



FCCLA.

NEW DIRECTIONS

SPRING 2022

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

Dear New Jersey FCCLA Members, Advisers and Alumni:

What a year this has been for FCCLA! After nearly two years apart, we were able to come back together for both a hybrid and completely in-person conference, where we were able to compete, network, develop our leadership, and have fun—just like old times! I, for one, had a great time being able to see you all in person and am so grateful to have had that experience.

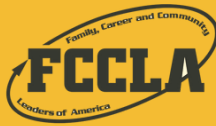
At the State Leadership Conference, we were all able to participate in a pivotal moment in our state association's rich history as we celebrated New Jersey FCCLA's diamond anniversary, commemorating our 75 years with our very own time capsule! Thank you to all chapters who contributed items to celebrate the occasion. The time capsule will be opened 25 years from now at the 2047 State Leadership Conference, when we'll celebrate our 100th Anniversary! I can't wait to see what the next 25 years bring for New Jersey FCCLA.

As the school year starts to wind down, I challenge you all to keep your leadership legacy going! Remember, leadership takes no vacations! Take every opportunity to be a leader of others and of yourself by engaging in random acts of kindness, helping your family around the house, volunteering, working on passion projects, and finding ways to engage in self-care.

At the end of April, the 2021-2022 State Executive Council and I have passed the baton to New Jersey FCCLA's new State Officer team. I am confident that they will do an amazing job at representing our state association and am very excited to see what they do for New Jersey FCCLA next year! Thank you to everyone who has made my year as a State Officer a great one. It has been an honor serving as your State President, and I owe the success and excitement of my experience to all of you.

Best regards,
Jacquelyn Trotman
State President





SPRING INTO FAMILY FUN!

BY JACQUELYN TROTMAN,
STATE PRESIDENT

Spring is finally here, and with the weather getting warmer, now is the perfect time to hop on the road for some family fun! You don't have to travel too far for a good time; here are some fun things to do that are only a car ride away!

Grounds for Sculpture - Hamilton, New Jersey

Grounds for Sculpture is a 42-acre sculpture garden, filled with both permanent and rotating works of art. There are several on-site cafes, and events are frequently held there.

The Steel Pier - Atlantic City, New Jersey

The Steel Pier boardwalk has a lot to offer for everyone in the family, with a carousel, bumper cars, carnival games, and more. The fan-favorite attraction is The Wheel, a 227-foot Ferris wheel with 40 climate-controlled gondolas, offering 15 minute rides for visitors.

American Dream Mall - East Rutherford, New Jersey

The American Dream mall is home to Nickelodeon Universe, the Western Hemisphere's largest indoor theme park, as well as the DreamWorks water park, with attractions appropriate for every age group. American Dream also has a backlight and Angry Birds-themed mini-golf course, a mirror maze, an indoor ski slope, a Legoland Discovery Center, an ice rink, and an aquarium; it also frequently hosts events.

NJ Botanical Garden - Ringwood, New Jersey

One of New Jersey's state parks, the NJ Botanical Garden is home to several themed flower gardens, some of which include the Wildflower, Italianate, and Lilac Gardens

There's so much to do to have fun without leaving New Jersey! So, on the next free day your family has, seek out family fun on the open road! Remember to stay safe under the sun!

This Season's Staples: Closet Must-Haves for This Spring!



BY: JACQUELYN TROTMAN
STATE PRESIDENT



It's time to hang up those winter coats and put away those snow boots! Spring is here, and it's time that we get ourselves geared up for the warmer weather. Want to keep yourself fashion forward this season? Here are a few of the biggest fashion trends for this spring:

Overalls:

Overalls are back in style this spring. What a perfect way to rock a comfy-casual look! Have a little fun with this trend by deviating from the classic blue denim overall; give different colors or materials a try!

Bold Colors:

This spring, put your neutrals on standby. Be prepared to see lots of color, because bright, mega-saturated hues will be everywhere! You'll be sure to stand apart from the crowd in colors like fuchsia, bright green, fluorescent orange and cobalt blue.

Y2K:

Year 2000, or Y2K fashion continues to thrive this spring, with low-rise pants, rimless translucent sunglasses, halter necklines, baby tees, and mix-and-match jewelry reminiscent of the '90s and early 2000s. Make this trend your own with pieces like miniskirt suits, or layered necklaces!

Parachute Pants:

This season, high-waisted, wide-legged pants are sure to be a closet staple. The parachute pants are both trendy and comfortable. It is also flattering on every body type! Style your parachute pants with a more fitted top for a trendy look!

Big Bags:

Maximalism will be a big part of spring fashion, especially when it comes to accessories. This season, big bags will be in! Even better, they're not just fashionable, they'll carry all of your stuff too!

Whether it's bold hues, or 2000's throwbacks, or large bags, there are plenty of ways to make sure you're attuned to this spring's hottest fashion trends. Happy styling!



Continuing the Leadership Legacy: FCCLA After High School

BY: JACQUELYN TROTMAN
STATE PRESIDENT

FCCLA's membership includes students from grades 6 to 12, so students get to enjoy all the opportunities and resources that our organization has to offer for 6 whole years! But, what happens to members once they graduate high school? How can they continue their involvement with FCCLA as they begin to pursue their college and professional careers?

National FCCLA allows alumni to do just that through its Alumni & Associates program. A&A is a network of adults that includes alumni from FCCLA, Future Homemakers of America, HERO, and New Homemakers of America, as well as supporters of the organization like honorary FHA or HERO members, current and former Family and Consumer Sciences professionals, teachers, parents, school administrators, employers, and business and community leaders that believe in our mission and purposes.

There are so many reasons to get involved with the Alumni & Associates program: A&A allows its members to see how involvement in FCCLA has impacted alumni after high school; network with former members, business and industry associates, and old FCCLA friends; share personal and professional experiences; and receive current FCCLA news and resources, including the "Beyond the Red" newsletters. With that much to offer, who wouldn't want to be a part of it? Anyone interested in joining Alumni & Associates can do so at the national FCCLA website: www.fcclainc.org.

New Jersey FCCLA has an alumni and associates program of its own called NJ Friends of FCCLA, open for both NJ FCCLA alumni and supportive community members, employers, and industry professionals to join! Head to the "NJ Friends of FCCLA" tab on the New Jersey FCCLA website, www.njfccla.org, to get involved!

Leadership shouldn't stop after high school. Be sure to join Alumni & Associates and NJ Friends of FCCLA to keep the Ultimate Leadership Experience going!



Strengthening Membership over the Summer

BY GIANNA DEBRYUN, FIRST
VICE PRESIDENT



Membership recruitment at the end of the year may not seem as important as it is in September, but the reality is that recruiting and maintaining members during the spring and summer months are especially important to the activity of your chapter! Here are some ways to encourage members to stay engaged over the summer and recruit new members in the process!

- Have outdoor meetings during the months after the State Leadership Conference. The nice weather outside will keep members cheery and happy as you discuss what's going on in your chapter.
- Continue to hold fundraisers and community service events. Encourage these activities because they will keep your members involved and active. Try to make them fun and summer themed. Fundraisers will also cut the costs of the National Leadership Conference and chapter initiatives in the upcoming year!
- Hold a post-National Leadership Conference chapter party! This will reward students for all their accomplishments at the conference and will also make them excited for what else is to come for the rest of the year.
- Provide incentives! Wherever there are incentives, there will be members. Reward those who are active and make them feel appreciated! Remember that "Recognize" is one of the three R's of Recruitment! This will keep active members engaged

Other wonderful activities that an FCCLA member could do are activities involving chapter bonding. No matter what size of chapter you are in, there are unlimited possibilities that you can do to have bonding time with your chapter. Because of the beautiful weather, the number of activities you could do is endless; you can go swimming in a pool or a local lake, visit an amusement park, or go camping. These are just some things you and your chapter can go do! While planning for these events, don't forget to post flyers around your community to encourage students to get involved with FCCLA! Another great idea for some chapter bonding is having a barbecue. Having delicious food, listening to music, swimming, playing lawn games, and watching movies are great ways to include your whole chapter in a group bonding experience.

