



BLUE & GOLD NEWS

Pennsylvania FFA Happenings



500 Gather to Learn Advocacy

To be an activist is to speak. To be an advocate is to listen.

At this year's State Legislative Leadership Conference, 545 FFA members from across the commonwealth of Pennsylvania did just that.

From March 24 to 26, the Sheraton Harrisburg Hershey Hotel overflowed with enthusiastic FFA members. They were ready to learn about the legislative process.

Pennsylvania FFA members took part in workshops, caucus meetings, committee work, general assemblies and conversation about current legislation.

These members were separated into a House and a Senate.

One FFA member in each group received the Founders Award — in the House, Ben Smeltzer from Eastern Lebanon FFA, in the Senate, Tanner Zimmerman from Cedar Crest FFA.

A special thank-you to former Secretary of Agriculture Sam Hayes Jr. for sponsoring the award as well as presenting it.

At this conference our FFA members got the opportunity to put their advocacy skills to the test through in our advocacy fair.

Members were put in groups and had to develop advocacy for a local nonprofit or organization.

To finish the conference, FFA



Ben Smeltzer, left, and Tanner Zimmerman receive the Founders Award at the Pennsylvania FFA State Legislative Leadership Conference.

members gathered for a breakfast with members from the Pennsylvania Senate and House, as well as business and industry representatives.

We are so thankful for the

continued support of all of the sponsors as well as elected officials. Thank you for allowing our members to learn how to dare to be an advocate.

Juniata Member Is an Avid Fundraiser



Haley Hoffman speaks at the kickoff for her first lupus fundraiser 5K.



Participants get ready to begin their lupus fundraiser 5K organized by East Juniata FFA member Haley Hoffman.

Haley Hoffman from the East Juniata FFA chapter is passionate about raising awareness for the Lupus Foundation of America.

"I started this project at the end of my sixth grade year," Hoffman said. "I was doing 5Ks around PA to keep me in shape. My mom came up to me and asked if I wanted to run the Lupus Loop in Philly, and of course I said yes. I wanted to raise money for the foundation since both of my grandmas were diagnosed with lupus. Unfortunately my Grandma Lu passed away."

Haley found her reason why and started to embark on her journey. She dared to be an advocate and stood up for what she believed in.

She started her supervised agriculture experience by raising money and donating all of the proceeds to the Lupus Foundation of America.

Hoffman made \$600 selling T-shirts and hoodies, \$1,200 from an Easter pie sale (100 pies at \$12 each), \$3,000 from a silent auction, and \$1,500 from a 5K run.

She also organized a motorcycle ride, which raised \$400 despite poor weather, and an apple dumping sale.

Hoffman's favorite fundraiser is the silent auction. She likes getting to see first hand how community members support each other.

Hoffman solicits donations of money and silent auction items from small businesses in Juniata County.

Hoffman has truly shown the true meaning of living to serve. We are so proud of Hoffman's effort in making a difference in her community.

We can't wait to see what her future has to hold as she continues to dare to be an advocate.

FFA Member Sees Her Business Rise

Hannah Vazquez of Chambersburg FFA is dedicated to baking, to every recipe and sweet treat she bakes.

She used her skill set to create a business, Sweet Blessings, that she now runs as a senior in high school.

Vazquez bakes cupcakes and other specialty desserts. She sells them in school during the lunch periods, and she takes orders through her social media pages.

The proceeds from all of her baked goods are split up into two different categories. Hannah uses the proceeds to pay for supplies and for her FFA trips to conferences and local and state compe-

titions. She manages her business's finances as well as baking and marketing all of her products.

One of Vazquez's favorite things to do is create new recipes.

"I loved being in the kitchen watching my mom bake ever since I was a little girl," Vazquez said. "The sweet aroma always filled the house. Seeing the hard work and dedication that she put into the dishes she made, as it finished looking like a masterpiece, truly made me happy. I invested my time to learn from her with lots of practice as I started to shape my culture through my sweets just like my mom."



Hannah Vazquez sells her baked goods during her school lunch.

Conference Teaches Living to Serve

The Washington Leadership Conference is held each summer in Washington, D.C., to allow FFA members to experience leadership and service learning while being exposed to the rich history of our country.

Each year the Pennsylvania FFA Alumni Association sponsors Pennsylvania FFA members to attend the conference. Twenty members are receiving a full or partial scholarship this year.

Attendees are inspired to become change makers in their communities. Each day of the conference focuses on a different

principle taught through the context of the nation's capital.

Throughout the week, members work on a Living to Serve plan, which is a personalized community plan for how students can serve their chapters and communities.

A highlight of the conference is the meal packing event.

With Florida-based company Meals of Hope, participants also pack 60,000 servings of oatmeal for donation to local food pantries.

The goals of the Washington Leadership Conference are to explore, encourage, advocate and serve.