



BLUE AND GOLD

Unlimited

Pennsylvania
FFA Happenings
www.paffa.org

Central Columbia Dairy Judge Paves a Way in FFA



Kay Riffindifil judges a cow by touch.

The Central Columbia FFA chapter has seen many students pass through its doors since its beginning in 1942. Many students have talents and goals they strive to meet and challenges to overcome. Kay Riffindifil is no exception. Riffindifil is a senior in the Central Columbia agricultural/environmental science program. She has been a Central Columbia FFA member for the past four years. She is enrolled in Career Pathways Program in agri-science, science and health. Riffindifil has been blind since birth.

She has taught her agricultural science instructors and FFA advisers Doug Brown and Curt Turner new tricks to learn without eyesight.

During her freshman year, Kay wrote an essay on what the FFA Jacket means to her for the Pennsylvania FFA Alumni Freshmen Jacket Campaign. She was awarded her FFA jacket during the



Kay Riffindifil holds her dairy judging award.

Mid-Winter Convention at the Farm Show Complex during the 2015-16 school year.

Riffindifil has attended numerous leadership conferences, conventions and workshops. She has competed in numerous Career and Leadership Development Events such as creed speaking at the northern regional level, junior and senior prepared public speaking at the northern regional level and

lastly, she is an avid dairy judge. Riffindifil's hard work has paid off as she has won the North Branch Area FFA Dairy Judging Career Development Event three of the past four years. Her preparation for dairy judging is similar to any student. She first learns and experiences milking equipment by feeling each part and is provided instruction about each piece and purpose of the equipment. Through

continuous studying she learns that equipment as part of the identification section of the event. To prepare for the knowledge exam section of the CDE, Kay practices study questions that have been brailed for her by Rose Thomas, her personal aide at Central Columbia High School. Lastly, Riffindifil prepares for the actual dairy judging section of the event. She utilizes model animals as well as live species to gain an improved sense of muscle location, body composition and body form to understand what class of animals she is judging.

At the competition, Riffindifil receives an exception from the contest officials allowing her to touch each animal during the dairy evaluation section of the event.

Riffindifil's growth, determination and drive to succeed has made her a special member of the Central Columbia FFA chapter.

Stationed by the Ear of Corn FROM THE OFFICERS STATION

My name is Morgan Bear and I am honored to serve as this year's state secretary. I live in Newville, Pennsylvania. I grew up raising livestock alongside my older brother Cody, in 4-H. Cody was also a member of the FFA. I can remember attending chapter FFA banquets and wondering if I could ever wear a blue corduroy jacket one day. When I entered my freshman year of high school I signed up for an agriculture course. I can remember being so nervous as I started my journey as an FFA member. Now looking back, I can proudly say that I gained so many opportunities from wearing the blue jacket and now, I can give those same opportunities to members all across Pennsylvania. The opportunities in the FFA and being involved in agriculture education are truly "Unlimited."

Family is everything to me. My parents taught me the value of hard work. They helped me to understand that if anything was worth doing, it was worth doing well. No matter if I was preparing for a gymnastics meet, studying for a test in school, or staying up late to try and memorize just one more sentence of my speech for FFA, I was going to do it to the best of my abilities. I can remember receiving my Greenhand degree at my first FFA banquet. I knew that all of my hard work throughout the year growing my supervised agricultural experience, reciting the FFA Creed, and gaining more knowledge of agriculture in my community



MORGAN BEAR

had payed off. I learned that I could continue to set my goals high and achieve anything I set my mind to.

Whether you have an agricultural background, or you are an inner-city student, through joining the FFA, there are endless amounts of knowledge, growth and experiences you can discover. Once you step outside of your comfort zone you can quickly see the impacts this organization can have on you. I couldn't imagine my life without being involved in the agricultural industry and the people within it. Being able to advocate for agricultural education and the FFA is an honor that I am blessed to have. I plan to continue to be an advocate after I retire as a state officer by continuing my education at The Pennsylvania State University to major in agricultural and Extension education. I plan to become an agriculture teacher after being greatly impacted by my agriculture teachers and FFA advisers Sherisa Nailor and SaraBeth Fulton.

