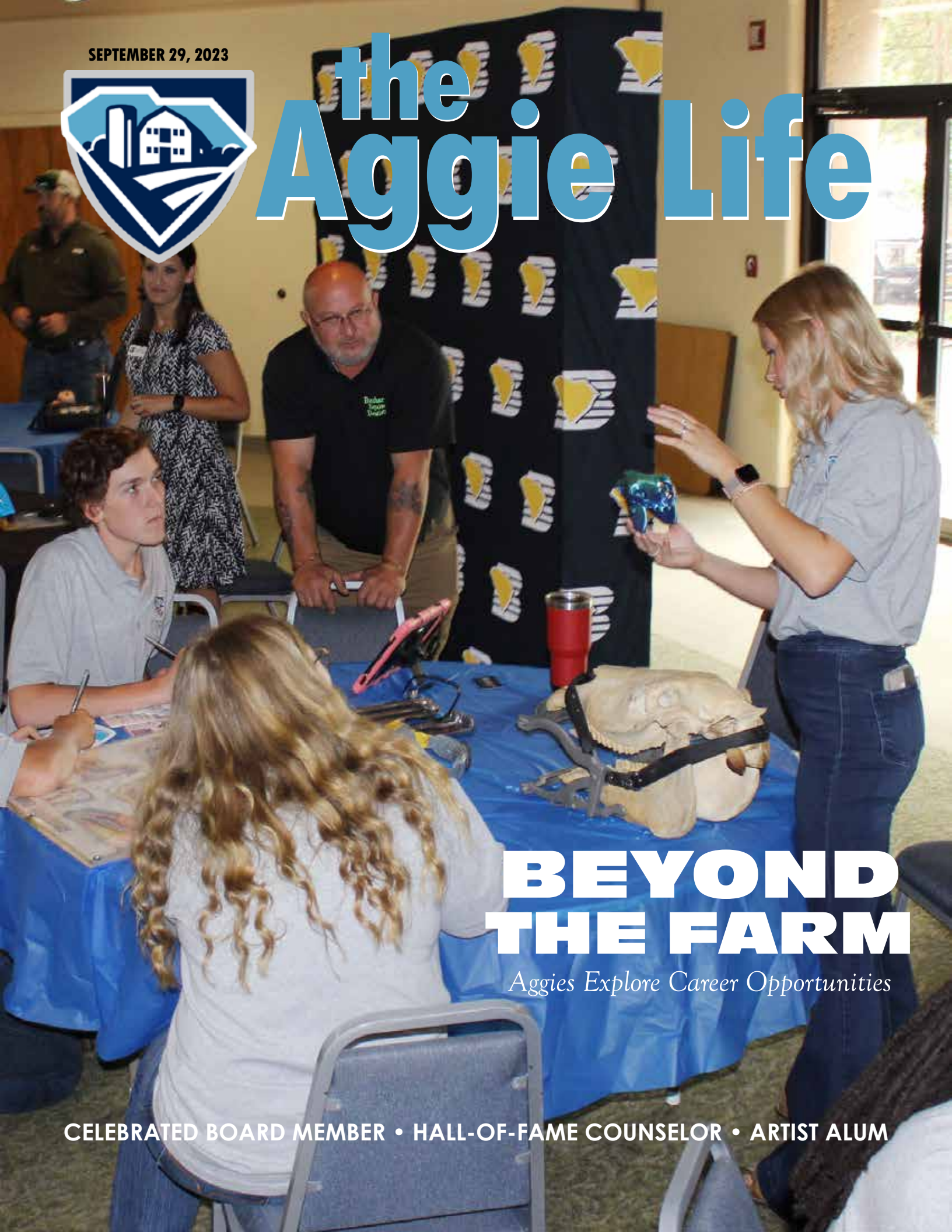




SEPTEMBER 29, 2023 EDITION



the Aggie Life



BEYOND THE FARM

Aggies Explore Career Opportunities

CELEBRATED BOARD MEMBER • HALL-OF-FAME COUNSELOR • ARTIST ALUM



Jahira Freeman of McCormick, a Governor's School leader, speaks to the Chamber of Commerce breakfast.