Summer recruitment and maintaining energy is crucial to a successful chapter. Members may feel as though a break from school always includes a break from FCCLA. When students lose motivation in the summer, they may not return as a member the following year. Make an effort to take these suggestions and implement them into your chapter this summer!

Dear Edna:

I have just been elected to serve as a chapter officer and the summer is approaching quickly. I don't want to lose contact with my fellow officers. What can I do to ensure that everyone can keep in touch?

Sincerely, Southern Regional First VP

Dear Southern Regional First VP,

Congratulations on becoming a chapter officer! I'm glad to see that you're concerned about keeping in touch with your fellow officers. Social networks are key in keeping in touch with people. Set up a "Group Me" or "Slack" group just for chapter officers so you can post pictures and updates. In addition, you can set up meeting dates to go out for ice cream or dinner to discuss events and fundraisers for the upcoming year. Another idea is to plan service events or fundraisers to take place during the summer so that not only your chapter officers stay close, but your members remain active. Staying connected over the summer will encourage the lines of communication to stay open during the upcoming school year!

Sincerely,
Edna P. Amidon
Founder of FCCLA

2022-2023 STATE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

GIANNA DEBRUYN

State President

ADEDOYIN AYENI

Vice President of Membership

NITYA ANGADALA

Vice President of Community Service

BENITA KIZHAKKEPURAM

Vice President of Parliamentary Law

AMANDA CHEN

First Vice President

DIYA POTTANGADI

Vice President of Public Relations

EMMA LARSEN

Vice President of Communication

RAINA PATEL

Vice President of Leadership






How to Plant an Herb Garden

BY GIANNA DEBRYUN, FIRST VICE PRESIDENT

Gardening may require a lot of time and care, but there are so many benefits to this sustainable practice! Whether your garden is a small patio planter, a backyard herb garden, or a plot in a community garden, creating your own mini garden is the first step in achieving a happy and healthy lifestyle. But, the question that most people have is: "How can I get started?"



First, it is important to know that miniature gardens planted in a pot or other container are not meant for outside sun or rain. For small, indoor plants, it is better to use real small plants that do not grow more than 2 cm per year. These plants are easy to maintain over time without needing too much care besides regular watering. For outdoor herb gardens, you should start by making efficient use of space. The location of your garden, the amount of sunlight it receives, proximity to a source of water, and protection from frost and wind are all important factors to consider when selecting the perfect place to plant!

The best way to maximize space in your garden is to create 3 to 4 foot wide raised beds. Planting single rows of crops, while they might be efficient on farms that use large machines for planting and harvesting, are often not the most effective way to plant a backyard herb garden. In a home-sized garden, the fewer rows you have, the fewer paths between rows you will need, and the more space you will have to grow herbs!

Finally, keep a record of your planting success and failures. Over time, this kind of careful observation will teach you more about growing herbs than any book or article you may find.

These observations you record will aid in the success of your garden because your notes will be based on your personal experience and will reflect what works best for the unique conditions of your own garden. Just like many other pursuits, remember that practice does make perfect!



Looking Forward to NLC

BY GIANNA DEBRYUN, FIRST VICE PRESIDENT

This summer, thousands of FCCLA members from across the nation will come together in San Diego, California to attend the 2022 National Leadership Conference. Traveling can be scary for some of us, but with the use of these five travel tips, you will be sure to have a smooth travel experience.

Before we start, just a general reminder... Make sure that your STAR project has been completed, checked over by your adviser, and is in accordance with the National FCCLA guidelines (which may differ from the New Jersey FCCLA guidelines). Be sure to have memorized your lines and made any other necessary preparations to guarantee your success in your STAR event competitions. Along with this, don't forget to bring supplies for last minute adjustments to your project!

1. Save yourself the stress of being held up at security by removing any prohibited items from your bag. For a full list of prohibited items, visit the TSA website, www.tsa.gov
2. Mark your bag with your FCCLA luggage tag so that you can easily identify your suitcase on the baggage claim!
3. Be aware of the other passengers aboard your flight. Try not to block the aisle, and make sure your carry-on bag is small and can be stowed away safely.
4. Pack a snack in your carry-on bag for the trip! Airport snack stands can be very expensive. Bringing a snack from home is more cost effective and can be healthier!
5. Make sure to pack your FCCLA appropriate attire, such as a white collared shirt and black skirt or pants, as well as your FCCLA red blazer!

Be prepared to network and meet with FCCLA members across the country. Networking with members from different chapters is an incredibly valuable experience. You will not only create friendships and connections with members from different states but also share ideas, advice, and initiatives with each other. You never know what ideas you may get from another member! Be sure to stay connected with your new FCCLA friends after the conference.

Spring is in full bloom already, and that means that your chapter fundraising should be, too! The spring is the best time for you to fundraise for the coming school year and if your chapter qualifies, to attend the National Leadership Conference in sunny San Diego, California!

We wish you luck in preparing for the 2022 National Leadership Conference in sunny San Diego, California! Can't wait to see you all there!

SLC Recap!

BY ADEDOYIN AYENI- VP OF MEMBERSHIP

Every year members from across New Jersey gather for an exclusive opportunity to continue their leadership journey at the State Leadership Conference. Although we were forced to go virtual the past two years, NJ FCCLA did not let that slow us down. While taking as much precaution as possible, New Jersey FCCLA was able to provide an amazing conference full of dynamic workshops, networking, an intriguing keynote speaker and competitive events.

Although the conference was only a one day event it was jam packed with many quality workshops and leadership development. As chapters arrived, a community service workshop as well as a workshop given by keynote speaker, Kyle Scheele, were available. At the community service workshop, members were able to make "Welcome Bags" for the Ronald McDonald House. The second workshop, given by Kyle Scheele, "Change Your Community; Change Your World", was all about how students could learn to take ownership of their lives and set the example for others.

Chapters were also given the opportunity submit and set up their competitive events.

Soon the Opening General Session started. This session began with the Junior ROTC from Camden County Technical School who presented the American Flag. Then, the State Executive Council and State Officer Candidates were introduced. Members also heard from Keynote Speaker Kyle Scheele about how it only takes one student or one person to make an impact on another person's life.

Kyle Scheele, through humor and personal anecdotes, inspired students to be that change. After the Opening General Session members were given the opportunity to attend vibrant workshops when not participating in competitive events. Students were also able to network with each other and gain new connections. Every member was given the opportunity to pick from 11 entertaining workshops to attend. At the end of the day, chapters attended the closing recognition dinner where leaving state officers relinquished their pins to the incoming officers. Members, chapters and advisers were also recognized for their efforts from the past year.

Overall the 75th Annual State Leadership Conference was a great success with members from across New Jersey given the opportunity to attend. This may have been the first in person conference for many but it showcased what NJ FCCLA is about! We hope to see you there next year!

Keeping Members Engaged and Chapters Active after SLC

BY ADEDOYIN AYENI- VP OF MEMBERSHIP

The Ultimate Leadership Experience does not end after the State Leadership Conference. It is your chapter's responsibility to continue to be active after the conference. This may seem difficult but there are many ways to keep members engaged even after SLC.

