

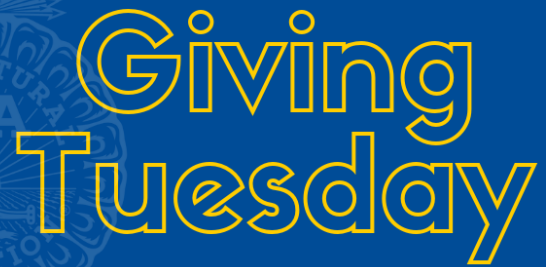
ILLINOIS ASSOCIATION FFA

Oct-Nov 2019 Newsletter

A WORD FROM GAGE

Hey Illinois FFA members! I hope you're having a great first half of your school year and have taken advantage of the many FFA conferences and competitions held already! I also hope many of you were able to attend your section Leadership Training School or even experience a chapter visit that my teammates and I have been putting on for the past 2 months. We have had an amazing time facilitating our visit and advocating for the many different perspectives we all hold in agriculture. And on top of that, meeting all of the amazing FFA members along the way made this an experience of a lifetime!

If you haven't already, be sure to follow us on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Snapchat to keep up with everything we are doing here at Illinois FFA. There are a variety of events coming up like Super Saturday, SIUC Basketball Game, 212 Conference, and FFA week. Be sure to check your calendar and talk to your advisor on how you can participate in any of these events. If you happen to run into any of the Major State Officers be sure to introduce yourself and say hi! I'm looking forward to what's ahead and making the most of 2019! See you soon!

A blue rectangular graphic with the text "Giving Tuesday" in a large, yellow, outlined font. In the background, there is a faint, circular seal of the Illinois FFA Association featuring a sun, a plow, and a sheaf of wheat, with the words "ILLINOIS ASSOCIATION FFA" and "EDUCATION" visible around the perimeter.

Giving
Tuesday

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NATIONAL TALENT

CADENCE SHIPES IS THE STAR OF THE SHOW



By: Collin White

Every year, some of the most talented FFA members from around the country have the opportunity to perform in front of 67,000 of their peers on the big stage during the National FFA Convention and Expo. This year Illinois is proud to be represented by Cadence Shipes from the Valmeyer FFA Chapter in Section 22!

Shipes talent is singing and playing the ukulele. “I started learning when I was very young,” said Shipes. “I have been hooked ever since!”

Her love for singing and music has always pushed her through the hard times when she had no motivation. “For me, it has always been my love for music that has kept me chasing this dream.”

Her journey started she was a freshman learning about all of the opportunities that FFA has to offer. When learning about state convention she noticed the application for state talent. “Because of my love for music, I submitted the application,” she said. “I’ve never felt more excitement then when I got the news that I was performing at State Convention.” After much practice and nerves to perform, she was ready for state convention. “I walked out in front of 5,000 people and sang my heart out,” Shipes said. “When I got off stage, I had so many people complimenting me and letting me know how great I did. I felt like I was on cloud nine. The rest of the convention was a dream for me.”

After her previous success, she learned of the National FFA Talent Contest and decided to apply. Since her selection in August, she has worked diligently on her song selection. “If you are interested in competing in State Talent and want to possibly compete in National Talent, I would really recommend it,” said Shipes. “It is definitely an experience to remember!”

We wish Shipes the best of luck as she goes to perform during one of the sessions at the 92nd National FFA Convention and Expo in Indianapolis, or catch her on a side stage around the convention all during the week.

Good Luck, Cadence!



NATIONAL CONVENTION - TOP 10

By: Brodee McCormick



The leaves are beginning to fall, the FFA Local Foundation Drive is underway and harvest season has arrived. That can only mean one thing - National FFA Convention and Expo is just around the corner! National Convention can be one of the busiest and fun experiences of the year. Convention is home to countless opportunities for FFA members. Below are the 10 things you have to check out if you are attending the 92nd National FFA Convention!

Opening Session - This first session is guaranteed to knock your socks off! From all of the smoke machines, the laser show, the loud music and all of the blue jackets in the room, it is definitely a unique experience from beginning to end!

