

BLUE AN GOLD

Pennsylvania FFA Happenings

Learners Today — Leaders Tomorrow

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Manor FFA Members stop and pose with Santa. From left are Jonathan Cawood, Boyd Barver, Kate Campion, Nate Phan, Will Herr, and Evan Ressele.



'Tis the Season for Giving
Sam Rishel, on ladder; Koltan Tyler, holding the ladder; and Matthew Boop, checking the centering of the lathe; help hang a lathe on one of the buildings for the Christkindl market.



Event organizers and chapter officers pose with donations collected for the Bedford CTC Toys from Tech. From left are Mackenzie Mohr, Mollie Robinette, and Cassie Nave.

MAIT BRAKE By FFA State Reporter

As the air cools and snow is filled with people and red buckets as Christmas music and the sound of bells fill the air. Yes, the Christmas season is once again upon us. FFA chapters across Pennsylvania have events during the Christmas season to help spread cheer. From organizing and starting their own events, to helping with other community events, Pennsylvania FFA members are busy during the holiday season doing good for others. Here are a few examples from the HG Parkinson (Fort Cherry High School), Millifburg, Manor (Penn Manor High School), Bedford CTC, and Benton FFA chapters.

The Fort Cherry Angel Tree: Mrs. Debbie Cowden is the school nurse at Fort Cherry High School. For the past eight years she has set up a table at a local food bank asking if families would like to be added

to the Angel Tree list. Families can list sizes of clothing, colors, or toys they might want.

Jodie Hoover is the agriculture education teacher at Fort Cherry High School. Hoover's students have been helping with the Angel Tree for the past six years. When asked how they initially got involved, Hoover said, "Mrs. Cowden has had three children in the FFA and is a big supporter so we are always willing to help her in any of her endeavors."

They help carry the unwrapped gifts to the wrapping room and then restack them in the storage room after they are wrapped. But the HG Parkinson members weren't satisfied just helping move wrapped presents. They decided to inquire about how they could help more. It was then that they started to "adopt" a family and buy gifts. They started with a family of triplet girls and sent the officers out to shop for toys and coordinating outfits. This year, they purchased gifts for two teenagers.

Victoria Iskipet, the chapter secretary, helps with the shopping.

"I loved doing this year. It was very humbling to realize that all these teenagers wanted was a basic pair of jeans. I couldn't help but think about how many clothes I have that just hang in a closet," Iskipet said. The Fort Cherry Angel Tree has grown from 97 families their first year to 143 kids this year.

Millifburg Christkindl Market: The Millifburg Christkindl market is a three-day market in the German tradition. At the Christkindl Market there are activities for the children, a Santa parade, caroling, and a visit from Santa. There are food and craft vendors that line the streets as well. The Millifburg FFA chapter has been helping set up the market for more than 20 years.

Members are involved with many behind the scene aspects of the Christkindl Market. Some members help the borough wear the sheds with elec-

tricity and decorate them with pine boughs and Christmas lights. Others help set up the many displays, some of which have been built in class. The displays have been welding or wood-working projects for the students in Lindsay Spruner and Charles Kessler's agriculture education classes at the Millifburg High School. The market was a brain child of the former German teacher at the high school. He asked the Millifburg FFA to help with it originally. The market has since multiplied many times from its original size.

It brings in thousands of people by the busload from many miles. It is now a community event involving the entire community, and the Millifburg FFA is happy to be a part of it. Member Jacob Fickelmann says he "enjoys helping out the community and he fills with pride when he visits the market every year."

Millersville Lionsess Breakfast for Santa: For members of the Manor FFA chapter at Penn Manor High School, December brings the Millersville Lionsess Breakfast with Santa. The Lionsess host the event at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Millersville. During the event, community members are welcomed in to purchase a breakfast which includes get pancakes, sausage, fruit and their choice of breakfast drinks. Santa is there, of course, and the community children get the opportunity to sit with Santa and have their picture taken.

In addition to talking with Santa, each child receives a gift that is donated by the Lionsess group. It has a family and community atmosphere and the children are very excited to see Santa.