First your chapter can begin to prepare for the National Leadership Conference (NLC). Edit your events to make them National-ready! Make sure your chapter attends the Delegates Meeting on May 7th to ensure your projects are prepared for NLC. You can also fundraise for NLC by holding car washes or ice cream socials. Fundraising is very important part of preparing for activities during the NLC. Make sure each member is aware of what to expect at NLC. You can hold an NLC meeting to help members prepare for this conference.

As the weather gets warmer, it is important to take advantage of outdoor opportunities. Keeping members engaged can also include holding outdoor meetings or a picnic membership drive. You can also pair older members with younger members. This can help members create bonds that they wouldn't generally create. In addition, this can allow younger members to learn from those who have been in their "shoes." This should include selecting a council for the coming year. By allowing the future chapter council to watch and learn from the existing officers, you can ensure that the transition runs smoothly.

Don't forget to continue community service initiatives! Creating a common goal for members to work together can be not only engaging but impactful. Community Service is all about how your chapter can impact your community. Do not let the end of the year slow your chapter down. Ensure that you keep up with creative and innovative community service initiatives.

Lastly, remember to recognize the members of your chapter for their achievements from the past year. The last of the 3 R's is Recognize. Your members have worked hard this year; show them that you have noticed! You can hold a final recognition party for your chapter. At this party select members to be recognized based on their achievements. You can also do superlatives. Make sure to recognize your senior members as well!

Engagement after SLC is important! The year may be coming to a close, but your chapter can not lose momentum. End the year off strong so you can start the new year stronger than ever!

Create a Leadership Legacy



BY ADEDOYIN AYENI- VP OF MEMBERSHIP

As New Jersey FCCLA celebrates its 75th anniversary, it is important for us as members to reflect on our own legacy. What will you leave behind? How will people remember you? How will you continue to use FCCLA for the rest of your life? As author Maya Angelou once said, "If you are going to live, leave a legacy. Make a mark that can't be erased." As leaders, one of our jobs is to help others, by leaving behind lasting memories and experiences. Here are 5 ways for you to continue the leadership legacy!

1. See yourself as a Relay Runner

Imagine life as a relay race. In a relay race, members of a team take turns running while they hold a baton in their fist. Each team member runs a portion of the race, and then they hand the baton over to the next runner. It's a win-win, each person on the team works collectively to reach their goal. To leave an impact on the world, you must not compete with others but instead work together. Leaders bring people together.

2. Volunteer

Helping others out of the kindness of your heart is a great way to leave a lasting legacy. Sometimes, it's the small things we do for others such as writing thank you notes or helping people put their groceries in their car that makes their day better. Volunteering can help you give back and connect with people on a deeper level.

3. Live for others

Leaders who have left the most impactful legacies are those who have dedicated their lives to helping others and making a positive impact on the people around them. Even on a smaller yet equally important scale, service to our friends and family makes just as much impact. The leaders who will be remembered in 100 or even 1,000 years are those who are selfless and do their best to always help others.

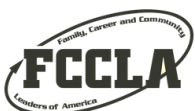
4. Determine your unique contribution

Everyone has unique talents and abilities. Your leadership legacy shows how you choose to use those talents to benefit others. Thinking of creative ways to use your talents to solve problems is how you can leave a lasting impact on others.

5. Lastly, Be Kind!

People who are kind leave a lasting impact on people. People remember your actions. Leaders who are generous and compassionate touch the hearts of all. Put others first and do your best to help in difficult situations. Kindness goes a long way!

There are so many ways for you to continue the leadership legacy and leave your own legacy. Your legacy starts with you now! You build your legacy overtime. As leaders, it is our responsibility to make sure that with each new person we meet, we leave lasting memories and lessons that they will remember forever. Be the person who makes everyone a better person!



Celebrating 75 Years!

BY ADEDOYIN AYENI- VP OF MEMBERSHIP

NJ FCCLA is celebrating their 75th Anniversary! At the State Leadership Conference, members and advisers joined together to celebrate this joyous occasion. FCCLA was founded in 1945 by Edna P. Amidon to help prepare students to be future leaders in the home and workplace.

NJ joined the association 2 years later. Ever since, NJ FCCLA has been an active part of FCCLA for 75 years preparing thousands of students to become tomorrow's leaders. Under the guidance of advisers, students have learned and continue to gain skills for life through Family and Consumer Sciences. This year, to celebrate this diamond jubilee, NJ FCCLA is creating a time capsule for members to open in 25 years! You can also participate in this celebration! Here are 5 ways to celebrate NJ FCCLA's 75th Anniversary.

1. Speak to your Advisers

Speaking to your advisers about what FCCLA was like when they were in high school is a great way to get a glimpse into the history of FCCLA. Specifically, find out why they joined or what made them become advisers in the first place. You can also find out if any other teachers in your school were a part of FCCLA as well and find out their experience.

2. FCCLA Game/ Trivia Night

You can also throw a 75th-anniversary party or game night to have members learn about the history of FCCLA. Get together with your chapter and come up with fun games to play with members and students in your school. You can end the night with FCCLA Trivia and have a prize for the winners. Advertise and invite students to come and learn more about FCCLA!

3. Design 75th Anniversary Merchandise

Just like NJ FCCLA, your chapter can design t-shirts to commemorate the State's 75th anniversary. Have students in your chapter design t-shirts, hoodies, stickers or anything of the sort to sell to students in your school. You can also use these items as PR items to give to your school principal or officials to teach them about FCCLA and show them your hard work.

4. Volunteer Day

Keep the positivity going in your chapter by volunteering at a local food bank or neighborhood business that might need some help. Organize a community service initiative to help members understand that FCCLA is all about giving back to your community.

5. Fundraise for Cause

Finally, fundraise for a cause. Choose a cause that your chapter is passionate about and raise money for that cause. For example, you can do a 75 hour or 75 day event where students can donate or help raise money for the cause of your choosing. This can also go in hand with your 75th anniversary merchandise as you can use some of the product proceeds from that event to donate to your cause. NJ FCCLA has been serving students and plans to continue to serve students for years to come. Let us all celebrate this important achievement. However, you choose to celebrate make sure to commemorate NJ FCCLA'S 75th Year!

Becoming Involved in Competitive Events

BY AMANDA CHEN, VICE PRESIDENT OF COMMUNICATION

Warmer temperatures, sunny days, flowers beginning to bloom - springtime is here, which also means it's the season for competitive events! Competitive events offer members ways to work with others, develop strong career readiness skills, and explore different pathways!

There are events in leadership, culinary arts, education, fashion, and interior design. Members can become involved in state, STAR, and skill demonstration events.

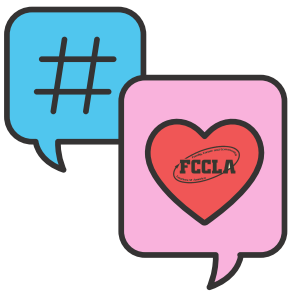
On our state website, www.njfccla.org, students can access guidelines for each competitive event during the Fall and Spring.

Students Taking Action with Recognition (STAR) events are offered at the state and national level. Members who place in first and second at the State Leadership Conference qualify to compete at the National Leadership Conference! Students should log into their Student FCCLA Portal if their STAR Event requires a STAR Events Online Project Summary Form. If you have trouble logging in, please contact your chapter adviser. The portal also includes a Competitive Events Guide that encompasses information on all of the STAR Events. STAR Events are split into three event levels: Level 1 (grades 6-8), Level 2 (grades 9-10), and Level 3 (grades 11-12).

