



BLUE AND GOLD

Pennsylvania FFA Happenings

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Southern Tioga FFA Packs More Than 12,000 Meals For Area Food Pantries

LIBERTY, Pa — Boxes of macaroni, boxes of cheese packets and bags of fortified soy protein were turned into more than 10,000 ready-to-prepare meals that were delivered to several food pantries in the Southern Tioga School District recently.

The Southern Tioga FFA chapter and alumni members spearheaded the project in conjunction with Meals of Hope, a food-packing organization in Florida. In addition to the 10,000 macaroni

and cheese meals, Meals of Hope provided 2,000 apple-oatmeal breakfast meals that were distributed locally.

"We wanted to do a project during National FFA Week that would put the focus on the importance of agriculture and also hunger and food insecurity in our communities," said project coordinator and Southern Tioga FFA alumni member Carolyn Moyer. "Hosting a food-packing event and donating the finished product to the area food banks was a great way to get lots of people involved."

The idea came to life through generous donations from individuals, businesses and many organizations. More than \$3,000 was raised to purchase the supplies to pack the meals.

Leading financial supporters included: the Blossburg American Legion, the Marine Corps, the Liberty Area Kiwanis Club, Liberty Community 4-H and many individuals and businesses. The Southern Tioga FFA chapter also received a \$400 Living to Serve grant and a \$250 grant

from Thrivent Financial for Lutherans.

On the day of the event, more than 50 FFA members, 4-H members, church volunteers and community members packed the 10,000 meals in approximately two hours.

"People were very supportive of the event," said Moyer. "I can't say enough about the generosity of the people in our area."

The Meals of Hope organization provided all of the supplies including raw ingredients, bags, scales and heat-sealing equipment. The North Penn Liberty cafeteria was transformed into a food assembly line with volunteers flanking three long tables. Other volunteers helped pack the finished meals in boxes and still others sealed them and moved them to a pallet from where they would be delivered.

Finished boxes were taken to the Liberty Food Pantry, the Mount Pleasant Food Pantry, the Blossburg Food Pantry and the Mansfield Area Food Pantry.

Barbara McConnell, food procurement volunteer for the Mansfield Area Food Pantry, said they serve an average of 240 families each month.

"Thank you for the generous donation of 'Meals of Hope' packages to the Mansfield Area Food Pantry," she said in a letter that was received recently. "The pantry is pleased to be able to give these out to the hundreds of families we serve."

The Southern Tioga FFA and FFA alumni affiliate are working together to reach out to the community about the importance of agriculture. Although the chapter is housed in the North Penn-Liberty High School, any student in the district can take ag classes and join FFA.

"There are so many opportunities for kids to



More than 10,000 fortified macaroni and cheese meals were measured, sealed and packed for distribution in approximately two hours by many volunteers. The group also donated apple oatmeal breakfast packets to area food pantries.

get a first-hand knowledge of agriculture in the FFA program," said Moyer. "We, as alumni, are encouraging agricultural education as our ag teacher, Nathan Schanbacher, is working with our administration and students to build the program."

Currently, classes are offered in horticulture, mechanical systems, animal science and introduction to agriculture. The FFA program incorporates classroom instruction and supervised experience in order to create a strong knowledge base. There are also leadership opportunities and career exploration events that can help students gain valuable skills.



Submitted photos

Volunteers from many community and school organizations gave donations and helped to pack meals at the food-packing event sponsored by the Southern Tioga FFA. Meals were distributed to local food pantries.

Milton Hershey FFA Chapter Proves Dedication to Future Of Agriculture

Chapter Spotlight

JILL PALMER

Pennsylvania FFA State Reporter

Founded on June 13, 1995, the Milton Hershey FFA Chapter of Hershey, Pennsylvania, has been continually sharing its love for the agriculture industry and agricultural education as they hold events, conduct unique Supervised Agricultural Experience projects and offer multiple classes like agriculture and natural resources and small and large animal science.

Since Milton Hershey developed its FFA chapter nearly 22 years ago, it's FFA members have proven themselves as a dedicated and willing attribute to the future of agriculture and their community. Each year, Milton Hershey FFA holds events like an eighth grade open house and assists with the elementary division fall festival. During the open house, FFA members set up stations within the ag shop under the four core areas of animal science, plant science, natural resources and FFA leadership.

Fall festival tasks include helping children on and off the hay ride, assisting at the bird feeder construction station and carving pumpkins.

