NJ FCCLA Fall 2025

NEW DIRECTIONS

Connecting NJ one chapter at a time.

President's Address

Dear New Jersey FCCLA Members, Advisers, and Alumni:

Welcome to another exciting year of learning, leading, and creating a lasting impact within your communities. Whether you're returning for another year or just beginning your FCCLA journey, we are excited to have you with us.

This year's state theme, **ConneCTEd for Success**, reminds us of our mission and goals, and reflects our continued commitment to personal growth, career aspirations and leadership development. As you begin planning your projects, events, and chapter goals, we encourage you to explore all that FCCLA offers. From competitive events and community service opportunities to national programs and fundraising initiatives, there is something for everyone.

We also want to recognize and celebrate all the members and advisers who attended the 2025 National Leadership Conference in Orlando, Florida, this past July. Congratulations to all who competed in a STAR Event, Challenge Test, and Skill Demonstration event! It takes a lot of hard work, dedication, and grit to meet the demands of a STAR Event. In addition to the success of star events, Ms. Dawn Santana, from John F. Kennedy High School, received the National Spirit of Advising Award. Natalia Prajzner, a member from UCVTS, was recognized as a Top 15 Finalist for the first-ever FCCLA Member of the Year. This conference would not have been possible without the support of your school administrations, chaperones, your advisers, and you, the members.

As we transition from the warm summer days into the colorful months of Fall, remember to take a moment to refocus. Take this time to create a plan and determine the methods that will keep you organized throughout the school year. Make goals for yourself so you can strive for success in both your personal and academic life. Now is the time to empower tomorrow's leaders by recruiting new members and showing them all that FCCLA offers.

Have a great start to your school year. We are thrilled to see all the fantastic things you do within your chapter during this school year; so, stay connected to the state association. We look forward to seeing you at the 2025 Fall Leadership Connection on November 24th, where we will continue to build skills, friendships, and memories that last a lifetime.

Sincerely,
Brian Muirhead
New Jersey FCCLA State President

YOUR SECRET WEAPON FOR BACK-TO-SCHOOL SUCCESS: TIME MANAGEMENT!

BY: BRIAN MUIRHEAD, STATE PRESIDENT

As a fellow student, I know returning to school after a long summer vacation can be stressful. It requires a lot of adaptation and a shift in schedule. Instead of waking up at noon daily, you must wake up at 6:00 AM. Here are a few tips to help ensure you manage your time wisely, especially as you are starting a new school year:

Get a planner: Your planner can be either a hard copy or a digital version, whichever is easier for you. Write down all your assignments and their due dates. This will help you allocate time for everything that has to be accomplished in your busy day. Tip,,, Personalize your planner with color-coding assignments!

Establish a Daily Routine: Create a consistent routine that works for you. This will help you avoid multitasking and prioritize your tasks. Establishing a good routine will also help you build good habits. This may take some trial and error but stay motivated. You will find something that works for you.

Set goals: Set a SMART goal for every task you have to accomplish. The best way to create a goal is to ask yourself: Is your goal specific? Is your goal measurable? Is your goal achievable? Is your goal relevant? Is your goal time-bound? If your answer to all these questions is "Yes," you are on the right track to achieving your goal and are effectively managing your time.

Time management may seem overwhelming, but even small steps can lead to significant results. Whether using a planner, establishing a daily routine, or setting clear goals, these simple habits can help you stay organized and feel less stressed. The beginning of the school year is the perfect time to build routines that work for you.

START THE SCHOOL YEAR WITH A FRESH SPACE!

BY: SIYA PATEL, VP OF COMMUNICATIONS

A fresh and organized space is key for starting a new school year; it sets the tone for a productive space, perfect for this upcoming school year!

Cleaning your bedroom may seem challenging, but you can get started by getting rid of items that are no longer in use. Here are some steps that you can follow to start transforming your space!

- Go through clothes, furniture, or knick-knacks that may not be in use and donate them to a local charity, thrift store, or shelter. This simple act can be a big first step to decluttering your room!
- The next step is to manage your storage space. Having shelving around the room to store items is important to keep your room in order and having bins underneath the bed can also create a hidden area to store extra items.
- When using these organizational tools, be sure to use labels to keep the organization successful long-term.

Finally, decorate with personal touches such as plants, posters, drawings, or even photos. Having your own space is a gateway for creativity and showing personality, so it's important to decorate! A well-organized room can help reduce stress and provide comfort, helping to create a space to focus on new goals for the upcoming school year.

National Leadership Conference Recap

BY: PRAGYA BHATIA, FIRST VICE PRESIDENT

Orlando, Florida, is often regarded as "The City of Dreams," very fittingly for FCCLA! These dreams became reality as thousands of FCCLA members arrived for the 2025 National Leadership Conference! A vibrant, exciting conference with endless fun, NLC brought new memories and experiences for all **123 New Jersey FCCLA members**.

The conference had several special guests, including a 10-foot-tall, real-life Optimus Prime, Broadway actor Alton Fitzgerald White, who played Mufasa in the award-winning show "The Lion King," and several notable figures from the US Army. The speakers throughout the conference shared their stories and brought to light how members can ***Dare to Dream*** through FCCLA.

New Jersey members made an impact throughout the conference. With two workshops, one NLC scholarship winner, two National Content Creators, four Challenge-Test participants, and ample networking across many states, New Jersey members and advisers explored countless opportunities within FCCLA. Members also attended engaging and informative workshops about Family and Consumer Science courses, leadership training, and service-based workshops throughout the conference.

As for STAR Events, New Jersey had 68 gold winners, 54 silver medalists, 5 bronze certifiers, 9 Top 10 finalists, and 4 Top 3 winners. All members were further recognized at our annual New Jersey Luncheon **this year at Maggiano's Italian Kitchen.**

On Tuesday, July 8th, members attended FCCLA Night at Universal Studios! The magic in the air was irreplaceable as members explored various attractions such as Harry Potter World and the many rollercoasters available. Members brought their FCCLA glow-in-the-dark bracelets, easily identifying FCCLA members, and forging new connections while having fun!

We are proud of our **NJ native: Lucais Romo**, the 2024-2025 National Vice President of Programs! When we saw Lucais take the stage at the National Leadership conference, our members went all out to cheer to support him on the national council. He did a wonderful job! Congratulations to Lucais for a wildly successful term! New Jersey FCCLA is honored to have you as an alumnus.