Keynote & Retiring Addresses - During the opening session there will be an opportunity to hear from Keynote Speaker Bob Goff. Goff is a New York Times Best Selling Author of *Love Does*, and *Everybody Always*. There will also be a chance to hear from Michelle Poler, the fear-facing worldwide phenomenon, during the Sixth General Session. In addition to words from industry professionals, the





National FFA Officers will be giving their retiring addresses. These addresses give members a glimpse into “a year in the life” of a National Officer and encourage members to continue to “Learn to Do.”

Rodeo - Get your boots on and check out the “World’s Toughest Rodeo” that takes place at the Indiana State Fairgrounds. There will be bull riding, saddle bronc riding and bareback riding. This event is always a hit for FFA members!

Time spent with chapter - Each and every moment you get to spend with your chapter will make for memorable stories later. From the long ride there and going to every event together, you will get to experience this trip with some of your closest friends. Enjoy and soak in every minute.

Expo and Shopping Mall - Make sure to check out the Convention Shopping Mall and Career Fair. Here you will be able to talk to universities and businesses from across the country, discover some new fundraising opportunities for your chapter and buy some new FFA apparel!

Band, Chorus and Talent - During the sessions, there will be time to hear from the AMAZING band, chorus and talent acts. These talented members arrive in Indianapolis early to start practicing for all of their performances. Catch them performing on the session stage, in the career fair, during the parade and in various pop-up locations throughout the week. You don’t want to miss hearing from these groups!

Illinois Winners on Stage - At every session be ready to cheer on the members of Illinois FFA as they go across the stage. Illinois Association FFA will be represented by CDE winners, Agri-Science Fair participants, National Proficiency Finalists, National Chapter Award winners, Model of Excellence Award winners, Star Candidates and our National Officer Candidate Miriam Hoffman going across the stage. Be loud and be proud of our Illinois FFA members!

Tours - Throughout the week there will be opportunities for you and your chapter to go on educational tours. The tours range from visiting the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, visiting ADM, visiting a local dairy farm and much more. Make sure to sign up for the tours and expand your agriculture knowledge.

Concerts - This year the concerts will be held in the Bankers Life Fieldhouse. Get your tickets ready for Old Dominion and Brett Young. The concerts are always a great way to make some memories with your chapter.

Food - There are food trucks on FFA Way, restaurants all over town and food inside the Convention Center and Mall.

There will definitely be something for everyone to enjoy! The countdown to National Convention is on!

Are you ready?



S.T.A.R. CONFERENCE

SECTION OFFICER TRAINING ACTIVITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES CONFERENCE



By: Gage Miller, State President

In early September, the state officers traveled to each of the five districts for Section Officer Training Activities and Responsibilities Conference or S.T.A.R. Conference. The major state officers created the curriculum and facilitated this conference five different times at the locations of Black Hawk East (District 1), Joliet Junior College (District 2), John Wood Community College (District 3), Lake Land Community College (District 4), and Southern Illinois University Carbondale (District 5). S.T.A.R. Conference has a curriculum that works to build skills section officers will use during their year of service. Curriculum ranged from bonding with fellow section officers, how to properly give an invocation and greeting, facilitating a workshop, and how to properly write a thank you card.

Once the officers develop these skills throughout the conference, they are then able to apply it to their section and home chapter. The major state officers enjoyed facilitating these conferences, as they were able to learn about and bond with each of the 25 section officer teams. They are also looking forward to traveling across the state and watching the section officers apply the skills they learned at S.T.A.R. conference during chapter visits.



