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**“ADVISOR TRIBUTE” SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS CHOSEN**

***Students receive scholarships for FFA summer leadership retreats***

BATH (May 30, 2024) - Agriculture education teachers/FFA advisors make a world of difference for the students they teach. This spring **students put into words**, as part of an FFA Advisor Tribute Scholarship application, **how their ag teachers/FFA advisors have impacted their lives.** Sixteen outstanding examples of amazing teachers impacting their students have been chosen out the applicants, and winning students will each receive scholarships to attend a SD FFA Leadership Retreat this summer.

**Leonard DeBoer Memorial**

Jasmine Oliver, Canton and Ireland McAreavey, Tri-Valley

**Walt Johnson Memorial**

Kate Williamson, Belle Fourche; Gabriel Stern, Brookings; Cash Martinnez, Bridgewater-Emery; Shay Marquardt, Bridgewater-Emery; Alexis Cermak, Sturgis; Bryxx Bawek, Doland; Lilija Coleman, Rapid City Stevens; Gracie Pedersen, Tri-Valley; Alinea McDonald; Viborg-Hurley; and Rose Wickham, Viborg-Hurley

**Stella Nagel**

Bobbi Eide, Gettysburg and Libby Krcil, Gregory County

**Jason and Ashley Frerichs**

Ava Kerner, Gregory County and Alexis Christensen, Garretson

The students wrote essays about how their FFA advisors have made an impact on their lives. **Each of these students thinks their advisor is one of the best and is happy to say so**! Here are a few examples of what they shared:

* **Gabriel Stern, Brookings** senior, says “Mr. Joshua Johnson encourages me to make my own path, even if it means doing it alone. With his support, I achieved new levels of leadership. Whether it be my ability to build a team or to compete at a high level in athletics, Mr. Johnson has never faltered, and pushed me to be the best that I can be.”
* **Jasmine Oliver, Canton** sophomore, shares the impact of both of her FFA advisors. “Miss Amie Carter provides an environment where we grow in our agriculture knowledge and understand concepts. Two of us were struggling with a science assignment and she explained it in a way we understood better. Mr. Russ Swanson, is always challenging me to use critical thinking skills and find joy in simple things.”
* **Bryxx Bawek, Doland** freshman, shares, “Mrs. Bailey Coates encourages me to support events in our small town, like painting at the park or putting up a snow fence for community members. I was nervous to try a CDE, but had fun learning in her class, meeting people, and seeing all I can do. I know Mrs. Coats will support me in all I try.”
* **Libby Krcil, Gregory County** sophomore, reflects how Mrs. Mollie Andrews encourages students to reach for goals. “From teaching me to weld to interview for a job or office, she has inspired me and others. She's taught us to always try, even if we think it is useless; that practicing is worth it and if we put in the effort and time, it will work out.”
* **Ireland McAreavey, Tri-Valley** seniorreflects, “Mr. Tanner Peterson believes in me when I don’t believe in myself, always claiming ‘the only one stopping you from doing your best is you.’ Everyone needs a person like him in their corner; someone who will believe in them and see their potential even when they don’t see it themself.**”**

Scholarships are made possible through the SD FFA Foundation by Stella Nagel, Jason and Ashley Frerichs, and the Walt Johnson Memorial Fund; in memory of two past FFA advisors: Leonard DeBoer and Walt Johnson. Both men led by example and their advice was truly ripened with wisdom. Mr. DeBoer spent his life teaching young people about agriculture and the leadership skills that would make them successful in their career choice. He was the FFA advisor in Chamberlain for almost 40 years where he lived FFA's mission by making a difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for *premier leadership*, *personal growth* and *career success* through agricultural education. Mr. Johnson served as the SD FFA Foundation President, as well as on the SD FFA Foundation board, in Newell as an ag teacher, community supporter and coach for FFA career development events. He was devoted to agriculture education and earned his Honorary American FFA Degree in 2007.

For more information about the South Dakota FFA Foundation and South Dakota's FFA programs, visit [www.sdffafoundation.org](http://www.sdffafoundation.org/).

Here’s what the rest of the recipients shared about their advisors:

* **Kate Williamson, Belle Fourche** junior, shares how Mr. Austin Bishop gives his members the means to start on the path they choose. “I didn’t grow up in agriculture. However, his classes and example instilled in me a love for all things agriculture. He shows us that failure is not a stumbling block or stopping point, but an opportunity to learn and grow.”
* **Shay Marquardt, Bridgewater-Emery** sophomore, comments that Mr. Alex Toupal’s influence extends beyond the classroom. “His mentorship inspires dedication, hard work, and a passion for agriculture. By sharing knowledge, offering support, and encouraging involvement, he instills values that last a lifetime. Through his guidance, we learn teamwork, responsibility, and the importance of community.” **Cash Martinez, Bridgewater-Emery** junior, adds “He is dedicated to the success and growth of his students. He will do all he can to help us, shows up at our non-FFA events, and taught me ‘nothing is achieved without a bit of struggle’”.
* **Alexis Christensen, Garretson** sophomore, is grateful to have advisor Ms. Alysha Kientopf. “She not only furthered my agricultural knowledge but taught me countless life skills. She is welcoming, caring, thoughtful, and always there to answer questions.”
* **Bobbi Eide, Gettysburg** junior, comments that Ms. Sarah McClure is outgoing and started new chapter activities. “Though only her first year in Gettysburg, she has inspired me and so many other students to push beyond our comfort zones, believe in ourselves, try new things, and to never stop dreaming.”
* **Ava Kerner, Gregory County** junior, says, “Mrs. Andrews pushes me to not only try new things but to find the best part of it. Whether I like it or not, she gets me to try to make the experience better. She puts her students first and always has a positive attitude.”
* **Lilija Coleman, Rapid City Stevens senior** was reclusive and terrified of public speaking. With Ms. Genetie Hendrix’s support, she found things she is incredibly passionate about and flourished. “She allowed me to discover new parts of myself, growing my confidence immensely with her constant warmth and fierce support.”
* **Alexis Cermak, Sturgis** junior, says Mr. Stran Holben is a big motivator, “He encouraged me to step out of my comfort zone and taught me that it is good to be uncomfortable. He listens to our ideas and thoughts. He has helped me, and others stay organized, be involved, be a better leader, and overcome the fear of public speaking.
* **Gracie Pedersen, Tri-Valley** junior says, “Mr. Peterson has not only helped me through competitions but has also helped me to learn the value of hard work by pushing me to be active and encouraging me to expand my SAE project exponentially each year.”
* **Rose Wickham, Viborg-Hurley** freshman, says Mr. Nathan Knutson has developed a sense of community among their chapter members. “He taught me the importance of hard work, dedication, and perseverance. I admire his ability to connect with students. He truly cares about every one of us and is always willing to listen and provide support.” **Alinea McDonald; Viborg-Hurley** freshman, adds, “Mr. Knutson takes time to show or explain things to me. He’s taught me to always be on my toes, be open to new ideas and try new things. He pushes me to do the best I can but knows that failure and mistakes are part of the experience. He is understanding and respects me as a person.”

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