

Convention Proceedings

89th Annual State FFA Convention Montana FFA Association



**April 3 - 6, 2019
Montana State University
Bozeman, Montana**

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Bozeman
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Special Guests

A'ric Jackson – Keynote speaker
Luke O'Leary – National FFA President

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Big Timber
Jacob Martin, State Officer Rep.
Culbertson



Alumni Association

Bill Jimmerson, Past President

Bozeman

Brian Engle, President

Big Timber

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Laurel

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Conrad

Emily Standley, Judith Basin District Rep.

Lewistown

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Tanya Flowers, Southeastern District Rep.

Shepherd

Scott Lackman, Eastern District Rep.

Hysham

Brent Beley, Southwestern District Rep.

Big Timber

Matt McKamey, Alumni Leadership Camp Director

Cascade

Jim Rose, State Advisor

Bozeman

Nathan Wildeboer, State Officer Rep.

Missoula



Convention Facts

1,278 members & advisors from 94 chapters attended plus and estimated 410 parents and other guests for a total attendance of 1,688.

Delegate Business Meeting

For Office Use Only
#1

Title: Selecting Replacement State LDE Competitors

Submitted by: Choteau FFA

For: 87 Against: 4
Motion Passed

Motion:

We move that when a district does not have two designated winners in Prepared Public Speaking, Extemporaneous Speaking, Parliamentary Procedure, Creed Speaking, Junior Creed Speaking, and Conduct of Meetings that the third-place winners in their respective Leadership Development Events from the other districts will be drawn at random to fill the spots so 16 individuals or teams will be able to compete at the State FFA Convention.

*Changes would be reflected in the CDE Handbook.

Rationale:

Some districts are much stronger in the LDEs than others, and those strong districts could possibly have 3 teams or speakers that may end up in the finals round at State Convention.

Those speakers or teams that are competing in rooms where there are only two or three competing instead of four have an unfair advantage in making the finals round.

We want to provide as many opportunities as possible to all of our members.

This will be no further cost to the convention as judges and setup are already in place.

For Office Use Only
#2

Title: Gold, Silver, and Bronze Recognition of CDEs

For: 80 Against: 13
Motion Passed

Submitted by: Choteau FFA

Motion:

We move to designate eligible teams and individuals competing in State FFA CDEs into gold, silver, and bronze divisions on JudgingCard with the top ten percent of individuals and teams receiving the gold ranking, the second ten percent receiving the silver ranking, and the third ten percent receiving the bronze ranking.

*Changes would be reflected in the CDE Handbook.

Rationale:

When there is a large number of contestants in a CDE, making the top ten is a very big deal, but reaching a goal of placing in the top 10%, 20%, or even 30% is a big deal as well and should be recognized. For example, last year's State Livestock Judging competition had 301 judges. Those placing as one of the top 30 individuals should be able to say that they are gold division individuals. There were 91 teams. The top 9 or 10 teams should be able to say they placed in the gold division rather than just the top 3 teams placing gold, silver, and bronze.

We know awards sent from the National FFA Foundation are plaques and individual pins of gold, silver, and bronze, but we can still recognize those high placing individuals with gold, silver, and bronze designations on JudgingCard.

All individuals and teams that judge in National CDEs are designated as gold, silver, and bronze. The least we can do is designate the top 30% of our members.

Many more individuals and teams were designated in this way for many years up until just a few years ago.

For Office Use Only
#3

Title: CDE District Qualification

For: 64 Against: 34
Motion Passed

Submitted by: Ruby Valley FFA

Motion:

We move to amend the Montana CDE handbook, Member Eligibility Section Line 6, by adding "Livestock Evaluation and ATMS" (Agricultural Technology & Mechanical Systems), and "New chapters would be exempt from this rule for the first two years" so it would read:

"A chapter must place in the top half of the chapters in their district to compete in the State Agricultural Sales, Livestock Evaluation, and ATMS CDEs. While also allowing the top 25% of individuals to compete in the state competition as individuals only. New chapters would be exempt from this rule for the first two years."

Rationale:

Because of the manpower and resources required to put on the state ATMS and Livestock Evaluation CDEs, reducing the number of participants would improve the overall quality of the event. Having only qualified participants would allow the event content to be more challenging. This would also make our district level events carry more weight so students have to prepare and compete for a spot. We already know this system works well for the Ag Sales CDE, so let's take advantage of it in others. There are many other invitational events in the state in these areas for students to gain experience. Allowing the new chapters to participate without the district qualifier for the first two years would allow them to get students involved and create interest in the events until they can be more competitive.

For Office Use Only
#4

Title: Refine Purpose

For: 102 Against: 0
Motion Passed

Submitted by: 2018-2019 State Officer Team

Motion:

We move to strike out Article I section B "The purposes for which this... rural recreational activities." and replace it with: "The organization shall cooperate with national and state government agencies and officials in vocational education to accomplish the following objectives:

1. To be an integral part of the organized instructional programs in agricultural education which prepare students for a wide range of careers in agriculture, agribusiness and other agriculture-related occupations.
2. To strengthen the confidence of students in themselves and in their work by developing desirable work habits and the effective usage of their time; by learning to assume responsibility; and by developing competencies in communications, human relations and other social abilities leading to the intelligent choice of a career and successful employment or entrepreneurship in the agricultural industry.
3. To provide agriculture-related programs and activities which will develop pride, responsibility, leadership, character, scholarship, citizenship, patriotism and thrift; and which will improve the economic, environmental, recreational and human resources of the community.
4. To encourage and recognize achievement in supervised agricultural experience programs, scholarship, leadership and other individual and group activities by providing awards to deserving members and chapters."

Rationale:

Seeing as our current purpose statement doesn't reflect the statement seen in the National Constitution, and not all values in our current statement resonate with members, this amendment would better reflect and refine our purpose statement to represent the Organization's values.

For Office Use Only
#5

Title: Alumni and Supporters Chapters

For: 86 Against: 6
Motion Passed

Submitted by: 2018-2019 State Officer Team

Motion:

We move to strike out Article II section D "Collegiate and postsecondary chapters may be established in two or four-year institutions where agriculture courses are taught. Each collegiate or postsecondary chapter shall be chartered by and maintained under the authority of the Montana FFA Association. All activities of these chapters of FFA shall be in harmony with the purposes, principles and ideals of the FFA organization. Activities for FFA collegiate and postsecondary chapter members shall be based upon the needs and interests of its members." And insert "Alumni and Supporters chapters may be established in two or four-year institutions where agriculture courses are taught. Each Alumni and Supporters chapter shall be chartered by and maintained under the authority of the Montana FFA Association. All activities of these chapters shall be in harmony with the purposes, principles and ideals of the FFA organization. Activities for FFA Alumni and Supporters chapter members shall be based upon the needs and interests of its members."

Rationale:

Seeing as Collegiate and Postsecondary chapters have since been transitioned into Alumni and Supporters chapters, our constitution should accurately reflect and include the changes made.

Career Development Events (CDE) Results

Agriscience Fair Winners:

Animal Systems: Jayna Jackson - Corvallis

Social Systems: Justice Betts and Meckenna

Schroeder - Missoula

Power and Technology Systems: Charlie

Palacios and Tiffany Loder - Corvallis

Plant Systems: Hannah Brence – Miles City

Food Products & Processing Systems: Emily

Seifert and Liz Vornier – Corvallis

Environmental/Natural Resource Systems:

Sawyer Reagen - Missoula

8. Logan Turner - Missoula

9. Brandon Schnug - Forsyth

10. Cade McParland – Ruby Valley

Agricultural Technology & Mechanical Systems CDE

1. Joliet

2. Missoula

3. Kalispell

4. Ruby Valley

5. Broadwater

Agriculture Communications

1. Cascade

2. Carter County

3. Corvallis

4. Bainville

5. Saint Regis

6. Fairfield

7. Electric City

8. Conrad

Agriculture Issues

1. Corvallis

2. Cascade

ATMS Individuals

1. Noah Salo - Joliet

2. Tyler Haag – Ruby Valley

3. Justin Harris - Joliet

4. Kalten Hendrickson – Missoula

5. Caroline Roeder - Choteau

6. Max Andres - Missoula

7. Jyler Thompson - Broadwater

8. Cody Bicknell - Kalispell

9. Trenton Braaten, Broadwater

10. Aaron Lang - Kalispell

Agricultural Sales CDE

1. Missoula

2. Forsyth

3. Beaverhead

4. Big Timber

5. Prairie

Agronomy CDE

1. Choteau

2. Belgrade

3. Kalispell

4. Stevensville

5. Missoula

Ag Sales Individuals

1. Kael Keltner - Prairie

2. Taylor McCormack - Belgrade

3. Joe Lackman - Forsyth

4. Lucas Oelkers - Culbertson

5. Kaitlin Garoutte - Stevensville

6. Ryan Robertus - Laurel

7. Teagen Turner - Missoula

Agronomy Individuals

1. Caroline Roeder - Choteau

2. Amber Johnson - Choteau

3. Anthony Tatarka - Belgrade

4. Michael Zielinski - Stevensville

5. Joe Tatarka - Belgrade

6. Kylie Rhoades - Stevensville

7. Maria Bay - Kalispell

8. Kayla Hagan - Plentywood
9. Kalten Hendrickson - Missoula
10. Erin Taylor – Big Sandy

Creed Speaking CDE

1. Miya Ross - Gardiner
2. Nora Goodwin - Victor
3. Laney Helland - Corvallis
4. Brighton Lane – Huntley Project

Jr. Creed Speaking CDE

1. Gus Turner - Missoula
2. Katie Tooke – Carter County
3. Tandy Planichuk – Stillwater Valley
4. Theresa Baird – Judith Gap

Conduct of Meetings CDE

1. Plevna
2. Joliet
3. Shepherd
4. Gardiner

ENR

1. Deer Lodge
- 2.
3. Fairfield

Employment Skills

1. Claire Stevenson - Hobson
2. McKenna Quirk - Missoula
3. Jaycie Rau - Fairview
4. Zachary Nichols – Electric City
5. Emily Evans - Fairfield
6. McKenzie Mork - Forsyth
7. Brooke Mehlhoff – Twin Bridges
8. Gracie Smith - Victor
9. Megan Flemmer – Park City
10. Abby Riska - Missoula

Extemporaneous Speaking CDE

1. Michael McKay – Corvallis
2. Andee Baker – Park City
3. Clair Stevenson - Hobson
4. Colton Young – Stillwater Valley

Farm Business Management CDE

1. Kalispell
2. Belgrade
3. Missoula
4. Park City
5. Miles City

FBM Individuals

1. Joe Tatarka – Belgrade
2. Anthony Tatarka – Belgrade
3. Cole Dykhuizen - Kalispell
4. Morgan Kelly - Kalispell
5. Hunter Burden - Kalispell
6. Tyler Haag – Ruby Valley
7. Kalten Hendrickson - Missoula
8. Nathan Blankenship - Prairie
9. Kadon Cheff - Kalispell
10. Caroline Roeder - Choteau

Farm Bureau Speaking Contest

1. Gus Turner - Missoula
2. Claire Standley - Missoula
3. Aidan Graham – Lodge Grass
4. Jacyn Scheffer – Victor
5. Kyla Tacker - Victor

Floriculture

1. Missoula
2. Park City
3. Miles City
4. Fromberg
5. Hinsdale
6. Fairview
7. Plevna
8. Conrad
9. Fort Benton

10. Joliet

Floriculture Individuals

1. Jessica Bursik – Park City
2. Justice Betts - Missoula
3. Thaddeus Miller – Joliet
4. Kylee Billingsley – Missoula
5. Claire Standley – Missoula
6. Amy Haughian – Miles City
7. Brooke Mehlhoff – Twin Bridges
8. Brooke Leidholt – Miles City
9. Dacey Robertson - Fromberg
10. Jaeda Paul - Plevna