Online STAR Events (Digital Stories for Change, FCCLA Chapter Website, and Instructional Video Design) are not judged at the State Leadership Conference, as materials should be sent directly to National FCCLA. NJ State events are offered solely at the Fall Leadership Connection and State Leadership Conference but are still engaging and fun! These events are split into three event levels: Junior (grades 6-8), Senior (grades 9-12), and Occupational (grades 9-12). This year, New Jersey FCCLA is offering 22 state events at our State Leadership Conference! This includes our two newest events, The Effective Teacher and T-Shirt Expressions. Skill demonstration events are held at the National Fall Leadership Conference and are a shorter version to STAR events. At this conference, members can also test their skills with knowledge challenges.

At the National Leadership Conference, certain competitive events offer scholarships for Level 3 Participants who place in the top three nationally. We recommend that you check in with your advisers for support and advice! With their guidance, you can improve upon your projects and gain inspiration. There is a rubric attached to each of the guidelines-be sure to refer to it and make sure you are following each of the steps!

Good luck to all participants! We can't wait to see you compete at our 2022 State Leadership Conference!



Guide to Social Media

BY AMANDA CHEN, VICE PRESIDENT OF COMMUNICATION

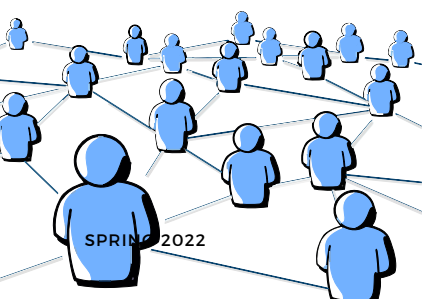
Currently, there are over 3 billion social media users worldwide, so there's no doubt that social media can be a great public relations and communications tool! Social Media can be an effective way to promote your chapter's initiatives and gain inspiration. There are many platforms that can be used to appeal to different audiences. Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, and TikTok are some of the most popular options.

Using different media types while thinking about your content and audience is important. For example, Facebook may be used to spread the word to parents and teachers, while Instagram may be a more successful way to connect with students. Canva is an easy and free tool to create digital content. It is recommended to include photos and videos of your members and accomplishments so your community can visually see what you are doing! Twitter sees an average 35% boost in retweets and Facebook has 2.3 times more engagement when using photos. Ideas for posts can be conference photos, competitive event recognition, community service, or upcoming events!

Having a social media calendar can be beneficial. Oftentimes, aligning your public relations with holidays and major events can be a great way to promote your chapter's activities. National FCCLA celebrates FCCLA Week in the second week of February. We highly encourage you to become involved in each day's activities, as it is the best time to advocate and connect with chapters nationwide. New Jersey FCCLA held a 12 Days of FCCLA in December to celebrate the holiday season, and we often post reminders leading up to conferences. Seize opportunities to post depending on the days!

Using Instagram Stories can be a fun and influential way to quickly connect on Instagram. Officer takeovers, challenges, reposts-there are many ideas you can do with it! Repost and tag your members so they can do the same.

Overall, social media can be a great tool to use to spread the word about FCCLA and our leadership activities. Keep an eye out for your audience and know what content would succeed! It's okay to experiment and be creative. Use graphics, photos, and videos to visually appeal to your community. Lastly, use your networking tools and gain inspiration...you never know what your next idea might become!



Protecting Our Planet Starts With You

BY NEHA PATEL, VICE PRESIDENT OF
COMMUNITY SERVICE

More than 99.9% of studies agree: Humans caused climate change. Humans impact the physical environment in many ways: overpopulation, pollution, burning fossil fuels, and deforestation. Changes like these have triggered climate change, soil erosion, poor air quality, and undrinkable water. The environment has been placed in a dire situation; wildlife dying, natural disasters intensifying, and fossil fuels at record highs. Global warming plays a huge factor and as leaders, we must be the initiators of change in protecting our environment.

We can start by saving energy. While technology certainly has made our lives easier, if not used responsibly, it will leave a big carbon footprint on the Earth. Choose a more environmentally friendly way of transportation. Walking decreases air pollution compared to driving in a car, meaning a little less smog and a little healthier air for the community in which you live.

The environmental impact of energy efficient practices at one's home can be significant, as the United States alone produced approximately nineteen percent of national greenhouse gas emissions in 2016. Out of the nineteen percent, sixty nine percent of residential emissions were due to electricity use, with direct fossil fuel combustion for home heating making up the other thirty-one percent. When you consider that such a large percentage of household GHG emissions are tied to electricity usage, it becomes clear that home energy efficiency measures can result in significant GHG emissions reductions.

Another important factor when it comes to protecting the environment is managing your waste. You always hear the phrase: reuse, reduce, recycle; however, most individuals do not follow these simple steps. Recycling in the U.S. is broken. In 1960, Americans generated 2.68 pounds of garbage per day; by 2017, it had grown to an average of 4.51 pounds. And while many Americans dutifully put items into their recycling bins, much of it does not actually end up being recycled.

Many recyclables become contaminated when items are placed in the wrong bin, or when a dirty food container gets into the recycling bin. Contamination can prevent large batches of material from being recycled. Other materials can't be processed in certain facilities.

You can start to make a difference in your own home. If we all do our part, we would not have to deal with these circumstances. Rinse out bottles, cans, and food containers before recycling. Learn which recycling symbols correspond to which types of plastic so you know what is recyclable. Understand what items and materials your community recycles. This typically can be found on your county's website.

As youth leaders, you can take the initiative to urge your representatives to introduce waste-reducing legislation or help publicize where materials in your community can be recycled.

Environmentally sound practices should be applied to your everyday life. Do your part and encourage others in your community to save our planet!

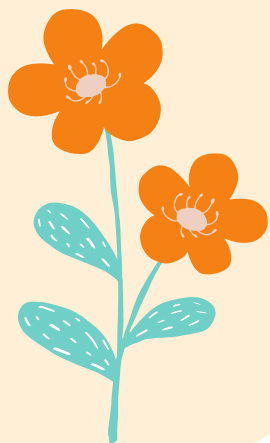
Introducing our National Officer Candidate

BY AMANDA CHEN, VICE PRESIDENT
OF COMMUNICATION

Exciting news! Gianna DeBruyn (Southern Regional High School) is representing New Jersey FCCLA as the 2022-2023 National Officer Candidate.

Gianna has been involved in FCCLA for the past six years, since beginning her journey in seventh grade. She has served three state officer terms as the 2019-2020 Vice President of Membership, 2020-2021 Vice President of Leadership Development, and 2021-2022 First Vice President. She has represented New Jersey at multiple state and national leadership conferences. At the 2021 National Leadership Conference, she earned a Pre-Professional Assessment and Certification (Pre-PAC) in Personal and Family Finance. Recently, Gianna traveled to Washington, D.C. with the New Jersey state officer team, where she advocated for Family and Consumer Sciences with the state legislature. We wish her best of luck on her National Officer candidate journey!





Spring Into Service

BY NEHA PATEL, VICE PRESIDENT OF
COMMUNITY SERVICE

Your leadership skills are your nutrients. Your time-management skills are your soil. Your attitude is the sunlight. Without nutrients, soil, and sunlight, you cannot blossom. Be the first sprout this spring to choose to blossom with community service. During the spring as the weather gets warmer, there are numerous opportunities open for serving the community. In fact, spending time in nature regularly encourages people to become better stewards of the environment.

