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Pennsylvania FFA Happenings

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FFA Holds Virtual Leadership Conference

ALAYNA HARRELL

Pennsylvania FFA Reporter

HARRISBURG, Pa. — Premier leadership, personal growth and career success are three traits the National FFA Organization instills in its members.

Pennsylvania FFA works to fulfill these components through leadership conferences.

Agriculture Cooperation Establishes Success (ACES) and the State Legislative Leadership Conference (SLLC) are two conferences that immerse our members in leadership experiences.

This year our association was pushed to think outside the box and create a new, virtual conference for all of our members. We decided to combine aspects of our ACES conference and SLLC to create a virtual mega conference.

ALL IN — the Advocacy Leadership Legislation conference — was a two-day experience in which members immersed themselves in advocacy, leadership and legislation.

Students heard keynote speeches from Artha Jonassaint, National FFA Southern Region vice president, and Trent McKnight, founder of AgriCorps.

Each day included a keynote address, two leadership workshops, career exploration time and a time of reflection.

Prior to the conference, each attendee received a conference box. The ALL IN conference box was filled with a conference workbook, pen, notebook, sticky notes, stickers, hand sanitizer, earbuds, a stress ball, New Holland sunglasses, and a T-shirt.

Each participant had the opportunity to use these materials through-



Pennsylvania FFA photo

out ALL IN and have a hands-on experience. On April 7, our association made

history as over 1,000 Pennsylvania FFA members attended our virtual ALL IN conference.

This event was the perfect example of the resilience of our members. Despite the situation, our members

are willing to put in the work to further their premier leadership, personal growth and career success.

Think Positive, Act Positive

FROM THE OFFICERS STATION



MIKARA ANDERSON
FFA PRESIDENT

With each passing day, I excitedly woke up and checked my Google calendar — all events still

read virtual.

This will phase out in a few months, I thought. Then we will be back, face to face, enjoying each other's company, and everything will be normal.

But as the months droned on, with little to no changes, I wondered, is this the new normal?

This thought ran through my head every day after being elected as a Pennsylvania state FFA officer last summer.

Becoming a state officer had always been my dream, and I couldn't wait to connect with members, preferably in person.

In June, I thought events and activities would open back up in the fall, just in time for school to begin, but they didn't. In fact, the

closures, cancellations, rescheduling and postponing only continued.

I found myself questioning my effectiveness as an officer and the quality of programming my team and I could provide students with virtual education. Looking back, I shouldn't have, because my year as a state officer has been incredible.

One evening, I was working in the barn and contemplating life, like I normally do in that setting — being in a barn seems to be where the greatest ideas stem from.

A voice inside my head prompted me to set the negative aside and think positive, and to act positive. I debated how I could do that with so much disappointment surrounding everything we are so used to as FFA members and agriculturists,

but nevertheless, I tried.

And because I tried to think positive and act positive, I began to view this season of life and the situation in an entirely new light.

There is good in every situation we encounter. Events are still happening, only in a different way. Being leaders, we must adapt to these changes and continue to deliver the same message in a different format.

While as a participant, we need to continue our involvement in these events and keep receiving the benefits from these programs.

With these virtual events and changes, we know there will be an end to all of the cancellations and changes at some point.

Now, think about yourself, no matter the stage of life you are in,

whether you are a student, parent, teacher, FFA alumnus or community member.

What events or activities in your life continue to be affected by the pandemic or the aftermath of the pandemic? How can you take these less-than-ideal situations and use them to impact the lives of people around you?

Being positive is contagious, and if we can each express it in our own lives and to those we encounter, this season of life will pass more quickly than we realize.

The next time you are finding yourself down about our current situation and longing for pre-pandemic life (trust me, I'm with you), remember to think positive, act positive, and life will be positive.

A Quick Glance at National FFA History

The Smith-Hughes Act was passed in 1917 and changed agricultural education for students across the United States.

It was the first step in reshaping agricultural education and the beginning stages of the National FFA Organization.

Eight years later, in 1925, Henry Groseclose organized the Future Farmers of Virginia. The FFV would serve as the model for the National FFA Organization.

In 1928, the National FFA Organization was established in

Kansas City, Missouri. Delegates from 18 states — Arkansas, Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Nebraska, New Jersey, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Carolina, Utah, Virginia, and Wisconsin — elected the first National FFA president, Leslie Applegate.

The organization began to grow rapidly. By 1929, the FFA adopted national blue and corn gold as its official colors. A year later, the FFA approved the FFA Creed by E.M Tiffany.

The famous blue corduroy jacket would be adopted as the official dress three years after.

This brief history was just the beginning of a bigger picture for generations of FFA members. Without this history, our organization would have not developed into what it is today.

As FFA members, we appreciate the history of past generations of agriculturalists and look forward to the future of the agriculture industry.