

NEW

DIRECTIONS

CONNECTING NEW JERSEY - ONE CHAPTER AT A TIME

WINTER 2016

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PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

Dear New Jersey FCCLA Members, Advisers, and Alumni:

This year has already been a whirlwind of exciting events for our State Association! New Jersey FCCLA has been successful on all fronts, and our members are tackling many aspects of our program of work. This Winter 2016 New Directions Newsletter highlights several major accomplishments in our state thus far, upcoming events, tips for chapters, and how to gain the Ultimate Leadership Experience!

Congratulations to all Fall Leadership Connection attendees! We had yet another amazing and fun conference filled with quality projects, motivational speakers, informative round tables, and exciting workshops. On behalf of the State Executive Council, we are excited to share these accomplishments with you and would like to thank all the Chapter Advisers, alumni, and administrators who have played an integral role in the success of the conference. I know that many new members were able to find their "ME"Power at their first FCCLA conference, and returning members were able to empower others to be better leaders.

The term "servant leadership" was first coined by Robert Greenleaf. We try to encourage NJ FCCLA members to be servant leaders- those who dedicate themselves to serving the needs of the organization and their members ahead of themselves. Martin Luther King Jr. once said, "Everybody can be great... because anyone can serve." During this winter season, the State Officers and our Advisers participated in a rewarding experience by cooking a meal for the families at the Ronald McDonald House in New Brunswick and satisfying one family's Christmas wish list. By practicing servant leadership, it does not mean you have to accomplish grandiose feats. It could be as simple as sending a handwritten thank you note to someone in your chapter to show them that you value their efforts. In the New Year, I challenge you to strengthen your "ME"Power to "Empower" others through servant leadership by making a positive impact in your families, schools, community, and FCCLA!

Sincerely,

Sanjina Namasivayam

NJ FCCLA State President

CLUSTER RECAP

By: Rohit Iyer, National VP of Finance

Travel west over the Appalachians to the central United States, or east over the Rocky Mountains to the Midwest; no matter how they traveled, 1,200 FCCLA members, advisers, and guests met in Indianapolis, Indiana for the 2015 National Cluster Meeting! From November 20-22, FCCLA members gathered in Indianapolis to EMPOWER themselves and learn to use their "me"power to spread the energy in their homes, schools, and communities. The conference included exciting workshops, inspirational speakers, and awesome competitive events!

The conference kicked off on Friday with the opening general session. The energy level went through the roof at the Opening General Session. The rest of the day saw workshops, networking events, and the start of the FCCLA / LifeSmarts Knowledge Bowl competition. At night, Shane Feldman, the first keynote speaker, spoke to conference attendees about "The 5 Hashtags of Life." Shane's charity, Count Me In, works to raise awareness worldwide about the importance of strong mental health among teenagers. Saturday was full of leadership development, friendly competition, and a ton of fun! Members were recognized for their participation in 11 Skill Demonstration Events, and six chapters emerged victorious in the FCCLA / LifeSmarts Knowledge Bowl as qualifiers for the 2016 NLC in San Diego. At the closing general session, the "Amazing" Tei Street entertained conference attendees with her fun and informative tips about how to survive adolescence and emerge amazing!

New Jersey succeeded at the conference in our competitive events. The team from John P. Stevens FCCLA placed first in the qualifying competition of the LifeSmarts/Knowledge Bowl Competition, and three members from JPS FCCLA took home two first place trophies and one third place trophy in Skill Demonstration Events. The 2015 Indianapolis National Cluster Meeting was an ultimate success! We can't wait to see how FCCLA members and advisers continue to empower themselves this year and at the 2016 National Leadership Conference in San Diego, California!

SLC PROMO

**JOIN US ON MARCH 22ND-23RD AT
THE STATE LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE!**

By: Rohit Iyer, National VP of Finance

It's time to EMPOWER yourself to further develop your leadership skills by attending the 2016 State Leadership Conference from March 22-23 in Cherry Hill! This is New Jersey FCCLA's largest leadership conference and is an opportunity you don't want to miss. The SLC is an amazing way for members to engage in competitions that fit their interests, hear from innovative workshop presenters, and network with peers who are also placing a focus on their leadership growth.

