

# **Convention Proceedings**

**91<sup>st</sup> Annual  
State FFA Convention  
Montana FFA Association**



**In-Person/Virtual Convention  
Billings, Montana**

## **State Officers**

Brooke Mehlhoff, President  
Twin Bridges  
Bailey Gasvoda, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President  
Big Sandy  
Chay VanDyke, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President  
Dawson  
Mckenna Quirk, Secretary  
Missoula  
Gracie Smith, Treasurer  
Victor  
Gracie Tooke, Reporter  
Carter County  
Max Andres, Sentinel  
Missoula  
Allyson Young, Parliamentarian  
Fairview

## **Special Guests**

Artha Jonassaint – National FFA Southern  
Region Vice-president  
Dr. James Woodard – National FFA Advisor



## **State Staff**

Jim Rose, State Advisor

## **FFA Foundation**

Gwynn Simeniuk- Executive  
Director  
Katharine Taylor - Program and  
Office Manager  
Payton Wilson – Communications Coordinator  
Jacob Martin - Marketing and Development  
Coordinator  
Saralyn Standley - Program and Events  
Coordinator  
Curt Robbins - Foundation President  
Columbus  
Scott Aspenlieder - Vice-President  
Billings  
Belinda Darlinton - Secretary  
Great Falls  
Mark Sinnard - Treasurer  
Wilsall  
Jay Meyer - Director  
Stevensville  
Jack Larson - Director  
Miles City  
Elle Patritti – Director  
Sheridan  
Tyler Noyes - Alumni President  
Townsend  
Bailey Gasvoda – Association 1<sup>st</sup> V.P.  
Big Sandy

## **Alumni Association**

Kelsey Kraft, Past President

Laurel

Tyler Noyes, President

Townsend

Heidi Froelich, Secretary

Park City

Emily Evans, Treasurer

Fairfield

Ken Johnson, Glacier District Rep.

Conrad

Nicole Senner, Big Muddy District Rep.

Richey

Judith Basin District Rep.

Unfilled

Sandy Evenson, Western District Rep.

Kalispell

Lori Kraft, Southeastern District Rep.

Laurel

Mike Tuszynski, Southern District Rep.

Broadview

Scott Lackman, Eastern District Rep.

Hysham

Kristen Swenson, Southwestern District Rep.

Livingston

Matt McKamey, Alumni Leadership Camp  
Director

Cascade

Jim Rose, State Advisor

Bozeman

Bailey Gasvoda, State Officer Rep.

Big Sandy



## **Convention Facts**

*This was the first in-person/virtual convention to happen in Montana. This was due to the Covid – 19 pandemic.*

# **Career Development Events (CDE) Results**

## **Agriscience Fair Winners:**

Animal Systems: Hailey Miles - Corvallis

Social Systems: Laila Smart/Natalie  
Cambell Corvallis

Power, Structural and Technology Systems:

Rudy Kummer/Wyatt Iverson - Bainville

Food Products & Processing Systems:

Own Dunn - Corvallis

Environmental/Natural Resource Systems:

Grant Wilcox - Corvallis

## **Agriculture Communications**

1. Cascade
2. Big Timber
3. Fairview

## **Agriculture Issues**

1. Corvallis
2. Park City
3. Shepherd

## **Agricultural Sales CDE**

1. Kalispell
2. Missoula
3. Forsyth
4. Belgrade
5. Shepherd

## **Ag Sales Individuals**

1. Joe Lackman - Forsyth
2. D.B. - Kalispell
3. T.B. - Kalispell
4. Brianna Rainey - Forsyth
5. Raey Hanke - Belgrade
6. Claire Standley - Missoula
7. Trevor Zimmerman - Missoula
8. C.M. - Missoula
9. Abby Knoll - Rapelje
10. Hailey Long - Kalispell

## **Agricultural Technology & Mechanical Systems CDE**

1. Miles City
2. Ruby Valley
3. Deer Lodge
4. Fergus of Lewistown
5. Huntley Project

## **ATMS Individuals**

1. Nolan Muggli – Miles City
2. Coleman Gilman – Ruby Valley
3. Tallon Hansen – Deer Lodge
4. M.S. – Fergus of Lewistown
5. Wyatt Muggli – Miles City
6. Trace Martin – Fergus of Lewistown
7. Aidan Thompson – Deer Lodge
8. R.M. – Miles City
9. Colby Caldwell – Ruby Valley
10. Hagen Rogers – Huntley Project

## **Agronomy CDE**

1. Shields Valley
2. Miles City
3. Stevensville
4. Kalispell
5. Winifred

## **Agronomy Individuals**

1. Sage Willis – Shields Valley
2. Ethan Bay - Kalispell
3. Matthew Slivka - Winifred
4. Joel Warneke - Winifred
5. Wyatt Isaacs – Miles City
6. Isaac Amezcua - Stevensville
7. Reace Lannen – Shields Valley
8. Jesse Isaacs – Miles City
9. Kayla Haigh - Stevensville
10. Andie Estes – Shields Valley

**Creed Speaking CDE**

1. Rylee Glimm - Kalispell
2. Grace Mosher - Shepherd
3. Emma Lou Slivka - Winifred
4. Jordan Leach - CJI

**Jr. Creed Speaking CDE**

1. Claire Murnin - Shepherd
2. Molly Gilbert - Shepherd
3. Raygan Carrol - Cascade
4. Jake Morgan – Clarks Fork

**Conduct of Meetings LDE**

1. Shepherd
2. Joliet
3. Miles City
4. Corvallis

**ENR**

1. Deer Lodge
2. Corvallis
3. Fairfield

**Employment Skills**

1. Lainey Kitzmann - Billings
2. Brianna Olstad - Shepherd
3. Lauren Kjos - Fairview
4. Gianna Boyd - Bainville
5. Katelyn Anderson - Shepherd
6. Hannah Griffin – Clarks Fork
7. Sydney Wolsky - Corvallis
8. Paige Bender - Conrad
9. Hannah Sundheim - Fairview

**Extemporaneous Speaking LDE**

1. Miles Graveley – Deer Lodge
2. Jake Chulyak – Big Timber
3. Joe Lackman - Forsyth
4. Luke Ostberg - Fairfield

**Farm Business Management CDE**

1. Big Timber
2. Bainville
3. Kalispell
4. Miles City
5. Corvallis

**FBM Individuals**

1. Rudy Kummer - Bainville
2. Brayden Young – Big Timber
3. Evan Heupel - Kalispell
4. Jake Chulyak – Big Timber
5. Brealyn LaRue – Big Timber
6. Matthew Slivka - Winifred
7. Payson Morgan – Big Timber
8. Kailey Brimmer – Miles City
9. Kaden Hansen - Bainville
10. Mackenzee Fabel – Ruby Valley

**Farm Bureau Speaking Contest**

1. Heidi Huber – Sacajawea Middle School
2. Sierra Skor - Bainville

**Floriculture**

1. Joliet
2. Miles City
3. Plevna
4. Forsyth
5. Corvallis

**Floriculture Individuals**

1. Thaddeus Miller - Joliet
2. Sophia Schumacher - Plevna
3. Olivia Collins - Joliet
4. Nyssa Schairer – Corvallis
5. Paige Shaw – Miles City
6. Jaeda Paul - Plevna
7. Claire Standley - Missoula
8. Caden Anderson – Miles City
9. Delaney Bauwens - Joliet
10. Emelia Schairer - Corvallis

**Food Science CDE**

1. Missoula
2. Belgrade
3. Shields Valley
4. Forsyth
5. Colstrip

**Food Science Individuals**

1. Aryn Blanchard - Colstrip
2. Brianna Rainey - Forsyth
3. Bridger Gouchenour - Conrad
4. Brianna Price - Forsyth
5. Jaden Boardman – Park City
6. Sage Willis – Shields Valley
7. Amy Chilcote - Missoula
8. Claire Standley - Missoula
9. Kayla Johnson – Shields Valley
10. Gus Turner - Missoula

**Forestry CDE**

1. Mission Valley
2. Belgrade
3. Deer Lodge
4. Forsyth
5. Beaverhead

**Forestry Individuals**

1. Jaylea Lunceford – Mission Valley
2. Robert McCrea – Mission Valley
3. Logan Lahaug – Mission Valley
4. Joey Teselle - Belgrade
5. Raey Hanke - Belgrade
6. Aidan Thompson – Deer Lodge
7. Makaila Learn – Mission Valley
8. Miles Graveley – Deer Lodge
9. Aubree Bohrer – Deer Lodge
10. Alex Tatarka - Belgrade

**Horse Evaluation CDE**

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

**Horse Evaluation Individuals**

1. Collin Cox - Missoula
2. Wyatt Dooley - Gardiner
3. Amy Chilcote - Missoula
4. Ashlee Schumacher - Belgrade
5. Morganne VanDyke - Dawson
6. Tenaya Welsh - Kalispell
7. Tess Shaw - Roundup
8. Cody Carson - Kalispell
9. Mackenzi Serrano - Roundup
10. Hannah Goffena - Roundup

**Livestock Evaluation CDE**

1. Big Timber
2. Miles City
3. Missoula
4. Huntley Project
5. Cascade

**Livestock Evaluation Individuals**

1. Jonna McCullough - Geraldine
2. Brighton Lane – Huntley Project
3. Sage Zook – Miles City
4. K.S. - Belgrade
5. Molly Ruth – Big Timber
6. C.C. - Missoula
7. Tallon Hansen – Deer Lodge
8. RaeAnna King – Big Timber
9. J.S. – Big Timber
10. A.S. - Missoula

