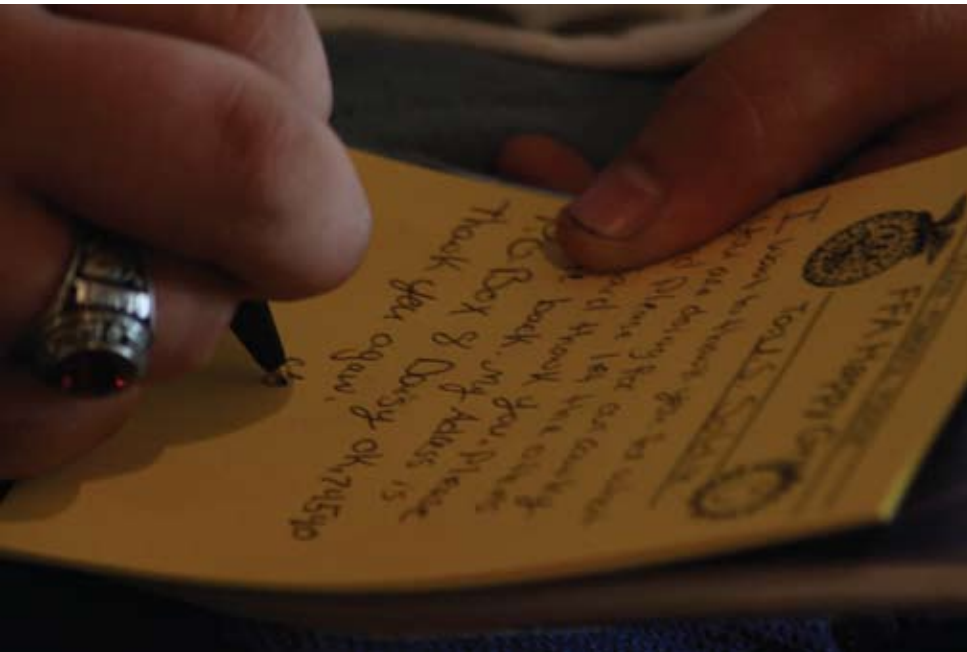




UTLOOK

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Happy Grams impact 1,600 soldiers



Happy Grams have traditionally been an “insiders experience” at Oklahoma FFA alumni camp. This summer, campers wrote Happy Grams to soldiers serving in Afghanistan to let them know FFA members care about their service to our country.

More than 1,600 notes were sent to troops following Alumni Camp 2010, and 10 Oklahoma chapters sent packages following the challenge given by camp curriculum coordinator Kelly Barnes. Contact him at kelly@yournextspeaker.com to get your chapter involved.

To Everyone Who Was Involved:

Thank you from the 1-45th Oklahoma Agribusiness Development Team for the Happy Grams from Alumni Camp. It meant so much to our team to receive letters from the FFA members as most of our team are former members. It was such a pleasure to open a box and have 95 Happy Grams, from members all over the state, staring back at us. We are very thankful for your thoughts and time to honor us during such a busy time for Okla-

homa FFA. Thank you for the coordination with Dr. Shelly Sitton to arrange for them to be shipped over with more school supplies. It is hard to express the appreciation that we have for receiving letters from home and it means even more when they come from children.

On a more personal note, I was very overwhelmed to see the Happy Grams. It made me feel like I was at home and back with students, not to mention that I personally know so many of the people involved. I was so

proud (as the Ag Teacher of the group) to show the letters to everyone else and to tell them that our state FFA association was thinking about us.

I look forward to meeting with some of you when I return, to share stories and pictures from our agricultural mission here. Thanks again to all of you for your support and we will see you in a couple of months when we return home. Please let the members know that we appreciate their thoughts!



SGT Ryan Ellis
Ag Education/Extension SME
1-45th OK ADT
Deployed

Go to okffa.org for more about Alumni Camp 2011



Dakota Miller

Southwest District Vice President

“Step out of your comfort zone.” We hear this phrase all of the time. We hear it in class, at leadership conferences and from our parents. I have preached this phrase over and over to younger FFA members and never thought a thing about it.