The Manor FFA members are there to help clear tables, help parents with high chairs, serve food and support the Lionsesses with any additional clean up and tear down. It is a great way to interact with community members. This year six Manor FFA members and adviser Diane Glock-Corrmann participated to help an estimated 200 community members. The money from the purchase of a breakfast is used to help finance community support projects through the Lionsesses, such as providing gifts for local elderly members who are not able to travel during the holidays.

The Manor FFA started helping with the breakfast when current chapter officer Kate Campion brought it up to the group. Campion's mother is part of the Millersville Lionsess group and helped get the Manor FFA

involved with the event. When asked what her favorite part of the event is Campion says, "My favorite part is knowing two important organizations are doing something nice for the community. Seeing all the kids' faces makes my morning."

Bedford CTC Toys from Tech: Bedford CTC FFA chapter was chartered recently. This year, they decided to start a community service event for children in need. The officer team for the chapter wanted to start a toy collection. With help from advisor Scott Myers, Mackenzie Mohr, Cassie Nave, and Mollie Robinette started planning Toys from Tech. They placed boxes in each of the classrooms for students and faculty to put toys and monetary donations in. To add an incentive they started a point system based on the value of the item. At the end of the collection period the program with the most points will receive a pizza party. The toys were given to students in the Everett and Bedford Elementary schools.

Robinette said, "My favorite part was the feeling you get from donating and delivering. Making other children happy makes me super happy as well."

Benton and the Salvation Army: Twelve years ago the Salvation Army called the Benton High School looking for help. The administration put adviser Doug McCracken in communication with the Salvation Army. At Thanksgiving, Benton FFA members help with a food distribution. At Christmas, they help with toy and food distribution. Members who volunteer on Thanksgiving donate one day of their time. For Christmas, members volunteer for two days, one to get packages ready and one to pass out the toys and food. FFA members also volunteer to go on their own to pack boxes and "ring the bell" outside the local Walmart. McCracken said, "I am thankful that the Benton Area School District still sees value in teaching students the importance of giving and helping out those in need." Next year is the Benton FFA helping "light up" Benton, come FFA members helped put up Christmas lights for elderly residents unable to decorate for themselves. On Christmas Eve they are putting out approximately 1,200 luminaries along Main Street and the front of the churches in town. The FFA, local businesses and churches helped the supplies needed for this project.

The Power of Pennsylvania FFA

I honestly cannot believe that I have been a part of such an amazing FFA state officer team for half a year now. As I sit here writing this article, I cannot help but reminisce over our year as a team. All of the life-changing experiences and great adventures that we have encountered thus far.

Throughout these past six months we have had so many experiences, and I have come to realize that whatever we do this year, there will never be a dull moment with our team. One of the biggest things I have learned this year is that our FFA members are truly "Learning to Do, Doing to Learn, Earning to Live, and Living to Serve."

Chapter visit time is coming to an end, and the team and I could not have asked for a better experience. We have facilitated workshops that talked about personal value, teamwork, stress management, communicating the FFA brand, and of course, opportunities within the FFA. I loved seeing the passion that our members had for these workshops, and it was apparent to me that they were certainly going to take something from them. During my chapter visit experience, I have had the privilege to see many community service projects, manage SAAs (supervised agriculture experience) and creative ideas. The amount of hard work, dedication, and passion for their communities our FFA members have is quite commendable. The National FFA

FROM THE OFFICER'S STATION



GRANT CARLTON

theme for this year is "Go All Out" and it is safe to say that our members are "Going All Out" in this world every single day.

As our year continues, there are so many things that I am looking forward to. Farm Show is just around the corner, which means our annual Mid-Winter Convention is coming up. In Mid-Winter, we will see first-year FFA members zip up their jackets for the very first time thanks to the Pennsylvania FFA Alumni Jacket Scholarship program. We will also get to see some of our former FFA members receive their Keystone Degree. Some other events I am very excited for are conferences like Agricultural Cooperation Establishes Success, or ACES, and State Legislative Leadership Conference, or SLLC, where our member's will participate in great workshops about multiple topics, and ultimately have a great experience while meeting peers from all across the state.

This year I have come to realize that the Pennsylvania FFA is more powerful than I have ever imagined. I believe that living passionately, and spreading a message of "good" is something worth doing. When our members, advisors, and communities come together, and with the help from our foundation, alumni, and other supporters, we will change the world.

Editor's note: Grant Carlton is the Pennsylvania FFA state chaplain.