The highlights of the State Leadership Conference include 50 competitive events open to members, community service efforts, a fun night with a variety of activities, and a fashion show promoting the achievements and garments of members competing in Fashion Runway!

If you've been to the SLC before, you know just how valuable an experience this is. If not, I encourage you to look into going to the conference! Remember to begin fundraising and working on your projects soon. I look forward to seeing you this March at the State Leadership Conference!

THE POWER OF GIVING AT THE STATE LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

By: Michelle Qu, VP of Community Service

This school year, things have come and gone: the first day of school, the end of first marking period, the National Cluster Meeting, and the New Jersey Fall Leadership Connection. Each year, the New Jersey State Executive Council creates a list of community service initiatives for our members and chapters. At the Fall Leadership Conference this past November, NJ FCCLA collected an approximate 1,654 pounds of canned goods for the Middlesex County Food Bank and 107 pounds of pull tabs for the Ronald McDonald House!

I am confident that we will collect even more items to help those around us at the State Leadership Conference. NJ FCCLA will continue to collect non-perishable goods for the Food Bank of South Jersey as well as pull tabs for the Ronald McDonald House. Non-perishable goods include rice, tuna fish, peanut butter, canned vegetables, canned meats, soups and pastas, as well as toothbrushes, toothpaste, baby diapers, and paper goods. Let's work together and beat our previous numbers!

If each member donated at least five non-perishable items and a hundred pull tabs for the upcoming state conference, we can help the lives of those around us. Join us now and take a part in the "Power of Giving!"



POSITIVE WAYS TO USE SOCIAL MEDIA

By: Adriana Pasquale, VP of Public Relations

We often focus on the negative ways that social media is used, but social media is a platform that can be used in a positive way, especially with FCCLA. Here are the top five ways to positively utilize social media:

1. Stay Connected- Connect and share ideas with members all through the country. See what different chapters are up to and implement new ideas within your own chapter.
2. Inspire- Inspire and motivate others to succeed by posting leadership quotes, photos, and videos. Also, follow people who inspire you; having your news feed flooded with meaningful postings by people you admire can only bring inspiration into your life.
3. Promote- Get the word out about fundraisers, community service, and any other positive events you are having within your chapter. Posting on social media will motivate members to get involved as well as keep members who cannot come to these events updated.
4. Publicize- Show your community the good that your chapter is doing. Use social media as a platform to recognize members who are going above and beyond in your chapter and community.
5. Have Fun- Every once in a while share a funny cat video or silly selfie. It is important to keep these posts to a minimum and always remember to share appropriate content, but funny posts can lift someone's mood.

LEADERSHIP BOOTCAMP

By: Nataly Zaks, VP of Leadership Development

The State Executive Council and I were very excited to see members from across the state at the FCCLA Leadership Boot Camp on January 9th at J.P. Stevens High School in Edison. At the Leadership Bootcamp, New Jersey FCCLA members received valuable training in leadership skills such as public speaking, communication skills, networking, teamwork and group dynamics, media and public relations, and so much more! This wonderful opportunity for leadership development and personal growth only comes once a year, so this high energy day was fun for all members who attended! With fun activities, icebreakers, and energizers, the Leadership Bootcamp was something you never forget, and members will be able to apply what they learned into their daily lives.



POWER OF ONE

By: Sylvia Melendez, VP of National Programs

With the new year rolling in, working on a New Year's resolution is a great first step to setting goals to better yourself. An effective way to start off the year is by working on Power of One! Power of One is a national program that teaches members how to set and work toward achievable goals. The Power of One units are A Better You, Family Ties, Working on Working, Take the Lead, and Speak Out for FCCLA. Power of One can even be used in your new year's resolutions and so you can accomplish two things at once! Power of One is due March 1st, 2016 at 5:00pm Eastern Standard Time. Some examples of project ideas are budgeting your money, improving your grades in school, and spending more time with your family. Power of One will enable you to organize your ideas and achieve your goals successfully. Completing Power of One is a great program that will truly "EMPOWER" you!