Food Science CDE

1. Choteau
2. Belgrade
3. Corvallis #1
4. Corvallis #2
5. Forsyth
6. Missoula #1
7. Park City
8. Missoula #2
9. Colstrip
10. Conrad

Food Science Individuals

1. Caroline Roeder – Choteau
2. Jessica Bursik – Park City
3. Joe Tatarka - Belgrade
4. Amber Johnson - Choteau
5. Martina Madsen - Corvallis
6. Anthony Tatarka - Belgrade
7. Brayden Goodman – Fromberg
8. Kalten Hendrickson - Missoula
9. Sawyer Reagan - Missoula
10. Jessica Waldo – Park City

Forestry CDE

1. Missoula
2. Kalispell
3. Deer Lodge
4. Belgrade
5. Ruby Valley
6. Mission Valley
7. Three Forks

8. Stevensville

9. Victor

10. Chinook

Forestry Individuals

1. Logan Turner – Missoula
2. Aidan Thompson – Deer Lodge
3. Max Andres - Missoula
4. Miles Graveley – Deer Lodge
5. Kalten Hendrickson – Missoula
6. Cade McParland – Ruby Valley
7. Jarrett Bowman - Missoula
8. Bethany Lyford - Kalispell
9. Anthony Tatarka – Belgrade
10. Casey Farrar - Missoula

Horse Evaluation CDE

1. Belgrade
2. Missoula
3. Kalispell
4. Roundup
5. Hobson
6. Chinook
7. Grass Range
8. Saint Regis
9. Simms
10. Hot Springs

Horse Evaluation Individuals

1. Kaydee Teselle – Belgrade
2. McKenna Quirk - Missoula
3. Cassie Hull - Roundup
4. Morgan Kelly - Kalispell
5. Katie Jacobsen – Red Lodge
6. Taylor McCormack - Belgrade
7. Abby Black - Belgrade
8. Amy Chilcote- Missoula
9. Colin Cox – Missoula
10. Rachael Stevenson - Hobson

Livestock Evaluation CDE

1. Broadwater
2. Kalispell
3. Big Timber
4. Joliet
5. Missoula

Livestock Evaluation Individuals

1. Walker Antilla - Joliet
2. Trenton Braaten - Broadwater
3. Kadya Braaten - Broadwater
4. Gunner Hathaway – Big Timber
5. Colter McWilliams - Missoula
6. Libby Twitchell – Miles City
7. Madeline Sutton - Kalispell
8. Jyler Thompson - Broadwater
9. Bailey Lake - Kalispell
10. Bethany Lyford - Kalispell

Marketing Plan

1. Cascade
2. Park City
3. Little Big Horn
4. Electric City
5. Chinook

Meats Evaluation CDE

1. Missoula
2. Kalispell
3. Grass Range
4. Belgrade
5. Corvallis
6. Fergus of Lewistown
7. Deer Lodge
8. Stevensville
9. Mission Valley
10. Conrad

Meats Evaluation Individuals

1. Max Andres - Missoula
2. Luke Heupel - Kalispell
3. Caden Seaholm – Grass Range
4. Justice Betts - Missoula
5. Anthony Tatarka - Belgrade
6. Joe Tatarka - Belgrade
7. Claire Standley - Missoula
8. Bailey Lake - Kalispell
9. Lucas Lawrence - Stevensville
10. Megan Bradshaw - Corvallis

Parliamentary Procedure CDE

1. Broadwater
2. Kalispell
3. Shepherd
4. Missoula

Prepared Speaking CDE

1. McKenna Quirk - Missoula
2. Larisah Moreland - Hysham
3. Anna Slivka - Winifred
4. Peyton Sodt - Richey

Vet Science CDE

1. Grass Range
2. Corvallis
3. Kalispell
4. Carter County
5. Roundup
6. Kalispell #2
7. Kalispell #3
8. Missoula #2
9. Missoula #1
10. Red Lodge

Vet Science Individuals

1. McKenna Quirk - Missoula
2. Mattie Tucek – Grass Range
3. Nola Goss – Grass Range
4. Jakob Dalbey - Corvallis
5. Reata Smith – Grass Range
6. McKenzie Mork - Forsyth
7. Jaylyn Jackson - Corvallis
8. Grant Finkbeiner – Grass Range
9. Tyler Eliasson - Roundup
10. Cassand Praxel - Kalispell

Team Sweepstakes Winner

1. Kalispell
2. Missoula
3. Joliet

Individual Sweepstakes Winners

1. Joe Tatarka - Belgrade
2. Anthony Tatarka - Belgrade
3. Caroline Roeder - Choteau
4. Kalten Hendrickson - Missoula
5. Max Andres - Missoula
6. Amber Johnson - Choteau
7. Jerrica Bursik – Park City
8. Logan Turner - Missoula

State Talent Contest

1. Boone Smiel - Stanford

Star Chapter – GOLD AWARDS

1. Beaverhead - STAR
2. Shepherd
3. Kalispell
4. Missoula

Star Greenhand

STAR Mackenzie Serrano - Roundup

Big Muddy: Trey Johnson – Hinsdale

Eastern: Laney Jones – Miles City

Southeastern: Mackenzie Serrano - Roundup

Southwestern: Nik Pierson - Park

Western: Claire Standley - Missoula

Glacier: Carson Crary - Choteau

Southern: Kyelynn Coombe - Joliet

Judith Basin: Birtukan Econom – Denton

Star in Agricultural Placement

STAR Ryle Elliot - Chinook

Kyle Evans - Cascade

Thomas Bailey - Kalispell

Wyatt Day - Victor

Star in Agriscience

STAR Jean Blackman - Cascade

Morgan Zuidema - Electric City

Star in Agribusiness

STAR Cole Dykhuizen - Kalispell

Kolton Lynn – Cascade

Anna Kraft - Laurel

Star Farmer

STAR Tyler Eliasson - Roundup

Andrew Ferrat - Broadwater

Claire Stevenson, Hobson

Andee Baker – Park City

FFA/American Indian Program

1. Little Big Horn 1
2. Little Big Horn 2
3. Saint Labre

Hall of Chapters

1. Gardiner
2. Missoula
3. Broadwater

Reporter Event

1. McKenna Quirk - Missoula
2. Kylee Coates - Shepherd
3. Brianna Rainey - Forsyth

Secretary's Book

1. Taylor Noyes - Broadwater
2. Abbie Smith - Richey
3. Madeline Sutton – Kalispell

Scrapbook

1. Bainville
2. Broadwater
3. Cascade

Treasurers Book

1. Andrew Ferrat - Broadwater
2. Chance Senner - Richey
3. Cole Dykhuizen, Kalispell

BOMC Awards

1. Richey

2. Park City

3. Shepherd

Scholarships Awarded

LEADERSHIP SCHOLARSHIPS:

Sam Cornthwaite Memorial ALC

Scholarship:

Bree Swanson, Chinook; Claire Standley, Missoula; Aidan Thompson, Deer Lodge

Pat Cavey ALC Scholarships:

Liberty Graham, Fromberg

Hailee Varner, Wibaux

Amelia Laubach, Big Timber

Brad King ALC Scholarship:

Lenora Shoemaker, Fromberg

Montana FFA Alumni ALC Scholarships:

Devan Birrer, Fromberg

Morgan Friede, Chinook

Jerzee Carr, Fromberg

Sam Cornthwaite Memorial WLC

Scholarship:

Gracie Smith, Victor

Miles Graveley, Deer Lodge

Max Andres, Missoula

Raelynn Thomasson, Big Timber

Aidan Thompson, Deer Lodge

WLC Scholarships:

Cody Johannes, Huntley Project

Justice Betts, Missoula

McKenna Quirk, Missoula

Taylor Noyes, Broadwater

Irene Andres Memorial National FFA Convention Scholarship:

Rylee Fisher, Shields Valley

Holt Family National FFA Convention Scholarship:

Teasha Johnson, Victor

John Bliss National FFA Convention Scholarship:

Kinsey Warner, Judith Gap

COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS:

AMTOPP (*Association of Montana Turf, Ornamental, and Pest Professionals*) Scholarship:

Amber Reiner, Kalispell

Lars Ronning Memorial Scholarship:

Jaycie Rau, Fairview

Stockman Bank Next Generation Scholarships:

Isaac Sponheim, Richer

Bethany Lyford, Kalispell

Dr. Max L. Amberson Scholarship:

Brooke Johnson, Huntley Project

Vern Dahlstrom Memorial Scholarship:

Andee Baker, Park City

Murdoch's Scholarship:

Paytyn Wilson, Bainville

Montana Land Reliance Scholarship

Jerrica Bursik, Park City

**MABA/MGEA (*Montana Agricultural
Business Association/Montana Grain
Elevators Association*) Scholarship:**

Kyler Brown, Richer

Blue Shows Through Scholarship

Trenton Braaten, Broadwater

Leave a Legacy Scholarships:

Kaleb Starr, Deer Lodge

CDE Scholarships

ATMS – Noah Salo, Joliet

Agronomy – Caroline Roeder, Choteau

FAM – Joe Tatarka, Belgrade

Livestock – Walker Antilla, Joliet

Star Greenhand – Mackenzie Serrano, Roundup

State Officer Nominating Committee

Luke LaLiberty (Facilitator), Matt McKamey (Facilitator), Leah Graf (Facilitator). Tom Peterson, Wilsall; Jeff Kaufman, Bozeman; Kendra Lane, Cascade; Pat Kossler, Bozeman; Ken Walsh, Twin Bridges; Whitney Klasna, Lambert; Danielle Horan, Moore; Katy Cardwell, Forsyth; Bailey Gasvoda, Big Sandy.



Officers Selected: **Caroline Roeder**, Choteau - President; **Lucas Oelkers**, Culbertson - 1st Vice President; **Isaac Sponheim**, Richey - 2nd Vice President; Emily Evans, Fairfield - Secretary; **Andee Baker**, Park City - Treasurer; Anna Slivka, Winifred - Reporter; Kyla Andres, Missoula - Sentinel; and **Andrew Ferrat**, Broadwater - Parliamentarian.