The Best Part of Being a teacher is being an FCCLA Adviser

BY: NATALIE GUARINO, CHAPTER ADVISER
HUNTERDON COUNTY POLYTECHNICAL SCHOOL

As an FCCLA adviser, I see firsthand how our organization transforms students who aspire to become future educators. FCCLA offers opportunities that go far beyond the classroom, helping members develop leadership, communication, and organizational skills—essential traits for any successful teacher. Through competitive events, community service projects, and leadership roles, students learn how to plan engaging activities, work with diverse groups, and manage responsibilities effectively.

FCCLA also encourages members to practice the very skills they will one day teach, such as collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking. They gain real-world experience in mentoring younger students, presenting lessons, and advocating for education-related causes. These experiences not only build confidence but also create a strong professional foundation.

Future educators in FCCLA graduate with more than just a career goal—they leave with practical teaching skills, a strong ethical compass, and a passion for making a difference in students' lives. From my perspective as an adviser, FCCLA doesn't just prepare members for their careers—it shapes them into inspiring, capable, and compassionate educators who will positively impact the next generation.

It has been a privilege to serve as a NJFCCLA adviser for the last 16 years. Some of my best teacher memories have been through FCCLA. So many of my students have shared their fondest high school memories being from their FCCLA experiences. From chapter meetings, chapter service, leadership workshops, and state and national conferences, FCCLA takes the lead in career and technical school organizations. I am proud to continue to encourage the teaching profession at Hunterdon County Polytech and inspire future educators with the support of FCCLA. I am looking forward to partnering in FCCLA's national "Be A Teacher Day" in October. I am committed to growing future teachers and building this remarkable profession.

Fall-Themed Fundraisers

BY: SHRIDHAR GARG, VP OF PARLIAMENTARY LAW

The fall season is a great time for our NJ FCCLA chapters to make a push with fundraising. The start of the school year brings changes in weather, and a time of many festivities; this creates many opportunities to make your chapter financially stable! It is crucial to take advantage of these prime-time opportunities, as fundraising serves as the means of keeping our chapters alive. Through fundraising, you can support community service initiatives, reduce conference costs, and raise funds for your chapter to affiliate. Overall, fundraising is truly important for our chapters as it involves all members, and this keeps the "fun" in fundraising. Here are some fall-themed ideas to start fundraising!

- **Fall Bake Sale**

As we move into the fall season, the weather cools down a bit, and freshly baked goods are all the rage. Warm pumpkin muffins, fall-decorated cookies, and pastries are delicious ideas for baked goods. Your chapter can make them fresh in-school, or members can donate.

- **Halloween Trick-or-Treat Bags**

Halloween is a great time for a themed fundraiser! Your chapter can create Halloween bags with pieces of candy, fun trinkets, or even spooky Halloween-themed stickers. At a chapter meeting, assemble these bags and sell them at an afterschool sale, or even as a gifting system for students to give one another.

- **FCCLA Refreshments at Fall Sports Games**

School football games during the fall season are great events for your chapter to fundraise. With the number of students coming out to watch the games, Hot cocoa and warm apple cider will be popular. Perhaps your FCCLA chapter could set up a snack/refreshments stand.

This season is a great time for your chapter to get started on the year's fundraising efforts. Fall-themed fundraisers can become an annual fun event for your chapter. Be sure to brainstorm with your chapter and advisers!

CREATING COMFORT

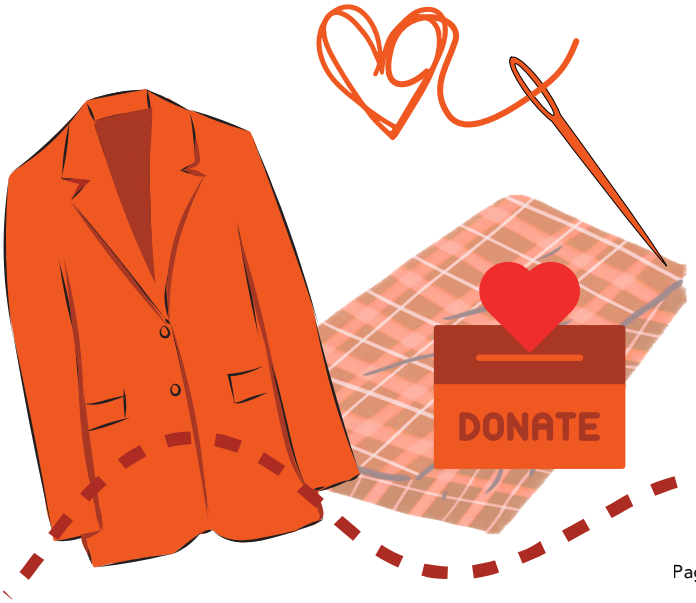
By: Carey Brown, OCVTS Chapter/Adviser

The OCVTS Chapter was contacted in January by our Employment & Industry Development Coordinator, who shared information about a special community service opportunity. A local family was collecting hand-crafted bonding blankets for their annual donation to the NICU at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP).

Bonding blankets—also known as scent blankets—help parents connect with their newborns in the NICU who require special care and cannot be held or bonded with in traditional ways. This initiative is especially meaningful for the family, who wanted to give back to the hospital staff that played such an important role in the care and recovery of their son, RJ. Born with a rare condition that carried only a 50% survival rate, RJ underwent surgery at just four days old, made a full recovery, and is now a thriving six-year-old.

The fabric—soft flannel in a variety of infant prints—was generously donated by several staff members, including one whose own son spent time at **CHOP** as an infant. We created two blanket patterns—a heart and a square—in two sizes to suit a range of newborns. Once the patterns were perfected, we set up a mini assembly line: one station for cutting fabric, another for sewing, and a third for pressing. This allowed each member to contribute in the way they felt most comfortable and confident.

In total, we were able to donate 45 bonding blankets to RJ's cause. RJ, along with his mom and sister, visited us to pick up the blankets and shared their inspiring story of strength and resilience.



LEADING THROUGH FCS AND FCCLA

KAYA BROMILEY,
SOUTHERN REGIONAL HS MEMBER

Leadership isn't about being in charge; it is taking care of those in your charge. Think about the leaders and role models who have inspired you. What makes you still think of them today? Could it have been their ability to listen, communication skills, or teamwork? Most people can agree people lack leadership skills, especially teenagers. The ability to lead can be achieved by being a member of Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America as well as taking Family and Consumer Sciences classes. You too can be a leader.