IL FFA FALL

BY: GAGE MILLER

As the month of September came to a close, Illinois FFA held numerous events that showcased involvement from its members. The month began with the State Horse Judging CDE held at Black Hawk East on September 14. There were a total of 222 members in attendance that judged eight different classes of horses. The teams with the highest scores in their division were:

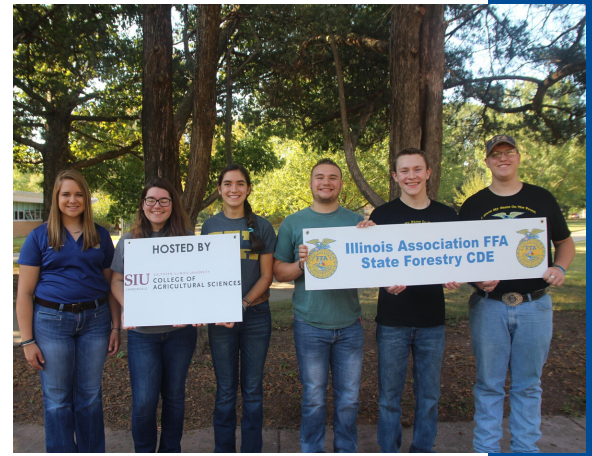
- Reasons Division - Rochelle FFA Chapter
 - Top Individual - Katie Huff, Mt. Vernon
- Non-Reasons Division - Pinckneyville FFA Chapter
 - Top Individual - Savannah Stamann, Brimfield
- Middle School Division - West Prairie FFA Chapter
 - Top Individual - Conner Blunier, Midland

"The horse evaluation CDE allows participants to do more than just identify horses with structural correctness and ideal characteristics," said Katie Huff. "It allows students to develop critical thinking and deductive reasoning skills." The horse evaluation CDE gives FFA members a 360° skillset pertaining to horse judging and evaluation. "This contest will always hold a special place in my heart," said Huff. "I believe it has given me countless skills."

The State Forestry CDE was held at Southern Illinois University Carbondale on September 28. The competition consisted of seven practicums, including identification of 25 different trees on the campus. The teams that came out on top in this competition were:

- Varsity- Olney
 - Top Individual- Victoria Zwilling, Olney
- Middle School- Liberty MS
 - Top Individual- Conner Blunier, Midland

To conclude the month of September and the 2019 MLB regular season, 500 FFA Day ticket holders attended the Cubs vs. Cardinals game at Busch Stadium on September 29. Illinois FFA was recognized during the first pitch ceremony as Bryan Barnett, teacher of the Winchester FFA Chapter, threw out the first pitch with his family while President Gage Miller and Vice-President Lane Harvey were announced on the field. The game finished with the Cardinals coming out on top, defeating the Cubs 9-0 and clinching the National League Central title. The the Major State Officers are looking forward to more Chapter Visits during October as well as the 92nd National FFA Convention and Expo. Be sure to look for more updates on these events by viewing posts on all social media platforms!





AMERICAN STAR

Only one percent of FFA members receive their American Degrees, and an even smaller portion are American Star Recipients. Illinois Association FFA has two individuals who have gone above and beyond in their involvement, community service and supervised agricultural experiences.

By: Collin White

Less than one percent of members receive their American FFA Degree, and an even smaller percentage have the chance to become an American Star. This year Illinois is excited to have two members selected as National Star Finalists. Nicholas Torrance from the Macomb FFA is an American Star Farmer and Kacie Haag from the Tri-Point FFA chapter is an American Star Agriscience recipient. Torrance and Haag have gone above and beyond in their involvement, community service and their supervised agricultural experience to receive these honors.

Becoming an American Star finalist is a long path to take. Candidates must first interview at the state level for their American FFA Degree in a star area. State Associations select representative in each category to represent Illinois at National Convention. Then, judges from National FFA judge the applications of each candidate from all 52 state associations and pick the top four in each category to be the American Star Finalists. At National Convention, the finalists will have one more round of interviews with a second panel of judges. The winner is then announced on stage during the Sixth General Session.

For Haag's SAE, she began working on her family's swine farm with a Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan and helping with the injection of 8-10 million gallons of dragline manure application annually. She worked to expand her program to a comprehensive project, which eventually reduced her farm's environmental impact. During her on-going project, she has studied numerous ways to reduce agriculture's impact on two area watersheds. Both watersheds in which the farms are located participate in the Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy, which commits to a 45% reduction in nitrates released by 2035. Every time she receives results, it creates new questions for her research.