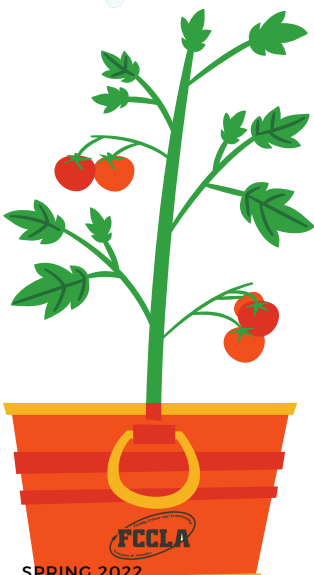
If you love to garden, grow vegetables and donate the produce to neighbors or a food bank. Spend time outdoors getting a break from the online world with friends and family. Develop critical thinking, organizational skills, and empathy and teamwork, while enjoying the rewarding feeling of doing good for others and feeling great after producing your own food.

Love the outdoors? Keep your favorite park clean. Environmental organizations need volunteers to do tasks like water testing, trail maintenance and animal management. If you're a science kid, this might be a perfect match for your skills.

If you're new to the volunteer scene, learn about local organizations by attending various community events. These events are a great way to show up and display support for various initiatives. They also provide a great opportunity to connect directly with different outdoor organizations, furthering your outdoor volunteering opportunities. One example is the Conservation Alliance, which holds events throughout the year to advocate for the protection of our wildlife spaces. Their work emphasizes policy and advocacy. Without their events, they couldn't get the funds, signatures, or awareness they need to enact change at both local and national levels.

Gain experience working with and teaching children while serving your community. Volunteer at a nature camp and teach kids about the environment. Choose to celebrate Earth Day! Earth Day promotes the protection of the natural environment from pollution and other destructive forces. You can host a community-wide Earth Day 5k Run by partnering with environmental awareness organizations.

As you blossom with newly acquired skills, others around you will look up to you and everyone will grow together. You will be the one to start an entire field of beautiful unique flowers: daffodils, daisies, roses, and much more! Don't stay a little seedling, you have the power to create a beautiful field



Ideas and Guidelines for Successful Picnics



BY ANUSHIKA SATHUVALLI, VICE PRESIDENT
OF PARLIAMANTARY LAW

As the weather is getting warmer, picnics are a great way to spend time with your family and friends under the sun. Here are a few ideas and rules to remember when having picnic fun.

The first step to planning a successful picnic is researching your park location's regulations. Many parks have certain hours in which they are open for public use. In addition, some parks require fees for using picnic areas. The last thing you want is to arrive at a park with all your food and find out that you aren't permitted to use it.

Secondly, it is important to pack food that will make your picnic not only fun but delicious! Food can make or break an event. For picnics, you want to pack food that is easy to eat but also tasty. Some examples of the perfect picnic food are sandwiches, kabobs, and salads. Make sure to pack utensils as well so you can conveniently enjoy your food.

There are other items that you may want to pack to have the perfect picnic. Of course, a picnic is not complete without a picnic blanket! A picnic basket is a convenient way to pack all your food and utensils for your picnic. Paper towels will be helpful for any spills that may occur. You may also find it useful to pack your food with ice packs to keep it cool and fresh.

Last, but certainly not least, be sure to properly dispose of all your trash after you are done eating. Over 100 million pounds of trash are created in parks alone, contributing to our earth's pollution. It is very important to respect both the park and the environment by cleaning up after yourself and making sure no trash is littered. Since trash can fly around in a park's windy environment, it is recommended to tie a trash bag to a tree or the ground. This way you can throw away all your garbage without it flying around the park. To prevent waste in general, try opting for reusable containers made of plastic or glass.

Hopefully, you will utilize these tips and tricks for having the perfect picnic. We hope you enjoy spending time with your friends and making memories this summer!

How to Stay Fun and Safe in the Sun



BY ANUSHIKA SATHUVALLI, VICE PRESIDENT
OF PARLIAMANTARY LAW

Spending time in the sun is a great way to receive Vitamin D, which is crucial to the health of your immune system. However, long exposure to the sun's UV rays without proper protection can lead to cancer, wrinkles, and discoloration. These effects may not be visible at first as sun damage accumulates over time. Therefore, you want to make sure you are always staying safe in the sun. It is never too late to start practicing proper sun safety! A great way to remember how to stay safe in the sun is through the 5 S's:

SLIP on a t-shirt: Did you know that clothing itself can block 98 percent of UV rays? Be sure to plan your outfits so that they not only suit the hot summer weather but can also provide ample protection from the sun.

SLOP on SPF 30+ sunscreen: SPF is a measure of how much UV radiation is required to produce sunburn on protected skin. The higher the SPF, the more effective your sunscreen is from protecting you from the sun's harmful rays. Dermatologists recommend purchasing a sunscreen that has an SPF of at least 30+.

SLAP on a broad brimmed hat: Another great way to provide sun protection to your face is by wearing a broad brimmed hat. But remember, a hat is not a substitute for sunscreen! Wearing a hat does not provide nearly as much protection as a sunscreen can. However, wearing a hat can physically block the sun rays from hitting your face, so it is always best to keep one handy.

SLIDE on quality sunglasses: That's right! When planning your outfits this summer, be sure to remember your sunglasses! Your eyes can experience sun damage as well. When your eyes are constantly exposed to the UV rays of the sun, the risk of cataracts, growths on the eye and cancer increases. Sunglasses are only effective to protect your eyes when they provide 100% UV protection. Research the sunglasses you plan on wearing or purchasing to make sure that they block both UV-A and UV-B rays. Sunglasses are not only fashionable but crucial for the health of your eyes.

SHADE from the sun whenever possible: A common misconception is that the longer time spent in the sun, the more benefits you receive from the sun's rays. However, this is false. You only need exposure to sunlight for above 40 minutes to receive the benefits from the sun's rays. Any time longer than an hour can lead to a higher risk of sunburn and the risks of skin damage. Whenever possible, try to stay in the shade.

Hopefully, you remember the 5 S's this summer as you spend time in the sun! Remember, it is important to have fun but stay safe as well. Happy Summer!



Spring Fundraising Ideas

BY ANUSHIKA SATHUVALLI,
VICE PRESIDENT OF
PARLIAMENTARY LAW

As we approach the National Leadership Conference and the end of the year, it is important to begin fundraising for your chapter. Here are a few fundraising ideas you can incorporate in your chapter this spring.

Mother's Day Plant Sale - One of the most popular celebrations of the spring is Mother's Day. Moreover, many students want to give their mothers something special to show them their appreciation. With these two aspects in mind, a Mother's Day Plant Sale is sure to be a popular fundraiser in your school. How do you start a plant sale? Partner with your school's Gardening or Courtyard club to see if they have a connection with a local plant nursery. If your school does not have such clubs, contact a local nursery and see if you can purchase flowers from there. Be sure to purchase a variety of flowers and plants. And of course, advertise your sales through social media, fliers, and announcements!

Outdoor Movie Night- As the weather is getting nicer, many students want to get out and enjoy the fresh air.

What better way to enjoy the outdoors than watch a movie with friends? To organize an outdoor movie night, ask your administrator to help set up a projector on your school's football or soccer field. Ask students to bring blankets so they can sit on the grass comfortably. Be sure to also prepare snacks and desserts for the students. A great tip is to choose a movie that has just been released, so many students will be interested in watching it. After choosing a movie, create tickets and sell them throughout the week.

Car Wash- As the weather is getting warmer, it is easier to have car washes as members can stay outdoors for longer times. Especially as the spring approaches, pollen and leaves often fall on cars, causing many car owners to want a clean car. Be sure to plan your car wash during a time when the weather is nice and when the spring season has just started. If you wait too long, many car owners may have already washed their cars. Have a group of members volunteer in shifts to help wash cars. You will need soap, buckets, a hose, and drying cloths.

These events are not only a fun but profitable way to raise money for your chapter. Even if your chapter is not attending the National Leadership Conference, you can use the money you raised for the upcoming school year. Happy Fundraising!

