

# THE AGGIE REPORT

SC Governor's School for Agriculture at John de la Howe

September 2022



## ANOTHER SCHOOL YEAR BEGINS



*Mr. Mann gives his students an overview of the greenhouse and adjacent fields on the first day of school.*

The third full academic year of the South Carolina Governor's School for Agriculture at John de la Howe has begun, and the Aggie family is continuing to grow in both numbers and excitement.

More than 70 students and their families gathered on our 1,310-acre campus in McCormick County over the weekend of August 6-7 as residential students settled into their cottages. A few more "daytime-only" students joined the resident Aggies on Monday, August 8 for the first official day of classes.

"We're happy that all our

returning students wanted to come back to school and seem to be excited," Greg Thompson, our school principal, said at the end of the first day of school. "We've got a lot of new things coming up for these young people, and I'm just a proud principal."

As the new school year began, Mr. Thompson announced a new theme for the 2022-2023 academic year: "Huddle Up!" It is a theme that stresses the value of teamwork.

"'Huddle Up!' actually means that we're all in the huddle together, and we have one goal,"

he said. "In order for us to reach our goal, we all have to be in the huddle and work together."

This year for the first time, returning Aggies will serve as part of a mentor program for incoming students to help them acclimate to the unique way of life at the Governor's School for Agriculture, the only residential high school in the United States dedicated to agriculture education. "I think they will provide a lot of good guidance to our new students," Mr. Thompson said of the mentors.

*continued on Page 2*



Coach Cann gives students a tour of the low-ropes agility course on the first day of school.

*Continued from Page 1*

Agency president Timothy Keown echoed Mr. Thompson's excitement about the growth of the student population, which has more than doubled from the first year of the Governor's School for Agriculture initiative in 2020. This year, in addition to homegrown Aggies from across South Carolina, the enrollment includes several from Georgia, North Carolina and Florida. For the first time, this year's crop of Aggies includes students from South Carolina's Pee Dee region.

"The good news is traveling fast about this amazing school, and we are thankful," he said.

Next spring, the school's second graduating class will

include 27 seniors, six more students than the inaugural herd of graduating Aggies.

"I think the kids that just graduated this past spring have set the bar for them," Mr. Thompson said. "I stressed to our returning students about even improving on the product we produced last year. We're excited about chasing some more scholarship money for these new folks for our upcoming seniors and these new folks coming in."

The Class of 2022 was awarded more than a half-million dollars in college scholarships. The school leadership is hoping to improve even on

that staggering level of early academic success.

"We have challenged the class of 2023 to earn \$550,000, a goal that I believe to be attainable," Mr. Keown said.

Even before the first day of classes began, the Governor's School for Agriculture was recognizing student success. A small corps of Aggies who represented the school at the South Carolina Jr. Beef Round-Up at Clemson University in early August were recognized at the year's first morning roll call.

"We are looking forward to an amazing year with more student accolades than ever before," said Mr. Keown.



## FOUNDATION CHAIR FEATURED IN NATIONAL MAGAZINE

Georgia Seabrook, chair of the non-profit South Carolina Governor's School for Agriculture Foundation, was recently featured in a cover story for a national forestry magazine.

Mrs. Seabrook was interviewed for the May-June 2022 issue of *Forest Landowner*, the signature publication of the Forest Landowners Association (FLA). Headquartered in Smyrna, Ga., the Forest Landowners Association is an advocacy group that supports the business interests of private forest owners.

The cover story, titled "Family Ties," focused on the 600-plus-acre family forest operation operated by the Mrs. Seabrook, her husband Cordes and their family here in McCormick County. The magazine spotlighted the 90-year history of the forested land purchased by Mrs. Seabrook's father John LeRoy in 1933.

According to Mrs. Seabrook, what writer Pete Williams - who composed the magazine profile for the trade journal - discovered during his five hours visiting in McCormick County was "this is 100 percent about family. Of course, we need to talk about the trees, and we need to talk about the business. But this about about family.

The wisdom of the shared family experience permeates the story, and Mrs. Seabrook sees parallels between the



profile of her family's story and the ongoing story evolving here at the Governor's School for Agriculture at John de la Howe.