Haag started experimenting with N-watch, a program designed by Howard Brown from GROWMARK, that helps farmers understand how nitrogen moves through soil profiles over time. Next, she began collecting water tile samples from several locations around the farms to test nitrate levels leaving those fields. After collecting data from N-Watch and water tile testing, she began working on using this data for everyday applications. This has led her to practical on-farm experiments with cover crops, split application of nitrogen, variable rates of nitrogen and adding nitrogen stabilizers to manure. To analyze the experiments, she has used some of the latest technologies such as GPS, drone imagery, Y-drops, stalk testing, soil health reports and has presented her findings to local watershed and soil and water conservation groups. Overall, the farm has lowered its nitrogen use by 13.89% over the last four years. This, along with other changes made possible because of her research, Haag has reduced the farm's

impact on the watershed by at least 26%.

“My SAE has increased my passion for agriculture,” said Haag. “It has shown me how on-farm research can be put to practical use.”

Haag is currently a senior at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, majoring in Agricultural Leadership Education and Communications with a concentration in Organizational and Community Leadership. She hopes to find a career in Farm Bureau or 4-H Extension close to home, so she can still help on the farm and continue her research after college.

Torrance's SAE consists of three different areas: corn production, soybean production and beef cattle production. In 2015, he started out with 20 acres of corn and 20 acres of soybeans. By the end of 2018, Torrance expanded his production to 100 acres of each. His yields have improved over the time of his project for both corn and soybeans. With the corn and soybeans he is in charge of making all decisions including planting, harvesting and marketing of his crops. With his beef production book he started 2015 with 14 head of cattle and ended 2018 with 22 head. He is in charge of all decisions such as breeding, managing and marketing his Hereford cattle, showing them at local, state and national shows. Torrance is currently studying crop science and minoring in animal science at the University of Illinois. Upon graduation, he plans to return to Torrance Farms becoming the fifth generation farmer in the family and eventually assume the management role.

Congratulations to both Haag and Torrance! We wish you the best in interviews and in your future careers!



CHAPTER VISITS



By: Brodee McCormick

The Major State Officers have completed four out of six weeks of chapter visits. Week one was kicked off with Brodee, Gage, and Emma visiting Section 21 while Collin and Lane visited Section 13. During the next three weeks, the Majors split up individually. Gage visited Sections 24, 15 and 23, Lane spent time in Sections 11, 18 and 4, Brodee stayed with Sections 17, 9, and 7, Collin was hosted in Sections 14, 20, and 6, and Emma worked with Sections 3, 10, and 12. In just four weeks, the team visited 223 FFA Chapters, stopped for snacks 54 times, and traveled 12,047 miles. While these statistics are impressive, what's even more incredible was having the privilege to meet and make memories with 5,259 agriculture education students.



The goal with chapter visits this year was to get out and meet students while also shining a light on all of the different perspectives in our lives, FFA and agriculture as a whole. The officers wanted our activity to relate directly to each and every person's perspectives in the room. At the start of the day, students participating in the visit created a paper airplane. Throughout the day, students were prompted with questions like "When you think of your

favorite restaurant, what do you think of?” or “When you hear the word agriculture, what do you think of?” In response to those prompts, members drew a small image on their paper airplane that represented their answer. At the conclusion of the workshop, the paper airplanes looked different for every student. Much like agriculture today, diversity is a critical component of the National FFA Organization and of Illinois Association FFA. Recognizing each others difference in perspectives is what makes each member unique.

Once the keyword of the day is identified- Perspectives- the visit shifts into determining core values. After each of the students defines one of their core values, the visit transitions to the Illinois FFA tradition of goal cards. These small cards allow each of the students to set short-term, mid-term and long-term goals that they want to achieve. These cards can be conveniently placed in a wallet, pencil pouch or FFA jacket because it’s essential to look back on your goals and determine what still needs to be accomplished.



Chapter visits would not be possible without all of the incredible section officers, dedicated agriculture teachers, driven students and incredible supporters. 2019 Chapter Visits are possible because of the support from Compeer Financial. Through the incredible support of Compeer, the state officer team can connect with members around the state, engaging them in conversations that focus on the importance of diverse perspectives. So far, more than 5,200 students have set more than 15,700 goals! These meaningful experiences build the skills of these young leaders so they can better serve our state, nation, and world.