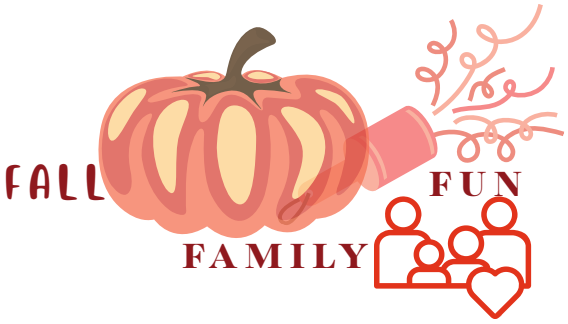
Family and Consumer Sciences is a field of study that focuses on helping families, individuals, and communities achieve great leadership skills. FCS was first developed by a woman named Ellen Swallow Richards in the 1890s. She was an environmental chemist and American engineer which explains her reasoning for wanting to include scientific principles into the home and enable people through education. Family and Consumer Sciences consists of many areas of study. Some of them include culinary arts, food science and nutrition, fashion and interior design, education, and social services. Imagine how much you can lead through being a part of Family Consumer Sciences education.
According to the University of Minnesota, 96% of students think leadership is important to addressing the country's most pressing issues but only one in three young people said they have the skills they need to be prepared to lead. FCS and FCCLA provides students with opportunities to build self-confidence, learn time management, and build entrepreneurial success. The only way to keep Family Consumer Sciences classes around is by having qualified people to teach them. There is a growing shortage of FCS teachers and it is greatly affecting education. This is important because FCS educators provide a wide range of skills to students of all ages. This is caused by schools program and budget cuts as well as lack of qualified educators. FCS classes are just as important as any other class and are slowly being minimized. This can also mean less FCCLA advisers which means less chapters. This was brought to attention during the 2015 American Associates of Family and Consumer Sciences conference, as well as the Filling the FCS pipeline: Summit for Action. The outcome of these events was Say Yes to FCS which is a national program that aims to bring attention to this ongoing issue. FCCLA plays a massive role in this initiative with our Say yes to FCS Star Event, FCS educator week which is held alongside FCCLA week, and the FCS signing ceremonies which recognize seniors who choose to major in FCS education in hopes to become FCS educators and FCCLA advisers.

The purpose of FCCLA is to create young leaders through community service, public speaking, teamwork, and so much more. Students benefit from this because it provides skills that will help prepare member for their future. Colleges and jobs look for students who have leadership qualities such as resilience, decision making skills, public speaking, goal setting, problem solving, conflict resolution, standing up for what's right, and leading with compassion. Teenagers are able to improve their leadership skills through Family and Consumer Sciences and Family, Career and Community Leaders of America, as well as taking initiative beyond those opportunities. Start with setting personal goals for yourself in order to keep motivated and feel a sense of accomplishment. Another extremely important action is working on public speaking skills. Doing simple things like attending Board of Education meetings to speak out on the importance of FCCLA can greatly benefit young leaders. Lastly, working as a team and educating the people around you. These are all crucial skills for careers, social skills, confidence, and making a positive impact on today's world.

FCCLA and FCS have the ability to greatly advance teenagers' leadership skills. Leadership is achievable for everyone and together, we are able to lead through Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America and Family and Consumer Sciences.

2025-2026 SAVE THE DATES

Fall Leadership Connection - November 24, 2025 - Edison, NJ
Leadership Bootcamp - January 10, 2026 virtual watch parties from your school
State Leadership Conference - March 25-26, 2026 Cherry Hill, NJ
National Leadership Conference - July 6-10, 2026 - Washington, D.C.



BY: JENNA TROTMAN, VP OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

As school is in session and holidays begin, the autumn season welcomes connections. It is important to devote time to sustaining the connection with your family members during this busy season. With this list of activities, you'll be able to create meaningful memories with your family during this season.

Visit a Pumpkin Patch

Pumpkin patches are the perfect way to spend time with your family because they're great for all ages. Many farms across New Jersey have fields of pumpkins, such as Battleview Orchards in Freehold or Happy Day Farm in Manalapan County! Some pumpkin patches have other activities as well, like hayrides or haunted houses. When you go to the field, remember to take in the moment. Take family photos and most importantly, have fun! If you want to go the extra mile, get pumpkins and when you bring them home, carve funny faces into them with your family!

Attend a Local Fall Festival

Starting from as early as September, many towns take pride in their fall festivals. These are full of vendors who sell items like apple pies to jewelry, and host tractor rides and apple bobbing contests. Whatever you choose to do, there will be something that every person in your family will enjoy!

Make DIY Fall Crafts

When searching the internet for fall crafts, you can find various activities with different skill levels . For example, if you prefer an easier craft, try to do something like painting funny faces on leaves, or make a paper loop sunflower with construction paper scraps. If you're looking for a craft that is more of a challenge, you can try to do a fall leaf wreath, which requires hot gluing artificial leaves to a foam or grapevine wreath.

Carving out time for your family will show that, despite a busy schedule, you are still making the time for them and, in the long run, can only strengthen your relationships.

BECOME A SERVICE AMBASSADOR!

BY: LIAM CHANG,
VP OF MEMBERSHIP

FCCLA stands for the Family, Career and Community Leaders of America, meaning that one of our core purposes is to prepare youth for roles in their future. FCCLA provides an opportunity to lead and make change, and New Jersey FCCLA specifically provides one opportunity that no other state currently does, and that opportunity is our Service Ambassadors Program.

It began at the start of in the 2024-2025 school year, Service Ambassadors were established through an application process to help FCCLA re-center and refocus on the community service aspect of our organization. Service Ambassadors attend monthly virtual meetings to connect and network with other community-driven individuals around the state, offering direct communication from the state council to chapters. As we head into the new school year, we are anxious to get this program rolling with another group of like-minded service driven members.

Starting September 2025, the application for service ambassadorship will be available from your chapter adviser. Your adviser will select one student from the chapter to participate. Don't worry about forgetting, as our Instagram page will be offering reminders about application windows opening and closing, to ensure your chapter can stay up to date.