I have always assumed that I was stepping out of my comfort zone because I did all of the FFA activities, met new people easily and even did the silly dances at Alumni Leadership Camp. However, I never seemed to feel the satisfaction promised. Was I just missing it?

Then it hit me. Did I really know what MY comfort zone was, so I could step out of it? For me, it wasn't meeting new people or doing silly dances. It was being quiet, letting others shine, and taking risks that might seem a little uncomfortable.

Sadly, it took me a long time to realize that I had been preaching something that I myself was not doing. I am consciously working every day to step out of MY comfort zone. I am learning that it is fun and rewarding, just as promised, and I am always proud of myself when I know I have “stepped out.”

FFA members, when you hear the phrase, “step out of your comfort zone,” I encourage you to first figure out what YOUR zone is. It could be trying a new career development event, running for a chapter office, volunteering for a community service project or making a new friend. You will be proud of yourself for stepping out.

And for those of you who cringe at the thought of silly dances at camp--they really are a lot of fun!



Dakota's Favs

- Yellow color
- Prepared Public Speaking FFA activity
- Roy's BBQ restaurant
- Mint Green VW Bug vehicle
- The Diary of Anne Frank book
- Chinese food
- Sprite Zero drink
- Show Steer animal
- I Hope You Dance song

Mitchell Earl

Northwest District Vice President

Erma Bombeck said, "When I stand before God at the end of my life, I would hope that I have not a single bit of talent left, and could say, 'I used everything that you gave me.'"

For me, that quote summarizes the important things in life. We are here to give—to give ourselves as a living sacrifice for Christ, to give ourselves as a servant for others, and to give every ounce of our effort and energy every chance we get. When we discover how to do that joyously, we find the richness of life.

It seems that every time the FFA has a convention, or any time blue jackets are in abundance, people who have never been a part of this organization ask questions about what the FFA is. Yet, all over, people recognize how prestigious this organization is with gifts, donations and continued support. People support FFA not merely because they like to support students, but because they realize how vital the FFA has been in teaching students the meaning of responsibility and character.

At this past State Convention, I walked across the street from the hotel to the Convention Center. Just as I reached the door, I noticed an older man a few paces behind me. Instinctively, I paused and held the door for him. He looked at me, smiled, and said, "I used to be in the FFA, and I know what it does. But since then, my job has required me to travel all over the United States, and NEVER has someone your age held a door open for me before."

This entire scenario caught me off guard. I was only doing something that I've always done, but it clearly had an impact. My point is this – it's the little things, small acts of service, one at a time, that make a far greater difference to a wide range of people than any of the numerous activities or events you can fill your resume with. But, after all, that's the heart of service – it often goes unrewarded.



Mitchell's Favs

The Office
TV show

Banana Republic
store

Psalms
Bible book

Blue
color

Meats Evaluation CDE
FFA activity

Medium-Rare Ribeye Steak
food

The Shack
book

Baseball
sport

Red Dirt & Country
music

Wilke leads with FFA skills

FFA Champion Monica Wilke



Serving as the executive director for Oklahoma's largest agricultural organization may seem a long way from a swine show ring, but for Monica Wilke, the life lessons she learned in the Grandfield FFA still apply to her job today.

Her job duties require her to manage the day-to-day operations of the Oklahoma Farm Bureau as well as its insurance company.

"As I interact with corporate executives, legislators and industry leaders, I use the interpersonal skills FFA provided," she said. "I have no doubt that if I had not had experience through FFA trips, camps, livestock and leadership I would not be sitting in the executive chair."

As an FFA member, Wilke competed on her chapter's livestock, land and meats career development teams and, of course, showed pigs. However, she also competed in the FFA Creed-speaking competition and the animal science public speaking division; attended FFA Alumni Leadership Camp; and earned the title of Oklahoma FFA Sweetheart in 1989.

"I always wanted to show," said Wilke, who also served as the 1992-93 Oklahoma FFA Secretary. "It was what originally drew me into FFA, but I realized there was so much more in leadership development and took off."