Mental Health During a Pandemic

BY ADITI KUDVA, VP OF LEADERSHIP
DEVELOPMENT



The pandemic has proven to be detrimental on the mental health of all age groups. We were pulled out of our daily routines and were forced to adapt to an unorthodox style of life: cooped up in our houses, isolation from our friends, an abundance of time with our family members. Mental health, although overlooked at times, is just as important to manage as physical health.

Isolation, stress, and a lack of healthy coping mechanisms can lead to severe depression. Let's take a look at some ways to manage stress and isolation.

Keeping the same routine every day can make each day blend together and make a person feel as though they have nothing to look forward to. Every week, plan a day where you are going to try something new: take an art class, call/see a friend who you haven't spoken to in a while, follow a new recipe for dinner. It may feel strenuous to get yourself to do things that you haven't tried before but getting yourself to do it is the hardest part. Once you accomplish a new task, a feeling of pride will overwhelm you and will encourage you to take on new hobbies.

It's easy to fall into a habit of bottling up your feelings until something triggers them to come out all at once.

Whenever any feeling comes up, either negative or positive, try jotting it down in a journal. It can be in the form of a diary entry, a poem, or even a song. Some people find journaling to be frustrating, but sometimes getting your feelings down on paper just to crumple it and throw it out is a healthy way to cope with negative emotions. Stress and feelings of loneliness can be regulated by refraining from keeping them to yourself and switching up the activities you pursue every day.

Remember to always reach out to a friend, family member, or teacher that you trust to speak about your feelings. Expressing your emotions is often the best way to help alleviate any negative feelings. Your mental health is important and should not be dismissed.



Spring Fun!

BY ADITI KUDVA, VP OF LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

With the weather getting warmer and the sun setting later, our possibilities to enjoy the weather with friends broaden. Although we can still have fun with friends during the winter, it's nothing compared to the warm weather. Let's look at some activities to indulge in to make this spring better than the last!

Have a Picnic- Enjoy the outdoors by going to your local park with friends and pack some snacks. Dress in sundresses, shorts, and sandals for the full experience. Don't forget a picnic basket and blanket!

Go Star-gazing- Set a blanket in your backyard and watch the stars with your friends. Point out famous constellations and have a conversation about what stars mean to you.

Have a Photoshoot- Put on some spring attire, do your hair and makeup, and visit a local park to take pictures with friends! Make long lasting memories by taking pictures that are professional enough to frame. Incorporate props and fun settings to make the pictures more memorable.

Tie-dye Garments - Have old garments that you don't wear anymore because they're too plain? Grab some tie dye from Michael's or Walmart and place rubber bands around your garment. Follow the instructions in your tie-dye kit and create some fun looking designs with friends!

Berry Picking- Berry picking is always such a fun activity, and it is perfect for the late springtime. It gives you and your family a chance to reconnect with nature.

Visiting theme parks- Spring is the perfect time to take a break from work and visit somewhere fun. Whether it be 6 Flags or Nickelodeon Park, this is the time to get away from stress while also spending time with your family! Visiting the theme parks helps you escape the stress of your daily life and can provide much needed distraction to make you forget about your troubles. Another benefit is that it helps you be more active.

Spring is the perfect time to explore the outdoors, assess your creativity, and advance your connections with the people around you. Get out of your house, unplug from technology, and make long lasting memories with friends!

Lessons in Action

BY ANANYA SINGHAL, COMMITTEE CHAIR

At Leadership Bootcamp, we learned many valuable life lessons from Kid President as to how to be "more awesome". This also connects with the idea of love languages which include words of affirmation, acts of service, quality time, and gift giving. Here are some examples that you can use to incorporate these lessons into your life.

- Giving at least one genuine compliment a day.
By giving at least one compliment a day, you can brighten up someone's day and spread overall positivity. Make sure to not only compliment one's physical appearance, like their clothes or new haircut, but also on their character! For example, compliment their personality and what makes that person unique.

- Saying thank you more often.
Show gratitude for those around you! This goes into the language of "words of affirmation" which constantly reaffirms to your friend that their efforts are being recognized and you appreciate their friendship. This includes saying thank you for the little things too. An example could be when you realize that your friend always asks about your day and how you are feeling. Next time you notice things like this, be sure to thank them for it to make them feel seen.

- Make time for others.
With all the responsibilities in our lives, we can get preoccupied and forget to check in with our friends. Even if it's for five minutes, make time to show your friends and family that you are there for them. This might include taking a walk around your neighborhood with your parents or going on Facetime calls with your friend. This goes into the language of "acts of service" and it is when your friend/family feels the most loved when you do tiny little things by spending time with them.

- Making simple gifts.
Whether it be writing positive messages on post notes or giving your friend a piece of their favorite candy, making tiny gifts can serve as happy reminders to your friends that you will always appreciate and support them. This goes under "gift giving" and this is when your friend feels the most appreciate when they receive little gifts. Often it is the thought behind the gift that means more to them than the materialistic aspect.

It is important to understand which love language your friends value the most because it can help them feel the most loved and valued. By doing little things like this, it can add up and make a positive impact on your friend's life. It makes the person feel appreciated and recognized which can immensely help make their day better.





How to Find and Prepare for a Summer Job

BY BENITA KIZHAKKEPURAM



A summer job is a great way for youth to earn extra money, build responsibility, gain knowledge, and apply skills in a real-world setting. Typical summer jobs include tutoring, being a lifeguard, teaching music, dance or a sport, babysitting, and hosting at a restaurant.

Identifying your interests is a significant first step to preparing for a summer job. Finding a summer job that corresponds with your interests can keep you motivated and engaged for the duration of the of the job.

Then, start researching for job openings in your area of interest and expertise. Your guidance counselors may provide an updated list of jobs and internships for students. Reach out to friends and family to help you in your search. Remember to start early as employers and companies hire early so that new hires complete training on time and are ready for business in the summer.

Focusing on the application, prepare a strong resume that highlights your interest, activities, achievements, volunteer work, and prior jobs that grabs the attention of the employers and recruiters. Make sure to draft cover letters that correspond with the particular job you are applying for, including skills and knowledge that will make you an excellent and qualified candidate for the position. Furthermore, interviews are crucial in helping the recruiter get to know you as a person, understand your story and interests. The interview provides an opportunity for you to communicate your skills.

As an FCCLA member, you have access to a plethora of resources to help guide you through this process. By competing in the STAR events of Career Investigation and Job Interview and State events including Career Search, you can earn valuable skills that can prepare you for a summer job. Moreover, summer employment is a great goal for the national program Power of One.

Hopefully, with these tips and ideas, you can stay optimistic in your job search and gain valuable experience to build skills for your future career! Not only will you find a way to keep yourself productive during break, but you will enjoy an engaging summer.

“Book” Yourself for a Summer of Leadership!

BY BENITA KIZHAKKEPURAM



A must-read book for this summer is *Leaders Eat Last*, by Simon Sinek. Sinek is an author and public speaker who inspires people to be great leaders within their communities. An impactful theme emphasized through this novel is the importance of placing others before oneself when one is in a leadership position. Trusting in others fosters a positive and nurturing environment for communal improvement. At the same time, having confidence in yourself motivates a leader to step forward and accept the challenge at hand. Reading this book can help you learn important techniques to improve your leadership skills and thereby make a positive impact on others.