BUSINESS LEADERS VISIT GOVERNOR'S SCHOOL

Business leaders from across McCormick, Abbeville and Greenwood counties gathered at the Governor's School for Agriculture in early September for the McCormick County Chamber of Commerce's monthly breakfast.

Our agency president Dr. Tim Keown offered an update about ongoing activities and renovations on our campus, and student leaders Jahira Freeman and Lyle Fulmer spoke about their experiences here. Mrs. Stacie Smith, executive director of the nonprofit John De La Howe Foundation, updated the Chamber members on projects to raise funds to support student activities and



other needs not supported by state funding.

Attendees were treated to a spectacular breakfast menu prepared by Mr. Nick Murphy, one of our resident advisors, and our culinary director Ms. Cassandra Sosebee. The morning fare included shrimp and andouille sausage in cream sauce, grits cakes and a fresh fruit board, complemented by "mock mimosas" with non-alcoholic sparkling grape juice.



Dr. Tim Keown meets with McCormick County government leaders during a recent Chamber breakfast.

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INSIDE THIS EDITION...

3

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dr. Tim Keown reflects on the start of another exciting school year

4

BEYOND THE FARM

Students explore career, collegiate opportunities during fair field trip

6

'ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE'

School counselor's commitment to service earns her a Hall of Fame induction

7

A 'MAGICAL' MISSION

Longtime board member honored for service across tale of two schools

8

SHARING THE JOY

Alumnus returns to teach summer art class to residential life staff

10

DRIVIN' AND DIGGIN'

Soil judging and tractor driving teams excel at Piedmont Tech meet



FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK



Dr. Tim Keown speaks to education leaders during the Business+Education Summit this past summer at the Greenville Convention Center.

Dear Aggie Family,

As I write this, our Aggies are anxiously awaiting 11:25 a.m. to depart campus for their fall break. I hope they have a safe journey home and spend much-needed quality time with family!

We have just entered our fourth year as the South Carolina Governor's School for Agriculture at John de la Howe, and what a journey it has been! To jog your memory, we officially opened in August of 2020 in the middle of an unprecedented worldwide pandemic. I sarcastically state often that we couldn't have chosen a "better time" to open a residential high school. Although the pandemic was an unsure time, we made it through with very minimal face-to-face instructional time lost.

Our first three years were filled with sharp learning curves, as we are the only residential high school in the United States that specializes in agricultural education. With the amazing team we have assembled, we have been able to learn from mistakes, correct the organizational trajectory, and march forward towards our goals.

The first quarter of this decade has been of the most rewarding and fulfilling time of my 43 years. There is no better feeling of accomplishment than watching our students succeed in and out of the classroom. We now have 47 alumni, who I am proud to announce, have collectively earned over one million dollars in academic scholarships! Our Aggie alums are enrolled in Universities and colleges across the

Southeast and extending west into Nebraska. These young people are already trailblazers in all areas of agriculture, forestry, and natural resources. They left a crater-like impact on this campus, and I expect them to do the same in their respective colleges and careers.

What's next for the Governor's School? We have organized a strategic planning committee to help answer those questions and to create a successful roadmap for the next five to 10 years. A few of the exciting projects we are working on include building a meat processing facility here on campus. This will help us fill the workforce gap and labor shortage in South Carolina while also serving local livestock producers. Having this facility will also help us reach our 50 percent sustainability goals of serving high quality, school-farm raised products in our cafeteria. We are also pursuing the addition of two new pathways, culinary arts and tourism management. We believe these pathways will enhance our agricultural pathways with farm-to-table events hosted here on our sprawling campus.

In closing, we thank each of our students, parents, legislators, board members, and other stakeholders for your support over the first few years of our grand re-opening of the historical John de la Howe campus. Dr. de la Howe had the dream of our school 226 years ago. I am proud to help achieve his vision written in his last will and testament.

Go Aggies!