WINTER ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN

By: Adriana Pasquale, VP of Public Relations

Whether you love or hate winter, being inside for ample amounts of time can give anyone cabin fever, especially children. There are plenty of ideas for involving children of all ages in engaging winter fun. Below are a few activities to inspire hours of laughter, fun and learning.

- 1. BUILDING A SNOWMAN.** During the first snow of the season, it's always a great bonding experience to build a snowman. Although the snowman might fall, keep trying and never give up! Get all of the children involved and add food coloring to the snow for a bright, colorful touch that will make your snowman unique.
- 2. WATCHING MOVIES.** Winter is the perfect time to relax, snuggle up with blankets, and watch a movie. Instead of venturing outside in the cold winter air, staying inside is sometimes the best option although it can get boring. Choose a few family movies and have a movie marathon while enjoying hot cocoa, with mini marshmallow, of course.
- 3. FAMILY GAME NIGHT.** Grab some of your favorite board games and spend some quality family time together. Try to avoid using electronics and just enjoy the time together as a family while playing classic games and creating friendly competition. It is important to take a step back from modern technology and invest quality time into the people we care about most.
- 4. SLEDDING.** Bundle up and head outside for a fun event that the whole family can enjoy! Find a nearby hill to ride sleds down, and remember to take a lot of photos as everyone is coming down the hill!
- 5. MAKING SNOW.** Using just two simple ingredients, baking soda and shaving cream, children can help to make "snow" in the comfort of your own home. Enjoy the fun of molding and building with snow without having to be cold. This activity is enjoyable for children of all ages!
- 6. BAKING COOKIES.** Make your favorite cookie recipe or buy holiday cookie dough to bake. The whole house will warm up as the yummy smell fills the air. For added fun, use icing and sprinkles to decorate the cookies after they have cooled.

These activities are fun for the whole family and can cure cabin fever among families. Traditions can be created around these activities and inspire fun for years to come. Take time this winter season to bind with family and create memories.



By: Stephanie Zhang, National VP of Competitive Events

The weather outside may be frightful, but that doesn't mean that your style should suffer! With the cold weather and increasing desire to stay home to enjoy a cup of hot chocolate and watch holiday movies, it's easy to slip into comfy clothing and lounge around the house. Check out these trends to stay fashionable and warm this winter!

- Turtlenecks are back and bigger than ever. They are extremely versatile and can be worn with accessories or layered with a cardigan, vest, or scarf.
- Sweater Dresses are the perfect combination of chic and comfy. They are great to wear day or night!
- Fur or Shearling Jackets and Cardigans are the perfect finishing touch to layering your winter look. Wear it to complement the color scheme of your outfit or as a contrast in texture!
- Velvet is BIG this season! Whether it's a skirt, jumpsuit, dress, or top, velvet will keep you warm and stylish at any event.
- Boots - the higher the better! Whether they're fur, suede, or leather, boots are the perfect accessory to complete your winter look. Pair your sweater dress with leggings and knee-high boots to create a chic and trendy outfit!

Wear some of this season's biggest trends, and I am positive you'll stand out looking warm and stylish! For inspiration on how to wear and accessorize these styles, look at the images below.



STAY HEALTHY DURING THE WINTER SEASON

By: Sylvia Melendez, VP of National Programs

It's the most wonderful time of the year! The winter season is the time of year to get together with your family, see old friends, and enjoy some free time. While catching up on your well-deserved personal time make sure to keep up with your health. Here are some simple yet effective ways to stay healthy during the winter!

First, and most importantly, wash your hands! Did you know on average you come into contact with 300 surfaces every 30 minutes exposing you to 840,000 germs within that half hour? Can you imagine how many germs your hands alone come in contact with each day? We are surrounded by germs and our hands are the one thing we use to touch everything, so keep them clean!

Secondly, drink water! Although this is one of the simplest things you could do, it is crucial to staying healthy. Staying hydrated serves many benefits such as aiding digestion, preventing headaches, and even improving your immune system overall. Drinking 8 glasses of water a day will surely keep the doctor away!