**Marketing Plan**

1. Park City
2. Cascade
3. Lodge Grass

**Meats Evaluation CDE**

1. Missoula
2. Big Timber
3. Kalispell
4. Miles City
5. Grass Range

### **Meats Evaluation Individuals**

1. Claire Standley - Missoula
2. Shaun Billingsley - Missoula
3. Morgan Anderson – Big Timber
4. Bailey Lake - Kalispell
5. Raeanna King – Big Timber
6. Lilli Meigs - Missoula
7. Evan Heupel - Kalispell
8. Emma Hibbitts - Missoula
9. Jake Stene – Big Timber
10. Miles Graveley – Deer Lodge

### **Parliamentary Procedure LDE**

1. Kalispell
2. Shepherd
3. Bainville
4. Ruby Valley

### **Prepared Speaking LDE**

1. Matthew Slivka - Winifred
2. Brighton Lane – Huntley Project
3. Hailee Varner – Wibaux
4. Danica Soper - Hinsdale

### **Vet Science CDE**

1. Grass Range
2. Corvallis
3. Kalispell
4. Plevna
5. Miles City

### **Vet Science Individuals**

1. Morgan Corean – Grass Range
2. Nola Goss – Grass Range
3. Caden Seaholm – Grass Range
4. Abbi Nowicki – Miles City
5. Bailey Uecker – Fergus of Lewistown
6. Hannah Stolfus - Kalispell
7. Nyssa Schairer - Corvallis
8. Audrey Erbaugh - Corvallis
9. Daniel Dorsett - Kalispell

10. Dacy Buerkle - Plevna

### **Team Sweepstakes Winner**

1. Miles City
2. Kalispell
3. Missoula

### **Individual Sweepstakes Winners**

1. Claire Standley - Missoula
2. Raey Hanke - Belgrade
3. Miles Graveley – Deer Lodge
4. Luke Heupel - Kalispell
5. Amy Chilcote - Missoula

### **State Talent Contest**

1. Emily Cole - Roundup
2. Ryan DeSaye – Dawson
3. Lane Johnson - Plentywood

### **Star Chapter – GOLD AWARDS**

1. Beaverhead - **STAR**
2. Shepherd
3. Kalispell
4. Park City

### **Star Greenhand**

Big Muddy District: Andrew Boucher - Hinsdale

Eastern District: Sophia Schumacher - Plevna

Southeastern District: Grace Mosher - Shepherd

Southwestern District: Megan Otis - Gardiner

**\*Western District: Coleton Sherman – Mission Valley**

Glacier District: Jordan Leach - CJI

Southern District: Alyssa Robertus - Laurel

Judith Basin District: Reinhard Bold – Big Sandy

### **Star in Agricultural Placement**

**\*STAR\*** Matthew Slivka - Winifred  
Chad Hitchcock - Simms  
Kaden Hansen - Bainville

### **Star in Agribusiness**

**\*STAR\*** Lauren Niebur – Big Timber  
Peter Johnson - Simms

### **Star Farmer**

**\*STAR\*** Bailey Lake - Kalispell  
Joe Lackman - Forsyth  
Austin Swanson - Chinook  
Jake Brown – Winifred

### **Star Agriscience**

**\*STAR\*** Brealyn LaRue – Big Timber

### **Hall of Chapters**

1. Fairview
2. Little Big Horn
3. Ruby Valley

### **American Indian Presentation**

1. Little Big Horn 1
2. Little Big Horn 2
3. Gardiner
4. Valier

### **Reporter Event**

1. Sydney Hawks - CJI
2. Morgan Anderson – Big Timber
3. Abigail Beddes - Shepherd

### **Secretary's Book**

1. Claire Standley - Missoula
2. Gianna Boyd - Bainville
3. Brooke Grow – Ruby Valley

### **Scrapbook**

1. Sydney Hawks - CJI
2. Mackenna Hartle - Kalispell
3. Shawna Eggert - Richey

### **Treasurers Book**

1. Hannah Stolfus - Kalispell
2. Matthew Ellerton - Richey
3. Kaiden Batzler – Ruby Valley

### **BOMC Awards**

1. Columbus
2. Simms
3. Shepherd

# **Scholarships Awarded**

## **LEADERSHIP SCHOLARSHIPS:**

### **Pat Cavey ALC Scholarships:**

Stefan Shoemaker – Fromberg  
Annika Lunde – Wibaux  
Roselyn Daniel - Corvallis

### **Brad King ALC Scholarship:**

Sarah Lombardi – Deer Lodge  
Zoey Aller – Big Timber

### **Montana FFA Alumni ALC Scholarships:**

Katie Jackson – Corvallis

### **Doris Robinson ALC Scholarship:**

Rylee Pederson – Wibaux  
Clara Graveley – Deer Lodge  
Madison Birrer – Fromberg  
Madison Reynolds – Fromberg

### **Sam Cornthwaite Memorial WLC**

#### **Scholarship:**

Kaycee Corbin – Deer Lodge  
Roselyn Daniel – Corvallis  
Katie Jackson – Corvallis

### **WLC Scholarships:**

Kaycee Corbin – Deer Lodge  
Cadee Hess – Park City  
Hailey Miles - Corvallis

### **Irene Andres Memorial National FFA Convention Scholarship:**

Annika Lunde - Wibaux

### **Holt Family National FFA Convention Scholarship:**

Caden Seaholm – Grass Range

### **John Bliss National FFA Convention Scholarship:**

Layton Tucek – Grass Range

## **COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS:**

### **AMTOPP (*Association of Montana Turf, Ornamental, and Pest*)**

#### ***Professionals*) Scholarship:**

Makenna Hartle - Kalispell

### **Stockman Bank Next Generation Scholarships:**

Brealyn LaRue – Big Timber  
Cody Johannes – Huntley Project

### **Dr. Max L. Amberson Scholarship:**

Grace Aisenbrey – Clarks Fork  
Joe Lackman - Forsyth

### **Vern Dahlstrom Memorial Scholarship:**

Miles Graveley – Deer Lodge

### **Murdoch's Scholarship:**

Tiffany Ioder - Corvallis

### **MABA/MGEA Scholarship:**

Sage Willis – Shields Valley  
James Taurman-Aldrich - Fergus

### **Blue Shows Through Scholarship**

Lexie Dietz – Shepherd

### **Trailswest Bank Scholarship**

Kadyn Braaten – Broadwater  
Kayla Johnson – Shields Valley

**Servant Leadership Scholarship**

Riley Larson – Conrad

**Leave a Legacy Scholarships:**

Tess Shaw – Roundup

Amy Chilcote – Missoula

Jaylea Lunceford – Mission Valley

Matthew Slivka – Winifred

Zachary Solomon – Stanford

Rylan Signalness – Fairfield

Skyler David – Miles City

Megan Johnson – Broadus

Hannah Griffin – Clarks Fork

Morgan Corean – Grass Range

Bailey Lake - Kalispell

**Big Muddy Legacy Scholarship**

Laurel Sponheim - Richey

**SAE Grants**

Lance Vranish – Belgrade

Devan Birrer – Fromberg

Holly Vranish – Belgrade

Cody Prather – Big Timber

Jake Chulyak – Big Timber

Jayna Jackson – Corvallis

Ashley Young – Big Timber

Mackenzie Serrano – Roundup

Kamden Carr – Fromberg

Skyler Shima – Mission Valley

Alexia Feddes – Stillwater Valley

Shannon Todd – Saint Regis

Abigail Curtis – Ruby Valley

Layton Geary – Grass Range

Jasmine Brinley – Grass Range

**Bulls for Blue Grant**

Shayla Russell – Stillwater Valley

Owen Dunn – Corvallis

Wyatt Todd – Saint Regis

Laney Jones – Miles City

Coulter Rein – Big Timber

***CDE Scholarships***

ATMS – Nolan Muggli, Miles City

Agronomy – Sage Willis, Shields Valley

FAM – Rudy Kummer, Bainville

Livestock – J.M. , Geraldine

**Star Greenhand** – Coleton Sherman – Mission Valley

**Most Inspirational FFA Member**

1. Gus Turner - Missoula
2. Jordan Leach - CJI
3. Brianna Olstad - Shepherd

## **State Officer Nominating Committee**

Luke LaLiberty (Facilitator), Matt McKamey (Facilitator), Leah Graf (Facilitator).

Pat Kossler – Bozeman, Mike Phillips – Billings, Frank Witt – Billings, Tim Schaff – Fishtail, Morgan Rose – Dillon, Karissa Floerchinger – Cascade, Anthony Hernandez – Little Big Horn, Nora Godwin – Victor, and Trent Peterson – Red Lodge

Officers Selected: **Joe Lackman**, Forsyth - President; **Colton Young**, Absarokee - 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President; **Danielle Horan**, Moore - 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President; **Riley Prather**, Big Timber - Secretary; **Matthew Slivka**, Winifred - Treasurer; **Cody Johannes**, Huntley Project - Reporter; **Allison Denton**, Fergus of Lewistown - Sentinel; and Sydney Kirschten, Baker - Parliamentarian.

