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|  | **NEWS RELEASE****South Dakota FFA Association**Website: [www.sdaged.org](http://www.sdaged.org) Facebook: [www.facebook.com/south.dakota.ffa](http://www.facebook.com/south.dakota.ffa) Instagram: [@sdffaassocation](https://www.instagram.com/sdffaassociation/)**For more information, contact:** Wyatt DeJong; SD FFA Executive SecretaryWyatt.DeJong@sdaged.orgApril Hamilton, SD FFA Leadership & Programs ManageApril.Hamilton@sdstate.edu  |
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| **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**June 23, 2023 |  |

**LOCAL FFA WORKS TO BUILD LEADERSHIP SKILLS**

VIBORG, S.Dak. — The South Dakota FFA Association conducted its annual Leadership Retreat June 20 - 23, at Swan Lake Christian Camp in Viborg, SD. A total of 65 FFA members in grades 7 – 12 attended from across South Dakota with the theme of, “Into the Safari; Imagine, Explore, Discover.”

The retreats centered on a theme of, “Into the Safari; Imagine, Explore, Discover,” focusing on teaching members how to invest in their chapters’ journey and adventure to instill the FFA Motto, “…premier leadership, personal growth, and career success through agricultural education.” FFA members developed and enhanced their leadership skills and self-confidence through interactive learning. The program featured workshops that helped members discover the value of service, integrity, communication, perseverance, teamwork, and having a growth mindset. They will use these new skills and ideas to benefit their local chapters and communities. Retreat attendees also participated in a service-learning project helping the City of Centerville work on beautification projects around town.

The retreats were directed by the 2023-2024 State FFA Officers: President, Alyssa Feather, Wilmot; Vice President, Dustin Kolb, Belle Fourche; Secretary, Raesa Zelinsky, Brookings; Treasurer, Gretta Larson, Lake Preston; Reporter, Gabrielle Rebelein, Sioux Valley; and Sentinel, Emily Robbins, Elkton. Retreat staff also included Tori Dvorak, Scotland; and Taylor Tennant, Gettysburg; SD FFA Ambassadors and National FFA Eastern Region Vice President Gracie Murphy.

While the members worked on developing premier leadership and personal growth through their time at the retreat, the advisor’s also had their own teacher academy learning about Plant Pollinators and Propagation, implementing Bees into their programs, and Livestock Artificial Insemination. These programs included tours of Natural Beauty and Landscape Garden Center in Sioux Falls, SD, as well as hands-on activities propagating a variety of plants, preparing to artificially insemination livestock and looking at livestock female reproductive tracts.

The retreat was sponsored by Farm Credit Services of America, Army ROTC, South Dakota Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Twin City Region Northland Ford Dealers, CHS Foundation, and SD Corn Utilization Council.

Retreat t-shirts were sponsored by SoDak Labs, SD Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers, Army ROTC, Plains Towing and Recovery, Hoegemeyer Seed, Kibble Equipment, Latham Hi-Tech Seeds, SDSU Farmhouse Fraternity and Tractor Supply Company.

Scholarships for individuals to attend sponsored by: SD FFA Foundation, West River Electric Association, Sioux Valley Energy, GDM Solutions and Walt Johnson Memorial.

*The South Dakota FFA Association is a statewide organization of 5,668 agricultural education students in 110 chapters in every corner of South Dakota. It is part of the National FFA Organization, a national youth organization of 760,113 student members preparing for leadership and careers in the science, business and technology of agriculture with 8,612 chapters in all 50 states, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Our mission is to make a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education. Visit* [*www.sdaged.org*](http://www.sdaged.org) *for more information.*

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