Lastly, find a sleeping schedule that works for you. Plan your day out each day and make it a goal to be in bed everyday at the same time. Regulating the time you go to sleep each night will give your body a chance to recharge. An average person needs at least 6-8 hours each night.

There are so many simple things you can do for your health that will go a long way. So remember, wash your hands, drink a lot of water, and get the sleep your body deserves.

NATIONAL FCCLA NEWS

FCCLA WEEK!

By: Stephanie Zhang, National VP of Competitive Events

FCCLA- this is the year of EMPOWERment! We are well into the 2015-2016 school year, and there are many exciting programs and initiatives for chapters and members across the country! Use these resources to empower your chapter's events!

1. The IMPACT Fund is an initiative of the NEC, and exists to advance and modernize FCCLA by providing opportunities for chapters and members to take action by furthering the mission and purposes of FCCLA. Chapters can fill out the application online at www.fcclainc.org to request financial aid for their event.
2. National FCCLA released the newly updated Student Body National Program, now with 4 units - The Fit You, The Healthy You, The Real You, and The Resilient You! Health and wellness are not just about eating right and exercising, but having stable mental and emotional health as well. Check out lesson plans, activities, and other ways to integrate Student Body into the classroom and your chapter's initiatives!
3. The NEC is extremely excited to announce that the NEC Blog is up and running! Check out the blog every Wednesday for posts written by the NEC about leadership, highlights on chapters, members, and advisers around the nation, and tips to integrate FCCLA into your families, schools, and communities!
4. National FCCLA has a new membership campaign called Go For the Red that provides incentives for members and chapters working to increase membership. Go For the Red empowers students and chapters to focus on membership by providing recognition at the 2016 National Leadership Conference, cash prizes, and FCCLA store vouchers for individual schools, a chapter, and a state delegation! The deadline is April 30, 2016, so make plans to recruit, retain, and recognize!

There are countless ways to get involved with FCCLA, and I hope you and your chapter participate in one of the initiatives National FCCLA has launched this year. Get involved and become EMPOWERED this school year!

LEAD2FEED STUDENT LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

*By: Alex Wang,
VP of Membership*

As FCCLA members, it is our duty to give back to the community. As a national career and technical student organization, FCCLA establishes National Outreach Projects with partner organizations in order to organize a united outreach and service initiative. It is more powerful when everyone in our organization is striving to support the same cause. Starting in 1997 at the National Leadership Meeting in San Diego, California, members from 38 states donated over 6,000 items to local shelters/agencies. In 2000, FCCLA changed the focus of the project to donating to national charities, and the success of the National Outreach Projects continues each year. For the 2015-2016 school year, FCCLA's National Outreach Project is Lead2Feed!

Lead2Feed is the country's leading and fastest growing free service learning program, with over one million students involved in over 3,500 schools in all 50 states. Lead2Feed teaches students about service and principles, while also giving students the opportunity to lead, create, and implement projects to help alleviate hunger in their communities. Students compete annually for a chance to win over \$275,000 in charity grants and \$150,000 in technology grants in schools. It is not only beneficial to the participating students, but also to the students' schools and communities! To sign up and for more information, visit Lead2feed.org.

By: Heather Paul, First Vice President

Join FCCLA members, advisers, and supporters from across the country from February 7 – 13, 2016 in a nationwide celebration of all things FCCLA! Each day has a different theme, so be sure to stay up-to-date on social media and join the conversation using #FCCLAWEEK.

MONDAY- MEDIA DAY

Get the word out about FCCLA! This is the day to post pictures of your favorite FCCLA memories or make announcements about FCCLA! Today is the perfect day to recruit members and let people know our mission and goals. You could write a news article or even be seen in the media!

TUESDAY- ADVOCACY DAY

Today is the day to meet with principals, superintendents, and state senators. Members should plan to speak with their principals and school staff. Chapter council members should plan to meet with their board of education or a board representative. State officers should speak with members of the state senate. Today is a great day to inform people of all your great accomplishments!