## **Proficiency Award Winners**

Matthew Slivka, Winifred – Ag Mechanics Repair and Maintenance

Max Andres, Missoula - Agricultural Processing

Colton Young, Stillwater Valley – Agricultural Services

Austin Swanson, Chinook – Beef Production Entrepreneurship

Miles Graveley, Deer Lodge – Beef Production Placement

Kaden Hansen, Bainville - Diversified Ag Production

Caleb Senner, Richey – Diversified Crop Production

Reace Lannen, Shields Valley – Diversified Livestock Production Placement

Rebecca Stroh, Chinook – Equine Science

Joe Lackman, Forsyth – Fiber/Oil Crop Production

Lexy Dietz, Shepherd – Goat Production

Jayden Goosen, Richey – Grain Production

Bailey Lake, Kalispell - Sheep Production

Gwen Collins, Shields Valley – Specialty Animal

Jacob Brown, Winifred - Swine Production

Peter Johnson, Simms – Turf Grass Management

## **State FFA Degree**

Gianna	Boyd	Bainville
Donna	Butikofer	Bainville
Kaden	Hansen	Bainville
Sydney	Kirschten	Baker
Dakota	Abbey	Beaverhead
Zachary	Craig	Beaverhead
Jack	Gibson	Beaverhead
Kylee	Lewis	Beaverhead
Malcolm	Peterson	Beaverhead
Tawni	Schmauch	Beaverhead
Chance	Story	Beaverhead
Raey	Hanke	Belgrade
Kiley	Smieja	Belgrade
Brealyn	LaRue	Big Timber
Amelia	Laubach	Big Timber
Samantha	Moore	Big Timber
Lauren	Niebur	Big Timber
Brayden	Young	Big Timber
Dakota	Holbrook	Broadus
Kaydin	Trent	Broadus
Kadyn	Braaten	Broadwater
Jasmine	Erickson	Carter County
Jessy	Barger	Cascade
Rebecca	Stroh	Chinook
Austin	Swanson	Chinook
Grace	Aisenbrey	Clarksfork
Sidney	Althoff	Clarksfork
Hope	Buessing	Clarksfork
Hannah	Griffin	Clarksfork
Brandon	Klaassen	Clarksfork
Kyra	Kroll	Clarksfork
Aryn	Blanchard	Colstrip
Jessica	Calovis	Columbus
Riley	Larson	Conrad
Tiffany	Ioder	Corvallis
Rylee	Jessop	Corvallis
Nyssa	Schairer	Corvallis

Ellis	Shortridge	Corvallis
Anissa	Bengochea	Culbertson
Kelsie	Williams	Culbertson
Brooklynn	Ragland	Custer
Charlee	Yochum	Custer
Cassandra	Brattain	Dawson
Aubree	Bohrer	Deer Lodge
Miles	Graveley	Deer Lodge
Tallon	Hansen	Deer Lodge
Noah	Squires	Denton
Justin	Forseth	Fairfield
Rylan	Signalness	Fairfield
Teajay	Fulton	Forsyth
Mariah	Harms	Forsyth
Kaylee	Herndon	Forsyth
Sadie	Kramer-Stahl	Forsyth
Joe	Lackman	Forsyth
Tara	McDermott	Forsyth
Brianna	Price	Forsyth
Nyla	Redding	Forsyth
Camron	Reilly	Forsyth
Cassandra	Schiffer	Forsyth
Michelle	Tallent	Forsyth
Rowan	Wester	Forsyth
Kaya	Parenteau	Froid
Jerzee	Carr	Fromberg
Brenda	Hassan	Fromberg
Emma	Bye	Geraldine
Jonna	McCullough	Geraldine
Loden	Idler	Hinsdale
Kaitlyn	McColly	Hinsdale
Danika	Soper	Hinsdale
Carson	Stevenson	Hobson
Berton	Detienne	Hot Springs
Gabby	Jarvis	Hot Springs
Cody	Johannes	Huntley Project

Connor	Coate	Joliet
Alaina	Harris	Joliet
Kelly	Lind	Joliet
Tori	Peek	Joliet
Jalyn	Songstad	Joliet
Gunnar	Ward	Joliet
Daisy	Becker	Kalispell
Thomas	Becker	Kalispell
Faith	Cheff	Kalispell
Matthew	Dall	Kalispell
Daniel	Dorsett	Kalispell
MaKenna	Hartle	Kalispell
Bailey	Lake	Kalispell
Hannah	Stolfus	Kalispell
Rachel	Bartz	Laurel
Kyle	Robertus	Laurel
Tamela	Abrahamson	Malta
Marcus	Knudsen	Malta
Natalie	Haycock	Miles City
Wyatt	Muggli	Miles City
Abby	Nowicki	Miles City
Jaylea	Lunceford	Mission Valley
Skyler	Shima	Mission Valley
Jeremy	Uhrich	Mission Valley
Amy	Chilcote	Missoula
Kadin	Kammerer	Missoula
Colter	McWilliams	Missoula
Danielle	Horan	Moore
Cole	Taylor	Opheim
McLain	Payne	Park
Nikolas	Pierson	Park
Terrance	Weimer	Park
Adam	Baker	Park City
Chason	Fenton	Park City
Rory	Shay	Park City
Jessica	Waldo	Park City
Jenna	Paul	Plevna
Andrew	Espeland	Red Lodge
Hailey	Neibauer	Red Lodge
Jayden	Goosen	Richey

Wyatt	Robbins	Richey
Caleb	Senner	Richey
Laurel	Sponheim	Richey
Erica	Dodd	Roundup
Gareth	Servis	Roundup
Tess	Shaw	Roundup
Colleen	Mosby	Roy
Colby	Caldwell	Ruby Valley
Mackenzee	Fabel	Ruby Valley
Coleman	Gilman	Ruby Valley
Jesica	Masshardt	Ruby Valley
Desaray	Tipton	Ruby Valley
Shaylar	MacGillivray	Shepherd
Shelby	Pitman	Shepherd
Gweneth	Collins	Shields Valley
Aidan	Jenkins	Shields Valley
Kayla	Johnson	Shields Valley
Reace	Lannen	Shields Valley
Hazen	Marshall	Shields Valley
Sage	Willis	Shields Valley
Carynn	Fredrickson	Simms
LaChrista	Hanson	Simms
Lane	Hinderager	Simms
Chad	Hitchcock	Simms
Peter	Johnson	Simms
Jake	Kapphan	Simms
Lucas	Kincaid	Simms
Breanna	Runstrom	Simms
Kelsie	Tadlock	Simms
Timer	Thomas	Simms
Mandy	Widmer	Simms
Alexia	Feddes	Stillwater Valley
Emily	Routen	Stillwater Valley
MaKenzie	Walton	Stillwater Valley
Mekeyla	Walton	Stillwater Valley
Colton	Young	Stillwater Valley
Hailee	Varner	Wibaux
Jake	Brown	Winifred
Matthew	Slivka	Winifred

## **2020 American FFA Degrees**

Andee Baker, Park City  
Kylee Billingsley, Missoula  
Jean Blackman, Cascade  
Trenton Braaten, Broadwater  
Molly Engle, Shields Valley  
Emily Evans, Fairfield  
Andrew Ferrat, Broadwater  
Kyle Glenn, Missoula  
Irene Johnson, Roy  
Daniella Leligdowicz, Custer  
Michael McKay, Corvallis  
Christaen McKelvy, Fort Benton  
Caleb Meeks, Geraldine  
Abbie Motley, Stevensville  
Carter Nickoloff, Culbertson  
Noah Nickoloff, Culbertson  
Lucas Oelkers, Culbertson  
Bryce Oksa, Plentywood  
Caroline Roeder, Choteau  
Cayden Rose, Gardiner

Rachel Gunderson, Chinook  
Tyler Haag, Ruby Valley  
Kayla Hagan, Plentywood  
Randi Hart, Simms  
Randy Heppner, Plentywood  
Riley Hilyard, Plentywood  
Mickayla Johnson, Hinsdale  
Brooke Johnson, Huntley Project  
Cord Schneider, Chinook  
Stephanie Skorupa, Clarks Fork  
Anna Slivka, Winifred  
Claire Stevenson, Hobson  
Nicole Stevenson, Joliet  
Kai Underdahl, Culbertson  
Kacie Wachter, Plentywood  
Tyler Weeks, Plentywood  
Tyler Wilm, Fromberg  
Peyton Wilson, Bainville  
Alex Young, Fairview

## **Honorary State FFA Degrees**

Lanette and Dan Young - Fairview  
Tom and Shelly Andres - Missoula  
Ryan Tooke - Ekalaka  
Johanna Tooke - Ekalaka  
Marci and Dave Smith - Victor  
Bill Lombardi – Deer Lodge

Dari and Dr. James Quirk - Missoula  
Christa and Morris VanDyke - Glendive  
Brandon and Kristen Gasvoda – Big Sandy  
Lenny Mehlhoff – Twin Bridges  
Jamie and Kelly Rowe - Dillon  
Scott Lackman - Hysham