Another powerful book is *I Am Malala: The Story of the Girl Who Stood Up for Education and was Shot by the Taliban*, by Malala Yousafzai and Christina Lamb. Malala was a leader who used the power of her voice to fight for women's right to education. She earned the Nobel Peace Prize for her activism through peaceful protest. Like her, we leaders do not have to submissively accept injustices in our communities. We can use our voice to advocate for change. This book is truly inspiring and serves as a source of motivation for many young leaders today, to advocate for causes that they strongly believe in and thereby prompt change.

For all the young novel-lovers, read *Because of Mr. Terupt* by Rob Buyea. This fictional book teaches the idea of personal responsibility and allows the reader to witness the powerful impact a leader (Mr. Terupt) can have on surrounding people. Buyea includes the perspectives of seven students and describes how they positively change over the course of the school year due to the impact of a role model. This engaging and enjoyable book can strengthen your understanding of the importance a leader has on the lives of others, and how to implement that idea in your own leadership journey.

Take time during the summer to not only enjoy a good book, but also find a way to keep yourself productive during break. Make sure to check out these books in the library or at a bookstore nearby to make this summer count!

Becoming a Savvy Shopper with Rising Food Cost

BY RAINA PATEL



According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), food prices are expected to rise between 2.5% and 3.5% in 2022. These increases in food costs are the product of the pandemic and a supply chain crisis. As of now, there are no expectations for food prices to go down, making smart shopping and budgeting habits all that more important for families. Learn how to be a SAVVY shopper as food costs increase with FCCLA.

Snip some coupons: Probably the most obvious and important on the list, maximizing savings comes easily by clipping coupons for additional discounts. Families should keep an eye out for the weekly booklet in the mail and come together to sift through the pages for the relevant deals. Make sure to cut out important coupons and save them for the next grocery run! As an alternative, many of America's favorite grocery stores have mobile apps where families may be able to gain access to more coupons with a digital loyalty card.

Always compare prices: Especially if a family has a variety of grocery stores available to them, consider shopping at a few and comparing their prices for the items needed. This can also be done online. Keep in mind the different sales each store runs as well. It could be effective to shop at two different stores depending on a family's specific situation.

Veer away from pre-packed items: Though pre-packed items (i.e. cheese and vegetables) are convenient in a fast-paced society, stores typically charge more for this convenience. Opting for whole foods, like fresh or frozen veggies and block cheese, saves money and brings freshness and nutritional value to food.

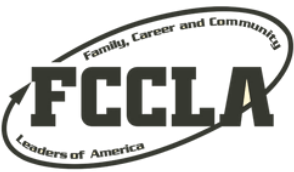
Very generic brands are key: As a clever marketing tactic, supermarkets will put the costly, name brand items at eye level, tempting the consumer. It is the top or bottom areas of the shelves that house the cheaper generic brands. To top it off, the quality is relatively the same for both the generic and name brands. Overall, this will drastically bring down a grocery bill as the difference in price is significant.

Yes to meal planning: It is a known fact that preparing meals at home costs much less than ordering takeout or dining at a restaurant. Also, cooking at home is a healthier practice. Meal planning helps families stretch their budget even further. By planning meals for the week, trips to the grocery store are minimized and the buying of only necessary products is encouraged. Take it even further by letting meal plans be directly dependent on the grocery store's weekly sales guide. Nevertheless, do not forget to stock up on the staples!

While there are countless more ways individuals can become savvy shoppers with the rising food cost, these tips are some of the most convenient and easy ways to obtain the nutrition without breaking the bank. For those with children, getting them involved in the different savvy shopper tips mentioned will not only teach them about the importance of smart shopping in an evolving economy, but will also allow families to work together to navigate groceries, food, and nutrition.

Happy shopping!





How to Organize Elections for Local Chapter Officers



BY RAINA PATEL

Today FCCLA has over 155,000 middle and high school members from 4,253 chapters across 47 associations. FCCLA truly is the Ultimate Leadership Experience. Chapter offices--just as with state and national level offices--are vital in the growth of a specific school's chapter. Not only are chapter officers an integral part of maintaining FCCLA at their school, but work to connect themselves and their chapter with others at state and national conferences. Therefore, chapter officers must be chosen with careful consideration while embodying the principles of leadership, teamwork, and membership. Below are three different suggestions to organize local elections for chapter officers so NJ FCCLA's chapters can further be strengthened. It is important to note, however, that a chapter's size and traditions also play a role in the election process.

1. During a chapter meeting, members will nominate candidates along with their reasoning for the nomination. Then, the candidates will be instructed to create a speech that outlines their qualifications or their response to a given prompt. The prompt can be decided by the exiting officers and/or the chapter adviser. These speeches will be done in front of the members who will then be given a ballot to cast their votes. The voting should be done toward the end of the school year to ensure incoming chapter officers have enough time to familiarize themselves with the workings of the chapter and create plans of action for the incoming school year. The aforementioned process is similar to the election of state officers.
2. The next scenario works well for large chapters and includes creating a chapter officer application for aspiring candidates. After the deadline (about a month before the end of the school year), a panel of evaluators should be assembled to pick out some of the best candidates (if the size of the chapter permits, a couple for each specific chapter officer position). The panel of evaluators should include past chapter officers (along with possible FCCLA alumni), chapter advisers, and other FCS-related educators. Candidates will be interviewed by the panel. A slate of officers will be selected by the panel and presented to the membership.
3. Participate in a simpler election where connections between chapter members and officers are encouraged all year. This works well for smaller chapters. At this point, everyone should have a good idea of all those in the specific chapter. At the end of the year, chapter members participate in a preferential style election where they name their top three nominations for office. The candidate with the highest number of preferential votes would become chapter president and vice president. The other candidates who earned a substantial number of votes will then decide which positions to fill among themselves based on their ability and experience. Chapter advisers and past chapter officers should supervise the independent filling of the positions to ensure they are filled fairly and effectively.

While there are countless more ways FCCLA chapters can harness their size and traditions to create effective election processes for their chapter officers, the three suggestions are some of the most common and convenient ways to hold elections. However, regardless of the specific election process, local chapter officers and their election should have everything to do with chapter members and their direct participation in the election of their chapter leaders. With the election of exceptional local chapter officers, chapters will continue to grow and connect in unimaginable ways.



Herbert Hoover Middle School Experiences the Ultimate Leadership Experience

BY MS. DEFRANCESCO, CHAPTER ADVISER

The 2022 NJ FCCLA State Leadership Conference was one of the most fulfilling and inspirational experiences that nearly all our members in attendance will ever have. From the connections made, to the lessons we received from our workshops, we have no doubts that each participant will never forget this conference. We would love to recount a few experiences taken directly from a few of our members who were able to experience this marvelous event.

Starting off with our chapter's president and first vice president, Pragya Bhatia and Oyindamola Ayeni. Both recounted how eye opening it was to be able to meet with many of the state officers and state officer candidates. From the way they conducted themselves as leaders, to how they addressed groups of large people, both girls found themselves feeling a call to duty as leaders. "They never failed to impress me from a leadership standpoint. As vice president of my chapter, I really hope to be able to hold myself in the same elegant manner as all of the officers do," said Oyindamola. We can all agree with her that each state officer was an inspiration and someone to aspire to be like. From how much effort they put into planning the entire event, to how kind and interactive they were with us members, we want to acknowledge the state officers and their efforts. "It was such an informative and educational experience, and the people made it all the more memorable. It was surreal to have everyone in person again and I feel as if I've grown as a leader and an individual as a result. I think the biggest takeaway from this was the memories. I'm always going to look back on that day and all the people I met and spoke to and think, 'There really isn't a better leadership experience'." Pragya noted, something that the entire chapter can acknowledge. They found that other schools and their respective voting delegates and chapter officials were extremely fun. As a chapter, we were able to make many connections, especially with John Adams Middle School. Having other people with our age category sharing their experiences with FCCLA was incredibly insightful. Our chapter president and vice president were glad to share how amazing their experience was, and both hope to gain even more experiences with FCCLA.