WEDNESDAY- RED DAY

Wear red on this day! This day is when people will ask "Why is everyone wearing red?" so make sure you have your elevator speeches ready!

THURSDAY- APPRECIATION DAY

Show appreciation for your members, advisers, school administrators, and parents. Today is a great way to show appreciation to those who empower you! Reward them with a nice card, small gift, an award, an announcement, or anything that shows recognition!

FRIDAY- FCS DAY

Show the world why Family and Consumer Sciences education is so great! Speak with family and consumer classes and tell them why it's important! Also, this is a good day to speak with school officials about how FCS has impacted your life. Also participate in FCCLA @ the Table by cooking a healthy meal and sharing it with your family.

STAR EVENT SUCCESS

By: Stephanie Zhang, National VP of Competitive Events

Ever since its implementation in 1983, more and more students have competed in the STAR Events Program at the district, regional, state, and/or national level each year. Thousands of members across the nation participate in one of the 31 STAR Events that FCCLA has to offer with hopes of qualifying to compete in the national arena at the National Leadership Conference! However, in order to compete at the 2016 NLC, you or your team must receive 1st or 2nd place in your event at the 2016 State Leadership Conference from March 22-23! Check out these 5 tips to be prepared in your STAR Event!

1. Create a schedule and spread out the work for your project. We're all guilty of procrastination, but if you want to compete at the National Leadership Conference, you have to put in the time to make a quality project. By doing a little bit periodically over a few weeks, you'd be surprised at how much you can get done with little stress!
2. Make an outline for your presentation. Outlines are the perfect tool to make sure you are only researching and presenting the most relevant information for your project.
3. Create a script or speech and rehearse, rehearse, rehearse! Speaking in front of a panel of judges can be nerve-racking, but it would be unfortunate to work so hard in your event and end up stumbling in your speech. Judges are always impressed when you know your presentation from start to finish, so take the time to memorize and practice your presentation!
4. Ask your adviser for help and to review your project! They are your best resource when it comes to STAR Events because they have experience with presentations and can help you enhance your project and take it to the next level!
5. Practice your entire presentation in front of others. The best way to be comfortable with public speaking is practicing in front of others. This way, you won't be as nervous when it comes to the real deal in Cherry Hill or San Diego! Ask your audience for advice and ways to enhance your presentation skills; it's better to get constructive criticism prior to the conference!

I hope you accept the challenge to participate in a STAR Event this year and showcase your knowledge and talents through a project! To find more information and the 2015-2016 Competitive Events Guidelines, visit this link to the NJ FCCLA website:

[HTTP://WWW.NJFCCLA.ORG/SPRING-COMPETITIVE-EVENTS.](http://www.njfccla.org/spring-competitive-events)

APPLYING TO BE A STATE OFFICER

By: Sanjna Namasivayam, State President

New Jersey FCCLA challenges you to get the Ultimate Leadership Experience! Find the "ME"Power within yourself to run for the 2016-2017 State Executive Council, and in turn, "Empower" the growing leaders of NJ FCCLA. Being a State Officer is a once in a lifetime opportunity that is both memorable and a hands on learning experience that will prepare you for future success. As a State Officer, you will participate in a two-day training where notable alumni will equip you with the leadership training you will need to serve on the state level. The leadership training and skills that you develop throughout your term will help you run our three annual state conferences and will prepare you for college and beyond. As a council, you will make decisions regarding budget, competitive events, community service initiatives, conferences and so much more! The State Association's election process is open now with the application available on the website. Here's how you can plan to run:

1. Talk to you parents and your Chapter Adviser to make sure they are willing to support your goals.
2. Complete and submit the 2016 State Officer Application (found at <http://www.njfccla.org/run-for-state-office>) by the due date and mail to the State Office.
3. Attend the Candidates' Meeting on February 27th with a parent and your Chapter Adviser. At the Candidates' Meeting, you will
 - a. Take an FCCLA Knowledge test
 - b. Interview with former state and national officers.
4. Present a speech at the State Leadership Conference and participate in the Meet the Candidates session.
5. If elected, participate in the installation ceremony!

