



BLUE & GOLD NEWS

Pennsylvania FFA Happenings



Find Your People for Authentic Community

OFFICER CORNER



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How would your life be if you didn't have your community? Would you have support on your best and worst days? Community is essential.

During my time in high school I was involved in various activities that gave me the opportunity to connect with others. You would think that I was able to connect with those people and find my true supportive community. Finding my family away from home didn't come easy, but I am grateful for the perseverance it has taught me.

We are taught since the beginning of our lives to create relationships and bond with others. The FFA has given me the opportunity to find that community, where everyone is supportive and loving even if you beat them in a contest. FFA is a place where everyone is welcome no matter your background. I have met members from across the country and state that welcome anyone with open arms even as a stranger.

Community can be hard to find in

different seasons of our lives. "Together We Can" is the 2024-2025 Pennsylvania FFA's theme. We cannot become our true potential by staying alone. Togetherness is essential to making a true difference. Imagine you're trying to become your best self, but you don't have someone there to keep you accountable. Togetherness is an opportunity for endless growth.

I encourage you to persevere and find your people and your community. There is always someone out there who needs just one person to talk to. Be that someone who listens when someone just needs to be heard. Will we be the change and become that person and allow them into our community?

Penns Manor Hosts Elementary Ag Day

SOPHIA DAUM

Reporter

Penns Manor FFA Chapter

The Penns Manor FFA Chapter recently hosted an Elementary Agriculture Day as the final part of agriculture education week.

This event provided young students a hands-on introduction to the world of agriculture. Students were led through various parts of the agriculture department, including the classroom, shop, barn and greenhouses. Each grade was separated into four groups, and at each stop, they were given an overview of the area and a tour. Along with the tours, each grade had a lesson in one station relating to something they learned earlier in the week.

Kindergarten students started off the day with a hands-on lesson about the basics of agriculture. The lesson focused on teaching the students about products that come from farms. In the greenhouse, FFA members had models of fields to show how different farms could look. They discussed how these products are useful in everyday life.

First graders were introduced to the world of wheat and its many products. Their lesson involved an innovative activity where they "made bread" by creating slime using various ingredients. This fun, tactile project allowed the students to understand better the process behind wheat's journey from farm to table. By the end of their station, they had learned of wheat's role in the agricultural economy.

Second grade students explored the concepts of sustainability and renewable resources. They made mini greenhouses from plastic bottles, teaching them about recycling and how agriculture can be sustainable. The students learned how simple materials can be repurposed to create an environment for growing plants.

For third grade students, the day focused on the history of soybean agriculture. In their lesson, a mini time machine was used to take students back in time to learn about the soybean's journey from a slight crop to an essential agricultural product.

Fourth grade students learned about pollination and bees' vital role in the ecosystem. Their lesson involved transplanting plants. By learning how to care for plants and how pollinators like bees help crops grow, the students gained a greater understanding of how important pollinators are.

Finally, fifth graders learned how to make glue out of milk. They learned to "weld" or glue two crackers together by using spray cheese, which was a fun way to demonstrate the welding process.

The Elementary Agriculture Education Day was not just an educational event — it was a fun, interactive way for young students to learn about the importance of agriculture and FFA. By demonstrating how the lessons they learned in their classrooms connect to things FFA does daily, the chapter provided students with a unique opportunity to explore agriculture. This event helped in planting the seeds of knowledge that will continue to grow for years to come.



Submitted

Somerset Area FFA Chapter members helped restock Laurel Hill Creek this spring.

Somerset Takes Stock in Laurel Hill Creek

The FFA's motto is "Learning to Do, Doing to Learn, Earning to Live, and Living to Serve."

This motto encourages students to get involved in their agricultural classes and communities.

On March 14, members of the Somerset Area FFA Chapter took the opportunity to gain hands-on learning by stocking more than 900 trout at the Laurel Hill Creek. These 15 students had recently obtained their boater's safety certification through the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission and helped stock a 1.75-mile stretch of the waterway.

A lot of equipment was needed to

make this event possible, from canoes to dry bags and fishnets.

