



BLUE AND GOLD

Pennsylvania FFA Happenings

www.paffa.org



Encouraging Growth, Be a Marigold

FROM THE OFFICERS STATION



ALAYNA HARRELL
PENNSYLVANIA FFA
STATE REPORTER

A few weeks ago, I was putting on my FFA jacket and I reached into my inside jacket pockets. At that moment, I realized that they were filled with different things from the past year — business cards, hotel room keys, pens, snacks and a marigold.

Many FFA members can probably relate; FFA jacket pockets are always filled with exciting treasures (some that we remember, and others that are surprising). But this day I was pleasantly surprised to find a small marigold.

At the beginning of my year of service, I visited my home chapter where I had the opportunity to meet with my superintendent. We talked about what this year could look like for my team, Pennsylvania FFA members and my home chapter.

By the end of our time together, I was feeling defeated. I was disappointed this year was different and sad for members — because of the pandemic, they could miss out on

certain opportunities.

Then my superintendent, Dr. Antonis, handed me this marigold, which changed my perspective. She explained to me that I would have to strive to be a marigold. Despite the challenges and change in our world, I had to remain the same.

A marigold is known as a “companion plant,” which means it assists in other plants’ growth. Gardeners plant a marigold next to vegetables to help them grow strong and healthy. Essentially, the purpose of the marigold is to protect the vegetables from bugs or harmful weeds.

Throughout the year, I have kept this small marigold in my pocket. And when I need encouragement, I take the marigold out of my pocket and it reminds me of why I am here.

I believe the Lord planted me in the Pennsylvania FFA Association to act as a marigold to our 13,000 members. Whether this means reaching out to a member over social media, sending them an encouraging card, or calling them on the phone, I try to be a source of motivation.

Regardless of the circumstances, I remember that I can always be a marigold by helping those around me grow. Each of us is planted exactly where we need to be and are here for a reason.

We can be individuals, who encourage growth and protect those around us. In a world full of division, hurt and sadness, the least we can do is be marigolds toward one another.

92nd FFA State Convention Goes Hybrid

HARRISBURG, Pa. — On June 7-11, the Pennsylvania FFA Association will celebrate its 92nd annual State FFA Convention. This convention is going to make history for our organization, as it is the first-ever hybrid celebration.

On June 7, we will kick off our convention virtually. There will be a total of three virtual sessions that will highlight the following: Keystone Degree recipients, agriscience fair winners, past state officers, honorary state degrees, citation awards, and remarks from multiple special guests.

The week will end with a one-day in-person celebration at Tyrone Area High School. This event will be held in the high school auditorium and feature the top two teams and

top three individuals in career development events, and the top three individuals in leadership development events. It also includes Golden Owl award winners, State Stars, ag science winners, proficiency state winners, Teach Ag essay contest winners, a showcase of Pennsylvania talent, recognition of the outgoing state officers, and induction of the 2021-22 state officer team.

Each of the virtual sessions will air on the Pennsylvania FFA YouTube channel. More information on our hybrid celebration can be found on our website — PAFFA.org — or on our social media pages. We can’t wait to see you at this historical celebration of our 13,000 FFA members.

Congratulations to Greenwood Ag Teacher

On behalf of the Pennsylvania FFA, we would like to congratulate Mrs. Krista Pontius for being named the winner of the 2021 Top Teacher search on ABC’s “Live with Kelly and Ryan” talk show.

Pontius teaches at Greenwood High School in Millerstown and is one of Pennsylvania FFA’s remarkable agriculture educators. Read more about her story on Page B7 of the Lancaster Farming.



Pennsylvania FFA photo

With the state officers wrapping up their terms in June, they offer pieces of wisdom to state officer applicants.

Dear State Officer Candidates ...

2020-2021 Pennsylvania State Officer Team

June is quickly approaching, and Pennsylvania FFA state officer candidates have begun submitting their applications to be on the 2021-2022 FFA state officer team.

Each of us understands the importance, competition and experience of running for a state FFA officer position. Out of numerous applicants, 11 individuals will embark on this exciting journey; we would like to offer some words of encouragement.

“Reach out to someone who has previously served as a state officer. They are a wealth of information and an incredible resource to help you prepare for the process. They are excited to help potential state officers like you!” — Mikara Anderson

“Just relax and be yourself. The nominating committee wants to get to know the real you, not see how well you can make yourself look like a state officer. Don’t compare yourself to the other candidates, just focus on being yourself and walk away confident, knowing that you did your best. Being elected to serve as a state officer is a huge honor, but remember that whether you are elected or not does not define who you are!” — Cody Lehman

“Remember that this year and this process isn’t about putting a new line on your jacket or adding something to your resume. It is about being a listening ear, a joyful servant and a loud cheerleader. It is about being a mentor, a resource and a friend. Not for your own recognition, but so that each and every member finds their place in this blue jacket. I’m already proud of you!” — Jessica Herr

“There is only one you, and you are spectacular so don’t compare yourself to everyone else. You each have individual talents that make you who you are. Embrace them. Be the most you (can be), and you will do amazing. Good luck to all of the candidates!” — Cheyenne Bastian Brown

“Use this opportunity to learn more about yourself. The election process can be stressful, intense and tiring — with each round you will be able to learn more about how you react and respond to certain situations. Regardless, if you are elected or not, you will be able to leave the interviews with valuable skills you can use in your future. I’m excited to see what each of you will accomplish in and out of your jacket!” — Alayna Harrell

“Never be afraid to be authentically yourself during this journey. The truth is that only seven people will make the new team. If you do not make the team, by all means it does not mean you were a bad candidate, it just means that you weren’t right for this particular team. Do not get frustrated, be yourself, and you got this!” — Emily O’Brien

“Seek the Lord first in all you do. You will see his hand in many activities and events you do this year. Remember to enjoy each moment and take the time to reflect on each experience. Be purposeful in your relationships — little things make all the difference. I am praying for each of you as you take this next step in your blue jacket.” — Emma Musser

Spring Has Sprung for FFA Members



Mifflinburg FFA photo

Ashley Mook, a Mifflinburg FFA chapter member and horticulture student, tends to the flowers in the greenhouse.

The Mifflinburg FFA chapter has opened its greenhouse to the public for the entire month. Starting May 1, students are giving greenhouse hours every Saturday in May from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The greenhouse is at Mifflinburg High School, next to the football field.

During classes, horticulture and plant science students have been learning and working hard to create beautiful flower and garden plants varieties. This includes geraniums, zinnia, snapdragons, polka dot plants, California wonder peppers, cherry tomatoes, pink blush tomatoes and beefsteak tomatoes, as well as herbs basil, chives, parsley and lavender.

During the week, appointments to visit after school for a tour or to pick up plants can be made by calling 717-286-8829.