Wilke earned a Bachelor of Science in family relations and child development from Oklahoma State University in 1996 before attending the University of Oklahoma School of Law, where she earned her juris doctorate in 1999.

"But I still bleed orange," she said with a laugh.

The 36-year-old worked for a law firm in Tulsa before joining

by Shelly Peper Sitton

the OFB agricultural lobbying team in fall 1999. In September 2009, she became OFB's first female executive director as well as the youngest executive director in the American Farm Bureau.

"I didn't just decide when I walked through the doors of the Oklahoma Farm Bureau that I had a passion for agriculture," she said. "I walked through the doors because of my passion for agriculture."

"I am truly blessed to work for the people I feel like I've known all my life," she said. "They share the same value system that I have. I work where it's okay to talk about my faith."

Wilke said she has relied on her Christian faith since she was 9 years old and it provides the compass for her value system.

"Never compromise your values, even when you want something really badly," she said. "And being a team player is a skill definitely necessary in the corporate business environment."

In addition to her professional career, Wilke is wife to Jason and mother to Miller and Myah, ages 6 and 3, respectively. She stays involved in the community through the Junior League of Oklahoma City as well as the Diamond Hats organization. She and her family attend Henderson Hills Baptist Church in Edmond. She said she also helps with wheat harvest on her family farm because she wants her children to understand their agricultural heritage.

Within the FFA, The Wilkes co-sponsor the Greenhand Creed-speaking event, and she serves on the Oklahoma FFA Foundation board of directors.

"As executive director, my hope and desire for Oklahoma Farm Bureau is for the organization to continue to be the voice of agriculture," she said. "As agriculture evolves I want OFB to be leading the charge in conveying agriculture's message to the public."

The HISTORY of Oklahoma FFA



For the first time, the history of the Oklahoma FFA Association will be available in book form.

Former national FFA officer and nationally known author, speaker and radio host Andrew McCrea from Missouri is the book's author.

McCrea hosts a nationally syndicated radio feature, "The American Countryside," a program that has won five Oscars for rural and agricultural broadcasting.

McCrea, along with many of the former members highlighted in the book, will be available for autographs at the 2011 State FFA Convention, May 3-4, 2011.



Purchase Your First Edition Copy at the 2011 State FFA Convention

Scholarships abundant for FFA's best

As Oklahoma FFA members continue to excel on college campuses throughout our state and across the nation, most still find themselves searching for financial aid and scholarships to pay for their higher education. Misty Wade, Duncan High School's senior counselor, offered this advice on how to streamline the process.

It's Never too Early to Prepare — Advice for Freshmen and Sophomores:

Younger students need to get involved in leadership activities and community-service projects. Also, keeping their grades up and taking classes to prepare themselves for the ACT exam is imperative. They should take the ACT for the first time by the second semester of their sophomore year and then retake it to improve their scores until the December exam of their senior year.

Head's Up Juniors:

The junior year should be focused on the ACT exam. Students wishing to go out of state for their higher education also should seek to score highly on the SAT. Colleges and universities encourage students to apply by October of their senior year; however, admission applications are accepted anytime after the junior year.

Seniors – Stay on Top of Deadlines:

Seniors should apply for financial aid after January 1 and as close to that date as possible. The address for financial aid, www.fafsa.ed.gov is a secure site.

And, Beware!

“Students should never

pay to apply for financial aid or for a scholarship application,” Wade said. “Even if you assume you will not qualify, the FAFSA application sends individuals onto other government assistance such as Pell grants or student loans.”

From the University's Viewpoint:

The Oklahoma State University scholarship application deadline is February 1 of each year. Other Oklahoma schools have a similar dead-

line. It is recommended that students declare a major on all scholarship applications as that allows applications to be sent on to further levels of awards.

How to get Scholarship Applications

Watch for scholarship information on your school's website

or the counselor's bulletin board. Many communities have a local base of scholarship funds through civic organizations, and many counties award scholarships to residents. “A major scholarship bank is located at www.fastweb.com,” Wade said. “It has hundreds of scholarships, and some students get lucky.”

Thoughts on FFA Members' Chances:

“FFA gives its members so many opportunities that prepare students for the scholarships both in and out of FFA,” Wade said. “Members have the background experience that allows them to be really successful in those competitions that award a lot of money.”