Proficiency Awards

Ryle Elliot, Chinook - Ag Mechanics Repair/Maintenance
 Anna Kraft, Laurel - Agricultural Sales
 Nicole Stevenson, Joliet - Beef Production Entrepreneurship
 Leotie Whitehead, Richey - Beef Production Placement
 Cayden Rose, Gardiner - Diversified Ag Production
 Kyler Brown, Richey - Diversified Crop
 Abigail Stevenson, Hobson – Diversified Livestock
 Wyatt Day, Victor - Forest Management and Products
 Jean Blackman, Cascade - Outdoor Recreation
 Rachel Stevenson, Hobson - Sheep Production
 Kylee Billingsley, Missoula - Small Animal Production and Care
 Megan Bradshaw, Corvallis – Speciality Animal Production
 Andee Baker, Park City - Swine Production
 Kalten Hendrickson, Missoula – Wildlife Management

State FFA Degree

<i>First Name</i>	<i>Last Name</i>	<i>Chapter</i>
Paytyn	Wilson	Bainville
Sean	Loutzenhiser	Baker
Bradley	Kallevig	Baker
Terye	Noble	Beaverhead
Brayden	Hankinson	Beaverhead
Harleigh	Johnson	Beaverhead
Anthony	Tatarka	Belgrade
Joe	Tatarka	Belgrade
Kaydee		
Anne	TeSelle	Belgrade
Georgia	Wortman	Big Sandy
Bailey	Gasvoda	Big Sandy
Grace	Finke	Big Sandy
Erin	Taylor	Big Sandy
Tyler	Schwarzbach	Big Sandy
Makiko	Reisig	Big Horn

Laramie	Haug	Big Horn
Jacob	Husman	Big Timber
Tayden	Gee	Broadus
Beau	Kuhbacher	Broadus
Bailey	Smith	Broadus
Erick	McConnon	Broadus
Callie	Williams	Broadus
Andrew	Ferrat	Broadwater
Trenton	Braaten	Broadwater
Caleb	Fix	Carter County
Tori	Tooke	Carter County
Kolton	Lynn	Cascade
Mackenzie	Wombold	Cascade
Jean	Blackman	Cascade
Kyle	Evans	Cascade
Cord	Schneider	Chinook
Rachel	Gunderson	Chinook

Kendra	McMaster	Chinook
Ryle	Elliot	Chinook
Alden	Johnson	Choteau
Garret	Yeager	Choteau
Caroline	Roeder	Choteau
Desiree	Jones	Clarksfork
Tristan	Phillips	Clarksfork
Stephanie	Skorupa	Clarksfork
Jessica	Adkins	Clarksfork
Amber	LeBrun	Columbus
Jessly	Howard	Columbus
Richard	Ratzburg	Conrad
Emily	Seifert	Corvallis
Michael	McKay	Corvallis
Megan	Bradshaw	Corvallis
Lacey	Gregoire	Corvallis
Tristan	Labatte	Culbertson
Lucas	Oelkers	Culbertson
Kai	Underdahl	Culbertson
Carter	Nickoloff	Culbertson
Noah	Nickoloff	Culbertson
Augustus	Spradley	Culbertson
Shane	Trusty	Custer
Jordan	Calloway	Custer
Deanna	Stieber	Custer
Kaleb	Starr	Deer Lodge
Hans	Lampert	Deer Lodge
Jessica	Ayers	Denton
Morgan	Ward	Denton
Parker	Donaldson	Denton
Kein	Carpenter	Denton
Morgan	Zuidema	Electric City
Emily	Evans	Fairfield
Jason	Gibson	Fairfield
Trace	Gulick	Fairfield
Walker	Heckman	Fairfield
Rachel	Foster	Fairfield
Levi	Wipf	Fairfield
Berit	Bedord	Fairfield
Jaycie	Rau	Fairview
Alex	Young	Fairview

Chloe	Arndt	Fergus
Grace	Holzer	Fergus
Christopher	Fourtner	Forsyth
Brandon	Schnug	Forsyth
Mckenzie	Mork	Forsyth
Christaen	McKelvy	Fort Benton
Mackenzie	Dethman	Froid
Hunter	Krogedal	Froid
Haley	Labatte	Froid
Tyler	Wilm	Fromberg
Maxine	Rysavy	Fromberg
Boone	Foos	Fromberg
Joey	Hale	Geraldine
Ryan	Seaman	Geraldine
Bentley	McCullough	Geraldine
Caleb	Meeks	Geraldine
Grant	Finkbeiner	Grass Range
Mattea	Tucek	Grass Range
Reata	Smith	Grass Range
Chaykota	Christensen	Hinsdale
John	McColly	Hinsdale
Sarah	Boucher	Hinsdale
Claire	Stevenson	Hobson
Kristen	Vincent	Hobson
Colton	Hawkins	Huntley Project
Codie	Bowen	Huntley Project
James	White	Huntley Project
Brooke	Johnson	Huntley Project
Jacob	Siewert	Huntley Project
Leslie	Lile	Huntley Project
Dawson	Bender	Huntley Project
Lauren	Hoines	Joliet
Kerstin	Sweet	Joliet
Brianna	King	Joliet
Walker	Anttila	Joliet
Justin	Harris	Joliet
Noah	Salo	Joliet
Kallie	Zinne	Joliet
Mallory	Simons	Joliet
Ella	Thompson	Joliet
Madeline	Sutton	Kalispell

Lynde	Shriver	Kalispell
Mabry	Shepard	Kalispell
Amber	Reiner	Kalispell
Layton	Praxel	Kalispell
Kayla	Praxel	Kalispell
Cassandra	Praxel	Kalispell
Thomas	Bailey	Kalispell
Sophie	Desch	Kalispell
Julie	Duffie	Kalispell
Cole	Dykhuisen	Kalispell
Jordan	Horn	Kalispell
Morgan	Kelly	Kalispell
Whitney	Levanen	Kalispell
Bethany	Lyford	Kalispell
Tyler	Thiessen	Lambert
Seth	Prevost	Lambert
Jacalyn	Wright	Lambert
Elizabeth	Hill	Lambert
Anna	Kraft	Laurel
Ashley	Gee	Laurel
Ryan	Robertus	Laurel
Bethany	Holm	Malta
Shelby	Jones	Malta
Charlee	Rhodes	Malta
Thomas	DeJaegher	Melstone
Abby	Hansen	Melstone
Harry	Griswold	Melstone
Matson	McClure	Misson Valley
Jarrett	Bowman	Missoula
Kylee	Billingsley	Missoula
Brianna	Bergum	Moore
Sidni	Payne	Park
Josie	Jesson	Park
Jerrica	Bursik	Park City
Megan	Flemmer	Park City
Andee	Baker	Park City
Bryce	Oksa	Plentywood
Brenna	Oksa	Plentywood
Randy	Heppner	Plentywood
Kayla	Hagan	Plentywood
Tyler	Weeks	Plentywood

Kacie	Wacker	Plentywood
Riley	Hilyard	Plentywood
Shayna	Ellis	Red Lodge
Katherine	Jacobsen	Red Lodge
Leotie	Whitehead	Richey
Brylee	Brost	Richey
Chase	Brown	Richey
Kyler	Brown	Richey
Haley	Olson	Richey
Abbie	Smith	Richey
Andrew	Beeler	Rosebud
Austin	Quinlan	Rosebud
Cassie	Hull	Roundup
Tyler	Eliasson	Roundup
Renee	Parsons	Roundup
Rebecca	Nelson	Roundup
Cooper	Shaw	Roundup
Victoria	Tirado	Roundup
Irene	Johnson	Roy
Tyler	Haag	Ruby Valley
John	Gilman	Ruby Valley
Emma	Hill	Saint Regis
Ryan	Van Tine	Shelby
Jack	Marshall	Shields Valley
Molly	Engle	Shields Valley
Rodie	Keyes	Shields Valley
Tanner	Lykins	Shields Valley
Emma	Torgerson	Sidney
Kade	Anderson	Sidney
Hannah	Silva	Stevensville
Raelynne	Barnett	Stillwater Valley
Shea	Ostrum	Stillwater Valley
Dylan	Young	Stillwater Valley
Cody	Hanson	Sweet Grass Hills
Dylan	Postma	Sweet Grass Hills
Lane	Lerum	Sweet Grass Hills
Ashley	Rauser	Three Forks
Raelynne	Hagan	Three Forks
Taylor	Rochford	Three Forks

Enola	McDonald	Three Forks
Brooke	Mehlhoff	Twin Bridges
Aaron	Grabill	Twin Bridges
Kenna	Millhouse	Twin Bridges
Joseph	Peterson	Twin Bridges
Ayden	Anderson	Twin Bridges

Cole	Escott	Twin Bridges
Ashleigh	Guinnane	Twin Bridges
Teasha	Johnson	Victor
Wyatt	Day	Victor
Anna	Slivka	Winifred

2018 AMERICAN FFA DEGREE RECIPIENTS

Sara Beth Malesich	BEAVERHEAD
Jerrica Shaylyn Gotfredson	BROADUS
Wade William Schneider	CHINOOK
McKade Elloit Mahlen	CULBERTSON
Logan Nickoloff	CULBERTSON
Beti Lombardi	DEER LODGE
Jacob Wallace Ayers	DENTON
Kaitlyn M Koterba	Electric City
Carter Storrusten	Electric City
Chloe Williams	Electric City
Lukas Johnson	HINSDALE
Allie Blain	JOLIET
Kyle W Deines	JOLIET
Danni Nardinger	JOLIET
Anthony James Songstad	JOLIET
Jayme Evenson	Kalispell
Kelsey Kraft	LAUREL
Zachary Proue	LAUREL
Victoria Emily Faith North Peigan	Little Big Horn-Lodge Grass
Natalie Arnott	MISSOULA
Jessica Ann Horan	MOORE
Ally Bummer	PLENTYWOOD
Aleecia Joy Eggen	PLENTYWOOD
JUAN Du-Pond	RUBY VALLEY
Ryan Jane Smart	RUBY VALLEY
Charali Wetherbee	RUBY VALLEY
Leah Aigner	SHEPHERD
Jake D Michels	SHEPHERD
Caitlyn Moran	SHEPHERD
Seth Rekdal	SHEPHERD
Bailey Dougherty	SHEPHERD
Dalla Flowers	SHEPHERD
Zane Lannen	SHIELDS VALLEY
Sierra Osborne	SIDNEY
John Power	WHEATLAND

Distinguished Service Awards

Mark Sinnard - Shields Valley

Honorary State FFA Degrees

Jared Long: MAAE President	Jaime Edmundson
Janice Cooper – Wheat Marketing Center	Koly Hertel
Aaron and Aleta Weidow	Jeff and Jenell Martin
Clarence and Lara Wildeboer	Roger and Carrie Clairmont
Kelly and Kristie Rutledge	Maria Crispin
Ruth Boedecker	Dave and Julianne Hill

Friend of the Foundation Award

Belinda Darlinton

State Convention Sponsors

Stage Sponsor	Alpha Gamma Rho Fraternity
FAM CDE Event Sponsor	Anderson ZurMuehlen
Vet Science CDE Event Sponsor	Animal Blessings Pet Hospital
Creed Speaking Event	Ann Newhouse
Agronomy Event Sponsor	Bayer Crop Science
Marketing Plan Event Sponsor	Billings Farmhand
Student Success Workshop	Bitterroot Stockgrowers
Vet Science CDE Event Sponsor	Cottonwood Vet Hospital
STAR Winners (Buckles)	Curt Robbins
Mechanics Scholarship Sponsor	General Distributing
Livestock CDE Scholarship Sponsor	Hubbard Feeds
STAR Greenhand Awards Sponsor	Jay Armstrong
STAR Greenhand Awards Sponsor	Lyle Armstrong
Employment Skills Event Sponsor	Mark & Joan Sinnard
Student Workshop 5 - Beef Quality Assurance	Merck Animal Health
Extemporaneous Speaking Scholarship	Miles Community College
Extemporaneous Speaking Event	Montana Agri-Women
FAM CDE Scholarship Sponsor	Montana Farm Bureau
State Degree Dinner Sponsor	Montana Farm Bureau
Parli Pro Event	Montana Farmers Union
Agronomy Event Sponsor	Montana Grain Growers
Vet Science CDE Event Sponsor	Montana Livestock Ag Credit