Timothy R. Keown, PhD, President
S.C. Governor's School for Agriculture



Staff Photos

During the “Beyond An Aggie” Career Day, student Sawyer Buzhardt (left) shares with her fellow Aggies some of the techniques and tools used at her family’s equine dentistry practice in Batesburg-Leesville.

BEYOND THE FARM

Aggies Explore Future Opportunities At Career, College Fairs

By LYNZIE HODGE

The student body and faculty of the South Carolina Governor’s School for Agriculture at John de la Howe boarded a charter bus and a school bus on Thursday, September 14 and made their way to attend the “Beyond An Aggie” Career Day event hosted by the school and the Student Council.

Representatives from different career fields were at the North Augusta Community Center, but all of them had one thing in common: all their careers were related to agriculture. Students gathered around these workers at different tables to hear about their jobs and to determine if any were a correct



David Taylor of STEC Equipment in Anderson, who is also an Aggie parent, discusses career opportunities.

fit for them.

Technical recruiter Marci Fulmer has been with Blanchard Machinery Company, which represents CAT brand heavy equipment, for two years and,

according to her, “does not plan to quit anytime soon.” Her job consists of recruiting technicians while bridging the line between schools and the workplace.

Trial lawyer Charles Lyons



Representatives from the state’s Department of Agriculture and other private-sector industries exhibited at the Aggie Career Fair.



majoring in history and minored in political science. He told students that being a lawyer is a very demanding course of study and if you dislike working hard, then it is not the field for you. He attends trials and defends people involved in legal cases.

Equine dentist Ashley Buzhardt has worked in the field for 13 years, and he uses many different tools to examine horses’ mouths and make sure they have healthy teeth.

Even after Career Day, the day was far from over. The group then headed to Southbound Smokehouse in SRP Park, the minor league baseball stadium in North Augusta, to enjoy a catered meal. Afterwards, they headed to CSRA College Night at the James Brown Arena in downtown Augusta. Many universities and colleges – such as USC, Clemson University, the Citadel, and the University of Georgia – were there offering information to hundreds of interested students from the Aiken-Augusta area.



Our group of Aggies stayed for about an hour, exploring what different universities had to offer, before returning to campus.

“I got the idea from the Youth Leadership Organization of North Augusta’s Career Fair,” said principal Mr. Gregory Thompson. He said that he thought, “Why not hold an event like this but with agriculture?”

Mr. Thompson stated that the event was held in North Augusta due to the proximity to the College Fair and an expected higher turnout than if it was held in McCormick. The purpose of the event was to expose more kids to agriculture-related careers and also to help them learn to interact with professionals, he added.

It was a busy, but rewarding, day for the students at the South Carolina Governor’s School for Agriculture at John de la Howe – a day to consider what lies ahead “Beyond an Aggie.”

'ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE'

Miss Newton Honored At Alma Mater For 'Passion To Serve'

STAFF REPORT

Jalissa Newton, our school counselor at the South Carolina Governor's School for Agriculture at John de a Howe, was recently inducted into the Wall of Fame at her alma mater, Estill High School in Hampton County.

"For them to recognize me and come back was a true honor," Miss Newton said. "What was an even better honor was that my elementary school principal at the time was the one who gave me the award. So, I was able to see a bunch of my past teachers who poured into me and helped me become the adult I am today."

While at Estill High School, she was the senior class president and Battalion Commander of the Can-do Battalion in 2007. She participated in EHS Marching Band for four years and was the section leader for saxophones. She sang in her high school's gospel choir and was a member of the speech and debate team, softball team and cheerleading squad.

In 2006, Miss Newton was selected to represent Estill High School at Palmetto Girls State and was an active participant in the Upward Bound program at the Technical College of the Lowcountry.

Miss Newton attended Francis Marion University and majored in counseling and development at Winthrop University. She began her education career as a school counselor in Beaufort County School District and was named Elementary School Counselor of



the Year for the 2016-2017 school year.

Her career has been about pouring into the lives of students she has served because she appreciates the challenge of coming from an area with a history of less-than-stellar schools and a disproportionate level of poverty. She definitely appreciates those who poured into her life.