Becoming a chapter service ambassador is not only an honor but an admirable leadership role. This role requires dedication, resilience, communication skills, time management, and most of all leadership skills. Chapter advisers will be greatly involved in their chapter's service ambassador, as this decision should not be taken lightly. A service ambassador job requires participation not just in the state service initiatives, but also that of their chapter. A service ambassador must ensure that their chapter stays informed as to what is happening with service initiatives at the state level, and also share information on what is taking place at the local chapter level. An individual should be dedicated to FCCLA and have a thorough understanding of what our organization stands for, as well as a dedication for leading their chapters.

The Service Ambassador program was a great success last school year, and with the start of a new school year, we hope to increase our effectiveness regarding community service. With new and returning service ambassadors working together, we hope that our team can collaborate and know that there are always people to help them step into their role. Become a service ambassador for your chapter and help us lead our chapters into a brighter more caring tomorrow!

COME ONE, COME ALL: COMPLETE

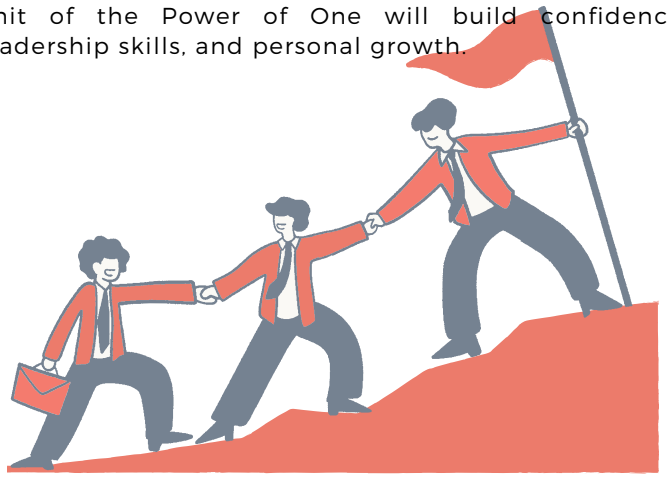
POWER of ONE 1

BY: BRIAN MUIRHEAD, STATE PRESIDENT

Power of One is one of the eight national programs that FCCLA offers. This self-paced national program aims to help members from grades 6-12 explore their personal power. This is one of the most popular national programs in our state. It is very flexible and allows members to improve different aspects of their lives, one step at a time. To complete Power of One, you must complete the five units: A Better You, Family Ties, Working on Working, Take the Lead, and Speak Out for FCCLA.

1. **A Better You** focuses on personal development. Projects include reducing stress, improving time management, or becoming more responsible.
2. **Family Ties** encourages stronger relationships with your family. Plan more quality time together or work on understanding different family perspectives.
3. **Working on Working** helps you prepare for future careers. You can explore jobs by interviewing professionals, shadowing, or researching education and training options.
4. **Take the Lead** helps you build leadership skills. Examples of projects include serving as a chapter officer, leading a group project, or participating in a STAR Event.
5. **Speak Out for FCCLA** is all about advocacy. Share your FCCLA journey by giving a presentation, starting a social media campaign, or speaking at a school or community meeting.

Completing Power of One is more than earning recognition, it is about discovering your strengths, setting goals, and becoming the best version of yourself. Your adviser is an important part of this National Program as he/she will be your accountability partner and help guide you through the process. Each unit of the Power of One will build confidence, leadership skills, and personal growth.



SETTING YOUR EXECUTIVE COUNCIL UP FOR SUCCESS

BY: RIA KOTTESWARAN, VP OF LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Being a part of an executive council is hard work, but nothing's easy if you really want it. There is a lot that comes with becoming a council member: dedication, enthusiasm, motivation, and responsibility. In order to be successful as student leaders, you need to set the tone, create goals, and bring the energy to your chapter. Here's how you can set up your Executive Council for success, with meaningful results:

Build Bonds With Your Team

As an executive council, you will be working with each other throughout the year . You are not just a group of people with a label, you're a team. Teams only work well when you can rely on and depend on each other. Plan a day with bonding activities and team-building exercises to familiarize yourself with your council and get to know each other.

Set Expectations

It is important to set expectations as a foundation for the council. It's important to make sure everyone has a clear vision of the groups expectations and can come together for a common goal. Every member should be aware of their responsibilities and their commitment to FCCLA and their chapter.

Set Goals

Create SMART goals as a council and individually to help create focus and purpose. Your goals will only help when everyone is committed to the results. It is necessary to avoid procrastination if the team is going to succeed.

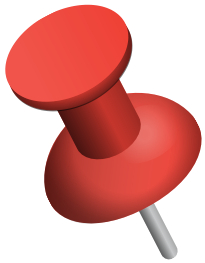
Work on Leadership Development

Being a part of the council means you're a leader, so of course, there is always room for improvement. Take the time to work on your leadership using available resources. Attending FCCLA's workshops during conferences is a great way to dive deeper into leadership. Within your council, you can offer training in public speaking, time management, and organization to help improve your skills as a team.

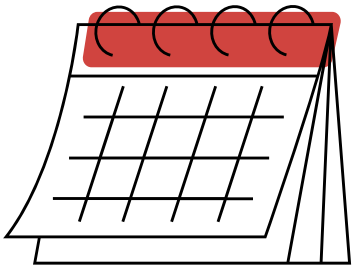
Recognize and Reflect

On the journey as a council member, there will be ups and downs, but it's essential to take the time to reflect on what went well and what improvements need to be made.

Setting up your Executive Council is the key to success. Solid beginnings always play a huge role in the final success. Be sure you establish a strong foundation so your team can thrive! FCCLA is counting on you to promote personal growth and leadership through leadership in action.



STARTING NATIONAL PROGRAMS NOW!



BY: AVADHI BAID, VP OF NATIONAL PROGRAMS

FCCLA's eight National Programs are special to FCCLA…they are your tool kit for leadership, growth, and success. From building stronger families to planning your future career, these programs help you lead at school, at home, and in your community. And the best part? You don't have to wait. You can collaborate, make a difference, and be ready to lead right now! Whether you want to start a school-wide initiative or work with your chapter on a STAR Event, these programs will help you kickstart these efforts.