## **Friend of the Foundation Award**

The John Deere Dealers of Montana

## **Lee Boyer Lifetime Achievement Award**

Bill Jimmerson

## **State Convention Sponsors**

<b>Sponsor Name</b>	<b>Program Sponsored</b>
<b>AgriSompo North America</b>	Ag Communications CDE, Career Conversations Seminar
<b>Alpha Gamma Rho</b>	Pre-session sponsor
<b>Anderson ZurMuehlen</b>	Farm & Agribusiness Management CDE
<b>Ann Newhouse</b>	Creed Speaking LDE
<b>Bank of the Rockies</b>	Ag Sales CDE Scholarship Sponsor
<b>BASF</b>	Food Science CDE Scholarship, Agriscience Fair, (Environmental & Natural Resource Systems),
<b>BNSF</b>	Ag Issues LDE
<b>Colleen Barnard</b>	Most Inspirational FFA Member Contest
<b>Collegiate FFA at Montana State University</b>	Pre-session sponsor
<b>Cottonwood Veterinary Hospital</b>	Vet Science CDE
<b>Curt &amp; Meredy Robbins</b>	Star Winners Buckle Sponsor
<b>General Distributing</b>	ATMS CDE, ATMS Scholarship
<b>Glacier Family of Banks</b>	General Session Sponsor - Friday
<b>Hubbard Feeds</b>	Livestock Evaluation CDE, Livestock Scholarship
<b>MaxAg of Montana</b>	Agronomy CDE, Proficiency Sponsor - Plant Systems, Networking Breakout Session
<b>McDonald's of Montana Cooperative</b>	Food Science CDE
<b>Merck Animal Health</b>	Vet Science CDE
<b>Miles Community College</b>	Extemporaneous Speaking LDE
<b>Montana 811</b>	Environmental & Natural Resources CDE
<b>Montana Agribusiness Association</b>	Ag Sales CDE
<b>Montana Army National Guard</b>	General Session Co-sponsor - Thursday
<b>Montana Association of Agricultural Educators</b>	Star Greenhand Finalists
<b>Montana Department of Agriculture</b>	MAAE Awards
<b>Montana Farm Bureau Foundation</b>	State Degree Session, Farm & Agribusiness Management CDE Scholarship
<b>Montana Farmers Union</b>	Gift Boxes/SAE Kits, Parliamentary Procedure LDE
<b>Montana Grain Growers Association</b>	Agronomy CDE, Star Farmer Award
<b>Montana Livestock Ag Credit</b>	General Convention Sponsor
<b>Montana Range Days</b>	Environmental & Natural Resources CDE

<b>Montana Seed Growers Association</b>	Agriscience Fair Co-sponsor, Agronomy CDE, Agronomy CDE Scholarship, Career Conversations Seminar
<b>Montana Seed Trade Association</b>	Agronomy CDE Sponsor
<b>Montana State University College of Agriculture</b>	Agriscience Fair Awards
<b>Montana State University Collegiate Young Farmers &amp; Ranchers</b>	Pre-session sponsor
<b>Montana Timber Legacy Foundation</b>	Forestry CDE
<b>Montana Youth Apprenticeship Partnership</b>	Career & Industry Panel, Career Conversations Seminar
<b>Neal Family</b>	Livestock Evaluation CDE sponsor
<b>Northern Ag Network</b>	Prepared Speaking LDE Sponsor
<b>Northern Livestock Video Auction</b>	Livestock Evaluation CDE Sponsor
<b>Northwest Farm Credit Services</b>	Days of Service Sponsor, General Session Co-sponsor - Thursday
<b>Opportunity Bank of Montana</b>	General Session Sponsor - Saturday
<b>Pima Medical Institute</b>	Vet Science CDE
<b>Pioneer Meats</b>	Career & Industry Panel, Career Conversations Seminar, Meats Evaluation CDE
<b>Ranch House Meats</b>	Parliamentary Procedure LDE
<b>Reach Higher Montana</b>	Career & Industry Panel, Career Conversations Seminar
<b>Rock &amp; Kristen Swenson</b>	Star Winners Buckle Sponsor
<b>Sheridan College</b>	Career Conversations Seminar
<b>Stockman Bank</b>	American FFA Degree Awards, Farm & Agribusiness Management CDE, Native American Indian Presentation
<b>TC Energy</b>	Ag Technology & Mechanical Systems CDE
<b>Torgerson's</b>	Ag Technology & Mechanical Systems CDE
<b>Tractor &amp; Equipment Co.</b>	Ag Sales CDE, Career Conversations Seminar
<b>Tri-State Truck &amp; Equipment</b>	Ag Technology & Mechanical Systems CDE
<b>University of Wyoming College of Agriculture &amp; Natural Resources</b>	Talent Contest, Career Conversations Seminar
<b>USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service</b>	Environmental & Natural Resources CDE
<b>Visit Billings</b>	Hospitality Sponsor
<b>Wichman Ag Supply</b>	Ag Sales CDE, Ag Technology & Mechanical Systems CDE
<b>Wilbur Ellis</b>	General Session Sponsor - Wednesday

## 2020 - 21 STATE OFFICER RETIRING ADDRESSES



### **Allyson Young, Fairview** ***State Parliamentarian*** ***Roots and Wings***

Does anyone else have that one thing that drives them absolutely crazy? One of those things you JUST BARELY witness and you are instantly mad, like slow walkers, loud chewing, or the word moist. I got a few of you out there with that one I can tell. Yeah? I know I did for the longest time. Mine started when... actually, I don't remember when my disdain for this started. I just know whenever I had to clean my room, I heard it. I'd walk in, look at the disaster zone that was my room (sigh), then from out in the living room I'd hear, "A place for everything and everything in its place!" My dad's favorite quote to use against me as a child. I HATED this saying. Mainly, I didn't want to clean my room. So, to guarantee that everything had its place, I threw open my closet

door, pulled open all the drawers under my bed, and shoved anything that would fit into those respective places. My room looked great until I needed to grab something. I'd reach into my closet and I would accidentally nudge something causing everything to spill out of my closet, and I was back to square one. Now frustrated, I heard my dad's saying again, "A place for everything and everything in its place," because he knew I did it wrong. Finally, I learned how to "properly" clean my room and I had a place for everything, and it wasn't shoved in the closet. We have similar times in life where we pack too much into each day, especially when we want to do everything.

Let's skip ahead to just before freshman year of high school. It was "Freshman Orientation" at Broadwater High School, and personally I didn't see the need to have a freshman orientation in a Class B high school of 200 kids, max, but I went because I had to. The teachers and principal went through their spiel and then we took a tour of the classes on our schedule. I searched up and down my schedule and looked at my dad, puzzled. "There's no ag class on here," I told him. The closest thing was Woods, and I didn't really want to take that class. Nothing against it, but I wanted to do FFA. After our tour I went straight to the school counselor and switched into the first ag class that worked for my schedule. Turns out that my first ag class wasn't your typical 'Ag 1' or 'Ag 2', at all. It was Natural Resources. Instantly, I was signed up, fifth period, first class right after lunch; it was going to be great or... maybe not so much; sorry, Mrs. Loughery. The first couple days of that class had me questioning if I actually wanted to stay there, not because of the class material, but some of the people in the class itself. It felt like none of the students wanted to be there. There were a lot of seniors who were just there to get their last couple credits. As a freshman, you want to learn from the seniors, but instead I felt like I was teaching them.

Now what would a freshman do when they aren't sure about something? Try something else, and that I did. I was involved in a lot of stuff throughout high school. I participated in football, pep band, National

Honor Society, and BPA. All of these things were great, and I had a good time with them, but they all had one thing in common. I had to make my own place within those groups. I had to find where I fit, what I even wanted to do. But FFA, that was different.

The first time I put on an FFA jacket was back in 2015 for John Deere Ag Expo. I met the bus outside Toston: white shirt, black jeans, black tennis shoes. Yeah, I didn't have much my first trip. I got on the bus and found my seat. My advisor walked up to me and said, "You need to try on one of these jackets." After going through a few chapter jackets we had on the bus that morning, we found one that fit just enough and a tie to complete the ensemble. I competed in only extemporaneous speaking that year, which was new from what speech experience I had before. I was actually super nervous for this event because I hadn't had any practice before that day. To be honest, leading up to the event, I was watching Netflix with my friend Louis. The time came where I had to go give my speech and I had two options of how I was going to get through the speech... because there was no backing out at this point. 1, Either my advisor was coming in with me to watch, or 2, someone from our chapter was going to have a video camera taping the whole thing. I did NOT want my first competition ever to live in infamy on camera, so my advisor came in and watched me. This was probably the most nervous I had ever been for a speech before. Sure, I had given 4-H speeches and demonstrations for about 6 years at that point, but this one felt like there was more behind it. After my speech was finished, my advisor asked me what I thought about the whole thing, and THAT was when I knew there was something special about this organization.

The next year, I met two of the most influential people, I think I will ever know... Albert and Ashley Koenig, alumni of the Belgrade FFA Chapter. While they were serving as state officers, I was a sophomore in high school, completely in awe of everything they did. They showed everyone around them their passion for agriculture and being a part of FFA, making everyone feel at home with a hello as they passed by or a multi-hour conversation while helping a CDE team practice. After getting to know them, I KNEW I had a home in this organization. Whenever I put on the blue jacket after that, it felt...right.

We as FFA members will always have a family here in the blue jacket, no matter where we go, no matter who we are. We can all bring something special to the table. You just have to give it a shot and find your place. "A place for everything and everything in its place." Montana FFA, where will you find your place?



## **Max Andres, Missoula** ***State Sentinel***

### ***The Little Things***

I'm going to start things off with a little quote from my good friend Ferris Bueller "Life moves pretty fast. If you don't stop and look around once in a while, you could miss it."

Let's think back to our first year in the blue jacket for some of us, that was freshman year for others, like me, in seventh or eighth grade. I remember being eager and excited for every contest, event, community service activity, and anything else that I could attend, especially the dances. Imagine 7th grade me. I was at least a foot shorter, and only about 10 pounds lighter. An

absolute UNIT on the dance floor. I would march right into the center where all the "big kids" were and have the time of my life, hoping that one day I could make a name for myself on the dance floor. And this feeling never went away. I remember my sophomore year, I spent every day after school for literally two months straight practicing my jitterbugging skill so that one day I could be just like Henry Smith or my older brother who was always tearing up the dance floor. I even started to write dance practices on the CDE practice schedule and they quickly became the most attended practices of the week. It got to the point, where our advisors started to worry that the only contest, we would win at state was the dance contest.

Even through all of my many miles traveled and events attended, my favorite memories come from the dances. Such a little part of FFA created such a big impact.

While I was tearing it up to "Apple Bottom Jeans" I never stopped to think of how many hours of dancing I had left and it was always over before I wanted it to be. It's the same thing with my time in FFA. I dreaded the thought of zipping this jacket up for the final time, but it always seemed further away than today. Time moves very, very fast. And it's okay to stop, take a moment, and simply enjoy life.