Members should also check out the Scholarship page at www.okffa.org.



Scholarships continue to rise for members

FFA Foundation Scholarships

- 11 - \$1,000 Public Speaking Scholarships
- 9 - \$1,000 CDE Scholarships
- 8 - \$3,250 State FFA Officer Scholarships
- 10 - \$500 Future Ag-Ed Teacher Academy Scholarships
- 44 - \$500 to \$1,000 Washington Leadership Conference Scholarships
- 5 - \$1,000 to \$3,000 Oklahoma Jr. Wheat Show Scholarships
- 2 - \$500 FFA Foundation Calendar Intern Scholarships
- 1 - \$1,000 State Proficiency Champion Scholarship

Additional Scholarships Available

- *The Oklahoma Wheat Show awards \$8,000 annually in scholarships.
- *The Oklahoma Ford Dealers scholarships are available through the National FFA Foundation. In 2010, 47 Oklahoma FFA members received \$1,000 scholarships from Ford Motor Company (\$500) and the Oklahoma Ford Dealers (\$500).

Information provided by Kendall Brashears, Executive Director of the Oklahoma FFA Foundation

Total Scholarships Awarded for 2009-10

\$92,600



Former officer named Fulbright Scholar

Numerous former outstanding FFA members now make great strides in college to improve their employability and future career success. One of those students is Jared Crain.

As a plant and soil sciences major at Oklahoma State University, Crain's education has never been bound to the city limits of Stillwater. In fact, he has international experiences from several trips to Mexico as well as to Argentina and Honduras.

Currently, Crain is studying in Mexico on a Fulbright-Garcia Robles scholarship for the 2010-2011 academic year. The Fulbright Program is the flagship international educational exchange program sponsored by the U.S. government and is designed to "increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries," according to the Fulbright website.

Students are chosen as Fulbright scholars based on their academic merit and leadership potential. They have the opportunity to study, teach and conduct research, exchange ideas, and contribute to finding solutions to shared international concerns.

"My project is in connection with Oklahoma State University and the International Wheat and Corn Improvement Center (CIMMYT). CIMMYT is famous for Norman Borlaug and the Green Revolution," Crain said. "My project specifically focuses on transferring nitrogen management ideas and technology developed at Oklahoma State to the Yaqui Valley in Mexico where one of the CIMMYT research centers is located."

"Study abroad is one of the best experiences that you can have," Crain said. "You will get to meet a wide variety of people, learn how other

cultures differ from our own, and be able to experience life firsthand in a foreign country."

In part because of his international experiences, the OSU Alumni Association honored Crain last spring as one of OSU's outstanding seniors. The recognition, given only to 13 students from the entire senior class last year, is one of the most notable distinctions made to OSU students.

Crain said in the future he wants to obtain a Ph.D. in plant and soil sciences and pursue international research, eventually returning to a university to teach and conduct more research.

Crain is a former Fargo FFA member from Woodward, Okla., and he served as the Northwest District Vice President in 2006-07. He has continued to serve the Oklahoma FFA by volunteering as a small group leader for



Alumni Camp.

You can follow Jared's current international experience through his blog at <http://mexicojared.blogspot.com/>.

Adair FFA wins world championship title

Congratulations to the Adair FFA Chapter and their equine evaluation team. The team won the Horse Judging Contest at the American Quarter Horse Association Youth World Show in Oklahoma City, August 5, 2010.

The team qualified for the event by placing second in the State Interscholastics contest last April.

Thirty-six teams from across the United States competed with Adair winning the halter and reasons contests and getting second in performance.

Pictured left to right are Devin DeLozier, chapter advisor, Ethan Propp, Abby Hendrickson, Callie Colclasure and Trevor Shoop.

Propp was high individual overall as well as in halter and reasons. Shoop was seventh high individual.



Submit your chapter's news and accomplishments through your district supervisor for publication.

TIME TO KICK IT



INTOX GEAR

WWW.OKFFAGEAR.COM

If you wear the blue this gear is for you!