The chapter received a grant from the National FFA Organization and partnered with Tractor Supply Company to help cover the cost of canoes, safety equipment and other items that helped make this project possible. These students worked hand in hand to accomplish the end goal of getting fish into prime habitat — a win-win situation both for the survival of the fish and the recreation provided for local anglers.

From assisting in obtaining the grant to obtaining their certifications and designing and testing the float

barrels, this event served as a learning experience for Somerset Area FFA members and Ag Ed students.

The Somerset FFA Chapter is grateful to the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission for their partnership for the project, as well as the National FFA Organization and Tractor Supply Company for offering the funding through their grant applications and the school administration for supporting the endeavor. Having opportunities for students to give back provides them with the knowledge and skills to be effective role models in their communities.



Submitted

Young students learn from members of the Penns Manor FFA Chapter.

FFA Helps Ronald McDonald House

Six FFA chapters assisted the Montour County Farm Bureau to collect donations to support the Ronald McDonald House in Danville as part of the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau's Farmer's Care event in March.

The chapters collected \$3,625 worth of donations.

Participating chapters included Southern Columbia, Montgomery, Millville, Central Columbia, Warrior Run and Danville. Members volunteered to help unload and organize the donations at the house.

"This is incredible. We have never had this much help with unloading and organizing before," said the executive director of the Danville House, Michael Turlis. "Usually, it takes over a month for our volunteers to sort and organize all of the donations. Having so many of the FFA students here really helped."

Learning About Chesapeake Bay

Juniata FFA members traveled to Port Isobel in March to work with the Chesapeake Bay Foundation.

They used inquiry-based learning techniques and STEM practices to explore wetlands, underwater grass beds, and oyster reefs by foot and aboard their research vessel.

Students were busy learning about the past of the Chesapeake Bay by setting crab pots.

Even though the bay is roughly five hours away, Juniata County still has a huge impact, as the Susquehanna river runs off directly into the Chesapeake Bay. More than 18 million people are connected to the bay whether they know it or not.

The students toured the neighboring island of Tangier, where they learned the history of crabbing and oyster fishing. Members went fishing and hiked at night through the bamboo forest, placing

themselves in the shoes of many critters, and also got to get themselves muddy in the marsh.

The bay currently faces many issues such as over-fishing, rising water levels, and the effects that global warming has on the weather. This has changed the way that fishing and day-to-day life on the islands and surrounding the Chesapeake Bay now function.

Greenwood Holds Hunger Banquet

On March 14, the Greenwood FFA hosted a Hunger Banquet, drawing more than 100 community members to an eye-opening event aimed at raising awareness of food insecurity.

Held in partnership with the Perry County Pomona Grange, the banquet provided attendees with a striking demonstration of global hunger disparities.

Upon arrival, guests randomly selected their seats, which determined the type of meal they would receive. Only one individual at each table was served a four-course meal, representing the small percentage of the world's population with consistent access to an abundance of food. Three others received a modest meal of spaghetti and bread, while the remaining four at each table were

given only a small bowl of rice and beans, reflecting the reality faced by millions of people worldwide.

In preparation for the event, a few Greenwood FFA students participated in a 30-hour famine, allowing them to experience hunger firsthand. This experience enabled them to genuinely speak to the audience about the physical and emotional challenges of food insecurity, adding a personal and impactful element to the evening's message.

The Perry County Pomona Grange prepared the meals for the evening. Following the meal, Pennsylvania State FFA Vice President Nathan Lesh led the audience through a presentation filled with statistics and personal narratives about global food

insecurity. His message underscored the importance of community efforts to combat hunger locally and internationally.

At the conclusion of the event, attendees were treated to desserts provided by the Grange and given time to reflect and discuss their experiences. Many left with a renewed sense of urgency to support those in need. Through this impactful event, the Greenwood FFA raised \$2,500, which will be donated to the Neighbor Helping Neighbor Food Pantry at the annual FFA banquet in May.

The Hunger Banquet not only provided financial assistance to a crucial local resource, but also encouraged deeper community engagement in the fight against hunger.