Since I was 6 years old, I have been showing animals, attending state conventions, and making friendships that will last a lifetime. However up until recently it never truly set in that this is my last year. And I know we all have similar stories to this, right?

Now, raise your hand or give a shout if you play or played a sport! (I'll raise mine too) if you raised your hand, you know how hard it is to prioritize between sports, FFA, school, and your social life.

Every year, the National FFA Convention is during my last football game of the season. I have attended nationals since 7th grade therefore I have always skipped my last football game knowing that there will be next season and another game or another sport. This past year I had the same mentality, but when I came back from Nationals, I realized that was it. That was the last football game I could ever (stress this word) play as a high-schooler and I missed it. It was gone, there was no dial that I could turn back to play in my last game. I was broken on the inside. I always said that I didn't like football and that I just did it because it was expected, it was something that my mom wanted me to do so she could wear the button, post on Facebook, and be a football mom. Now I know that I was lying to myself, I loved

the sport and I find myself even today looking for a way to experience football again. Before this year- I had never watched a whole football game from start to finish- now I have watched dozens. On Friday nights I started to play football with my brothers in Sigma Nu. Even now, I look for every excuse to play football again. But it was over, just like the dance when the clock strikes midnight. Regardless of what it is, the last of anything is bittersweet.

I felt this exact same feeling this past year at GOLD Conference when the interviewer asked me to take off my jacket as if it was the last time, I would ever wear it and then asked me the question, “Where would you be without it?”

I was stumped, that simple question threw me off. It was one of the hardest moments of my life to think that way. Where would I be without FFA? (pause) I honestly have no idea. It has been a part of me ever since I can remember. Even though I knew I could put my jacket back on after the 10-minute interview was over, it felt like forever.

In my interview, I rambled on about my history with FFA and then ran out of the room as quickly as I could. It wasn't until afterward that I began to realize how deep my roots are in this organization. Never once in my entire FFA career have I stopped and taken a moment to breathe in the air, the sounds, and the energy. As I reflected on my time in FFA after GOLD Conference I found it hard to remember the little things. Like all of the conversations that I have had with the people that I met over the years. I tried to change that.

Last year my chapter had the pleasure of traveling with the Deer Lodge FFA chapter to Fergus Mechanics and on that bus, I found what I was searching for. That meaningful connection came in the form of Rachel Lombardi. She is one of Mr. Lombardi's many daughters and is as sweet as can be. On my way off of the bus, Rachel gave me a slip of paper and wished me good luck. I said thank you and got off of the bus without a second thought. I was focused on the competition- memorizing how to build a rafter and what tools did what. I wasn't worried about what this little girl gave me. As I walked into the building, I looked at the paper I was given, it was a picture of a horse jumping over an obstacle and it said: “jump to first.” (Picture on screen). I was taken aback by how much time she spent drawing it and her generosity. This was one of the few times in my life that I have received something that took that much time and energy without a motive behind it. It was given with no hidden meaning, she wasn't trying to get anything out of it, it was just an act of pure kindness. It meant a lot to me to get that picture of purely good intentions so I put it in my wallet and still carry it around with me today. Every once in a while, I will pull it out to look at it and remember how something that seems so little could mean so much. Rachel, if you're in the audience thank you for being a wonderful and caring person.

However, Rachel's kindness didn't stop there! After the competition, I sat with Rachel to thank her for the picture and tell her how good of an artist she was. Later that same day again as I was getting off of the bus, she gave me another present- a handmade flower. That is when I realized how little things can have a big impact and that we can impact someone every single day. It's up to us to determine if it's positive or negative.

I challenge you to be like Rachel, to do things out of pure, good intentions because you never know how much it can mean to someone. Maybe it's holding the door open, complimenting a stranger, asking someone on the sidelines to dance, or giving someone something to brighten their day. Life isn't going to wait because you're not ready. A minute will tick by no matter how you use it. Let's use it to build someone up, make a memory, help a friend, or even yourself. A minute matters. Montana FFA, let's make the little things count.



## Gracie Tooke, Ekalaka *State Reporter*

### *Law of Attraction*

Like many of you, I took physical science as a freshman, and then biology as a sophomore. By the end of my sophomore year, I wasn't a really big fan of science. And then, \*pause\* junior year \*pause\* chemistry. I fell in love, with the periodic table, atoms, and the way these atoms bonded together. I learned, in chemistry, bonds are not formed randomly. They are formed with intention, pattern, and purpose for creating useful compounds. Now, let's step back and talk about the atom. The atom is the building block of life and is made up of three subatomic particles- the proton, the neutron, and the electron. The proton and neutron are what make up the nucleus, or the main part of the atom. The proton has a positive charge, while the neutron does not have a charge at all. The third particle is the

electron, which has a negative charge and is found in the clouds surrounding the nucleus. Atoms form bonds by using these charges to interact with each other. A bond only forms when there is a strong attraction between the opposite charges. When an atom has a large number of protons in its nucleus, it has a strong positive charge and pulls other atoms in that have a negative charge. So, when a very positive atom is pulling in a pretty negative atom, the positive atom is asking this negative atom to give share some of its electrons and form a bond. If we pause for a moment, we can recognize that humans are chemical beings that follow these same patterns. This evening, I would like to take a few minutes to explain how protons, neutrons, and electrons are so relative to how we live our lives and interact with others.

During my sophomore year of high school, whenever I put on my FFA jacket, I put on a character that deflected others. I had a large cloud that was full of electrons, and a very small amount of protons. I developed a character that I thought would be attractive to others. However, in this process I became dis-ingenuine and superficial, ultimately a social climber. I didn't realize this about myself until everything fell apart during state convention. I did absolutely terrible in all of my events and I started to feel bad for myself. Mrs. Banks, my advisor, was with me during this pity party and she simply asked me, "Why do you care so much about winning, or being perfect?" I was shocked, I mean who doesn't like winning? I eventually answered her saying, "Mrs. Banks, if I don't win, or if my name isn't announced, nobody will know me, or like me." In my mind, I thought I would practically be a neutron. Mrs. Banks quickly corrected me by saying, very firmly, "Gracie, achievements may make you feel good temporarily, but they do not define you. The way that you treat others defines you." At that moment, Mrs. Banks gave her energy to me and it felt like I shed a layer of valence electrons, a layer of negativity and an attitude that repulsed others. I then began to understand that vulnerability is necessary, as it allows us to acknowledge areas where we need to improve. We must understand that sometimes, when people bring attention to our electrons cloud, it often makes us want to go back to behaving like a neutron. However, we must remember that they would not be doing this if they did not value a potential bond. This requires being comfortable with being uncomfortable.

In atomic structure, and ultimately what makes a magnet work, is that electrons repel each other. Negativity repels people from our lives. When we turn the magnet around, we use the protons to attract and neutralize the negatives in our lives. Over this past year, I've seen several members pull others in on countless occasions. One instance being, my chapter visit to Ryegate. On this particular morning, my energy levels were

pretty low. I didn't know why, but it felt like I hit a brick wall. When we walked into the classroom, Chay and I began setting up in preparation for the workshop. The bell rang and the workshop was soon to begin. As members filed in, it was pretty evident that everyone was also stuck in this weird, and low energy sort of rut. It was when Cooper walked into the room that the group was immediately energized. He was so excited to introduce Chay and I to all of his classmates, tell us a little bit about them, and lastly, Cooper was eager to know more about us. In this moment, Cooper was using his positivity to help form bonds between previously unconnected atoms. He did this by breaking down each of our electron clouds which allowed our protons to be fully displayed. He was seeking to pull others in, and encourage them. We should all be more like Cooper. We should strive to make an impact on others by simply reaching out and showing genuine interest in who they are. We can no longer be put off by the electrons of others, but instead we use our protons to pull them in, show grace, and truly understand them. With this, a bond is formed.

Let me share with you the Tooke atomic theory that I have developed throughout the last several years in this organization. First, let me tell you about my friend, Joe Lackman. Many of you know him, competed with him, and many of you are like me- you've lost to him. Joe reminds me of the type of individual that, during my sophomore year, I would've thrown up a wall of electrons against for fear that I would not measure up. Joe is the perfect blend of protons, electrons, and neutrons. He knows when to allow his protons to create positivity in himself, and others. He knows how to utilize his neutrons to simply be a friend, without being either positive or negative, just supportive. He is not afraid to allow his electrons to steal some of our own in order that we may become more balanced individuals.

Next, I met Matthew Slivka at Alumni Leadership Camp in 2018. Matthew reminds me of an unassuming, and essential compound. There is no dangerous radioactivity. He has this unique combination of atomic structures that instead of drawing people to Matthew, draws Matthew to people. Matthew's greatest atomic characteristic is his ability to lift our negativity without getting caught up in our clouds. Matthew is one of those individuals that we don't mind being vulnerable with.

The third test of my atomic theory is Wibaux's own Hailee Varner. Under established atomic theory, the only way for an atom to become more positive is to shed electrons to a nearby atom. Hailee has the unique ability to increase her own positivity without having to push her electron cloud at anyone else. By continually encouraging others, Hailee forms strong and lasting bonds that maintain a positive charge.

Individually, Joe, Matthew, Cooper and Hailee, as well as many of you, have had a positive influence on my life. You have shown me that a truly profound impact is more than just the positives. I trust that through your own involvement in this incredible organization, have had numerous opportunities to interact, have showcased your protons, and helped others out by collecting a few of their unnecessary electrons. Remember also that neutrons are an important part of the formula; be that ear to hear, that hand to hold, and that shoulder to cry on and continue to grow and form the lasting bonds that only come from wearing a blue corduroy jacket.