"As my father-in-law would say, 'None is as smart as all of us,'" she said. "And if we can work together, we can work anything out. That's how we feel about the family and that's how

we feel about this place. These students, when I look at them, my heart swells. I look at the teachers and how much they pour into this."

Thank you to Mrs. Seabrook and her family for their support of this mission here at John de la Howe and congratulations on this national honor.



# MOVE-IN WEEKEND FUN



On the weekend before the first day of school, new and returning students rolled onto campus with their clothing and other gear for Move-In Weekend 2022. After settling into their residence halls, the latest crop of Aggies were treated to a block party featuring a DJ, cotton candy, snow cones and even an indoor fun zone with inflatables. What a way to start the 2022-2023 school year!!







## RETIRED AG TEACHERS HOLD REUNION ON JDLH CAMPUS



*These retired agriculture teachers from across South Carolina visited the Governor's School campus in August for a reunion.*

More than 15 retired ag teachers from across the Palmetto State gathered on the campus of the Governor's School for Agriculture for an emotional reunion on Thursday, August 11 – their first such get-together since the COVID-19 pandemic began.

United in their love of farming and teaching, these veterans of the fields and classrooms of South Carolina's high school agriculture programs shared memories, laughed and teased each other. They also marveled at the progress made at the 225-year-old John de la Howe campus in just the past two years.

Among those gathered for the reunion was Hugh Bland of Edgefield, a retired ag teacher at Strom Thurmond High School in Edgefield County and instructor at Piedmont Technical

College who serves as chairman of the Governor's School for Agriculture's Board of Trustees.

"It just makes me proud that they can see where we are and where we're going with this. It's an exciting time," Mr. Bland said. "I think everybody likes what they've seen and are surprised at some of the things they've seen. For those of us who started this thing, who took this program over, it's surprising how fast everything has come into shape here."

Mr. Bland was joined by Timothy Keown, president of the Governor's School for Agriculture, in welcoming the reunion to the campus. For Mr. Keown, the event also offered an emotional reunion with one of his personal mentors, retired ag teacher Jay Copelan.

"These teachers that you see

right here almost raised me in agricultural education," Mr. Keown said. "I'm super excited to see this group here. I bet if we did the math there's probably over 1,000 years of dedication to South Carolina public education, FFA and agricultural education in this room. Everything we have designed here – curriculum-wise, residential-wise, SAE-wise – is built on the foundation of what these teachers have done before me and us."

After a brief presentation on the rich history of the campus, Mr. Keown climbed behind the wheel of one of the school's buses and gave the retirees a personal tour of the 1,310-acre farm. After the tour, they all settled in for lunch at the cafeteria.

*continued on Page 7*



*Continued from Page 6*

There, the entire student body and current staff of ag educators at the Governor's School greeted the educators and later joined in an impromptu birthday celebration for Mr. Copelan, complete with cake.

Among the guests in attendance was Troy Helms, State Director of South Carolina Agricultural Education at the Clemson University Cooperative Extension. He offered the retirees a status report on the current condition of ag education in the Palmetto State and stressed the need to continue recruiting and growing new crops of dedicated ag teachers to serve the state.

Looking around the room at the veteran teachers sharing fellowship, Mr. Helms noted that "the amount of experience that

we have with these teachers is just overwhelming," and the quest for additional qualified ag teachers to fill their shoes remains an ongoing challenge statewide.

But teaching agriculture in South Carolina high schools and colleges is a vital part of the future quality of life and economy in this state and across America, he said. After all, agriculture represents the largest industry in the Palmetto State, generating nearly 250,000 jobs and an economic impact exceeding \$46 billion annually.

"They've been boots on the ground for many years in their local communities and local high schools, and their branches are still spreading across the state through teachers they have

produced in their classrooms that are now producing future teachers as well," Mr. Helms said of the retirees in attendance. "To have a strong ag program, you've got to have the support of the community, but you've got to be there also to support those that are in the community - whether it's through adult education, through your classroom or just seeing them out in the community sharing those experiences with their community members."

Maybe the next generation of great ag teachers for the Palmetto State is being trained up for the challenge right here right now on the campus of the Governor's School for Agriculture at John de la Howe. Only time will tell.