If the officers haven’t visited your section yet, don’t worry! After a few weeks off for time in the office and National FFA Convention, the five majors will be back on the road for chapter visits in November. They have had so much fun so far and cannot wait to see the rest of you all soon!

Did you miss chapter visits and didn't get to fill out a goal card? Don't worry, here is a goal card that you can write your goals on, cut it out and put it somewhere that you can look back on it later!

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

THE STATE OFFICERS REFLECT ON THE PAST YEAR



By: Lane Harvey, State Vice President

That smell of turkey in the oven and a warm pumpkin pie can only mean one thing to me; the holiday season. While it's easy to occupy our minds with the hustle and bustle of the holiday season, often overlooked is the reason for holidays like Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Years. There is much to be grateful for as our team reflects on the last year. We are thankful to serve Illinois Association FFA. We are thankful for these experiences that allow us to give back to the organization that has given so much to us. We are thankful for our families back home who continue to support us throughout all of our travels. We are thankful for each one of the 19,101 FFA members across the state of Illinois. We are so blessed to have such amazing members and supporters throughout our state. Last but not least, we are beyond thankful for our advisors. Without all of their sacrifices and nights away from home, we would not be where we are today.

I challenge each one of you to think of not just the things that you are thankful for this year but to also express your thankfulness to those individuals that have positively impacted your lives. A simple handwritten note or a quick appreciation text to someone can speak volumes!

With the start of a new decade right around the corner, think about all that we have to be thankful for in this last decade and how much we have grown as individuals. Just in the last decade, we have seen the rise of such game-changing innovations such as the iPhone, Instagram, the implementation of drones in precision agriculture, and so much more! Looking forward to the next decade brings a new sense of excitement and challenges to us all! I cannot wait to see where the world as a whole will be in the changing of the next decade and I can only ENVISION what all Illinois Association FFA will accomplish in this next decade!

GROWMARK AND FARM PROGRESS

FFA members learn about innovation and agricultural progress at GROWMARK and Farm Progress.

By: Emma Freebairn



Towards the end of August, the Major State Officer team spent a few busy weeks building relationships with industry friends. They attended the GROWMARK Annual Meeting and the Farm Progress Show. GROWMARK is an avid supporter and sponsor of Illinois FFA. Dedicated to helping young leaders grow, GROWMARK strives to provide members opportunities like attending their annual meeting in Chicago. The Farm Progress show is held in Decatur, Illinois, every two years. Many FFA chapters attend the show to see new innovations in agriculture and farm machinery. There are hundreds of companies there giving away free merchandise and answering student and farmer questions about their technology and business practices.

State President, Gage Miller, gave remarks at GROWMARK on the importance of innovation. Miller and the rest of the team spent their

days in Chicago interacting with FFA State Officers from Iowa and Wisconsin, and young leaders from Canada. They listened to keynote speakers such as the CEO of Netflix and the past CEO of Tesla and Apple. The keynote speakers gave valuable messages on the power of creativity and thinking outside the box. The State Officer Team looks forward to implementing what they learned from these speakers throughout the next year.

On August 27-29, the Major State Officers traveled to Decatur for the Farm Progress Show. The team sold t-shirts at the FMC stand alongside Indiana FFA state officers. The State Officers also assisted with Titan Tires tire auction. All proceeds from the t-shirt sales and tire auction will be going back to Illinois and Indiana FFA chapters. They were able to meet with many different companies that support FFA. The Farm Progress Show

is often a highlight of a FFA member's experience. Members are about to learn a broad spectrum of things about the agriculture industry, and this year the state officer team was able to spend their time there, making valuable connections with industry friends and raising money for the organization.

The state officer team finds both the Farm Progress Show and GROWMARK Annual Meeting to be extremely valuable experiences that allow them to connect with industry friends and thank them for the support they give our organization. GROWMARK sponsors a vehicle the state officers drive, as well as offering the organization support in many other ways. The Farm Progress Show is a fantastic learning experience that allows the state officers and all FFA members opportunities to network with future employers and colleges as well.