In addition to being able to network with members across New Jersey, you will be able to bond with your fellow State Officers and create friendships that will last a lifetime! The State Executive Council strongly urges you to run to be a part of this unforgettable experience!

5 CHAPTER ICEBREAKER IDEAS

Ice breakers are a great tool to get members motivated, comfortable, and excited. It's a great way for members to learn about each other and feel comfortable speaking. Below, you can find five different ice breakers that you can use at chapter meetings:

1. A student will start a story with a sentence that ends in "SUDDENLY." The next person then has to add to the story and their sentence will also end in "SUDDENLY." You can continue the story until everyone has contributed. For example, "I

was at the State Leadership Conference and SUDDENLY someone asked me to run for state office and SUDDENLY I decided I would so I went to speak to the state adviser when SUDDENLY she said that I had to fill out an application and come to the next meeting when SUDDENLY I decided it would be a great idea!"

2. Ask the members to form a circle. Give one member a large orange, ball, or any other round item and tell them that they need to pass this around the circle using only their chin and neck. If the round object is dropped, you must restart the game.

3. Ask the group to sit in a circle. An adviser or the person starting the ice breaker will pick a murderer. The game begins with players sitting looking at each other. When you look the killer in the eye, they will sink and you can die by falling down or making it dramatic. You must identify the killer without dying yourself.

4. Each member will stand in a circle. They'll put one hand with one other member and the other hand with another member. Members will then try to untangle themselves.

The object of all of these ice breakers is to come together to complete a task. As members come together to try to solve a silly problem, they will use their twenty-first century skills and have fun in the process!

GO FOR THE RED

By: Rohit Iyer, National VP of Finance & Alex Wang, VP of Membership

FCCLA's 2016 membership campaign is encouraging members to Go for the Red and maximize their membership recruitment! Membership is one of the most important pillars of FCCLA; together with advisers, youth fuel the growth and achievement of FCCLA. This is why membership growth is so important. Everyone knows this, but what can we do to boost membership? Here are some ideas for recruitment strategies:

- have a school dance hosted by FCCLA
- create an FCCLA recruitment video
- host a chapter movie night
- make school announcements about joining FCCLA
- invite guest speakers and alumni to chapter meetings

When recruiting more members, get creative with your ideas! All you need to succeed is a great idea and a lot of enthusiasm! National FCCLA's campaign provides incentives for members, chapters, and states to recruit new FCCLA members. The deadline to apply for chapters and members to apply for awards is April 30, 2016.

Go For The Red recognizes chapters based on percentage increase of membership numbers. Chapters can apply to have a chance to be the chapter winner through the national website. The chapter winner receives a chapter highlight in the national newsletter Teen Times, a \$250 cash prize, a \$50 FCCLA Store Voucher, and National Recognition. Membership is essential to FCCLA; apply and Go For the Red! Make membership growth one of your goals for this year, fill out the membership campaign application, and you'll be well on your way to going for the red!

LAST MINUTE RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

By: Alex Wang, VP of Membership

Is it too late to join FCCLA? It is never too late to recruit members to your chapter! Recruitment is a year-long commitment that never stops, and it is when a chapter continuously grows its numbers that it is the most successful. Think you're burnt out of ideas? Well, here are 5 last minute recruitment strategies:

- Have a chapter party at school that is open to new members to celebrate the start of the New Year!
- Encourage members to bring their friends, and whoever is responsible for affiliating the most new members gets free registration to the State Leadership Conference paid for by the chapter.
- Many freshmen have just become comfortable with the high school environment and may be looking to find something to become involved in. Hold a freshman night for freshmen looking to join that will be fun but also educate freshmen about FCCLA and how it will benefit them.
- Use the same techniques that your chapter used to recruit at the beginning of the year! Just because it's no longer the start of the school year doesn't mean you can't use the same recruitment techniques! Take the ones that were the most effective, and do them again!
- Mix up those bulletin boards! Don't just put up a bulletin board at the beginning of the year and leave it. Come up with new designs and new ideas. Passing students will notice the changing bulletin boards and may be interested to join!