Thank you, Montana FFA and may you be the atom that you were intended to be.



## Gracie Smith, Victor *State Treasurer*

### Making Magic

So, you found the remote, made your snack and finally get to put your feet up. Now what do you choose to watch? Maybe it's Star Wars, Greys Anatomy, a Disney classic, or the newest Netflix binge. For me...it's Twilight. I really don't know how this obsession began but I LOVE the twilight series. And not just twilight— Harry Potter, the Avengers, Avatar, and many other series have given me hours of entertainment, and shaped my life in many ways. Other than nerdiness, the underlying theme connecting all of these—is magic. All of my life I searched to find my magical world, a place where I could belong like in Twilight, find hero's, like the Avengers, and make lifelong

friends like Harry Potter. When I was in 7th grade, I found that magical place—FFA.

When I joined FFA I had a few immediate goals in mind; staying in a hotel on a school trip, the Dances, and winning Creed. What I didn't realize I would find, was a second family who would accept and support me. As Bella from Twilight says "My time as a human was over, but I never felt more alive. I was born to be an FFA Member." Okay, I may have changed that last part up a little...but you get the point.

As a 7th grader I was the youngest in my chapter composed mostly of high schoolers. But despite our age difference they immediately accepted me with open arms--It was just like when Bella apprehensively first meets the Cullens, but they already consider her a part of the family. My high school confidants showed me all that the FFA world had to offer. They would join me in racing through every part of the trade shows, and catapult into the isles for line dances during pre-sessions. They even put up with my insisting on carrying a bright pink, four-foot-long selfie stick all around National Convention. Together, our chapter created traditions, inside jokes, memories, and magic. As years passed, I became one of the upperclassmen and it was my job to introduce our new members to our silly rituals. Allow me to explain one of my favorites—"stealing" the *free* breadsticks at Olive Garden— a tradition I inadvertently began at my first Olive Garden experience on our way to the State Floriculture Contest in Glendive, Montana. As I walked out with the basket of breadsticks wrapped in a napkin "hidden" under my jacket, I heard our waitress shouting from the door "hey stop, wait!" I turned around with terror in my eyes, ready to confess my bread crime--when she handed Taylor her wallet next to me, and told us to have a great day.

It's sharing funny traditions like this, and supporting each other's quirks and unique personalities that define a family. FFA has given me a second family, a place to belong and totally be myself. There is nothing more magical than showing someone that they belong.

We all know the Avengers, a group of butt-kicking super heroes who are always saving the world. My Ag teacher, Ms. Tintzman is easily comparable to my favorite superhero, Iron Man. She may not be an eccentric billionaire—especially on that Ag teacher salary— but she does have the quick wit, perseverance, and desire to help any and everyone she can. Ms. Tintzman and I both started FFA when I

was a 7th grader. She was our newly-hired ag teacher, knowing about as much as I did about FFA. But within a few weeks, it became very clear that she would excel. Just like Tony Stark says “sometimes, you gotta run before you can walk”.

And that is exactly what she did. When I was 9 years old, I was diagnosed with Crohn’s disease. This disease causes me to get unpredictably sick. One year, when I missed officer interviews while I was hospitalized, I was devastated. It was a really hard time in my life, and difficult to find my strength. Ms. Tintzman gave me that, by including a 2nd Vice President, me, in our officer team. Assuring me that I had earned it, she believed that I would soon be back to being an officer and in-turn, so did I.

My advisor made the ag room not just a classroom, but a second home for anyone who needed it—even keeping snacks for after school tutoring and FFA practices. From all the late-night creed sessions with my favorite middle school members, to putting up with Lilly and I bringing a 24 pack of red bulls to CDE Day’s...and drinking them all, Ms. Tintzman made FFA a place where everyone could belong. And she kept us all in line, with the occasional threat to throw her prosthetic leg at us—another similarity to iron man.

Ms. Tintzman didn’t just wake up and decide to be a superhero, it was the decisions that she chose to make every day to invest in those around her that added up to create her magical powers. When you wake up every day, choose to make those differences. React with empathy, be understanding, and reach out to the people around you—be someone’s hero.

During Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows, dark times fall upon the whole wizarding world. Harry and his friends can’t seem to catch a break, as their world spirals out of control. The pandemic has felt a lot like the Deathly hallows, but as Dumbledore wisely said “happiness can be found, even in the darkest of times, if one only remembers to turn on the light.”

Turning on the light is exactly what my mom, Marci, did this past year. Becoming an empty-nester in a time where all of her organizations and volunteering activities came to a halt, my mom found herself with more free time than she had ever wanted. Instead of locking down and binging Netflix for 8 hours a day... she made a decision, she wanted to start making more art. She cleared a space in our mudroom and made a little art studio where she could spend some of that free time. Starting with some portraits of our animals, she then began to take requests. Making pastels for close friends and family members, portraits of their beloved pets. Not only did she find joy in having a project, and being able to do fine art again; but she used her gift to *bring* joy to others. I was blessed enough to be able to witness the reactions of many who were given pet pastels this year, and to say it brings a smile across every face in the room, would be an understatement.

My mom used her art to make magic in so many lives, during a time when we all needed to remember to turn on the light.

Turning on the light was critical for Riley Larson from Conrad when her family became sick with COVID-19 and it darkened her world--but she still found joy in every day. Luke Heupel from Kalispell has been a hero throughout his battle with cancer, and the entire Corvallis FFA Chapter showed McKenna and I that we belonged in their FFA family from the second that we arrived.

You can’t always control your situation, but you can control how you react to it. Make someone feel like they belong, be a hero to those around you, turn on the light. Montana FFA:

Never stop making magic



## Chay VanDyke, Glendive *State 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President*

### 1 for One

We've all had that one thing that we've dreaded doing. Procrastinating it until the last minute just to give it our best try at "not doing it." For me it feels like I do that with every homework assignment I have. It's times like these I hear my Grandpa's voice in my head telling me "even the dirtiest jobs need to be done by someone." My grandpa was always the first one to volunteer if something needed to be done. He gave his best effort to give help wherever it was needed. The impact he made didn't go unnoticed. My grandpa became my role model showing me why it's important to do your best and help your neighbor. Now let's take

a small trip to the past.

In 1914 a man was born at his grandparent's farm in Iowa. Growing up he worked on the farm where he was heavily involved in his high school wrestling, football, and baseball team's. He went on to Graduate from the University of Minnesota and eventually revolutionize many plant crops. One major accomplishment was his breeding technique of wheat, that worked to dwarf and increase the crops resistance to disease and fungi. Most of the wheat variety you see today exists thanks to his research. In 1941 he was rejected from the armed forces, but did his service developing a glue that would withstand the warm salt water of the South Pacific. His Adhesive made it possible for supplies to reach American troops freshly and safely eventually evolving into today's super glue and sealant. His name is Norman Burlaug. He credits his work ethic to his wrestling career in high school where he was always taught to give **103%**.

In 1802 Humphry Davy created the first real electric light. It wasn't until 1878 when Thomas Eddison first began to seriously research a practical electric light taking one idea to a new level. Today we light our world with technology that stemmed from his research. If you take a drive through rural Montana on a cool August evening you will probably come across a wheat field and a few lights on a tractor. These two revolutionary ideas working hand in hand to run our world. Two people, from different times, with very different ideas. Thomas Eddison and Norman Burlaug are just two examples of people who had a "good" idea. If we think about everything that we take for granted today started out as an idea. Today our phones update on average once a month. Each update bringing something new to your fingertips all with a purpose to make the world a better place.

The past is one of my favorite things to reflect on. As it's said best by Master Oogway from Kung Fu Panda "Yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery, but today is a gift. That is why it is called the **present**." Living in the present was something my grandpa excelled at. He never hesitated to lend a hand anytime a neighbor asked. It didn't matter whatever he was doing he would drop everything and give his best effort to get the job done. Now unlike me he didn't procrastinate his work. As soon as one job was done, another began. Each job done with 103% effort and my grandpa wasn't afraid to try things a new way. He always told me "if a job's worth doing, it's worth doing right. But there is always more than one way to skin a cat." My Grandpa taught me what it truly means to be a servant leader.

Looking back, it would have been just as easy or even easier for Burlaug, Eddison, or my grandpa to not talk about their ideas or not lend a hand. To just keep quiet and keep on enjoying themselves. But they too wanted to challenge themselves, give into their curiosity and give 103%. We all want to make life as easy as possible right? I mean who doesn't like sitting on the couch all day watching tik-tok.

The ability to exert and influence change on the world is an FFA members' forte. My Grandpa talked about his years in FFA and how beneficial it was to preparing him for his future. During my years in 4-H I always heard how FFA members left their marks on communities around the state and admired the passion they had to serve. It wasn't until my Junior year when I could understand the impact the blue jacket can make on a school and the community. Navigating the territory of a new FFA chapter was no walk in the park. We have to dive right in. My advisor threw us into various contests and we saw the other FFA members' hard work and commitment. **They went hard. I mean I have never had a ruder awakening than when I was** in my first state Livestock judging contest as an FFA member. Now I was no newbie to judging livestock....but I would have never guessed a Corduroy jacket would keep the cold better than a Yeti cooler. After that cold miserable contest, I had no idea why ANYBODY wanted to do that again. As I left, I felt exhausted--but I heard my grandpa in the back of my head saying "just because it's tough doesn't mean you give up." I kept my head up and had the time of my life at convention as I saw members, advisors, guests, volunteers, and state officers put 110% into every. single. thing they did. The ride home from convention instantly became a planning session. My chapter and I began brainstorming ways that we could build a better world in our community. For the first time I was able to experience the change true service could really make in a community.