# Howe-lloween Festival

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 23RD AT 4:00 PM

FREE ENTRY

(CASH RECOMMENDED AS SOME EVENTS/VENDORS DO COST)



SC Governor's School  
for Agriculture  
AT JOHN DE LA HOWE

## SIGN UP FOR TRUNK OR TREAT!

23  
OCTOBER  
2022

IF YOU OR A GROUP YOU ARE A PART OF  
WOULD LIKE TO SET UP A CAR TO  
DISTRIBUTE CANDY, PLEASE CONTACT:

4-6 PM

[KAYCEE.KEASLER@DELAHOWE.SC.GOV](mailto:KAYCEE.KEASLER@DELAHOWE.SC.GOV)



SC Governor's School  
for Agriculture  
AT JOHN DE LA HOWE





# 'THE 1797' CELEBRATES 225TH ANNIVERSARY

A rich and compelling story two-and-a-quarter centuries in the making will be celebrated this November on the campus of the Governor's School for Agriculture at John De La Howe.

It's called The 1797 Celebration, and on Saturday, November 5, 2022, our campus will spring to life for a day-long festival rooted in the history of the former Lethe Farm once owned by enigmatic French physician John De La Howe.

The theme for this family-friendly event is "Coming Home to John De La Howe."

The festival will be from 8 a.m. until 2 p.m., and it will coincide with a reunion of John De La Howe alumni from across the country. The public is invited to attend. There will be no admission charge, but cash is recommended for the vendors.

The day's festivities will begin with the second "Bull Run" 5K road race, which will give runners an opportunity to explore the winding gravel roads of the John De La Howe campus on foot. More details on race entry will be released in early September.

From 9 a.m. until 1 p.m., The 1797 Celebration will offer a wide variety of family-friendly activities for history buffs, including a display of documents and artifacts from the campus's 225-year history and from the nearby Willington On The Way



history center; living history demonstrations featuring colonial re-enactors from the Living History Park in nearby North Augusta; a petting zoo; agriculture-themed field games and competitions; and campus tours.

Dr. De La Howe's tomb and his Lethe Plantation home site near the banks of Little River and Lake Thurmond also will be available to visitors for self-guided tours.

Live music and a parade around the 12-acre Governor's Green at the center of the campus are planned during the day. Breakfast and lunch will be

available for purchase.

The 1797 Celebration draws its name from the year that Dr. John De La Howe passed away and that his last will and testament provided for the establishment of a "farm school" to serve underprivileged children – specifically 12 boys and 12 girls – in the "useful arts related to farm life," according to a history published in 1996 by the Bicentennial History Committee of the John De La Howe School.

The campus has served as an educational institution in some form since shortly after Dr. De La Howe's death.



## STUDENT COUNCIL OFFICERS ELECTED

The student body at the Governor's School for Agriculture has elected its 2022-2023 Student Council officers. Serving this year will be JC Chandler, president; Elsa DeRosa, vice-president; Lyle Fulmer, secretary; Jahira Freeman, treasurer; Kyleigh Adams, parliamentarian; and Caroline Jordan, historian. As the election approached, JC and other candidates for president offered campaign speeches in the cafeteria.





## FFA MEMBERS ATTEND WASHINGTON LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE



Four of our local FFA chapter leaders -- Lyle Fulmer, Sierra Tinsley, Allie Taylor, JC Chandler -- and their teachers participated in the FFA Washington Leadership Conference just before the start of school. They visited with U.S. Rep. Jeff Duncan at the Capitol and toured a number of historic sites around the Washington area as they engaged in leadership training with FFA members from around the nation.





Guidance counselor Ms. Jalissa Newton assists student with completing their paperwork on College Application Day.

## SENIORS SIGN IN AND SIGN UP ON COLLEGE APP DAY

Almost two dozen future JDLH graduates recently gathered in the school library to take a huge next step toward their lives beyond the farm.

These ambitious Aggies were part of College Application Day 2022, an informal session in which 23 Aggie seniors completed a total of 77 applications to prospective colleges and universities. To assist, admissions offices at 21 colleges agreed to waive their application fees for the day.