By: Lane Harvey

BUILD CONFERENCE

415 members came together to BUILD their leadership skills.



A huge event our members look forward to every year is BUILD Conference! BUILD stands for Being United in Leadership Development. BUILD Conference is a much-anticipated event for Illinois FFA members. This conference, held in partnership with Illinois Farm Bureau and its affiliates, encourages FFA members to BUILD their Image, Relationships, Teams, Perspective and Others. Through many different activities and learn-book work, members were able to learn how to enhance their leadership skills. 415 members and over 80 chapters attended BUILD 2019.

In addition to the sessions, members were able to experience the Opportunity Fair. At the fair, members networked with colleges and industry leaders about their futures in agriculture and beyond.

Attendees had the pleasure of hearing from two keynote speakers during the conference. Doc Patterson and Joe Fingerhut were both massive hits with members. By listening to these speakers, members were able to learn even more leadership skills by listening to personal stories from both Patterson and Fingerhut. The theme of Fingerhut's keynote was turning the words "I can't" into "How can I." Through Fingerhut's message, members were able to truly challenge themselves and dig deep into thinking about how can they be better leaders in their chapters, communities and homes.

With over 415 members in attendance, BUILD 2019 was a huge success this year, and we cannot wait to see all of the future leaders of Illinois FFA emerge!

GIVING TUESDAY

\$325,000 to raise for 2019-2020!

By: Emma Freebairn



Illinois FFA members that participate in FFA today.

Last year, the Illinois Foundation FFA Local Collection Drive raised \$345,572.47. This money was raised by Local Drives that chapters completed, online donations on Giving Tuesday and contributions from industry professionals. The Central A&M FFA Chapter was the highest contributing chapter donating \$11,470. The support of community members and local businesses is so important because of the impact they have on chapters in their area, and they return impact their local chapters can have on them. For the fiscal year 2019-2020, the goal is to raise \$325,000 for Illinois Foundation FFA.

Money raised on Giving Tuesday goes towards the funding of many different Illinois FFA activities and awards. Hundreds of proficiency medals and plaques, as well as thousands of certificates, are sponsored by these donations. These awards are a symbol of the hard work and dedication it took to achieve the goals that members outlined over the last year. Donations also go toward funding the activities of Major State Officers and Section Presidents. Funding the travels and work of these officers is valuable to allow them networking opportunities with students and industry friends. The officers help recruit new FFA members and plan leadership development events for all students. They direct the work of the state Association and are a valuable

Tuesday, December 3, is known nationally as "Giving Tuesday," which is an international movement created as a way for people to donate to non-profit organizations.

Illinois Foundation FFA takes part in this day of giving to raise money for state officer travels, leadership development conferences and plaques and awards. Illinois FFA is made successful due to the generous support and donations made by family and industry friends during our Local Collection Drive and Giving Tuesday campaign. The Campaign, running on Facebook on December 3, will consist of testimonies from FFA members. Past and current state/section officers will share their FFA story on social media, displaying the ways that FFA has had an impact on their lives and the lives of the more than 19,099

part of ensuring that members are gaining the best experiences possible while attending camps and conferences. At these events, members learn valuable leadership skills and are able to network with other FFA members and industry friends from across the state.

The Illinois Foundation FFA provides members across the state with the tools to help further their success and career readiness in the agriculture industry. Without the support of the Foundation and the countless Friends of FFA who donate on Giving Tuesday, the members of Illinois FFA could not reach their fullest potential. Donating to the cause ensures that members can be the future leaders of our state, nation and world.

Thank you to the many donors who have already made contributions to the Illinois Foundation FFA. The generous donations made to the organization help empower its members and build tomorrow's leaders. With Giving Tuesday approaching soon, we would like to thank Compeer Financial for committing to a \$2,500 match for the money donated through this Campaign. Compeers long-standing support to Illinois Foundation FFA has shaped and influenced the lives of FFA members in countless ways. Illinois Foundation FFA is grateful for Compeers commitment to developing exceptional leaders in FFA and agricultural education programs across our state.