Career Connection

The beginning of a new school year is the perfect time to jump into Career Connection. This program helps you explore your interests and align them with real careers. Whether you dream of being a doctor, designer, or entrepreneur, Career Connection gives you the resources to set goals and discover the path that fits you. With units like My Skills, My Life, My Career, and My Path, you'll gain confidence for your future step by step.

Community Service

FCCLA's Community Service program turns passion into action. It helps you identify real needs in your community and take the lead to solve them. From hosting donation drives to writing thank you cards to show gratitude, every act of kindness creates a ripple effect. With the units Learn, Lead, and Serve, this program empowers you to create change right where you are.

FACTS

FACTS helps you become a champion for traffic safety. Through this program, you'll learn and spread awareness about seatbelt use, distracted driving, and car maintenance. Whether you start a seatbelt challenge in your community or make posters about texting and driving, FACTS ensures that road safety starts with you!

Families First

Families First highlights just how powerful strong relationships can be. The units Dynamics, Balance, Development, Safety, and Skills help members build trust, improve communication, and promote safe, supportive environments. From organizing a game night to leading a discussion on mental wellness, this program helps you create lasting bonds at home and in your school community.

Financial Fitness

Financial Fitness teaches you all about how money needs to be managed. It teaches you about earning, saving, spending, and protecting your money. This program gives you a head start on building good habits that can last a lifetime. Want to buy something big? Plan a budget. Want to teach others? Start a savings challenge at school. Learning the difference between wants and needs, tracking your spending, and setting savings goals will give you the confidence to take control of your financial future.

Power of One

Power of One gives you the chance to focus on everything you! Through five units (A Better You, Family Ties, Working on Working, Take the Lead, and Speak Out for FCCLA), you'll set goals that matter to you. Whether you're trying to improve a skill, become more organized, or speak up for change, this program helps you take charge of your life, one goal at a time.

Stand Up

The Stand UP program is all about finding your voice and using it to make an impact. Whether it's fighting for inclusion, addressing school issues, or promoting mental health, you'll learn how to identify a cause, educate others, and advocate for change. It's your chance to lead important conversations and inspire others to join in.

Student Body

Student Body gives you the power to take care of yourself and others! From learning smart food choices to managing stress and staying active, this program helps you build a balanced, healthy life. The units The Healthy You, The Fit You, The Real You, and The Resilient You teach everything from nutrition to emotional wellness. Start a wellness challenge, create self-care kits, or host a fitness day, with the assistance of the program.

Beginning the FCCLA National Programs now gives you a head start on making the most of the 2025-2026 school year. These programs are more than just checklists. They are the steps to personal growth, leadership, service, and future success. Whether you're setting goals, starting a service project, or leading a school-wide initiative, you have the power to shape your year and your future. So. grab your chapter, choose a program, and get started…NOW!

2025 NJ FCCLA FALL LEADERSHIP CONNECTION & FALL COMPETITIVE EVENTS

BY: AVADHI BAID, VP OF NATIONAL PROGRAMS

Get ready to start the academic year with an unforgettable experience at the 2025 Fall Leadership Connection! Held at the Pines Manor in Edison, this exciting event brings together members from all over New Jersey. Whether you're a returning member or brand new to FCCLA, this conference is your guide to a year filled with success.
From the moment you walk in, the energy is contagious. You'll hear from motivational speakers who share powerful stories about leadership, resilience, and believing in yourself. Their words will leave you energized and ready to take on the school year with confidence!

If you love challenges, don't miss the Fall Competitive Events. There are 35 unique events designed to match all interests and skills. Whether you're passionate about arts and design, public service, education, or financial literacy, there's something for you. These events are inspired by FCCLA's National Programs and Career Clusters. Participants gain real-world experience and get recognized for competing.

Throughout the day, you'll also get the chance to participate in skill-building workshops led by student leaders, advisers, and career professionals. These sessions are fun, interactive, and focus on giving you tools that will help in any aspect of your life. These workshops range from community service to career exploration and personal leadership development.

On the topic of service, FCCLA focuses on the importance of giving back to the community. Leading up to the conference, you can take part in meaningful community service projects like the Cupcake Challenge, a non-perishable food drive, and a pull tab collection for Ronald McDonald House Charities. These projects are a fun and fulfilling way to make a difference while raising awareness within and outside of your chapter.

Are you a chapter officer this year? Make sure to attend the Chapter Officer Workshops led by the State Executive Council. These sessions are specially designed to help you become a stronger leader.

Whether you come to compete, connect, or just explore what FCCLA has to offer, the Fall Leadership Connection is the perfect way to start your year. Visit www.njfccla.org to download the Fall Competitive Events Guide with all the rules, rubrics, and registration information. So, mark your calendars and get ready because NJ FCCLA's biggest fall event is waiting for you!

#NJFCCLA: BOOST YOUR CHAPTER'S ONLINE PRESENCE

BY SIYA PATEL, VP OF COMMUNICATIONS

Social media is one of the most powerful tools for FCCLA chapters to share their accomplishments, engage with members, and spread the word about their chapter. Chapters have many different platforms to use when showcasing their chapter, such as Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, etc. It's important to choose platforms that are most popular among your chapter members and the school.

Creating these platforms comes with great responsibility. This means posting consistently and appropriately. Remember, you are representing your chapter with this online presence, so represent it well!

In addition, posting consistent updates on chapter events, projects, and meetings keeps members engaged and boosts a chapter's reach across NJ. When creating posts or stories, it is also important to make sure the posts/stories being put out are appropriate and professional. After all, your chapter's social media also represents New Jersey as a whole, so professionalism is key. High-quality photos and videos also contribute to professionalism and help posts stand out to others.

Last, to grow your chapter's appearance on social media, use hashtags. Using hashtags, like #NJFCCLA, can help chapters connect with other chapters statewide. This will encourage increased participation and build awareness. One of the most important aspects of a chapter is its presence online, and with growing technologies, it is highly encouraged to keep chapters connected through social media.

INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS - THE KEY TO SUCCESS -

BY: RIA KOTTESWARAN,
VP OF LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Have you ever gone to the store and came across a rude employee? The one who gives you the stink-eye or answers with that sarcastic tone? Or an employee who is on their phone and annoyed that you need service? Well, we have all been there at one point or another. What does this behavior say to you? The lack of strong interpersonal communication skills.