Of course, it wouldn't be a true retelling if we didn't acknowledge the incredible keynote speakers and workshops! Specifically, Kyle Scheele and his 'It only takes one' presentation. If we had to sum it up in 3 words, they'd be insightful, eye-opening, and influential. His presentation was a beautiful mixture of storytelling and comedy, all while calling everyone in the audience to action. A call to make the world a better place... One thing at a time ...One day at a time ...One chapter at a time. Several of our members found themselves entranced by his words and how powerful they were. He managed to connect with each individual in the audience. "His humor made the entire endeavor more memorable along with the theme being presented in a serious but wholehearted manner. It truly held my emotions to hear his story and inspired me to cheer on my peers and those around me, whether I know if they're struggling or not. The entire theme of how it only takes one to change a life stuck with me. In fact, it stuck with all of us," Our member, Anisha Pyne, explained to us after the event, "It's an undeniable fact that the presentation was emotional and charmingly unrefined. It takes confidence and strength to allow yourself to express vulnerability especially in front of such a massive group. Yet, Kyle Scheele was able to do it in a way that was confident and inspirational at the same time. We all appreciate him taking the time to speak to all of us. He represented what it means to be a leader in every sense of the word and for that we are inexplicably grateful."

It would be short-sighted not to mention the events each member took part in during this SLC. Over the months prior to SLC, we watched each other juggle preparations for our competitive events. It was an educational balancing act with FCCLA, our academics, and our personal lives. Despite all the long hours, time spent creating, and rehearsing, all the trials and tribulations, we would all do it over again. We learned time management, public speaking, and embraced our inner leaders. Emily Shiju Thomas stated, "It was honestly such an enjoyable experience to be able to collaborate with people I love, and I have no doubts that working on our events brought us closer than ever. I learned how to wisely spend my time and put my everything into a specific project. I know we all learned such valuable life skills that we'll carry with us for the rest of our lives." In regard to working on her event with her group and chapter, we all agreed with her when she mentioned life lessons; SLC provided so many in one day and each member went home, more knowledgeable than when they came. For many of us, it was our first time participating in one of the events. FCCLA opened so many opportunities to learn valuable skills that we used within our events. As such, our hard work and dedication paid off when we received our results. Although, it wasn't about placing first in the long run; it was about the lessons we learned along the way.

As a chapter we will never forget this year's SLC and hope to experience even more moments through FCCLA. Each of us had a unique experience that was undeniably impactful and allowed us to blossom as leaders. We thank those who helped pull all of this together to give us the most amazing experience possible. We hope to join everyone again at next year's State Leadership Conference and make even more memories. For these memories will shape and guide us towards a brighter future. For this is what FCCLA is truly about.

MEN'S WAREHOUSE MEETS FCCLA

BY KARINA URBINA TAVERAS, CHAPTER PRESIDENT OCVTS

I began my working career at Men's Warehouse just nine months ago, and since then, I have learned so much more about the business world of fashion. I remember when I first announced to my coworkers that I was joining FCCLA. Since that very moment, I have received their unconditional support. My parents, family, and friends are pleased and proud of the work environment I have established. Being a young fashion student is not as easy as it sounds. I am always on demand, running from one event to another. Thankfully, Men's Warehouse has made it stress-free for me and has always offered a helping hand, especially regarding FCCLA. I have the entire team at store 5429 collaborating with me and collecting the Ronald McDonald House Charity Pull-tabs since the end of 2021. Most days, I come in to find a supportive handful of pull tabs waiting for me in our back offices. I requested that we continue to collect pull-tabs until 2023, my graduating year. I believe that they will keep gathering them going forward, well after my graduation, to keep the tradition going for FCCLA and myself!

I joined the team at Men's Warehouse to learn and experience hands-on learning in the Fashion industry. Simultaneously, I joined FCCLA. Since then, I have made it my duty to actively participate in competitive events and all aspects of FCCLA, and that is what my team appreciates about me. At our staff meeting one evening, Angela announced, "Karina really likes to challenge herself and won't give up till she succeeds. We are proud to have her on the team."

Our tailors, Abdul and Mary, are skilled professionals who committed their careers to the profession. I often spend time with them learning tailoring techniques. Mary is my "tailor instructor" because she took time during her breaks to sit down with me and educate me on "do's and don'ts" of sewing. She addresses my sewing mistakes and teaches me the correct technique, so I learn from it. If I require assistance with problem solving an issue on a garment, I know I can turn to her. Our other tailor, Abdul has worked with the company for as long as this store has been open. He also upskills me in men's wear techniques, so I am educated on all types of garment construction.

All the staff are very supportive in helping me achieve my career goals. The store carries many designers' fabric samples that are available for custom orders. Nina, the store assistant manager, often allows me to take home the discontinued swatches because she is aware that I will repurpose them in my projects. My co-worker, Jessica M. educates me on current styles and colors, and she shares ideas on how to use the samples. Getting opinions on my competition projects is always great since she has a passion for crafting. When it comes to my writing/speech skills, I always get suggestions from my crew, especially Frank, who has his English literature degree. My co-workers, especially Nina, love to share and discuss my accomplishments with our clients. She always makes sure to tell them I'm a fashion student who is competing in FCCLA.

Every competition opportunity I have had has been met with unconditional support. When I told them I made it to the FCCLA Nationals, after months of talking to them about it and manifesting my plans, they were over the moon. Before the State Leadership Conference, I was working and had not yet practiced my speech. I was afraid I wouldn't have the right words to say. So that night, Jessica had me practice with her at the store in front of her and my co-workers. Having no note cards and just speaking from the heart, who knew I would achieve 1st place and get to go to the National Leadership Conference!

My STAR event Fashion Design garment was also featured in my School's Prom Fashion Show in March. I am the current Chapter President. My Men's Warehouse supported me with donating rental tuxedos for the event and Jessica even helped during the event. Days later I found out that the FCCLA garment was published in a local newspaper, highlighting our Fashion Show, in which my Men's Warehouse crew was thrilled to see it. Ultimately, the event was a great success, and I was grateful for the experience.

Just recently, the Men's Warehouse staff surprised me with a congratulatory cake in honor of my achievements and 1st place in the FCCLA competition! I am thankful Frank went out of his way to make it happen. A video of this moment was posted on social media and touched many hearts throughout the internet. Jessica is our store manager of fourteen years, and she is loved and respected by all. She interviewed and hired me, and she has supported me since from the start. "Karina is an exemplary member of our team here at Men's Warehouse. Within a few short minutes of interviewing her, I knew she would be someone with an outstanding work ethic both inside and outside of Men's Warehouse. She's proven herself to be persistent, creative, passionate, and adaptable to any situation. I am beyond proud to be able to witness the entrepreneur in her grow all while having her as an employee. I am excited to see what the future holds for Karina." - Jessica Clyburn.

In conclusion, I want to share that being a member of the team at Men's Warehouse has impacted my future in the world of fashion in a very positive way. Thanks to their professionalism and compassion, I was able to grow and thrive in this industry that I love. I never thought I'd find a community like this. Going to work at a Men's Warehouse is like going to see your family. Every day I come in, they welcome me in with open arms, ready to either teach me something new or learn what's new with my fashion designer career. To Jessica M, Nina, Angela, Frank, Abdul, Mary, Kyle, Travis, Jessica C, Stacy, Will, and everyone else on the team at Men's Warehouse, thank you for being such an essential part of my fashion career journey. The adventures are just getting started!