Like Eddison, Borlaug, and my Grandpa we can challenge ourselves. Give it our extra shot and go the extra mile. Express your ideas, and don't be afraid of trying new things. We can only change the world in the present. Montana FFA, I leave you with this. How will you win your race? How will you lead? How will you change the world?



## **Bailey Gasvoda, Big Sandy**

### ***State 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President***

### ***Seeking Strength***

I used to ride this puppy for miles and miles! Okay, maybe not actually miles, but I did ride the heck out of this little bike! I would run out the door, in my little cowgirl boots, hop on this sick ride and pedal down the road to my grandparent's house. Let's talk about my outfit really quick though because let me tell ya, these boots were quite the fashion statement. To go with the boots though, you would find little Bailey out in the front yard wearing some sort of sundress, a cowgirl hat, and of course this little red bike dumped in the grass. I had a red rope

that I would swing above my head and "practice" so I could be a true cowgirl. I loved the song "cowgirls don't cry" by Brooks and Dun, because naturally, I was a cowgirl. I remember listening to it for the first time with my grandpa and from there, I never let those lyrics leave my mind.

One day, I hopped on this bike because I was going to take a spin and go see my grandparents. I “saddle my horse,” straighten out my cowgirl hat, and I head down the road. I peddle, peddle, peddle as fast as I could go, but I just so happened to feel a little extra bold that day. I take one hand off the handlebars, and begin to lift the other. Naturally though, I wobble and almost crash, but, that didn't stop me. I was going to ride my bike with NO HANDS, so I completely let go. (Pause) Now I like to think I made it pretty far, but realistically, I don't think I did. Before you know it, I have a mouth full of rocks, scuffed up knees and elbows, and my bike is tipped over behind me in the ditch. My little fearless self, got a good ole slice of humble pie from this little bike.

When I crashed, though, I was right by my grandparent's house. Embarrassing, right? So, I get myself up out of the road, stand my bike back up and hop right back into the “saddle”. I choked back the tears and rode right up to my grandparent's porch. I dump my bike in their yard, wipe off whatever gravel is left in my bleeding knees and then my grandpa opens up the door. He looks me up and down and says “Bailey, what happened?” Quick to respond, I say “Well, Papa, I kinda got bucked off.” I said that as I was choking back tears because MAN that wreck hurt! I look up at him, with tears starting to flood my eyes, and say “but Cowgirls don't cry Papa! They just ride, baby, ride!” In that moment he just chuckled and pulled me into his arms to comfort me but I was not going to cry, because that is NOT what true cowgirls do! Long story short, you could say Brooks and Dun had quite the influence on me because I never wanted to let myself cry. (PAUSE) All I ever wanted to be was strong. I knew it was “going to hurt every now and then, but If I fall, just get back on again!

All my life, I have always prided myself in the fact that I could crash on that little red bike and not cry. I convinced myself that since I could lift heavy weights in the gym, I was just strong. In reality though, I had no clue what it took to actually be strong. I had no idea what it meant to truly seek strength.

Throughout the past couple of years, strength has really come and gone in my life. There are certain moments where I feel incredibly strong, and others where I feel defeated and run down. Days where I struggle to get out of bed. Struggle to want to go outside, feel human, and connect with people. More often than not though, I find myself wanting to hide that I feel this way. I don't want people to view me as weak or see me as someone who is struggling. Because that's not who I am. I am supposed to be that little girl that gets back on the bike after she crashes. Be that girl who lifts heavy weights and is viewed as strong! But really, most days I don't feel like that. However, I find it alarmingly easy to put on a fake smile, go about my day, and pretend to be put together and unstoppable. For me, it is so much easier to just remember that “cowgirls don't cry” they just “ride baby ride.”

Now when I said that this past year strength has come and gone, I really mean it. Just a few months ago, I hit a *huge* pr in the gym. I was able to squat clean 35 more pounds than what I was doing a year ago, and that might not seem like a huge increase, but for me, that was a clear sign that I had gained strength. On the flip side of things, this year, I truly felt what it was like to feel my weakest. I got to a point where I was just going through the motions in life. I felt disconnected and was in this never-ending slump. I got clinically diagnosed with depression and severe anxiety. I got prescribed antidepressants and started having to go see a therapist every week. It sucked. It really did because I was not supposed to be this weak. I didn't want to be so defeated that I had to have someone help me be better. I just wanted to be strong and independent, but I couldn't seem to seek the strength that I needed.

But, within a few weeks, I gained a lot of progress. It took a lot of tears, time, and truth to get to feeling better but as I started to focus on how many incredible things I had in my life, I began to remember how strong I actually was. I thought about my family, my friends, my coworkers, my teammates, and all you members. I thought about so many members and that... is what would always push me to find the strength I needed. I would think about Riley Larson from the Conrad FFA chapter. I met Riley at

GOLD conference this year and I got to watch her grow so much in just 3 short days. Now, if any of you know what goes on at gold conference, you know how stressful and nerve wracking it can be. Riley was heading into her first interview and she would not stop psyching herself out. She kept knocking herself down and telling herself that she just couldn't do it. But somehow, Riley found her strength. She went into the interview room, and came out grinning ear to ear. She came out so confident and so strong and that inspired me to always come out of situations feeling strong, regardless of how scary they were. I was so inspired by her ability to seek her true strength, and because she did that, she was able to truly show just how wildly capable she was. I would think about 2 members from the Harlem FFA Chapter, Stan and Alayne. These 2 bright members attended John Deere Ag Expo in Havre. Neither of them felt confident going into the competition. I remember asking them if they were excited and they said "well, we really don't know what is going on but it will be okay!" They just smiled and proceeded to start the competition. As time went on, I glanced over and happened to see a very special moment. Alayne was stuck on a question and you could see the stress in her face, but Stan looked at her, gave her a big thumbs up and a reassuring nod, and she ended up completing the contest and both of them did so well! Alayne and Stan inspired me to seek strength in other people and to always remind others just how strong they are.

Now, it is scientifically proven that the greatest way to build strength is through resistance training. So, it should be simple. To be strong you just lift heavy weights and build your muscles. Easy, right? Let's think about that more. Resistance training. What actually is resistance? Resistance the act of opposing, or withstanding a force. We have to think about the times in our lives where certain forces are opposing our journey forward. The times where you simply feel defeated. Where you want to give up, and just feel weak. This force acting against our progress and growth is making us stronger. It is growing our "muscles" The force may make us feel weak, but it takes being your weakest to find out TRULY how strong you are. When you feel the most weight on your shoulders, that is when you are making those gains! Speaking of gains, let's think about the gym really quick. Imagine you just squatted a really heavy weight. You repped it out and got that workout done. When you walk out of the gym though, your legs really start to feel tired. Your knees wobble because you went hard! The next day you head back for another workout. You go back to the squat rack, because we ALL know that leg day is everyday right? You go to hit that squat below parallels, but then, your quads give out. You drop the bar, make the loudest bang ever, and everyone turns their heads to you. People then think "Wow did they REALLY just drop that? It's not even that heavy! They, clearly are not very strong...weak sauce!" The reality is though, you ARE strong. You lifted so much weight yesterday, but now all of a sudden, all you feel is weak. But think about that resistance you just pushed through. All that weight you lifted! Don't tell me you aren't strong! Get back on the bike when you crash; just ride baby ride! Push through fear and weakness with confidence, just like Riley. Remind others how strong they are like Stan and Alayne did. Hit those PRs in the gym! Montana FFA, push through that resistance and seek your strength!



## **Brooke Mehlhoff, Twin Bridges**

### ***State President***

### ***Brain, Heart, Spine***

Can anyone here tell me what a velvet worm is? Chances are if you can, you just might like nature documentaries as much as me. From velvet worms to mudskippers and pangolins to saiga antelope, there has always been something fascinating about the variety of life we get to enjoy. This interest started from a young age. As a special treat my brother, sister, and I were allowed to go down to our local library and pick a movie. Like most towns with a population under 300, the Twin Bridges public library movie section is... limited to say the least, which basically meant we could watch Oklahoma the musical, or a nature documentary. I remember one time in particular,

watching an episode all about the depths of the ocean. As I'm sure you can imagine vampire squid and yeti crabs were quite the shift from the gophers, cows and rattlesnakes I was used to. Although they were all interesting, one animal caught my attention more than any of the others. Jellyfish. They were absolutely stunning. (Pun intended) At the time I was perfectly content to enjoy the fragile little creatures for their beauty, but now looking back I can see that they serve as a valuable object lesson as well. Jellyfish, while breathtaking, aren't good for much. They have no brain, no heart, and no spine. We've all heard the phrase "stand up for what you believe in". But how do you choose what to believe in? It is so easy to just go with the flow and agree with the voices shouting the loudest. What you believe, about what's right and wrong, about the world around you, about your purpose in life; might just be the most important decision you ever make. It affects every single area of your life, from your goals, to how you treat people, and even how you choose to spend your free time. It all boils down to what you believe. That's why it's incredibly important to know the "why" behind what you believe in.

Throughout history there are countless examples of people who have stood up for their beliefs only to end up changing their mind once they get more information.

