



FEBRUARY 28, 2024 EDITION



the Aggie Life



Celebrating The Impact Of The FFA



THE THRILL OF VICTORY THE AGONY OF DEFEAT

One of the more notable events of National FFA Week on the John de la Howe campus was the annual friendly competition known as the Ag Olympics.

This field day pitted the Blue Team against the Gold Team in a series of athletic contests, including kickball, dodge ball, a three-legged race, an egg-in-the-spoon race, welding, and lumberjack competitions on the Governor's Green and around campus. The battles were fierce and the "smack talk" abundant.

The competition was fierce all afternoon, but in the end, the Blue team prevailed once again, defending its title from last year's Ag Olympics. There was some speculation that the superhero-like capes, cowboy hats and tutus worn by Blue Team captains may have been the "secret weapon" that catapulted them to certain victory.





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THRILL OF VICTORY...

It was fierce competition as the Blue and Gold teams squared off in our Ag Olympics

ON THE ROAD



AGGIES ON CAMERA

With our Ag Fest fast approaching, two teams of Aggie communicators took to the local television airwaves recently to raise community awareness.

On Thursday morning, Feb. 15, Mr. Russ Abrams took three students to WRDW Channel 12 in Augusta for a live interview on "Morning Mix." Gray Gardner and Lilly Fox joined Mr. Abrams on-set with hosts Cliff Bennett and Zayna Haliburton. Lyle Fulmer watched from just off-camera.

A few days prior, Mrs. Libby Templeton led four Aggies to film a segment for "The Means Report" on WJBF NewsChannel 6 in Augusta. Nightly news anchor Brad Means interviewed Lyle, Gray and Mrs. Templeton, who were joined on-set by J.C. Chandler and Lilly Fox.

"The Means Report" aired Monday, Feb. 26 to offer one final PR push prior to the Ag Fest. Thanks to our friends in the local media for these opportunities!



National FFA WEEK

FEBRUARY 17-24, 2024

Celebrating The Impact Of The FFA At John De La Howe



Officers of the Governor's School for Agriculture FFA chapter led a special meeting as part of an Ad-Vocates Breakfast during National FFA Week

STAFF REPORT

Members of our school's FFA chapter joined nearly one million students and more than 9,000 chapters across America during the week of Feb. 17-24 in commemorating National FFA Week.

The nationwide celebration promotes the FFA's mission of "Learning To Do, Doing To Learn, Earning To Live, Living To Serve." The highlight of our local celebration was an Ad-Vocates Breakfast, during which community members, school staff and students gathered in the cafeteria to hear five Supervised

Agricultural Experiences presentations.

J.D. Miller, our FFA chapter president, presided over the special meeting alongside other chapter officers. The ceremonies including a traditional roll call of officers and a position-by-position description of the officer duties and the longtime traditions ascribed to each office.

Jahira Freeman, Blake Arias, Elizabeth Viseth, Gray Gardner and Emily White dazzled the audience with tales from the SAE projects and accepted \$1,000 scholarships from the McCormick County Soil and Water Conservation District.

The district's chairman Mr.

Bobby Edmonds was on-hand to present the checks. The ceremony ended with the traditional group recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

The wide variety of SAE presentations included Jahirah's project on investing in agricultural stocks, and Elizabeth's research on bass fishing.

Visitors to the Ad-Vocates Breakfast also had the opportunity to take a bit of the John de la Howe campus home with them as they were presented with potted plants saying, "Thanks for helping us grow."

A delegation of Aggies also attended the annual Legislative



Mr. Bobby Edmonds was on-hand at the Ad-Vocates Breakfast to present scholarships to five Aggies who gave their award-winning SAE presentations during the event.

Appreciation Day, presented by the South Carolina FFA Organization. Hundreds of FFA members from across the Palmetto State attended.

The gathering on the steps of the State House in Columbia gave our students the opportunity to meet fellow FFA members and lawmakers representing McCormick, Abbeville, Greenwood, Edgefield and other surrounding counties.

During that same event, Mr. Hunter Morton accepted a framed joint resolution passed by the South Carolina House of Representatives and State Senate honoring his achievements as recipient of the 2023 Outstanding Early Career Teacher Award for Region 5 from the National Association of Agricultural Educators.

Our local FFA chapter will hold its annual Banquet later this spring to showcase the achievements of our students and to honor graduating senior FFA members.



During the Legislative Appreciation Day, Mr. Hunter Morton accepted a joint House-Senate resolution.



LIVING TO SERVE

What Does The FFA Experience Mean To You?

As part of the school's celebration of National FFA Week, several of our student leaders discussed their experiences in the FFA and how the organization has impacted their lives. They talked about what it means to wear the iconic blue corduroy, and they offered advice to younger students who might consider joining the FFA. Follow the QR code to access the full interview series.



GRAY GARDNER

"The FFA experience as a whole, starting out in ninth grade, has just been absolutely amazing for getting me out of my comfort zone and just getting me to try a lot of new things. I'd never really been this involved in agriculture and agricultural education. So just to see this vast expanse of how many people were so dedicated to what they were doing, it was just amazing to push me out of my comfort zone and to try new things and get involved in an area I love now and have a passion for and want to pursue in college."