Pennsylvania FFA, thank you so much for this opportunity that I have been blessed to have. With the FFA I am involved in an organization that is much bigger than myself and I am so grateful that I can carry out my passion for this industry with my family, community and state supporting me every step of the way.

Editor's note: Morgan Bear is the Pennsylvania FFA state secretary.

Pa. FFA Alumni Launch Jacket Campaign

"We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give."
— Winston Churchill.

Over the past 12 years, the Pennsylvania FFA Alumni Association has worked diligently to provide 4,132 Pennsylvania FFA members the first step to a student's success in this organization — providing them with a national blue and corn-gold corduroy jacket.



Greenwood FFA members zip up their jackets for the first time.

The blue and gold jacket provides a tremendous amount of pride as well as unlimited opportunities that are made available to each student in the organization.

The alumni organization has set a goal to present 400 students with jackets at the 2019 Mid-Winter Convention, which will take place at the Pennsylvania State Farm Show. In order to reach the goal, the FFA Alumni Association is asking for help. For \$60, someone could sponsor a jacket for a first-year FFA member.

Donations can be sent to the Pennsylvania FFA Alumni Association, c/o Krista Pontius, 405 East Sunbury Street, Millerstown, PA 17062.

The jacket presentation will take place at the Pennsylvania FFA Mid-Winter Convention at 2 p.m. in the Large Arena. At the Mid-Winter Convention, the Keystone FFA Degrees will

be confirmed, Pennsylvania FFA Star awards announced and hopefully 400 first-year members will zip up their jacket for the first time.

Alumni know the tremendous amount of opportunities that lay before each of these fledgling FFA members and the excitement of becoming a part of this life-changing organization.

Trinity's Leafy Green Machine Expands Learning Experience



Schools across Pennsylvania are recognizing the importance of project-based learning, college and career readiness, and agricultural studies. Trinity Area High School teachers in Washington County have committed to prepare students to reach their fullest potential by providing unique opportunities and rigorous academic and agricultural curriculums.

One of the unique additions to Trinity's agricultural curriculum is an automated hydroponic growing unit called the Trinity Leafy Green Machine.

In the summer before the 2017-18 school year, Trinity High School administration used a local share account grant to purchase a hydroponic growing unit from Freight Farms called The Trinity LGM (Leafy Green Machine).

The Trinity LGM, purchased and funded by this LSA grant, is a vertical hydroponic farming system built inside a 40-foot repurposed shipping container. The LGM is capable of growing lettuces, herbs and hearty greens at commercial scale in any climate or location. High school students in the greenhouse production and advanced hydroponics courses grow lettuce plants from seed and harvest mature plants using this AgroTech automated system.

Currently, students are raising three varieties of lettuce as well as learning about sanitation and

food safety. Using this unconventional farming technique enables the school to grow fresh produce year-round on a paved driveway. It also promotes sustainability and unconventional farming methods to grow an abundance of food. Students learn to monitor nutrient levels, water levels, monitor plant health, conduct water quality tests, and calibrate pH, conductivity, and temperatures with the assistance of their vocational agriculture teacher Jeannette Hartley. Students also conduct independent research and keep records of data collections. The produce grown in the Trinity LGM is sent weekly to the Greater Washington County Food Bank to food insecure residents of Washington County. Trinity donates an average of 600-800 mature lettuce plants weekly that are distributed through 48 distribution sites and

seven agencies located throughout the county. Students not only learn about growing food, but also how to work as a team to meet deadlines, improve problem solving skills, communication skills and feel a sense of community involvement.

The Trinity LGM has been a valuable addition to the vocational agriculture program as well as linking curriculums and students from a variety of backgrounds. It provides an opportunity for collaboration within course work and other courses offered. It promotes agriculture and innovative thinking to improve the future of farming in Pennsylvania. These unique opportunities offered by Trinity Area High School are preparing students to reach their fullest potential and become contributing members of society.