Interpersonal communication is the way we exchange information with individuals using our emotions, verbal, and non-verbal messages. This communication is vital to everyday human interactions and important in both our personal and professional lives. When you meet new people, it's especially important to use strong and positive interpersonal communication because that is how you will be perceived. People who come across as friendly, confident, and open are more approachable, and will be more successful. Establishing good interpersonal skills is important in forming strong relationships. It's hard to get through this world with weak communication; your voice matters, and working on communication is how things get done. Interpersonal skills play a huge role in building strong relationships and help solve problems effectively, especially in your home and future career.

Three Ways Interpersonal Communication Leads to Success:

- **Build Strong Relationships**

Being a good communicator makes it easy to build relationships on a deeper level. You are more prone to building strong bonds of trust.

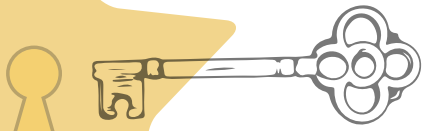
- **Avoid Conflicts and Misunderstandings**

Clear communication helps avoid confusion, mistakes, and conflict.

- **Encourage Active Listening**

Keeping engaged in a conversation with both your body language and listening is important as it builds respect and understanding.

Interpersonal communication is important to everyday life. It helps build the foundations of our conversations and respect. With both nonverbal and verbal skills combined, applying good communication skills makes meaningful connections.



SCHEDULE AN FCCLA CHAPTER VISIT!

BY: SHRIDHAR GARG,
VP OF PARLIAMENTARY LAW

What are Chapter Visits? This is a great opportunity for all of our NJ FCCLA chapters. State Officer Chapter Visits are a resource sometimes overlooked; it can truly be beneficial as it allows you to get information directly from the New Jersey State Executive Council (SEC). The NJ SEC is a great resource for everyone; We are a dedicated team ready to help your chapter!

Examples of Chapter Visits:

- If your chapter is struggling with membership, you could request a chapter visit. State Officers can visit during a chapter meeting to talk about FCCLA and the various advantages of our organization!
- The state officer team is open to providing clarity with competitive events, helping in the process of selecting events, or needing guidance on where to get information. We will be happy to speak about why students should compete and how competitive events help members!
- For community service, state officers can help your chapter brainstorm ideas and create a plan. This can give you the push that you may need to get started!
- However, these few examples just scratch the surface. If there is something your chapter wants to discuss, we accept the challenge; a chapter visit might be the solution!

If you would like to request a chapter visit, your chapter adviser can send an email to the state staff at our NJ FCCLA email (njfccla@gmail.com). Chapter officers can also contact a State Office or find a form on the state website to schedule a chapter visit. We truly encourage you to take advantage of this opportunity to help your chapter experience a successful year!

THE JOURNEY OF A LIFETIME: RUNNING FOR STATE OFFICE

BY: PRAGYA BHATIA,
FIRST VICE PRESIDENT

State Office is a million different things: responsibility, leadership, compassion, integrity, the list goes on. Throughout my high school journey, FCCLA has been a constant, and to be able to serve as a leader in this organization that has fundamentally shaped who I am is beyond gratifying. Being a state officer has been the unique journey of a lifetime.

As we start the new school year, members have the chance to grow through FCCLA. Growing also means leading—this year holds an opportunity to run for state office.

As a state officer, pathways open like never before, such as networking with officers all across the state, representing New Jersey as a voting delegate at NLC, meeting Capitol officials as part of Capitol Leadership, serving as a part of the National Network teams, and so much more.

Your journey starts now, with your chapter. But. it can take you so many places if you just let it. Applications to run for State Office can be found on the NJ FCCLA Website in the Fall. Here's a breakdown of the steps to apply for state office:

February 1 - Applications due
February 28 - Candidates Meeting + Knowledge Test + Interview
SLC Day 1- Speech & Situational Questions from Voting Delegate
SLC Day 2- Officer Installation

Please feel free to reach out with any questions! To learn more about running for state office, please go to njfccla.org under "Leadership" and click "Run for State Office."

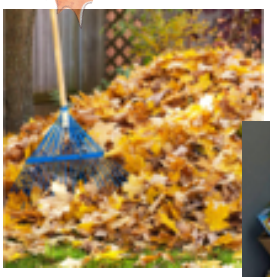
SERVICE INITIATIVES: GIVE BACK TO YOUR COMMUNITY

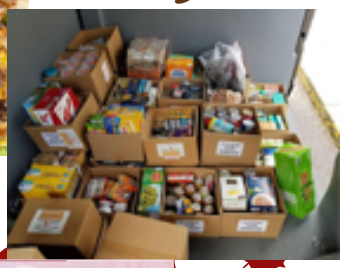
BY: MISHREE PATEL, VP OF COMMUNITY SERVICE

Fall is the perfect time to give back to your community with your chapter, in service and kindness. With the cool weather marking the start of a new school year, as well as new service opportunities, your community waits for you. Community service is an integral part of FCCLA, so here are some ideas to get more involved in your community.

- **Organizing a food drive:** Gather canned foods, snacks, and hygiene products to donate to a nearby food bank for families in need during the time of giving. With schools closed during the summer, this leaves food pantries running low on needed items. With Thanksgiving being so near, it is crucial to organize food drives during the fall.
- **Assembling care packages:** Create bags with socks, snacks, hygiene items, and kind notes for shelters or senior centers. During this season of giving, it's important to bring this spirit to all members of your community through acts of kindness.
- **Organizing a clothing drive:** Collect gently used attire from students and faculty to donate to local shelters or charities. It benefits struggling families and helps create sustainability by reducing textile waste. As the air chills, shelters never have enough warm clothing such as jackets, coats, gloves, hats, etc. This is the perfect way of impacting others in need, one coat at a time.
- **Raking leaves for neighbors:** Volunteer to rake leaves or cut lawns for older neighbors or your school grounds to promote community involvement. When the beautiful fall season sets in, seniors can't keep up with their yards with leaves and cold weather. You can lend a hand to make a change in the community!

These ideas of community service not only help someone else, but they also create teamwork and leadership within your chapter. Engage in one or more of these opportunities, whichever you choose, fall is the perfect time to show how FCCLA members demonstrate we care. Bring out your sweaters, gather your ideas, and let's FALL into SERVICE!