ENR Event/Awards Sponsor	Montana Range Days
Agriscience Fair (Plant Systems)	Montana Seed Growers
Agronomy Event Sponsor	Montana Seed Growers
Agronomy Scholarship Sponsor	Montana Seed Growers
Agronomy Event Sponsor	Montana Seed Trade
Agriscience Fair Awards	MSU College of Agriculture
Sales CDE Event Sponsor	MT Agribusiness Association Foundation
Star Greenhand Finalist Sponsor	MT Association of Agricultural Educators
Career Panel/Delegate and Advisor Lunch	MT Department of Ag
Forestry CDE Event Sponsor	MT Timber Legacy Foundation
Day of Service Sponsor	National FFA Living to Serve
Livestock Event Sponsor	Neal Family
Prepared Speaking CDE Event Sponsor	Northern Broadcasting
Livestock Event Sponsor	Northern Livestock
Day of Service Sponsor	Northwest Farm Credit Services
General Session Sponsor - Thursday	Northwest Farm Credit Services
Proficiency Awards Co-sponsor	Nutralix
General Session Sponsor - Saturday	Opportunity Bank
General Session Sponsor - Friday	Pioneer Meats
Meats Evaluation CDE Event Sponsor	Pioneer Meats
Parli Pro Awards	Ranch House Meats
Proficiency Awards Sponsor	RDO Equipment Co.
Student Workshop 7 - Chapter Officer	Reach Higher Montana
STAR Winners (Buckles)	Rock & Kristen Swenson
American Degree Awards	Stockman Bank
FAM CDE Event Sponsor	Stockman Bank
General Convention Sponsor	Stockman Bank
Native American Indian Program Awards Sponsor	Stockman Bank
Mechanics CDE Event Sponsor	Torgerson's, LLC
General Session Sponsor - Wednesday	Tractor & Equipment Co.
Mechanics CDE Event Sponsor	Tri-State Truck & Equipment
General Convention Sponsor	WestBred
Mechanics CDE Event Sponsor	Wichman Ag Supply
Sales CDE Event Sponsor	Wichman Ag Supply
Agriscience Fair (Animal Systems)	Wilbur Ellis
General Session Sponsor - Friday	Wilbur Ellis



Lainee Hill, Broadwater *State Parliamentarian* *Bigger Than You*

One thing that I love about FFA is all the amazing things you can do within it. Whether its Vet Science or Sales or Public Speaking there are so many opportunities to try and experiment with! And the cool thing is that no matter what you decide you love today, can be completely different from what you decide you love tomorrow. You can shift from a hard-core mechanics competitor to a cool and composed exempt speaker. FFA lets you find your passions and figure out where the passions are going to come from. But, above all of that, I love the last line of the FFA motto. Living to serve. If we can look outward at least a fraction of the time we look inwards this world would be a completely different place. Imagine the possibilities!

One of those competitions that I experimented with was Livestock judging. 10 classes, 3 sets, a barn that you can see your breath in even if it's 85 degrees outside, juggling whether you want to lose points on reasons or if you can stand a few minutes without a coat to give your set, 6 pencils in case you accidentally lose five of them, and NO TALKING. Yeah some of you out there struggle

with that one. Nothing can compare. I have been livestock judging since I was around 12 years old which was about 6th grade. Get this, the first set of reasons I gave was on a set of candy bars. 12 year old me was not impressed, mom said I would be looking at pigs not a half melted snickers and a Baby Ruth that was a little too powerful for its wrapper. Of course, the obvious top was the Recess. But I stuck with it and man did it take me some places! Each year I competed, my reasons scores improved little by little to the point my senior year, I was talking consistent 45s at most competitions. I was placing in the top ten at a few competitions, candy bar Lainee was in the past and I was rocking it. My team and I worked so hard that we won the state competition my senior and went on to win third place overall team at this past National Competition in Indianapolis! We were good. Cool right! Let me share a little secret with you. I HATE livestock judging Livestock Judging was not my passion. It wasn't even close to being my passion. I stuck with my team throughout the years because that's what a team does, they stick together. Don't get me wrong I was good but no matter how hard I worked I could not fully commit to the competitions. I wasn't there for me. In life we may be passionate about something today and two years from now, two months from now, two days from now we may want nothing to do with it. It is ok to change, its ok to gain and loose passions, its ok to try something and not like it! But, if we continue to follow those things that we aren't passionate about, if we continue to follow paths that we don't choose, if we continue to follow dreams that aren't ours, if we continue to do things to make others happy while sacrificing our own happiness, we will never truly succeed. We may do ok, it may seem like we succeeded, but we won't ever be truly invested in what we are doing. No matter how hard we try, if we aren't passionate about something we can't give it our 100%

We have to stop following other people's dreams and start following our own. We aren't guaranteed to succeed but, if we never try how will we ever know. I want you to think about what is holding you back from doing what you want to do? Really think about it. Is it the FEAR of not meeting expectations? Is the FEAR of failing? Is it the FEAR of not being strong enough? Think about what YOU....YOU! Not your mom. Not your music teacher. Not your basketball coach. What YOU really want to do. Now why aren't you doing it? We need to set aside our fear, hesitations and doubts and start having faith in ourselves. Martin Luther King once said "Faith is taking the first step even when you don't see the whole staircase."

I played basketball in high school. And, if you couldn't tell from my "graceful" fall earlier, I was not the star point guard. As a matter of fact, the only "guard" thing about me was that I was guarding the basket. Sterling Owens on the other hand has exemplified the guard position. You see, Sterling is exactly what her name implies, she is a diamond in the rough. From the outside, a team might think she was just an ordinary player. She wasn't on the starting five, she wasn't extremely tall, and she didn't score twenty points a game, so they didn't pay much attention to her when they prepped for our games. Unfortunately for them, that would be the mistake that would oftentimes lose them the game. Sterling would come off the bench like a momma cow coming out of shoot number eight. She was a force on defense. The mood of the game would change instantly. Sterling's first possession: steal, second possession: tipped the ball, third possession: flustered the guard. Sterling is like the fly that never dies and she will go and go and go until the final buzzer, no matter how tired she is. One time, in the first quarter of the game, a wild pass turned into a face full of leather for Sterling. No one thought much of it

until we were in the locker room at the end of the game. Sterling, from her chair in the corner, calmly says “guys, I think I broke my nose”. She played the entire game with a broken nose! That girl would do anything for her team and she NEVER GIVES UP. Her will to succeed is unmatched.

Just like Sterling never stopped fueling her fire, we have to constantly believe that we are capable of anything. We have to find it within ourselves to persevere when times are tough and to never lose faith. In basketball and in life we can either give up, give in, or give it all we have got. Sterling could have just as easily come onto the floor and matched the intensity of the game and played like an ordinary player. But she’s not ordinary. And neither are you. Nobody decides what you are going to do besides you. If we don’t start believing in ourselves now, when are we going to start? Tomorrow? Next Week? Next Year? Pretty soon we run out of “nexts”.

We need to start believing in ourselves NOW, start believing that we have what it takes to do amazing things NOW. We can’t doubt ourselves anymore. Doubt will never let us climb the stairs. It will always push us down. It’s ok to be scared, to not know what is going to happen next. It’s ok to step onto that staircase and not know where it leads. You have to know that whatever happens, you will be able to handle it. He (points up) has a plan for us, so how can we fail? You WILL get through it. You ARE capable. You ARE enough. So, what are you going to do, give up, give in, or give it all you’ve got?

How many people in here have a great hometown pastor? Yea, me too! Sometimes I sit around and think, “Man, Pastor Sandon must have been bonkers, absolutely bonkers to have stuck around for as long as he did.” You see, there were three things that I LOOOOVED about my church in Townsend. Number one, like any good Lutheran church, Wednesday night potlucks were a staple. Number two, Madison and I became the next Shania Twain and Reba Macintyre singing along during Sunday morning service. Number three, the highlight of my week, Confirmation Class. I remember this one time that the boys tried to lock Madison and I out of the parsonage. We came sprinting out of the church after them, trying to avoid being stuck on the porch AGAIN while they laughed at us from inside. Unfortunately for us, Maddy and I were still plagued with the awkward uncoordination of middle school life, and we did not win the race. We arrived at the front door, out of breath, only to find an unlocked house. That’s weird. Wary of what tricks the other two had up their sleeves we cautiously creaked the door open and stepped inside. There was no one inside. After a thorough sweep of the house we ventured into the basement where we found Zane and Brett locked in the “fuzzy room”. In other words, in their desperate flea to hide from us they had shut themselves into a dark room with no functioning door handle. This led to many power tools and a complete door removal in Pastor Sandon’s house. This was just part of what our confirmation class put our Pastor through. We spent three long years thinking of different ways to convince him to eat stale jalapeño Cheetos, hiding muffins around the house (and then sneaking back in to clean them up), breaking the fan during an intense game of orange baseball and so much more. We were the true cause of his gray hair.

While any normal person would have given up on us within the first week of class, Pastor stuck around. He not only stayed he made sure that we created a community of friends that would always have our backs. He made sure that we loved the Lord and that we learned as much as he could teach us in our short time together. He listened to us complain about our struggles in school and spent time with all of us making sure we were okay. He believed in us. Pastor Sandon was passionate about the Lord and loved teaching. He used his passion to serve something bigger than himself. He didn’t expect anything in return, he believed in us and that was enough.

We need to serve something bigger than ourselves, without any want for returns. Whether it’s Christ or FFA or your family or some other group, we have to give our service to something that we believe in. Giving because we believe. We have to be selfless leaders, selfless employees, selfless friends, selfless individuals. Just like Pastor Sandon’s purpose was to serve the Lord, we all have a purpose that is bigger than this right here. We were put on this earth to mean something to someone. We have a purpose. So what is your purpose? It doesn’t have to be profound. If you are a brother, a sister, a son, a daughter, a servant of the lord, a friend, an FFA member you have a purpose. There is someone out there for you to impact, to serve. We all have to work to make ourselves better so that we can make the lives of those around us better.

Here is an excerpt from Ephesians 4:1 – I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. We mean more than just us.

A lot of you are probably sitting in your seats thinking, “Lainee, you just told us literally five minutes ago to do things for ourselves. Now we are supposed to do things for other people? Is our State Parliamentarian a hypocrite?” *Pause for laughter because I’m hilarious* It is so important for us to do those things that we are passionate about. To spend every single day moving towards our own goals and our own dreams. If we spend our lives doing things that we don’t love then we aren’t really living at all. And we have to do that for ourselves, no one can do it for us. We have to put in the work, we have to put in the desire, and WE HAVE TO DO IT. But, none of that matters if you do it all for selfish reasons. You can be the best basketball player, the richest business man, the world’s greatest inventor it doesn’t matter. You have to believe in more, you have to do things for yourself to better other people. You have to have a purpose bigger than yourself. You have to give your service something that you believe in. You have to believe in something bigger than yourself. I believe in the future of agriculture. I believe in you. I believe I am on this Earth to serve Him (points up) and to love you. WHO are you living for? WHAT are you living for? What do you believe in? Montana FFA, I challenge you to believe in more!



Karli Blanchard, Colstrip ***State Sentinel***

Pursue Your Passion

It was freshman year - winter season of cheerleading and I was PASSIONATE. I was finally fulfilling my childhood dreams of following in my mother's cheer footsteps. On this particular day I was ready to prove that I would be one of the girls who received the coveted privilege of being chosen to travel to the divisional and state basketball tournaments to cheer on the Colstrip Colts and Fillies. 12 girls were allowed to travel, which equated to three stunt groups of four people. Two bases. One backspot, and one flyer. If you couldn't already tell by my height, I was a flyer. We were in a fairly new stage of learning stunts as a team, so the requirement for tournament travel was for each group to

successfully put up an extension. Which means the bases and backspots hold the flyer in the air with their arms completely extended. For reasons I still don't understand, my coach allowed every stunt group other than mine practice an extension before the day of reckoning when travel groups would be decided. When the fateful day came, our coach rounded us up at the end of practice and said. "Okay, now we are going to put extensions up. If it hits, then you are allowed to travel, if they all hit. We will take the three most solid groups. I. Was. Sweating. Every single group had all kinds of practice, except for mine. The first group went up flawlessly. the second took two tries, but they still made it up. The third group went up flawlessly once again. Then, it was time for my group to make our very first attempt at an extension. " Okay ready 5-6 set 7-8-1-OUch" I hit the floor. We tried again it fell again. We were given a third chance, and once again, I hit the floor. It was decided that my stunt group would not be traveling to tournaments, and my cheer season was over. I was crushed. I had struggled with this particular coach from the beginning of the fall season up until that point. I was convinced that she was the reason that I wasn't going to travel. I told myself (and my mom) that I was not going to be cheering the next fall. After brooding for the remainder of the school year (and most of the summer) I inevitably showed up at tryouts in August. The season began and I was terrified of how it would go, and how I would get along with this coach. The season went surprisingly well for our team as we grew and developed, although I kept my distance from the coach I so feared. She suddenly decided it was time to relocate her family to PA and left us with a replacement coach for the rest of the season. The season ended and we went through a couple of coaches until my junior year when my team was blessed with Kayla. She taught me that positivity and perseverance was the only way to pursue my passion and reach my goals as a cheerleader. Because of this, I got to finish my cheer career as a leader on my team and performing stunts on a higher level than I had ever thought would be possible.