"Even in high school, I always put my best effort forward," she recalled. "I felt like that was innately already in me, but I feel like due to lack of resources and exposure to certain things, from being in the area known as the 'corridor of shame' when it comes to education, it made me value education a lot more. It made me embrace a lot of experiences that I probably wouldn't have had the opportunity to have without the

educators who assisted me along the way."

While at Lady's Island Elementary School, Miss Newton launched Girls On The Run, a program that inspires girls to build confidence and other important life skills through interactive lessons and physical activity. This led her to become a regional trainer for the non-profit organization and assisted other schools with starting the program.

In 2019, Miss Newton transitioned to Allendale County, where she was the school counselor at Allendale Elementary School for two years. She arrived at the Governor's School for Agriculture at John de la Howe in 2021.

Miss Newton's main role is to serve our students by ensuring compliance with state reporting and testing but moreover ensuring that each student's academic, career, and social emotional needs are met. She counts among her biggest achievements here "navigating the process through the South Carolina Department of Education and Piedmont Technical College to add additional dual enrollment agriculture courses for all students."

"I have a passion to serve. I really do love serving students and helping students reach their best potential," she said, "and sometimes think outside of the box, or just assist them with the things they want to do. I want students to know that anything is possible if they put forth the effort, ask the right questions and do what they need to do."

A 'MAGICAL' MISSION

Board Member Honored For Service Across Tale Of Two Schools

STAFF REPORT

With his long gray beard and hair pulled back into a ponytail, Tom Love certainly looks the part of a mysterious J.R.R. Tolkien character – a wizard about to cast a benevolent spell or a sage sitting atop a mountain fortress, dispensing hard-won wisdom.

So, when Mr. Love speaks of "magic" with his soft, measured tone of voice and the look of wonder behind his glasses, there is a certain authority and authenticity to his message. Tom Love makes you want to believe in magic.

"When I went in front of the Senate to be confirmed for the Board position, I told them about working here, all the years I worked on this campus," recalled Mr. Love, who recently segued out of his role on the Governor's School for Agriculture's Board of Trustees. "I told them about my first experience coming onto this campus, and how I knew it was a magical place. And over the years since then I had seen how the magic had left because of all the different things that had happened."

Mr. Love told those legislators that if they confirmed him to sit on the Board of Trustees, "it would be my goal to see that the magic came back," he said. It has taken awhile, but it would seem now there is magic still in the air at John de la Howe.

"Once we got it where it is now, when it started to become what it is now, it was gravy after that," Mr. Love said, with the slightest hint of



wistfulness in his voice. "It didn't matter at that point how much longer I was on the Board because the mission had been completed for me."

Mr. Love was honored September 22 at the regular quarterly meeting of our school's Board of Trustees for his service to this institution both as a member of the governing body of the current Governor's School for Agriculture and the previous John De La Howe School. His roots run deep in the soil of this campus; before coming on the JDLH Board in 2014, he was part of the previous school's instructional team.

He led the launch of the John De La Howe School's wilderness program to teach discipline and responsibility to that school's students, many of whom faced

difficulties assimilating into traditional school environments. Later, he became the institution's training director, teaching staff members to navigate the challenges of working with the student population of an "alternative school" environment.

When the John De la Howe School and its former mission was sunset and the seeds for the new Governor's School for Agriculture mission were planted, Mr. Love knew he wanted to be part of growing something fresh and exciting – and good -- here in this place with a 226-year history of serving young people.

"It meant so much to me before, seeing the kids come through and then go home and be successful," he said, "but now to see – in the short time we've been in existence as the Governor's School for Agriculture – we get to see what our new students are doing after a year or two of graduation – and it's truly amazing!"

For his service across the missions, Mr. Love was presented at the Board meeting a handcrafted plaque made with weathered wood harvested from old John De La Howe barns. State Sen. Billy Garrett also presented him with a proclamation honoring his selfless dedication to this campus and to the ideal of growing productive young South Carolinians.

Thank you, Mr. Love, for your commitment and your wisdom. You always will be part of the legend and lore of this truly magical place.