In the late 19th century, there was a running theory that there were canals on Mars. One astronomer by the name of Percival Lowell actually spent his entire career searching for and mapping out these canals. Night after night he would sit in front of his telescope and meticulously trace out all the lines across Mars's surface. He was convinced that these canals were made by extraterrestrial intelligence. He even wrote several books explaining his theories in detail. His work was peer reviewed and backed by many other well-known astronomers. But time and better telescopes made it obvious that no such canals exist. So, what was Lowell seeing? He had spent his entire career mapping the vein structure of his own eye. That's right, all those little lines across the surface of Mars were actually just an optical illusion projecting the blood vessels of his eye across the surface of the planet. If any of you are mapping the back of your own eyelids right about now, its, a great time to tune back in. Even intelligent, experienced, and trusted individuals, can put their trust in the wrong things. Because he believed that he was seeing proof of alien life on Mars he essentially wasted his life's work on something that didn't exist and went

down in history in a less than flattering light. How about you? Do you take the time to test your beliefs? Or do you just go with the flow? This story always reminds me of one of my favorite quotes by Charles Spurgeon, "If you want the truth to go round the world you must hire an express train to pull it; but if you want a lie to go round the world it will fly; it is as light as a feather, and a breath will carry it." The truth takes effort to find. Don't settle for convenience, use your brain, and work to ensure what you believe in is trustworthy and true.

Next, if you're going to make an impact on the world around you, you must have a spine. Have the courage to be kind to someone even when they have wronged you. Have the courage to step out of your comfort zone and try something new despite the possibility of failure. Have the courage to stand up for something, or even better, someone.

As a sophomore in high-school I took advantage of every opportunity to travel, from sports to academic competitions and of course FFA trips, if there was a bus leaving our school parking lot you could bet, I would be on it. On one of these trips, we arrived early and had time to sit and chat. The conversation soon steered to controversial waters, and as I listened to the kind of things, they were saying I knew I didn't agree. and when they asked me what I thought about it I said so. It didn't take long before some of the upperclassmen boys got pretty nasty. I didn't know what to do or say, when one boy, let's call him Sam, spoke up. Sam very simply said that he agreed with me. He was not loud or rude or mean. The ridicule swiftly shifted to him and for the rest of the trip I watched as the older group of boys continued to argue with and make fun of him. Sam and I weren't friends at the time and I still wouldn't consider him close but I will always respect and remember him for standing up and having a spine when I certainly did not. It would have been easy for him to keep quiet, to stay out of it, but I am so very grateful that he did not. Sam had both a brain and a spine in this scenario, but even more than that, he had a heart.

As important as it is to know the truth, and have the courage to share it, it matters just as much how you go about sharing that truth. That's where heart comes into the picture. We need to be loving and kind in our interactions with others. After all, people don't care what you know until they know how much you care. So, what does loving other people look like, anyways, well, according to my favorite definition in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7: "*Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth.*

*Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.*"

It is my sincerest hope that we will all come to know and show this kind of love.

Over the years FFA members from all across the state have amazed me with their wit, courage, and kindness. My 8th grade year a girl from the Big Timber FFA Chapter simply said hello to me during an agronomy competition, and made me feel at home in my blue jacket for the first time. My sophomore year a boy from Opheim FFA inspired me with his passion for agricultural policy and the future of farming. This year when I met Stephanie Leach from the CJI chapter I was moved as she explained why she decided to step up and become an FFA advisor to fill a need in her community. These folks and countless others have made such an impact on me and those around them just by reaching out for one moment. Even little acts like these can make such a large impact.

Sometimes it would be a lot easier to float through life, but we have been gifted with all the tools we will ever need to make a stand. Montana FFA remember to be caring and brave as you use your brain, your heart, and your spine.



***McKenna Quirk, Missoula***  
***State Reporter***  
***TA - DA***

The wind howled and my hands shook as I stood at the top of the mountain, peering over the drop off and down the mountainside. My dad had decided that it was time for my brother and me to ski down our first black diamond, a run that only experts are supposed to ski. I felt certain this was going to be the defining moment of my life... I was six. I built up my confidence and dropped in. I began quickly picking up speed, a huge smile spread over my face, and then BAM! My brother and I collided at max speed and started tumbling down the mountain. My nose smacked into my brother's helmet, and at the bottom of the run, after disentangling myself from my brother's skis, I realized my nose was bleeding. As any six-year-old would, I started bawling my eyes out. My dad knelt in front of Colton and me, handing me a snowball to hold over my nose, and asked us a question: "Guys, what do we say when we fall down?"

"We say 'ta-da.'" we answered.

"We say it with a little more excitement than that." my dad said.

"Well okay....ta-da!" we said louder.

"With your hands in the air!" my dad prompted.

I threw my hands in the air and yelled "TA-DA!" And just like that, I started to feel better.

My dad's rule about saying "TA-DA!" whenever I fell while skiing is not only a fun, simple way to handle a mistake, but it is a technique based on science. It has been scientifically shown that the simple act of smiling makes people feel happier. The University of Kansas published findings concluding that simply smiling can reduce the body's response to stress and lower the body's heart rate in stressful situations. This "TA-DA" technique takes this idea to the next level, we smile, we throw our hands in the air, and we yell! And this technique really works! Whether it was getting a bloody nose, somersaulting down a run, or falling into a ditch, no matter the circumstance, saying "TA-DA!" always

makes me feel better, helps me laugh at myself, and gives me the confidence to get back up and try again. Saying “TA-DA” helps us find the positive side of every situation, and gives us the strength to stand back up and move forward.

We have all doubted ourselves before. I can’t even begin to count the number of times I have doubted myself and my abilities, telling myself things like “there is no way I am going to place in this CDE....I shouldn’t even try out for that part, I’ll never get it....I will never get a chapter office.....I don’t think I can, so I won’t.” When I tried out for the Missoula Youth Orchestra in sixth grade, all I could hear as I walked into the audition room was that voice inside my head saying “you’ll never get in, you can’t read music, you’ll make a mistake...” Once I finished playing my solo piece my hands clammed up. Now, it was time to read music. At the time, I was only just learning how to read music. The notes on the page still looked foreign to me. I tried my best, working slowly through each measure. I waited for weeks to see if I had gotten in, and finally, my mom received the fateful email. “Congratulations! We can’t wait to see you in rehearsal!” I had gotten in! When I showed up for rehearsal I started looking for my nametag to see where I had been seated. Nothing in the first row, where the most advanced players sat, nothing in the second row....I could not find my name. I asked the conductor where I was seated, and he pointed to the second to last chair in the very back of the second violin section, which was not the place I wanted to be. Awkwardly I made my way through the crowded music stands and chairs to get to my seat. I sat down and started unpacking my violin. I felt a tap on my shoulder and looked up to see the smiling face of my new stand partner. She was so positive and excited to be there, enthusiastically introducing herself to everyone around her. She made me laugh, and I decided that my stand partner and I were going to be great friends. I decided that I was excited to play with a group of such strong musicians. I decided to see the positive side of my situation, and to have fun! It was at that moment that I gave myself the power of “TA-DA.” Giving yourself the power of the “TA-DA” gives you the ability to tell that voice inside your head, “if this doesn’t go as planned, that’s okay....if I’m not perfect, that’s okay....I may not place in this CDE, I may not get the part, I may not get a chapter office, but at least I am here, and that is something to be excited about!”

It’s a common, natural thing to be afraid to make mistakes and to be afraid of failure. I know I am! Sometimes our mistakes can be a little embarrassing and silly, like how I didn’t know where the defrost button was on my car until this February. But mistakes and failures can also affect us deeply. They can affect our confidence, and convince us that it’s not worth it to get back up and try again. But saying “TA-DA” gives us a way to fight those fears. Saying “TA-DA” helps us bounce back from mistakes and failures, and try again. As a freshman at my very first John Deere Ag Expo, I felt pretty defeated. My advisor had signed me up for Creed Speaking the night before the contest - and I have never even heard of the Creed before! I spent hours trying to memorize it in my hotel room, writing it over and over again, saying in the mirror, reciting it in the shower. The time came to present the Creed to the judges...“The FFA Creed, by EM Tiffany. I believe in the future of agriculture with a faith born.....” and my mind went blank. I was so embarrassed. How could I show my face in that contest ever again? I sat, dejected, in the hallway outside of the judge’s room. But there were still other contests I needed to compete in that day. I had to put my game face back on. I stood up, brushed myself off, and thought to myself “TA-DA!” That wasn’t my best, but hey, it wasn’t my worst either! Saying “TA-DA” gives you a chance to laugh at yourself, and helps you decide to move forward.

There are already so many incredible and inspirational Montana FFA members who have decided to say “TA-DA” and turn every situation into a positive one. Ann Oschner from the Missoula FFA Chapter has chosen to say “TA-DA!” This past year, Ann ran for a chapter office and received the office of Reporter. Despite the unprecedented circumstances she and her team have faced this year, she has chosen to remain optimistic, come back from disappointments, and continues to bring light to the MCPS Ag

Center. She gives 110% of herself to everything she puts her mind to, perfectly embodying the “TA-DA” mindset. Wyatt and Colton Todd from the St. Regis FFA Chapter have chosen to say “TA-DA!” They competed for the first time in mechanics at this year’s John Deere Ag Expo. While they were a bit nervous, they focused instead on how excited they were to be at their first in-person FFA event. They worked hard, asked questions, and made sure to have fun. Ann, Wyatt, and Colton show us that adopting the “TA-DA” mindset is an active choice that you can make every day. It is something that you can control. In the moment, it may be difficult to quite literally put your hands in the air and say “TA-DA” with a smile on your face, but “TA-DA” is a mindset as well. In choosing to say “TA-DA” either out loud or in your head, you are choosing to see past your obstacles. You are choosing positivity, optimism, and self-assurance. You are choosing to make a comeback, to try again. You are choosing to say TA-DA.

Montana FFA, let’s all stand up...

Now --- throw your hands in the air.

Montana FFA, on the count of three, we’re going to say TA-DA.

One....two.....three - TA-DA!!!