The negativity and barriers I faced during the beginning of my time as a cheerleader turned out to be internal, as opposed to external. Upon realizing that it was up to me and not anyone else to reach my goals as a cheerleader, I was able to change my outlook on the situation. Instead of letting that negative experience define the rest of my cheer career, I discovered where my potential lied, broke free from all of the past negativity, and worked hard to pursue my passion.

Let me tell you a story of Maria Sklodowska, who was not much older than us when she began to maximize her personal potential to find her passion. In 1891, this young polish woman decided she was going to travel to Paris to study physics and mathematics, in hopes to follow in well-educated father's footsteps. She faced many challenges along the way, she worked as a governess for years before she

could begin to afford to pay tuition at the University of Paris, and nearly starved herself throughout the course of her education. She of course, persevered, and was eventually awarded two degrees in physics and mathematics. During the course of her studies, she met her husband Pierre Curie, a professor in the School of Physics. The pair bonded over their mutual love of science, and eventually went on to work together, making some of the most crucial discoveries of their time. Marie and Pierre Curie investigated radioactivity and discovered two radioactive elements, polonium and radium. Upon her husband's death Marie took over his position at the college, becoming the very first woman to teach there. Despite her long list of accomplishments, Marie faced constant obstacles. Men scoffed at her work simply because she was a woman. People ignored Marie's outstanding work in the scientific field, and questioned her intelligence, because she was a WOMAN! Considering we are celebrating 50 years of women in FFA by acknowledging some of the greatest women in agriculture, I think we can all agree that discrediting a person's work because they are female is pretty outrageous. Just like some of the greatest women involved in agriculture and science, Curie persevered and continued to be a prominent woman of science. She went on to become the head of the Red Cross radiological services and become the first woman to win a Nobel Peace prize. Marie was also the only woman to ever win TWO Nobel Peace prizes, as well as the only person to ever win in two different sciences. One of my favorite quotes from this esteemed woman says "Life is not easy for any of us. But what of that? We must have perseverance and above all confidence in ourselves. We must believe that we are gifted for something, and that this thing, at whatever cost, must be attained."

Marie Curie refused to listen to those who told her she couldn't live her dream. She proved those who sought to discredit her work, wrong. She knew her potential in both physics and math. She pursued her passion for science and became one of the most well-known scientists of all time despite what others said to her. This is something we can all accomplish in one way or another. Once we realize our personal potential, we are ready to pursue our passion.

The only way to successfully pursue your passion is to break free from negativity. This means staying positive during challenging times, whether big or small, is vital in using your personal power to break free from negative thoughts which lead to negative actions. My very good friend Josiah Chatterton from the Bushnell FFA chapter in Illinois, challenged what could have been a negative experience with perseverance, laughter, and positivity. You see, Josiah has a burning passion for music. He was on stage at the 90th National FFA Convention, right before a session during which he was to perform a beautiful, haunting solo during the ever powerful "America the Beautiful." If you've ever been to National Convention, then you know that pre-session is always full of hype and excitement. Naturally, the chorus members were on stage dancing to the cupid shuffle as it blasted over the loudspeakers. During the infamous "kick-kick-DROP" portion of the song, Josiah participated and, unfortunately, ripped his pants. Embarrassed but laughing, Josiah hustled backstage with his friend named Haven who happened to have safety pins in her jacket pocket. Haven hastily fixed Josiah's pants, and they both returned to the stage. By this point, everyone in the choir knew that Josiah had ripped his pants. The rest of the session ran smoothly, even Josiah's solo was incredible! But the snickers and comments about his pants ripping followed Josiah the entire week of National Convention. Despite the near R-rated event, Josiah returned to perform with the National Chorus the next year. The first few days of convention, Josiah was again not recognized by those who did not know him for his solo. People from other states he had never seen before came to him and jokingly asked "hey, aren't you the guy who ripped his pants on stage?" When talking with Josiah, he told me he was able to joke back and laugh with these people, even though, deep down, it hurt a little bit to not be recognized for his achievement. Unsurprising to anyone who remembered his solo from last year, Josiah earned another opportunity to perform a solo on the National Convention Stage. If any of you were at Nationals, I'm almost positive you will remember this.

As soon as members heard that lovely piece right there, Josiah had people coming to him left and right asking a new question. "Hey, aren't you the guy who sings the solo?" Because Josiah didn't let the negativity of others influence him, he broke free from unfortunate title of "guy-who-ripped-his-pants-on-stage" and became someone who received a standing ovation from thousands of FFA members.

Josiah used self-confidence and positivity to pursue his passion for music and turned positive thoughts into positive actions with an incredible outcome.

We can all do this every single day whether you are anxious about that upcoming test, or simply have been told that you won't do well at something you love, you can pursue your passion by turning negativity into positive thoughts and actions.

Ladies and gentlemen, It is important to find where your potential lies. It is important to break free from the negativity around you. But above all of that, Montana FFA, it is **ESSENTIAL** that you **PURSUE YOUR PASSION!!**



Courtnee Clairmont, Mission Valley *State Reporter*

Stand Up

I like the market hogs 3-2-1-4..... I like the market hogs 3-2-1-4... no that doesn't sound right.... Okay I like the market hogs 3-2-1-4 (a little bit of improv). At this point I can't remember anything about the class we looked at thirty minutes ago. As I stood outside the door of McAlpin's classroom trying to have confidence to give one set of reasons I was shaking in my boots to say the least. I then had an idea, I thought it would be a wise decision to sneak behind the corner to give myself more time to prep what I thought was an **AWESOME** set. Unfortunately, my escape plan lasted for maybe 30 seconds and then I heard "Clairmont you ready to give your set?" Man, if I thought I was nervous before it sure was nothing compared to what I was feeling

now. As I walked to the classroom head hanging down low and notebook shaking in my hand, I slowly started rattling off my set.... I like the market hogs 3-2-1-4, I started with 3 because he's the wide based, heavy muscled, and, suddenly my eyes began to well up with tears. I tried to push through with my voice quivering but, I had to stop. As I looked up at McAlpin I was extremely embarrassed, because I knew I could do better than what I had just done.

I had let the fear of not being good enough stand in my way. I let self-doubt get the best of me. If I would have had more confidence. Or if I wouldn't have allowed what others thought of me or worse what I thought of myself stand in the way. I would have been able to push through that bumpy set. Even with not being able to get through that set I still learned a valuable lesson..... In order to get better **you have to have grit**. Without grit you will never be able to make the difference that is needed.

Speaking of pushing through the hard times. This fall I made a friend in a very unexpected way at the John Deere Ag Expo. An older gentleman stop and asked Andrea and I for directions to another conference that was being held on campus. Now, before we continue this story y'all need to know what this man looked like. He was the kind of guy your Mom tells you stranger -danger because, he wore this long brown trench coat and had on a pair of shady sunglasses. I could hear moms voice in the back of my head saying, "Courtnee don't talk to him. (with the mom eyes going crazy.)" However, I still felt drawn to him and I had to talk to him. I wanted to help him find where his conference was being held. As we scratch our heads and thought of where he might need to go, our

conversation quickly began to shift. He began to tell us about his childhood and that he grew up on the outskirts of Powell, Wyoming, which made my jaw drop because, I attend college in Powell. As our conversation continued as he started talking about how lucky he was to still be alive. (pause) Seven years ago he was told some very devastating news. His doctor had diagnosed him with a rare skin condition along with cancer. He talked about how at one point he was taking more than three pills a day, hard tiring weeks of chemotherapy, and over the course of the next three months there was constant trial and error. Right when they thought the cancer was going to get better there was another downhill spiral. At this point he could have given up on his life instead of fighting to live. He then told us about how he finally came to the realization that he needed to throw out the pills and he needed to start living again. With this choice he began to feel stronger, he began to feel happier because there was no limitations on what he could do. Instead of fighting for his life he was now living his life to the fullest. When the doctors diagnosed him they had told him that he had only 6 months to live. It is seven years later and this gentleman is still living his best life. Sure, he may have to take a pill or two a day to get through but, he understands and values his life. As he wrapped our conversation, I asked him, "how do you keep going?" He got super excited and pulled up his coat sleeve and showed me his watch. Now, when an older man shows you his watch you're expecting to see a nice gold watch that has history behind it or that has been passed down from generation to generation. Instead it was one you probably could find in the child's department of Walmart. In the middle of the plastic watch there was Tigger off of Winnie The Pooh and he said, "Tigger is a fighter and that's what I am. And I will continue to always fight."

This gentleman had GRIT he never was going to throw in the towel just because the cards he had been dealt were not ideal.

When life throws us curve balls we cannot just watch the ball go by instead we have to step up to the plate and give the pitcher a fight and hopefully hit the ball out of the park. Whether we are told that we do not have much time to live, or we are told that we will not amount to anything we must always continue to fight. We have to understand our self-worth and have courage as we face the hard times. We have to be like Tigger and keep bouncing and fighting.

Become a Warrior in Your Community

Once we begin to understand that we can fight for ourselves we can then begin to stand up and make a difference, in our communities. In this world sometimes we have to be warriors in order to get the job done. There is a quote I heard that I really love, "Whenever you put on paint it shows the spirits that you are ready for anything, that your heart is good, that you're gonna fight for your family or whatever you believe in. This symbolizes that you are a warrior and a warrior means to be ready for anything and to fight for what you believe in." With this quote in mind I'm now going to ask that you all close your eyes. Picture your family....your friends... and the people you would do anything for. Now, picture losing all of them. How do you feel? Are you angry? Are you sad? Are left with questions? You can open your eyes now. What you just felt and experienced brought out your inner warrior, some of you felt sad and weak, while many of you were wanting to fight for those lives that you lost. It's the ones that we hold the closest to our hearts that encourage us to stand up and make a difference. Now, I want to tell you about a town that is just down the road from mine. The Arlee Warriors won the State Class C Champion Basketball team title. With every lay-up, jump shot, and rebound they were fighting for something bigger than just a title. Instead, they were fighting for a change in our society and their community. They had dedicated state to suicide prevention. In their community there had been many young lives taken and these young boys no longer could stand idly by and watch their community give up. They had created a video that addressed how it is time to become a warrior for those around us, we have to stand up as warriors, and win the fight against hopelessness. The warriors knew that they were making a huge statement with this video but, they also knew their friends young and old needed to know that they were not alone. Little did the Warriors know the type of impact that they were going to have on their community, state, and nation. This small project turned into something very large for a small town in Montana. Suddenly, people were jumping on board with the warrior movement. Even the New York Times had wrote up an article based off of the Warrior Project. The New York Times were sure to mention what the boys had said," one had mentioned that they were dedicating the tournament to all the families have fallen victim to the loss of a loved one due to the pressure of life. Another had said, "To all the youth on the flathead reservation, we want you to know we stand together." We. Stand. Together. (dramatic pause) Montana FFA we have to stand together when the going gets tough. We need to create a support system in our communities.