Sharing The Joy

Alumnus Comes Home To Lead Staff Art Class

STAFF REPORT

It is not uncommon for members of the Governor’s School for Agriculture’s first two graduating classes to return to our bucolic 1,310-acre campus – but Evan Herring likely is the first to return with brushes in hand.

During this past summer’s break, just a few weeks after walking across the stage to accept his diploma, Evan came back to John de la Howe to do a little teaching of his own. He led members of the Residential Life staff in a painting workshop as part of their summertime professional development.

Evan was recruited by his mother Jessica, who serves on the ResLife team. “I didn’t have anything else going on this summer, so I said yes,” he recalled.

The painting class was a logical extension of the children’s art classes Evan had been teaching at the McCormick Arts Council. “I guess that was enough to spark interest from mom,” he said.

Evan led the Residential Life advisors through painting their interpretations of a basic and appropriate theme: a barn and a country road.

“I picked something I thought they would find relaxing to paint,” he said. “They all painted a barn, but I wanted them to be as creative and expressive as they could be,



Recent graduate Evan Herring leads members of the Residential Life staff through painting some barn art.



so I told them to choose whatever colors they wanted. It didn’t need to be realistic in any way.”

Yellow barns and green skies were all fair game, according to the young instructor. “I told them, do whatever comes naturally,” Evan said.

Evan concedes that as a former student who had interacted with the residential advisors within the teacher/student dynamic, he was at first a bit intimidated to flip the roles for the art class. However, he soon settled into a comfort zone and relished sharing his knowledge of painting.

“I went really well, and after a few minutes – especially just talking with them – it went by smooth,” he said.

Of course, individual artistic expression is part of the natural



Residential advisors became the student’s students during the summertime art classes.

palette of Evan’s life. After graduating from the Governor’s School for Agriculture this past May, he is now enrolled at Winthrop University, pursuing a degree in graphic design.

With experience teaching children at the Art Council and

now adults as a “guest artist” at his alma mater, Evan is not completely ruling out doing more teaching in the future.

“Growing up, I really didn’t have any opportunity for an art class, because it was always the first program taken out of my

schools for funding,” Evan said. “I have my own career ideas, but it’s really fun to give people that little push and that opportunity – if they want to take advantage of it.”

There’s no word yet on whether any of the residential advisors’ art has sold for millions at auction.



Staffers show off their works of art -- their different individual interpretations of the barn scene -- following Evan’s summertime class.



Eli Waystack shows off the driving skills that earned his top individual honors at the Piedmont Technical College Invitational meet in Saluda.

Drivin' And Diggin'

Aggie Teams Rise To The Occasion at Piedmont Technical College

Whether behind the wheel or digging into the dirt of Saluda County, the Aggies of the South Carolina Governor's School for Agriculture once again have proven they are the best in any field (or pasture).

Competing at the Piedmont Technical College FFA Soil and Tractor Invitational on Thursday, September 28, our Aggies soil-judging team claimed first place among more than 175 students from around the region, while our tractor-driving teams finished in first and third places.

Eli Waystack also claimed first place individual honors in the tractor-driving competition.

"I just tried to take my time and do it right," said Eli, who gets plenty of practice driving tractors on his family's farmland in the Lowcountry. "I drive tractors pretty much every day at home."

Is it a big change to drive a tractor for competition versus just everyday farm work? "It's slightly different, but it's kind of the same," Eli said.

The competition was hosted by Piedmont Technical College on its Saluda County campus.

"The main goal of the day was to provide students with an experience similar to the State CDE contests coming up this fall," said Mr. Hunter Morton, one of our ag teachers. "Students were able to drive the tractors that will be used at the state contest as well as gain more experience driving the course. The soil judging aspect was conducted as the state contest will be."

The tractor-driving teams navigated a course laid out with traffic cones, and their individual times were calculated based on penalties incurred when they struck any of the cones. The oil-judging contest allowed students to judge four different soil pits with an understanding of how quickly soil can change in a small area.

"Overall, it was a great day that provided a quality experience for our students," Mr. Morton said.



**Great Job,
Aggies!**

**Keep up
the good work!**