KATIE OSTERGAARD

"FFA has been a great experience for me. I've gained skills such as leadership and talking to people. I was really nervous as a freshman, and I really didn't want to go up and talk to people at Camp when I first went – then I did. I went up and I talked to people, and I was like you know I'm going to do it. I'm going to go make some friends – and I still talk to them to this day. I'm so grateful that I did that, and I'm so grateful for the opportunities that I've been given."



SIERRA TINSLEY

"The FFA experiences that I've achieved and went through have been great. Being able to travel to the National FFA convention, making those connections, getting better with leadership skills and developing those opportunities, as well as being able to branch out into different categories. I competed in Envirothon last year with Mr. Morton, and then we won State and we went to National. Being able to have that diverse background that I have...it's been able to help me step out of my comfort zone."



LILLY FOX

"I'd say my FFA experience has definitely had one of the biggest impacts on my life, whether that's through learning new things, like last year I did livestock evaluation and that was something that I've never done before. Me and some of my friends got together, and we practiced and we practiced, and we ended up getting second. We had a good outcome with that. I've made some friends across the state, across the country at National Convention. Just being able to get involved with something like that has definitely been one of the biggest parts of the experience."

ELLA TAYLOR

"To me, my FFA experience has been everything. It was definitely a new journey that I knew nothing about coming into school, and I just jumped right in it. I have found tons of people and great advisors, tons of opportunities. It is definitely one of the reasons why I am branching out so far and I'm going to Oklahoma State. I would have never thought about leaping and taking different opportunities if I didn't have the experience through FFA, competing in CDE at the state and national level, going to different conferences, being able to meet new people. It's just been everything."



LYLE FULMER

"To me, the FFA experience always really boiled down to what it represents as a whole: agriculture education and the agriculture industry. The agriculture industry is so much more than just cows and tractors and the farm equipment and all those other things. It is more about the people and the community. In the FFA, through agriculture you really meet all these different professionals and these elders and these ancients that know all of this great knowledge."





As the JDLH equine program grows, the commitment to giving our visiting horses the very best quality of life includes revamping their stalls with new flooring.

EXTREME EQUINE MAKEOVER

Students Work Together To Revamp Home For School's Resident Horses

STAFF REPORT

Some of our four-legged residents here at the Governor's School for Agriculture have a much more comfortable place to rest after an extensive student-led interior design project at the Equine Center.

The stalls at the horse barn now have brand-new floor mats, refreshed shavings and a more weather-friendly foundation, thanks to an industrious group of Aggies. The makeover further prepares the equine program to continue as one of the school's fastest-growing offerings.

"This a project that will last for years," said Mrs. Heather Rhoden, our equine program director. "This is for the betterment of our school and for the next generations that come through our doors. It's easier clean-up. It doesn't fatigue your horses as much if they're on the mats. It's a benefit for all the students and the horses that are here."

One of the Aggies who worked hardest on the project was Eli Waystack, who boards his horse at the



Eli Waystack, who took lead on the project, hammers in one of the stall mats.



The equine center makeover was a multi-layered project that included extensive cleaning out of old shavings, tearing out the stall dividers, adding new sand and lime to the stalls and the meticulous installation of the new mats and reconstruction of the dividers.

Equine Center. He said the former stalls had suffered erosion damage in recent heavy rains, and it was a good time to give the center a much-needed revamp.

"We just needed it to be more reliable and safer for the horses," Eli said. "We had to clean out all the old shavings, take out all the dividers, and then we had to come in with loads of sand, level it and pack it down tight with a tamp."

The students also added a layer of lime to assist with odor control. Once the foundation was prepared, according to Mrs. Rhoden, Eli hand-cut most of mats to fit around the posts in each stall, and then he nailed them into place. "It took a lot of time, a lot of labor and a lot of help," he said.

Mrs. Rhoden said Eli basically set the bar for his fellow student workers' dedication to the project. "Eli did a great job, and took his time, and definitely put his heart into it. He worked every day on the project until it was completed."

In the end, it was a labor of love for Eli. "I did it for everybody who has a horse here and myself, so we didn't have to worry about our stalls washing out, and for the safety of our horses," he said. "It makes the barn look better. It makes the school more presentable."



Valentine's & Pigskins

Residential Life Staff Host Student Holiday, Super Bowl Gatherings

As students at a residential high school, our Aggies have many chances to experience the food and friendship standard to special occasions.

In recent weeks, the Residential Advisors in our residence halls have created special events for Valentine's Week and the Super Bowl. These events are a chance for advisors and students to showcase their culinary skills. Great work, Aggie family!



AGGIES IN ACTION



J.D. Miller and Ben Bronson recently competed in the S.C. Department of Natural Resources State Skeet Tournament at the NTFW Palmetto Shooting Complex in Edgefield. J.D. claimed a \$2,000 scholarship for finishing as the top male individual shooter, while Ben picked up a \$500 scholarship in a drawing.



Great Job, Aggies!



The school's SADD Club collected and delivered canned goods to Helping Hands in downtown McCormick. These donations helped replenish the food bank's inventory after the holiday season. The Helping Hands pantry is open every Wednesday from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.



Some of our students visited the campus of the Connie Maxwell Children's Home in mid-February to get in some horse-judging practice, and they also enjoyed learning to drive Belgian horses on the Connie Maxwell Farms' two-seater cart.