I need you to all really think about, how often you stand on the sidelines and watch your community go through hardships? How many times have you decided it was time to make a difference? What has been holding YOU back? Are you afraid that your idea will not be good enough? Are YOU afraid that your one voice couldn't make a difference? The real question is which one of you is the next warrior for your community? In order for our world to

become stronger we need warriors. Our society can no longer sit back and watch our communities go through sorrow. It is up to YOU to make an impact and stand up for what YOU believe in. We need people who are ready to take a stand and fight for something good. We will never be able to make a difference if we are not willing to let our voices be heard. We have to have the ability to persevere and overcome obstacles. Let's look back at the older gentleman that continued to embrace his hard times and make the most out of every day. It was his use of grit that gave him the strength to fight for his life. Or even like the Arlee Warriors that were not afraid to stand up and make a difference in their community. They showed no fear and extended out a helping hand. Each of us are capable of standing up for what we believe in and staying true to our morals.

Montana FFA, we are the warriors of this generation and it is time that you stand up.



Jacob Martin, Culbertson

State Treasurer

Don't Wave Your White Flag

White. Flags. White flags are commonly known as a sign of defeat. They are a sign of giving up. In my life, I know plenty of times I've felt like I've wanted to wave my white flag. So picture this: A 5'4" boy wearing an old pair of trail running shoes, basketball shorts, an old jersey, and looks like he enjoys pizza rolls a bit too much. This boy was me. In the 6th grade, I was on a basketball travel team with my friends in my hometown, Plains Montana. Now, anyone who knows me knows that I'm not the most athletic person. Typically, my short lived time on the court consisted of me running around the gym floor, looking like I had no idea what I was doing and trying to get open so my teammates would pass the ball to me. One morning at practice, while we were all in line to shoot free throws, I heard two boys behind

make fun of my prized running shoes. After that happened, I was devastated and I wanted to quit basketball. But when I told my mom about it, she told me I couldn't give up on a commitment I signed up for. So she took me to the mall and got me a pair of bright green Reebok zigs. I felt UNSTOPPABLE in my new kicks, I finished out the season. I even made ONE basket during the final game of the season. Now unfortunately for me, after my season of travel team, I figured out basketball wasn't really for me (although, it was probably fortunate for all future basketball teams I would've been involved in). But that's okay! Even though I wanted to give up, I couldn't wave my white flag. I eliminated the negative and focused on the good parts of basketball. No matter how hard it may feel, we can't wave our white flags. In order for us not to give up, we have to ignore the negative and find people we can lean on.

My junior year of high school, my high school music program was fundraising for a trip to Canada, and our hot commodity for sale was none other than quality Wisconsin cheese. We were selling some of the BEST cheese curds, cheese spreads, crackers, and meat. We had our fundraising sheets and I went and sold to my 'usual customers,' and I had even written down about \$75 dollars of food for myself. Now, during this fundraiser, I was going through a tough time in my life. My friends, family, and teachers started noticing a change in my behavior, I wasn't smiling or trying to crack bad dad jokes like I used to. I didn't feel like putting effort into anything anymore, I felt like giving up and doing nothing. I had nothing to strive for and I was ready to wave my white flag. One day my choir teacher, Mrs. Hekkel, came up to me in the hallway and asked me if I was doing alright. I simply told her,

"Yeah, I'm doing fine!" But she could tell something was wrong--she knew I didn't seem happy anymore, like I felt like I was giving up. On the due date of turning in our fundraising sheets, I went to the choir room to give it to Mrs. Hekkel, but before I went into her room, I crossed out my items on the sheet. I thought to myself, "I don't need to be spending all of this money, \$75 dollars is too much just to buy some fancy cheese that I'd probably consume in one night." I turned in my sheet, and Mrs. Hekkel says, "Hey, what's this crossed off of your sheet? Is that your name?" I said, "Yeah, I just don't need to be spending that kind of money, so I'm gonna save it." and she goes "Ohh gotcha, good for you!" So fast forward a couple of weeks and the cheese orders were delivered to the school. Mrs. Hekkel asks me, "Can you come with me to the fridge? We need to get some boxes moved into the choir room." So we mozy on down to the school fridge and went we get inside she says, "See that box? Grab it and open it up for me, my hands are full." So I open the box, and inside I find all of the cheese I was gonna buy for myself. All I could say was "Um, what is this lol" At that point in time, Mrs. Hekkel gave me a hug and said, "Jacob, I know that you are going through a tough time right now and it really sucks, but know that there are people who will always care about you and support you. None of the bad things matter, what matters is that you stay true to yourself and everyone around you." Honestly, that moment is one of the most important moments of my life. I will never forget it. Why? Because in that moment, Mrs. Hekkel valued me. She let me know that I had a purpose. I had felt like I had no one and I wanted to give up on everything, but I discovered Mrs. Hekkel was always going to be there for me. Hear me when I say this: Don't wave your white flag when things are getting tough FIND those people you can lean on and have with you as your support system. No matter how hard the times may be, the people who love you will always be there for you. Nobody finds success truly by themselves. There is almost always at least ONE person that was there to support them and help them achieve their goals, even when the times are getting tough. So find those people, and appreciate them for supporting you.

Alright let's take a pop quiz:

1. Name the 5 people with the most money in the world.
2. Name the last 5 Super Bowl winners.
3. Name the last 5 World Series winners.
4. Name 5 US senators.

How did you do?

Not many people would do very well. Let's try again:

1. Think about a few teachers who have helped you in school.
2. Think about some friends who have helped you during a tough time.
3. Think about who you like to spend time with.
4. Think about who has made you feel special.

Was this easier?

The people who make a difference in your life are not the ones with the most credentials, the most money, or the most awards. They are the ones that care. The people who let other people lean on them, and invest their time into the success of others, are the people that truly make a difference in this world. When you see other people who are ready to wave their white flags, support them. Hold them up, be that person who was there for you, and help them find success. Once you've found the people you can lean on, once those people have helped you find success, realize that it's YOUR turn to be that someone who supports other people. See those people who are ready to wave their white flags. Don't let them give up and support them.

We can't wave our white flags, no matter how we feel. When life gets tough, eliminate the negative and focus on the positive. Find those people you can lean on, and once you have the opportunity, be someone else's positive reinforcement. If you get a bad grade on a test, if you get in a fight with your best friend, if someone calls you ugly, gay, fat, stupid; if you find out someone in your family is sick or if you lose a family member, if you feel like you have nothing to live for--KNOW that everyone has a purpose. As bad as life can be, we can't give up. We can't wave our white flags. We have to focus on the positive things, rely on the people that care about us, and care about other people. Montana FFA, don't wave your white flag.



Mamie Hertel, Moore

State Secretary

Be Fearless

If there is one thing you know about me, it's that I love Taylor Swift. No matter what mood I'm in, there always seems to be a Taylor Swift song that puts how I feel and what life experience I'm going through into lyrics. Feeling down? Crushing hard on someone? Entering your freshman year of high school? Looking for a good cry on your high school graduation day? Not only does Taylor have a song for every mood, but almost every song she has written empowers her listeners to be brave. In fact, Taylor has an entire album dedicated to being Fearless. Now, many of you might not have listened to this album on repeat like myself, but it goes without saying that every day, we should live fearlessly. (emphasize)

Now, of all the 77 Taylor Swift that have reached the Billboard Hot 100, one song that has helped to describe my life experiences on numerous occasions is "Mean". For those of you haven't heard the

song, it's written about a person who tries to put Taylor down, knocking her off her feet, and making her feel like nothing. I'm sure we all have had mean people in our lives at some point. They're the ones who try to tell us we can't accomplish our goals, or even try to stand entirely in our way. Today, I want to share a story about not a mean person in my life, but a mean heifer. When I was in 8th grade, I had the opportunity to receive a heifer through the NILE Merit Heifer Program from Redland Red Angus near Hysham, Montana. Redland Red Angus was extremely kind to me in many ways, and even let me visit their ranch to pick out my heifer for myself from their herd. I remember the day when I picked out my heifer vividly. Driving up to Hysham with my dad and Darrell Stevenson on a cold but bright December day, looking at dozens of heifers, and deciding on a wider framed heifer that I thought would fit in well as a range cow in our herd back home. When I made my decision on the heifer, Bob Redland looked at me, with eyebrows raised, and asked, "Are you sure you want this one?" Now, a normal person might have considered this question with a bit of thought, as he seemed a little uncertain in my choice of heifer, but that, of course, didn't click with me in that moment. We loaded up the heifer, with a bit of difficulty due to the fact that her personality started to reveal itself in the loading chute that day and headed back home. On the way back, I decided to name my heifer Ruby, after a gem. Little did I know she was anything but a gem. When we arrived home, I quickly discovered that halter breaking this heifer would be a difficult task. Ruby was highly aggressive, and even broke several panels in our corrals. One night, after Ruby injured herself on one of the aforementioned panels, I sat in the barn with my Grandpa, watching Ruby strike at the ground with her hooves, breathing heavily and angrily at us. My grandpa turned to look at me and said "Mamie, I think you better send this one back." Now, while I was having doubts about how I was going to halter break this heifer, this comment from my grandpa pushed me to want to overcome the challenge with Ruby more.

For a year, I worked constantly with Ruby, with the help of my dad. The following November, I was able to show her at the NILE, overcoming the challenge of Ruby. Reaching that point was not easy, however. It took many hours of frustrating work, but in the end, the feeling of overcoming the challenge of Ruby was overwhelmingly rewarding. Now, my time with Ruby taught me more than how to hold on tight to a rope as she drug me around the fairgrounds at my county fair. Ruby taught me that even though there are going to be challenges to overcome in life, challenges are worth overcoming. In fact, some of the best things in life come with challenges. College is a challenge. Relationships are a challenge. Owning a business is challenging. Life is a challenge. But it is a challenge that is more than worthwhile to overcome. FFA members, it is without a doubt that there are more challenges ahead for all of us than there are challenges behind us, and to overcome those challenges, we have no choice but to fearlessly face every challenge that gets thrown our way. Face challenges fearlessly.

Now, with challenges comes people who will doubt your ability to succeed. And let me tell you, I have definitely had a few doubters in my life. In fact, I've had a few that told me I would never stand on this stage. And

no, I am not talking about being a state officer. When I was in fourth grade, I LOVED to talk. I wasn't afraid to share my opinion or express my thoughts at any given moment, and you can bet I was always the kid with my hand raised to answer a question. One day in writing class, however, my teacher took me aside and told me she wanted me to see the school's speech therapist. Needless to say, confident 10 year old Mamie was shocked. I had never even considered the fact that I might have a speech impediment. That week, I was scheduled with Mr. Stansberry, the speech therapy provider. During our session, he gave me several worksheets, notecards, and exercises to work on. I went a few more times after that first meeting, but I seemingly wasn't making a whole lot of progress. On our last session that I went to, Mr. Stansberry looked at me and said "You won't be able to do public speaking. Your impediment is something that can be worked on but will probably never go away completely." As a fourth grader, I was devastated. As I said before, I loved talking, performing, and most of all, I loved the confidence I had in when I was speaking. Mr. Stansberry's words did not define what I chose to do, however. In 7th grade, I began creed speaking, which lead me into extemporaneous speaking, and now, I stand in front of you today. Doing exactly what I was told I wouldn't be able to do.

My mom has a saying that I like to tell myself every day, and it is truly a big contributor to everything I do in my life. She always tells me "Whether you think you can, or you think you can't, you are right." In fourth grade, I could've easily turned into the girl that never spoke, in fear of what others thought of the way I say my S's. I didn't though, because I was determined not to let my fear of other's opinions direct what I chose to do with my life. Now, some might say being bold (and a little stubborn) as a ten year old isn't relevant when it comes to the "real" world. I disagree, however. Who in here has suffered from lack of confidence? (everyone raises their hands) And who wishes they could be as confident and carefree as they were when you were ten? It's no lie that there are times when we all wish we could have a little more confidence and be a little more fearless.