When you think of the word unique, this FFA chapter definitely comes across the board as such. These members are striving to have unique accomplishments and work hard on projects that others may not have available to them. Milton Hershey is the only residential high school with FFA in the state of Pennsylvania, meaning that their students live on campus year round as they grow, lead and succeed within the Pennsylvania FFA Association.

Special projects include a maple syrup SAE, where Milton Hershey School students help tap sugar maple trees on campus, collect the sap, and help with boiling and bottling the syrup. A trout hatchery SAE is also a unique project run by their students that consists of feeding and caring for trout fingerlings throughout the year. Students will then help stock local streams with the trout.

When asked, "What has been the most beneficial thing that's happened since you put on the blue and gold jacket," chapter secretary Ashley Smith said, "Before getting a jacket, I didn't really get involved in FFA and never got into any of the activities that were available. Being an officer and wearing my jacket makes me proud because it taught me leadership and allowed me to be more of a leader. The most beneficial thing that has happened since putting on the jacket would be having a name out there that people in FFA know they can come to and talk."

If you would like to learn more about Milton Hershey School, go to mhskids.org.

There's No Place Like Home FROM THE OFFICERS STATION

For so many people, travelers especially, the small town of Somerset, Pennsylvania, is simply exit 110 on the Pennsylvania Turnpike. A convenient stop for travelers

on their voyages to take a break at either one of the many fast food chains or slumber in a plethora of motels. Some don't even stop along the way, drivers simply pass right through this "turnpike town" as a whole. But to me, I see Somerset as home. As the beautiful county that has literally gone down in history. After being elected to serve the Pennsylvania FFA Association for one year last June, I have traveled across the entire commonwealth as well as explored at least six new states while advocating for agriculture and leadership within our members. But after my travels, I always loved the drive home. Knowing that my small town is waiting for me to come home from my adventures always makes me smile. My town and county are full of traditional festivals and gatherings that bring the county together.

In the summer we have an antique sale in the town's diamond and main roads of Somerset. We have Mountain Craft Days in the fall that will whisk you away to the Revolutionary War era. Maple Fest in the spring celebrates our maple products not even to mention our wonderful county fair. But the thing that makes Somerset County a national beauty is our events that have gone down in history. In 2001, Flight 93 crashed into a field in Stonycreek Township in Somerset County. And 10 months later, nine miners from the Quecreek coal mine in Somerset



MADDY BUSS

were trapped and all safely rescued. This event reached national news and led to the official naming of Somerset County as America's County. All of these things make me

proud of my Somerset County, but it's not only the places or the events, it's the people that make this county wonderful. Mom and Pop shops prove to have the most genuine hospitality where family traditions stand strong. I was very timid and shy when I entered my freshman year of high school and was enrolled in my first agriculture class because I was one of the only people in the class who did not live on a farm. But right away I felt welcomed by my classmates who put my difference aside. I quickly learned that the National FFA Organization can and does include every single student no matter his or her background. From growing as an FFA member in the Somerset Area FFA chapter to serving the state association as an organization bigger than myself, I have learned that every single person belongs. That is what I strive to show members each day, that we all belong. No matter where you came from, small town, massive city, living on a farm or not, you have a place in the FFA.

I am proud to be able to represent my small town everywhere I went this year, and because of my strong home school ag program I have the opportunity to show members that each of us belongs here. We are all going to follow our dreams and passions in life, but don't forget to love the small town where you came from.

Editor's note: Maddy Buss is the Pennsylvania FFA state treasurer.



Submitted photo

The Pennsylvania FFA state officer team is shown with New Holland North America representatives.

Celebrating the Blue and Gold of Agriculture Machinery

JILL PALMER

Pennsylvania FFA State Reporter

CHAMBERSBURG, Pa. — Two Pennsylvania State FFA officers joined Forrester Farm Equipment in celebrating their customers as they hosted a "Customer Appreciation Day" event March 17.

During this time, customers from across the area came in to the New Holland dealer's location in Chambersburg to take part in fellowship with one another, and of course enjoy some great chicken barbecue.

The two state officers representing the Pennsylvania FFA Association in attendance were Jill Palmer of Fulton County and Garrett Jenkins of Lancaster County.

"New Holland is a very cherished partner we are blessed to work with, and so is the Forrester location here in Chambersburg. They play a vital role in the ability we have to educate our members on how to be great leaders within the agriculture industry, and their everyday lives. Any chance we can get together and celebrate our partnership is always a good time. We're extremely thankful for what they do for us," said Palmer.

Monday, April 10, also brought a day of conversation and learning as the state FFA officers visited the New Holland North America location and toured the manufacturing plant where they produce hay tools like balers.