TIPS TO INCREASING OUR MEMBERSHIP

BY: LIAM CHANG, VP OF MEMBERSHIP

FCCLA prides itself on the impacts made within its families and communities across the country, and New Jersey FCCLA is no different. Our NJ FCCLA membership has not only grown together, but is also thriving. As we continue to improve, reach higher, and work to not only retain our community, but also build it to be bigger and better. Our work to strengthen New Jersey FCCLA, is not possible without the help of our chapters. All of us are part of the same big family, New Jersey FCCLA, and with the start of a new school year, what better time to grow that family? The "Three R's" tell us to not only recruit new members, but also retain those within our chapters, and recognize members' efforts.

Starting the new school year can be challenging, as past members move on to other stages of their lives, many who may want to focus on other things. It can be difficult to hit the ground running again. Chapters need to find new ways to bring the "passion" back, but these hard times bring new opportunities. Think of all the newcomers to your school, those who may have never heard of FCCLA, even people who have and just don't realize all the benefits of membership. Promote FCCLA in your FCS classes. These students have an interest in FCS and CTE and may only need a small nudge to get started. All members have the potential to do great things for your chapter and our state association. Increasing membership numbers won't be easy, but there are some things you can do to help!

Host School Events

Hosting school events can not only be a blast for those in your school, but also a useful networking tool that can be effective in bringing more interest to FCCLA. Events could range from anything as simple as a coffee social or game night, to things as extravagant as a fashion show or performance. Don't be afraid to get creative with it, as these events can provide a fun time for classmates and help spread awareness about FCCLA. This can lead to increased membership numbers!

Approach Other School Associations

Working with other clubs or organizations in your school community is an amazing way to not only network but also potentially find new members. Your school may have several clubs centered around the things that make up FCCLA (ie. cooking club, fashion club, etc.) or even just clubs centered around community service. These school clubs make it perfect to find individuals who already share an interest in FCCLA-related topics and can provide great ways to search for new members.

Advertise

Advertising for FCCLA is self-explanatory, but there are some ways you should go about it. Having a social media account is one thing, but making sure to consistently post updates is another. Throughout the year, posts about new opportunities within FCCLA or collaborations with school social media accounts can help enlarge the pool of people who could potentially join your chapter.

For more ways to strengthen your chapter visit our website njfccla,org or contact the State Office for help!

ADVANTAGES OF FOODS LITERACY FOR TEENS

BY: SHRIDHAR GARG, VP OF PARLIAMENTARY LAW

FCCLA provides a unique opportunity for students to gain significant hands-on experience while studying food and nutrition in and outside the classroom. It allows students to learn through competition-based settings while preparing for events, competing, networking with people in the industry, or just other teens with the same interest. Why is foods literacy so important for teens, you may wonder? Studying Food and Nutrition is more than just learning how to cook a good meal. Rather, it gives teens essential skills needed for independent life, which many first experience in college. By learning lessons in meal planning, budgeting, nutrition, food safety, etc, students can explore important skills they will carry on with them for life.

Other benefits of food education can include how it builds the confidence and knowledge needed in the kitchen. NJ FCCLA State Events, FCCLA STAR Events, Skill Demonstration Events, or even Challenge Tests, all give students a place where they can apply and test their knowledge gained in Food Education courses. This helps further prepare them with the key skills gained in Family Consumer Sciences classes.

With the many benefits already offered to teens in food classes, it also helps teens take control of their health. Knowing what foods are healthy, how to prepare them, and having knowledge of proper nutrition, students can make healthier choices in their younger years to set themselves up for the future!

FCCLA continues to promote FCS and up to date information about Foods and Nutrition through its various programs! The importance of Foods classes and competitive events is truly evident with the independence, knowledge, and responsibility they provide to growing teens !

FALL 2025 FASHION TREND: WHAT'S IN THIS SEASON?

BY: MISHREE PATEL, VICE PRESIDENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICE

Fall is here, and so are new trends! Coziness, creativity, and old/new style mixture define this season. Fashion is a way to express your personality and convey yourself, so don't miss some of the most popular trends for the new fall season!

1.**Big Coats & Bold Belts**
Over-sized blazers and jackets are totally in trend these days. Top them with a broad belt to add more jazz and comfort to the outfit.

2. **Slouchy Boots**
Pirate-cut or loose suede boots that are available in many colors. They are comfortable shoes that will look perfect worn with jeans, skirts, or dresses and provide a cozy fall look.

3. **Ballet Oxfords**
These are both ballet flats and school staples. They fit great, and are stylish and versatile - perfect for school or a night out. These shoes can lift a fall wardrobe and become a staple this year with coats and scarves in a stunning combination!

4. **Cozy Textures**
Faux fur, fuzzy scarves, and warm knit sweaters are a must-have this winter. Not only are they cute, but they also warm you up instantly. These accessories are never going out of fashion and are a part of the winter essentials!

5. **Purple Tones & Warm Browns**
This palette of colors is trending on social media platforms, such as lilac, violet, chocolate brown, and beige. Try out using these colors in your wardrobe to remain trendy this fall! Also, try using some of these neutral colors in your closet through fuzzy socks, scarves, mufflers, etc.

Easy Tips To Incorporate These Trends:

- Wear a fuzzy scarf or boots
- Mix purple with a neutrally colored item like black or brown
- Replace sneakers with ballet oxfords
- Buy fun belts at thrift shops or online

Fall 2025 is all about showing your personality. So, layer it up, get cozy, and try something different this fall!

TIPS FOR BALANCING SCHOOLWORK AND EXTRACURRICULARS

BY: JENNA TROTMAN, VP OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

Being involved in school activities is highly encouraged, but it is also important to prioritize being a student. Staying on top of your schoolwork is extremely important, but it can be managed when you start the school year off strong. Here are some tips to help you control the demands of school, while still being an active member in other extra-curricular activities.

Dedicate your time efficiently.
With so many things to do in your day-to-day life, your schedule can be hectic and unorganized, leading to forgetfulness and falling behind. A helpful tool to control this is time blocking (either on a physical planner or a digital one). When you separate your day for all of the tasks you need to complete, you will have a good mind set and will feel the motivation to finish your tasks in the given time period.

Maintain a strong relationship with activity advisers.
Building these relationships with your advisers is important from the start. Demonstrating leadership qualities like dedication and positive communication skills can help you succeed in your extra-curricular activity. Discussing ideas with your adviser shows that you care about the growth of your chapter and allows you to build a trusting relationship.