Let me tell you, though, there are so many people sitting in this crowd that are fearless. Every day, you wake up, and you are ready to conquer the world. There is one special person sitting here with us today that has been the epitome of fearless, and I'm lucky to say I've known him my whole life, as he is my Grandpa. My grandpa has shown me how to live fearlessly every day, even in the oddest of moments. One summer my grandpa and I were riding in the combine together. We had just gotten into a new field, which meant that we couldn't dump grain until the end of the first round, since the grain cart doesn't have the space to drive up alongside you. As we reached about the $\frac{3}{4}$ mark of that first round in the field, a beeping noise resounded through the cab. It was the combine telling us we were rapidly approaching the maximum amount of grain that we could fit, and we needed the grain cart to empty us, so as to not overflow, and cause a mess of the grain. Naturally, my grandpa said we could probably finish the round. "Probably". The combine continued to beep at us a few more times, but my grandpa had no fear that we would be able to make it to the grain cart parked at the entrance of the field. Before long, I noticed through the windshield that some grain was trickling down. We screeched to a stop, but that only made matters worse, because the overflowing grain suddenly shifted forward, causing even more grain to be spilled. Now maybe you all think this story isn't the perfect example of my grandpa showing me how to live fearlessly, as that day ended in me climbing up on top of the cab of the combine to shovel the grain back in, but it is the perfect example to me of how my grandpa lives fearlessly, even in the little moments. While my grandpa and I chose to take the risk that day with the grain, there are times in life when we don't get to choose to be fearless. These last few months, my grandpa has not gotten the choice to be fearless. He has had to fight what so many other people have had to fight, too--cancer. Cancer is scary. But since finding out about this diagnosis, my grandpa has been nothing by positive for those around him. My grandpa is still cracking jokes at every opportunity possible, helping with the calves, and going to all the social events that my grandma loves to go to. He hasn't let the challenge of cancer define him, and I know that this challenge is one he will overcome.

You see, we all have to overcome challenges to truly live fearlessly. Brenda from the Fromberg FFA chapter takes care of her niece on a daily basis, at only the age of 15. Brenda lives fearlessly. Allie from the Hobson FFA chapter has had not one, but two torn ACLs in the just over a year, and yet she radiates positivity and happiness to all those that have the opportunity to know her. Allie lives fearlessly. Mattie from the Grass Range FFA chapter has enlisted in the United States Air Force. Mattie is fearless for our country. You see, being fearless is more than being brave for yourself. It's about being brave for your mom, dad, brother, sister, random strangers, classmates, teachers, cousins, teammates, coaches, friends...It's about being brave for everyone around you.

Montana FFA, be fearless.



Andrea Rutledge, Big Sandy *State 2nd Vice President*

Get Rhythm

If any of you have ever heard my incredible singing, you would probably agree with me in saying that I don't necessarily have the best rhythm. But there is a day that I remember particularly well when my rhythm was especially off. (pause take a few steps) It was June 15th the summer of 2010. My dad and I were headed to find a few missing pairs up at the summer pasture. I was beyond excited. I was going to get to spend the whole day with my dad and I was riding my new pony, Coconut. (get very serious) Now before I get any further into this story, there is one disclaimer I want everyone to know – ponies can be really difficult to stay on. At this point you can imagine how cool 9-year-old Andrea is feeling. She is out riding with her dad on her trusty steed, she was basically the next John Wayne. (act out John Wayne?) Well that was all going to change. Instead of just walking through the ditch like a normal horse, Coconut decided to jump the it. Since I was not expecting the sudden jolt, the jump caught me by surprise! That led to me falling off and on to my butt. Being the good mount that Coconut was, he stopped, looked at me and waited for me to pick myself up and get back on.

The search for cows continued all through the morning and into the afternoon. After some time of searching, we came to a hill, and my dad who tends to be a little competitive decided it would be fun to race to the top of the hill. As the race neared the end, my concentration was on beating my dad. That blinded me from seeing the hole that was in our path. Thankfully, Coconut noticed the hole and without missing a step he easily cleared it. . . . Andrea did not. But that didn't get me down. I bounced on the ground, jumped right up, brushed myself off and was back on my horse in no time. Only to hear my dad laughing at my fall, once again. My dad and I continued on that day, after many more miles in the saddle we ended up finding all of the cows. Low and behold I fell off a few more times that day. (Pause and walk a few steps) Seven to be exact, to no fault of my horse, I just really didn't have any rhythm that day.

Just because I fell off 7 times in one day doesn't mean that I had to stop riding. It just so happened on that day my rhythm wasn't perfect. I had to learn how to change it up and figure out my new tempo. At some point all of us will have to change up our own rhythm, but what matters is that we continue to search for our own unique rhythm in everything we do and everywhere we go,

There is one person that I think of when I think of finding rhythm wherever we go.

This year at GOLD Conference I met one FFAer that made the most out of the rhythm that was around her. Victoria didn't grow up in and around agriculture but sitting and talking with her you never would have guessed that was the case. Victoria lit up when she talked about FFA and her role that she was finding. You see, Victoria grew up in California, and 6 years ago she moved to Roundup and found her rhythm within the Roundup FFA Chapter. And I don't know how many of you have been to California and Roundup, Montana, but I can assure you the two places are nothing alike. Victoria took this opportunity in the blue jacket to become a leader, an advocate, and a role model. She now has plans to advocate for FFA and agriculture, helping it reach urban areas in Southern California where they are not exposed to our everyday life. After talking with Victoria, I couldn't help but smile to myself. Never once did she miss a beat when it came to talking about the organization she had grown so fond of. Victoria could have just as easily decided that FFA was not for her, but she took a chance at a new rhythm. If you know Victoria, you know she has an incredible rhythm that she shares with everyone she comes in contact with, and if you don't know Victoria, make it a point to meet her because she has a phenomenal song. Maybe you have found yourself in a situation where the rhythm around you isn't quite what you are used to. Maybe it is faster or perhaps it's a bit slower, what you are used to.

Think of the last time where you were unsure about what was happening around you. What was the first thing you thought of doing? (pause... let them think about it) It can be hard to change up your rhythm and find harmony with the new sounds around you, but it can be done! Listening to the music around you is how you create your incredibly unique rhythm.

I can think of many times when I almost missed out on some incredible music because someone that I knew missed a beat or wasn't quite in tune with me. A story that comes to mind is a story of two farmers,

There once was two brothers who lived on adjoining farms. They fell into serious conflict and this was the first serious rift they had had in 40 years of farming side by side. It began with a small misunderstanding and it grew into a major difference,

and finally it exploded into an exchange of bitter words followed by weeks of silence. One morning a carpenter came looking for a few days of work and the older brother, willingly put the carpenter to work. He said, "look across the creek at that farm. That is my neighbor, in fact, that is my younger brother. Last week there was a meadow between us and he took a bulldozer through and now there is a creek between us. I want you to build a tall fence, so I can no longer see his place." The carpenter nodded, understanding his job. He worked hard through that whole day. Measuring, sawing, and nailing. Towards the end of the day, the older brother could see that the carpenter had finished his job. When the farmer saw what the carpenter built, he was shocked. There was no fence there at all, in fact there was a bridge. Just at the same time the younger brother had saw what was now covering the creek. The younger brother ran to meet his older brother in the middle of the bridge, praising him for building the bridge even after all the things he had said. The two farmers begged the carpenter to stay, but he simply responded that he had more bridges to build.

Nobody has perfect rhythm, that is just a fact of life. Everyone, including ourselves, makes mistakes. It can be hard continuing to be around people when they make mistakes, especially if their mistakes affect our rhythm. However, it is important to look past those missed notes. How many of you have a favorite person that you go to when you are needing a really good quote? Well, mine is Zig Ziglar, and he has a quote that goes like this: "forgiveness takes the burden of hate, guilt, and bitterness off your back, and with a lighter load, you can climb higher and faster, and be much happier in the process." Life is only so long, it would really be unfortunate if you missed the opportunity to make music with someone just because of a few missed beats.

What bridges in your life do you need to build? What bridges in your life you need to cross? Maybe you are in a situation where you are the carpenter – you are helping to mend a relationship or you are one of the brothers – you have a difference with someone and instead of fixing the relationship on your own you need a carpenter. Next time you find yourself in a place where the soundtrack isn't sounding right, remember that we all get a few beats off at times, but never ever let that stop you from making harmony with those people in your life.

Each and every one of us was given a unique rhythm. Your rhythm isn't the same as mine (point at difference people in the crowd), and his rhythm isn't the same as hers (again, point at different people in the crowd). Nobody in here has the same exact rhythm. Where we find our rhythm is what creates our individuality. Victoria could have decided that FFA was not for her and she didn't want anything to do with it, but she stepped feet first into the opportunity. Just because our songs in life are not the same does not mean that they can't work together to create some incredible music.

b. Once you know what your rhythm is be true to your song. Not everyone is going to hear the music that you are making, they will only see a few beats. Take time to find your rhythm, be flexible when searching, and once you know what it is.....

Montana FFA LET YOUR RHYTHM LEAD YOUR FEET BECAUSE ALL YOU WILL HAVE TO DO IS FOLLOW!



Nathan Wildeboer, Missoula ***State 1st Vice President***

Why Not Me

If that sounds familiar, then you, like me have probably spent a few too many Saturday afternoons and late nights binging whatever movie or tv show recently piqued your interest. My love for movies and tv comes from a number of places, but ultimately, I can't get over the feeling of being drawn into another reality. While it can be fun to picture ourselves as the hero, always swooping in and saving the day, the world we live in is a little bit more of a group project. And one of the biggest tasks we've been given is to understand and respect those around us.

My high school had a bit of a strange schedule. Once a week, we had a 1 and half hours class, the length of almost 2 normal class periods. Now while most teachers used this long class for a longer chemistry lab or a complicated math assignment, my AP English teacher did something a little interesting. At the beginning of the year, we were presented with a list of controversial topics, ranging far and wide from the use of Guantanamo Bay after 9/11 to the internet of

things and technologies integration into our lives. After each picking a topic that spoke to us, we were tasked with creating a presentation that outlined both sides of the issue, presenting the facts, and allowing for our classmates to draw their own conclusions. After a few weeks of intense research and careful review, we settled into a weekly rhythm. Each week, the presenter was given up to 25 minutes to explain their issue before it was opened up to class discussion where anyone could provide facts, or their opinion. Now I found most of these discussions interesting, and a lot of the topics are items I still feel strongly about today, but one week sticks out in particular. We didn't know the topics ahead of time, so you can imagine my excitement and surprise when I discovered we would be discussing modern agriculture, and more specifically the use of animal products in our daily lives. As the presentation started, I impatiently waited for my chance to show off everything that I knew. But as the presentation went on, the girl presenting delved into her own personal beliefs. She was a vegan, and believed that the use of animal products for human consumption was unethical. Now, as I heard this, I began to furiously jot down notes, planning to make my stand and prove my expertise during the discussion section. But after the presentation ended and we entered a heated debate, I was surprised to learn just how many of my classmates were hesitant about the use of animals in agriculture. As we entered the last few minutes of class, I circled up with the like minded people around me and discussed how we were the only ones that really understood. A few days later I had all but forgotten the discussion, but whenever I saw that girl in the halls or in the classroom, I always thought of her as the "vegan girl who doesn't really get it". A few weeks later, our teacher announced that we would be headed to Paul's Pancake Parlor to celebrate the end of the school year, and our high school graduation. On the long walk to Paul's, my athletic physique put me near the back of the pack, chatting with my friends about our plans for the summer. Once we arrived, we realized that seating was scarce, and low and behold a few minutes later I was sitting face to face with the "vegan girl who just didn't get it". After a few minutes of small talk, I realized that this was my opportunity to set the record straight. After sidelining our conversation about colleges, I quickly launched into how my experiences around agriculture in 4-H and FFA had influenced my beliefs. But as we mulled over the ethics of GMO's and the practicalities of animal agriculture, I realized that I had made a mistake. I came into the situation thinking that I was the expert, the hero, trying to educate a helpless person and create another supporter of agriculture. But as our discussion took up the rest of breakfast, and then the long walk back to the school, I came to realize that she knew just as much, if not even more, than I did. I had reached my own conclusion about her and forgotten that her opinions weren't something that needed to be corrected, but were a part of who she was. While I thought that I was going to educate her and change her mind, I came to realize that we were two people faced with the same facts that had just drawn very different conclusions. How often do we assume that someone just doesn't get it because their opinion isn't the same as our own? How often are we listening to respond, instead of listening to understand? See when we listen to understand we open

ourselves up to a host of new relationships and experiences that can change our lives for the better. Who in your life should you be listening to?