"It was really important for students to have a variety of schools to choose from on College Application Day," said Jalissa Newton, guidance counselor. "I reviewed students'

individual graduation plans from last year to select schools that students were interested in applying to."

Among the colleges selected by students at John de la Howe were Lander University, Francis Marion University, Fort Valley State University, Piedmont Technical College, Orangeburg-Calhoun Tech and Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College.

Taylor Haigler, admissions counselor at Lander University, and Dr. Stacy Platt also helped the seniors navigate the college application process.

"I believe any student can do what they put their mind to, and often times that looks different for each student," Ms.

Newton said. "With our school specializing in agriculture, there are so many opportunities for them to take advantage of with trade schools, apprenticeships and two-year programs can lead them directly into their careers, while other careers future education."

Greg Thompson, principal at the Governor's School for Agriculture, was impressed by the enthusiasm of this year's senior class. "It kickstarts their senior year with excitement when you have College Application Day," he said. "When you're all in the same room and you're all applying to colleges, it's like they're all catching the college fever."



## AGGIES EXCEL AT JUNIOR BEEF ROUNDUP

Seven of our Aggies participated in the South Carolina Junior Beef Roundup at Clemson's T. Ed Garrison Arena during the first weekend of August. JC Chander won a \$500 scholarship and Reserve Grand Champion Charolais. Sierra Tinsley won Reserve Grand Champion Simmental. Other members of our team represented our school proudly in the showmanship and breed show competitions.





## AGGIES REPRESENT AT BEEF, GOAT SHOWS IN LAURENS COUNTY

Members of the Governor's School for Agriculture's beef show team represented the school at the Laurens County Livestock Show, performing well in Senior Showmanship, British Breeds, Continental Breeds, and Crossbred classes. That same weekend, Kyleigh Adams picked up honors in the Laurens County Goat Show with Champion Heavyweight, Grand Champion Open and Reserve Overall Open Wether. Congratulations to all of our participants in the Laurens County livestock events.





## RABBIT TEAMMATES SHINE AT LAURENS SHOW

Four of our Aggies were honored for their achievements at the Laurens County 4-H Rabbit Show. Brooke Grondski placed first in Senior Showmanship, while Colette Alston earned first place in Lionhead, Sidney Grantham won first in breed with her California, and Lynzie Hodge earned Reserve Best in Show with her Netherland Dwarf.



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for Agriculture at John de la Howe*



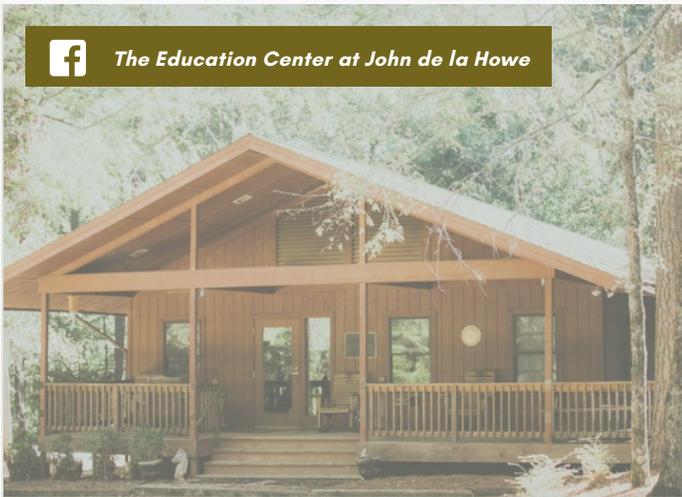
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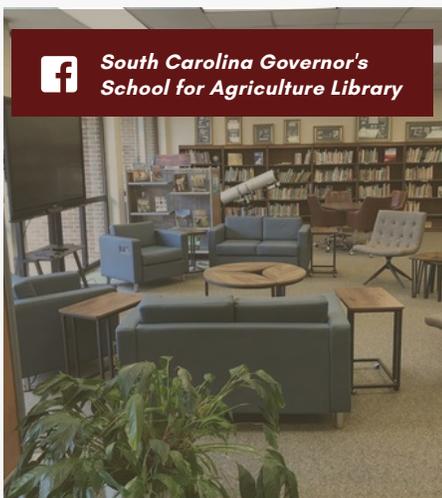
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