorite thing I am looking forward to is the fun activities we do which are helping us learn more. The real reason why I got into FFA was that my stepdad had told me all the fun things he did when he was in FFA and to me, it sounds like fun and it is.

Glad I joined

By Dakota Dalton, 9th grade

FFA has given me many amazing experiences so far. I'm a freshman in high school and decided to join after the teacher had talked about it in Ag 1 class. It's been a really fun thing to be a part of. I went to the National Convention and it was amazing. I had so much fun and saw

all sorts of interesting things. It was also cool just seeing how many people were in FFA.

We also had a blood drive we we're helping out with not too long ago, and it was fun hanging out with people and helping out. Overall I've really enjoyed FFA so far and I plan to continue being a part of it for the rest of my high school years.

Great first year

By Bailey Love, 9th grade

My experiences in FFA have been so much fun. I have gotten to know new people, hang out with some other people and went on a trip to a convention and had a lot of fun. We get to do our own dress up days and even have some game and move nights. I'm getting to do FFA with my friends and showing at

the fair.

FFA teaches you a lot about the things you can do after high school and help you get somewhere in life. FFA is so much fun and teaches you a lot about everything in life. This summer I will be showing my steer at the Warren County Fair. This will be my first time showing. I look forward to a great experience.



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Students got the chance to learn about dairy farming and many other agricultural practices during a visit to the National FFA Convention. Submitted photo.

Important experience, valuable skills

By Raymond Ridgeway, 9th grade

Being in FFA is a journey well taken. The trip to Indiana I took changed my life forever. Led by one of the best teachers I could ask for, I learned so much about agriculture and how the United States works behind the scenes.

Having fun with friends and building friendships for a lifetime is really what it's about. It's also about learning what hard work is and how hard work can build skill. FFA is a great program and I think everyone should join, whether they have an agricultural background or not.

Learning leadership, responsibility

By Reagan Vehige, 9th grade

I am in my first year of Wright City FFA and have completed six years of 4-H. FFA has taught me that being a leader is about serving others and encouraging and making them be a better person. FFA is preparing me for the future by developing my leadership skills that will help me make good decisions through my young adulthood.

I show sheep at the county and state level. Taking care of my livestock has taught me so much about responsibility. I get up each morning at 5:30 to make sure all my animals have feed and water. I work with them four times a week to get them ready to show. FFA is definitely guiding and helping me to be the best person I can be.



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Wright City FFA students develop their horticulture skills in the program's greenhouse. Submitted photo.

I felt welcome

By Nicole Nunez-Cruz, 9th grade

FFA is a sound group consisting of many groups of people, fun events, and well worth events! I have found and made meaningful connections with so many wonderful people. Despite being a

new member of FFA I have seen many sides to this group, from working hard at blood drives to falling down slides and giggling. No matter who you are, this group has always been so welcoming.

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