My mom is one of my biggest role models, working harder and caring more than I ever thought possible. Recently, she's been working to support foster families and refugees, helping them to feel at home in my hometown of Missoula. Over the years, I've gotten roped into a number of different events, but one story really sticks out. A few summers ago, my mom called me up and told me about a family that was in need of assistance. Living just outside of Missoula, a single mother named Amy and her kids were living in an apartment filled with mold and a bunch of other issues the landlord was doing nothing about. After deciding to leave, the family needed to move all of their possessions to a storage unit down the road, but didn't have any of the vehicles, or manpower to make it happen. So my mom, my friend Jacob and I loaded up and were on our way to help. Once we arrived, we quickly got to work moving dressers, beds, and tons of boxes. Starting out uneventfully, I was sure we would be done in no time. But sure enough, seemingly out of nowhere the clouds darkened up and rain began to pour. As the job got more miserable, I grew more and more impatient, just ready to be done. I just didn't understand how someone could end up in their situation. I had made my conclusion about them, and was ready to move on. But after displaying my frustration to my mom, she explained the series of unfortunate circumstances and decisions that had led to Amy and her family landing where they were.

And while it hurt my heart to know that there were people in my community going through that, it was the relationships I built that really brought it home. You see when spending time with Amy and her family, I was brought face to face with the reality she lives every day. Dealing with an unreliable car, broken furniture, an overstuffed apartment, and no place to go. As if the past weeks weren't enough, the challenges she faced were still a treacherous path ahead. This family needed service, they needed a car, they needed an apartment, they needed clothes but more than all of that, they needed someone, to care.

Every day, we are confronted by ideas and people that don't line up with our own beliefs. This leaves us with a choice. Because when we take a step back, we realize that deep down, we are all driven by the same thing. The need to belong. There is a choice to be made when we hear of another young person struggling with the burden of mental illness. Choosing to care is understanding that while we may vote red or blue, running our country requires both sides to fight for what they believe in. You see there is a choice to be made when we see a classmate support PETA, there is a choice to be made when we pass a homeless woman on the street, a choice to be made when a chapter member celebrates Hanukkah not Christmas, and there is a choice to be made when we pass two men holding hands on the street.

How often do we arrive at a stance, reach our own conclusions, without truly understanding? If we truly plan on making an impact on the lives of those around us, we must first start by changing ourselves. Who around you could use someone that cares? Are you stepping in and making a difference or are you allowing your own preconceived notions to take you out of the game? Because as long as there are differences between people like you and me we will always have the choice to display compassion and understanding. The world around us provides countless opportunities to make a choice that can literally change someone's life. This year, you all have showed me what that choice can look like. This year, you all allowed me to grow through the good days, and the bad. And now you all get your chance to make a choice that will change the world. So what are you waiting for?



Morgan Weidow, Corvallis

State President

Catalyst of Hope

I love TED talks. A current item on my bucket list is to give a TED talk, right after skydiving and becoming proficient in a second language. Some of my favorite talks are, of course, the ones about science.

In a science experiment, there are interactions, reactions, and outcomes. In life, there are also interactions, reactions and outcomes. In some reactions, there are substances called “catalysts”. These catalysts *change the course of a reaction by beginning it or speeding up the process*. Catalysts are used to make everything from plastic to medication, and even used in our own bodies during digestion.

Just like the variables in a science experiment, in life, we can change the outcome by being a *positive* influence. The smallest actions can be a **catalyst of hope** in the lives of others. Don’t ever

underestimate the power that a single action or a single word can have on someone. Any small action can be a catalyst for hope.

So, another item on my bucket list is to visit Hawaii. Apparently, taking our whole family to Hawaii was on my parent's bucket list as well and January, I found myself and all eight of my family members sitting in airplane seats, as we flew over the Pacific Ocean headed for the tropical paradise. My parents rented a house right next to the beach and it looked so beautiful - but it was not what we expected. We get to the house, settle in and head to bed, excited to explore the beach the next day. The next morning, around 5 am, I woke up to my eight-year-old brother *screaming* in the hallway outside my room. My eyes shot open, I flew out of bed and ran into the hallway to find Reece, my little brother, staring into the bathroom, frozen in shock. So I peer into the bathroom and laying in the middle of the bathroom floor was a MASSIVE, I kid you not about the size of my fist, COCKROACH laying on its back and wiggling its gross little antennae as it struggled to flip back over. I look over at my brother and he is just glaring at this monster in a trance - like his young life is flashing before his eyes and a REAL TEAR rolls down the side of his cheek. So the humor of this scene whipped me out of my own shock, and what do I do? I whip out my phone out and document this moment on snapchat, because it’s obviously the logical thing to do next. I actually saved that clip just for you all.

As you can see, this was a pretty traumatizing moment for him. Only second to the time when we were snorkeling on that same trip and received an alert that a BALLISTIC MISSILE WAS INBOUND TO THE HAWAIIAN ISLANDS. But that's a story for another time!

So that first evening, after hours of playing on the beach and a few more cockroaches later, our family sat down at the dinner table. Reece was called on to pray over the meal, and so he starts out, “Dear heavenly father, thank you for the food and letting us get to Hawaii safe, please bless that there will be no more cockroaches on this trip. In Jesus’ name, Amen.” And we all sang in chorus, “Amen!”. After dinner, my mom and I were cleaning up and she asked me if I’d get up the next morning to scan the house for any more cockroaches before he woke up. She said, “I think this is a great thing to turn into a faith-building experience for him”. So, for the rest of the trip, we religiously got up an hour before everyone else and got rid of the extra critters that tried to join our vacation. My mom made it her personal mission to answer that boys’ prayers.

She influenced my brother’s experience by just a small action. Waking up an hour early to sweep up bugs didn’t mean much to us, and it was easy, but it was significant for Reece. He still talks about that cockroach, and to this day, thinks it is absolutely amazing that we didn't see anymore in the house. He’s here today though, so he knows the truth now. Sorry, mom. He is also one of the most faithful kids that I’ve met and I wonder if his faith would be just as strong if my mom hadn’t made it a priority to take action on the hope that he prayed for. Her small actions made his experience.

What if we always made it a priority to invest in the experience of others? What would the world look like if we were all cheerleaders for one another? **We should strive to want more FOR others instead of from them.** We know how it feels when people tear us down, and yet we still do it to others. Instead of tearing them down because of our own insecurities, let's celebrate them and do what we can to eliminate the roaches in their life. You have no idea what they are dealing with outside of school, or even in their own head; and through just a small action, you could literally be the answer to someone's prayers. Small actions like complimenting someone who might be insecure about their appearance, telling your teacher how much you appreciate them when she's having a rough day, or being generous with thank you notes for the people that enrich your life. I get that there are times when this is difficult. OR that even if you *did* want to do something for someone else, maybe you wonder if you can make a difference at all. But let me tell you why you're wrong.

You are powerful beyond measure

Exactly a year ago, I was sitting in those candidate seats. The day of the candidate cut, I didn't think that I would make it to the final round of interviews. I doubted myself, I thought my interviews were awful and I wasn't sure that I was a good enough candidate. I was in the lobby of the hotel, talking to my advisor, and one of our chapter members was with us. His name was Comen. He was a pretty shy kid, and this was one of his first FFA events. There was a grand piano in the middle of the lobby, and I noticed that he kept looking at it and trailing his fingers along the keys. I asked, "Hey Comen, do you play the piano?", he responded with a shoulder shrug and did a little (*finger waving*) and didn't say anything else. My advisor and I went back to talking and Comen sits down at this piano and starts playing an incredible song - like Beethoven's 9th symphony or something. I was speechless. Not only was it a beautiful piece, but this super shy kid was just playing his heart out like no one else was in the room. It was incredible. If you have ever made me laugh hard enough or seen me watch military coming home videos - you know that I cry very easily. So what did I do in the lobby of the hotel in front of dozens of members and advisors? I cried. Because I was so overwhelmed by the significance of this simple moment. I was so proud of Comen. I knew that I wanted to be a state officer to be able to participate in moments like with members and to empower them to do things like Comen just had. Because of what I saw and what I felt, and what I experienced in that moment, I was reassured in my ability to be an officer, in my intentions and the reason I was running again. I was made confident in my abilities.

I doubt that Comen knows what he did for me in that moment. But in what might have been a bold and scary action for him, an enormous impact was made on me. Like Comen, we are often faced with opportunities that might scare us. And I'm not talking about opportunities like trips or positions, I'm talking about small windows in time where we have the chance to change a life for the better - opportunities to make moments significant for someone. Like when you see a classmate sitting by themselves at lunch, you have the opportunity to make a connection. When you know your sibling is having a rough time, you have the opportunity to change their day. When you see someone struggling, ready to be done, *you* have the opportunity to provide hope.

My favorite poem, hanging up on my bedroom wall, is one by Marianne Williamson:

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate.

Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.

It is our light, not our darkness

That most frightens us.

You are a child of God.

Your playing small

Does not serve the world.

You are powerful beyond measure. While your playing small does not serve the world, I encourage you to **start small.**

We are not blind, we know that others around us struggle. Whether or not *you* have a desire to change this, *know* that your actions **-no matter how small-** can be the moment that changes a life. Be generous with your compliments, the thanks you give, go out of your way to let someone know you appreciate them. A simple smile, a small thank you, or a single word, has the power to be a catalyst of hope that keeps them hanging on and refuels their passion to do the same for others. We've all had someone who has made a simple moment significant for us. Whether it was your parents, a teacher, a friend, or a stranger, we've all been given a little bit of hope by a small act.

I've found that is often the things left unsaid that have the most impact. Everyone needs encouragement from time to time, no matter how on top of it they seem. All of us in this room have the power to be a catalyst. Don't miss that opportunity to provide hope. Don't get to a point where you find yourself saying, "I wish I had told

them how much they meant to me, I wish that I had intervened when I could have helped him, I wish I was nicer when I had the chance.” Our actions are catalysts and once we begin to act, hope is everywhere.

Just like the hope that Sofy DuPond of the Ruby Valley FFA chapter provides to fellow members as she constantly greets everyone with excitement and a smile. Like the hope that Kaleb Starr of the Deer Lodge FFA chapter shows to his siblings and peers by being an example of a loving leader, and just like the hope that Tori North-Peigan, alumni of the Lodge Grass FFA chapter provided to me through encouraging words and reassurance at a time when I doubted myself most. Once we begin to act, hope is everywhere. Wanting more FOR people means stepping in when we have the chance to help them and being generous in recognizing their value. **Know** that you are more powerful than you think.

One small act might only seem like a drop in the bucket, but the reaction it can have is immeasurable. Our actions can be a variable that influences the reaction and changes the outcome of someone’s day, or even their life. We can be a catalyst for hope.

Montana FFA, you are a catalyst!