Recruiting members has no deadline, and can be done at anytime during year. Whether it be at the beginning of the school year, the middle of it, or approaching the end, recruitment is always essential to the success of a chapter. Growing a chapter's membership throughout the year will prove effective to maintaining membership numbers for the chapter's future. So next time someone asks if it is too late to join, tell that person: Welcome to FCCLA!

VALENTINE'S DAY SNACK IDEAS

By: Nataly Zaks, VP of Leadership Development



RED VELVET CUPCAKES

(yield: 18-24 cupcakes)

12 tablespoons unsalted butter, at room temperature
1 3/4 cups granulated sugar
2 large eggs
2 1/2 tablespoons cocoa powder, sifted
4 tablespoons no-taste red food coloring
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
1 teaspoon salt
1 1/2 cups whole milk
3 1/4 cups all-purpose flour, sifted
1 1/2 teaspoons baking soda
1 1/2 teaspoons apple cider vinegar

For the vanilla cream cheese frosting:

6 ounces cream cheese, at room temperature
4 tablespoons unsalted butter, at room temperature
1/4 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
4 cups confectioners' sugar, sifted

1. For the cupcakes: Preheat the oven to 350°F. Line 2 standard cupcake pans with paper baking cups.
2. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, cream together butter and sugar at medium speed for 3-5 minutes or until light and fluffy. Lower speed and add eggs, one at a time, mixing slowly after each addition. In a small bowl, whisk together cocoa powder, red food coloring, and vanilla. On low speed, slowly add this to the stand mixer bowl, mixing until well incorporated. In a small bowl, combine salt and milk.

On a low speed, alternate between adding a third of the flour, followed by a third of the milk, and mix. Repeat and mix until incorporated, and stop to scrape down the bowl as needed. In a small bowl, quickly stir baking soda and apple cider vinegar together (it will fizz!) then pour this reaction into the batter. Mix until just incorporated.

3. Using a standard-size, spring-release ice cream scoop, scoop batter into the lined cupcake pans so each well is 2/3 full. Bake for 18-20 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean. Transfer the pan to a wire rack to cool completely.
4. For the frosting: In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment; beat cream cheese and butter on medium to high speed until light and fluffy. Beat in vanilla extract. On a low speed, slowly mix in confectioners' sugar until well combined. Then beat on a high speed for at least 2 minutes to ensure a light and fluffy frosting.
5. Transfer frosting into a plastic piping bag fitted with a round metal tip. Make sure cupcakes are completely cooled before piping the frosting on each cupcake.

VANILLA FROSTING

3 cups powdered sugar
1/3 cup butter or margarine, softened
1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla
1 to 2 tablespoons milk

1. In medium bowl, mix powdered sugar and butter with spoon or electric mixer on low speed. Stir in vanilla and 1 tablespoon of the milk.
2. Gradually beat in just enough remaining milk to make frosting smooth and spreadable. If frosting is too thick, beat in more milk, a few drops at a time. If frosting becomes too thin, beat in a small amount of powdered sugar. Frosts 13x9-inch cake generously, or fills and frosts an 8- or 9-inch two-layer cake.

PINK MINI MILKSHAKES

1/2 cup heavy cream
3 teaspoons confectioners' sugar
1/2 cup whole milk
1 pint strawberry ice cream, softened
Pink sprinkles, for decorating

1. Whisk cream in a mixer bowl until soft peaks form. Add sugar; whisk until stiff peaks form. Transfer to a pastry bag fitted with a 1/4-inch plain round tip (such as Ateco #10); refrigerate up to 30 minutes.
2. Process milk and ice cream in a blender until smooth. Divide among twelve 2-ounce glasses. Pipe spirals of whipped cream on top of milkshakes. Decorate with sprinkles. Serve immediately.

GUMMY BEAR POPSICLES

Popsicle mold
Popsicle sticks
Gummy Bears
Sprite

1. Fill molds about 3/4 of the way full with Sprite.
2. Drop in gummy bears.
3. Place popsicle stick into mold.
4. Freeze until thoroughly frozen.