Don't procrastinate
As leaders, we take responsibility for our tasks and find ways to get them done. Procrastination only invites negative action such as cramming, stress, loss of sleep, and much more. Using a planner can help you create a schedule to keep you focused and on track.

Choose activities based on your school schedule.
Stepping into the club fair in the first month of school can be overwhelming, and the first inclination is to join everything you see. Joining what interests you is encouraged, but sometimes, you need to take a step back on when to say yes. If you are in a sport that practices 4 days a week, it might not be the smartest move to join a club that has meetings 3 days a week. There will be other clubs/organizations that fit your needs, so don't stress!

Prioritize your self-care
School can get overwhelming, and it will start to take a toll on your mental and physical health. Between taking the SATs, filling out college applications, or balancing AP courses, you need to find time to take care of yourself. Make sure you are getting an adequate amount of sleep, eating all 3 meals, and asking for help when you need it. Your schoolwork is important, but a healthy body is the most important of all.

This is a basic list of tips that will ultimately lead to your success, academically and in your extracurriculars.

Good luck!

FALLING FOR DIY: CREATIVE FALL DECOR PROJECTS

BY SIYA PATEL, VP OF COMMUNICATIONS

As the fall season comes around, it brings an opportunity for members to express creativity through small, fun, and useful décor projects. These projects are easy to make and can be enjoyed as a group or individual activity.

Sweater Sleeve Pumpkins
One creative idea is to make Sweater Sleeve Pumpkins. Using sweater material or any kind of soft fabric, cut a section shaped like a pumpkin, sew the sides, fill it with cotton stuffing or any kind of filler, and close the top with twine. This creates a pumpkin-shaped pillow, which can be placed around the house for décor. To complete the fall theme, drop fall-flavored essential oils to create an aroma for the home.

Leaf Silhouette Lanterns
Another fun project is Leaf Silhouette Lanterns. Glass mason jars can be decorated with painted fall leaf patterns or leaf-shaped cutouts. After decorating, place a tea light inside the jar to create a glowing lantern, perfect to place on a windowsill, lighting up a cozy atmosphere.

Book Page Pumpkin
Last, another way to decorate homes for fall is a Book Page Pumpkin. Grab an old book, remove the cover but keep the spine, and trace half of a pumpkin onto the pages. Use scissors and a craft knife to cut the pages. Once everything is cut, fan out the pumpkin into a circle and glue the last and first page together; this creates a 3D pumpkin. Painting the edges and adding a stem make the pumpkin more realistic and decorative. This 3D book page pumpkin can be placed anywhere around the house and is a simple décor item for the fall.

These crafts can be used as chapter bonding activities, helping chapter members get into the fall spirit. It's important to keep chapter members engaged and filled with excitement for the new school year and what FCCLA has to offer. These fun crafts could be donated to local charities and senior citizen homes as a way to serve your community!

SETTING GOALS FOR SUCCESS: RED ROSE CHAPTER AWARD

BY: RIA KOTTESWARAN, VICE PRESIDENT OF LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

We all dream. We all aspire. We all want success. However, the truth is that success can only be achieved when you work for it, set goals, and see them through. As promising as it sounds to sit around and dream about the future, nothing will ever be given to you. That's why it's important to start setting goals for success. Setting goals not only makes your vision more attainable but also helps define a pathway with a clear plan. Goal setting can help you achieve success in your personal and professional life. As Zig Ziglar once said, "A goal properly set is halfway reached." Start your path to success with the simple steps of setting goals!

In FCCLA, goal setting plays a major role in earning chapter recognition. The Red Rose Chapter is an award that is given to chapters that demonstrate achievement in chapter development, member involvement, and leadership. It is a great way to see your chapter grow and expand while working through the requirements given for eligibility. Becoming a Red Rose Chapter involves meeting many goals. These requirements take time and dedication, which is why taking the time to work and creating goals will help plan out the vision.

But this doesn't end here. Chapters that earn Red Rose recognition are better prepared to apply for the Ultimate Chapter Award, which is the highest honor a chapter can receive. The Red Rose Award acts as a stepping-stone toward building strong habits, setting expectations, and documenting achievements earlier in the year so that your chapter can aim even higher. The work put in from the Red Rose Award, such as planning events to tracking member engagement, directly supports the requirements for the Ultimate Chapter Award! Set your goals now and let each achievement move your chapter closer and closer to becoming an Ultimate Chapter.

Here is a great way to approach goal setting. Easy, convenient, and destined for success.

SMART Goals:

This approach helps in setting effective objectives, where each goal is **Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound**. This method is very effective and ensures goals are clear, focused, and practical.

By following one of these methods, you can create well-defined goals and be more likely to reach your dreams. Avoid drifting aimlessly, set a goal, and follow it through. Your success is only defined by the work you put behind it. Goals matter . Get started on your chapter's Red Rose requirements now and use those same habits to reach for the Ultimate Chapter Award. Make your school proud!

Ask Edna

BY: PRAGYA BHATIA,
FIRST VICE PRESIDENT

She knows all the secrets… "Ask Edna" is an advice column all about FCCLA!

Dear Edna,

How can I increase engagement in my middle school's chapter?

I loved FCCLA as a middle schooler, and my adviser was very hands-on. He helped us with fundraisers, reviewed our projects, and was an advocate for FCS courses with our school board of education. He has since retired, and the new adviser has the same passion for FCCLA, but the chapter has been getting smaller and smaller, AND less involved! How do I fix this?

From,
AlwaysRockingtheRed45

Dear AlwaysRockingtheRed45,

That is a great question! I love that you are thinking about helping your middle school chapter. It is amazing to hear that your advisers truly love FCCLA, and I wish that for every middle school student as well.

One way I would suggest rectifying the issue is to get students excited about FCCLA when they are in elementary school. In the spring, present to 5th graders about what FCCLA is and what opportunities are available to them as members. You can also take a poll of the students' interests and create service projects around that. For example, if the students like crocheting and team activities, consider hand-knitting blankets for a nearby hospital or shelter.

Or, try new and exciting membership initiatives. You can learn about them in the articles by our 2025-2026 VP of Membership, Liam Chang (page 12).

Good luck with your FCCLA endeavors, AlwaysRockingtheRed45!

With love,
Edna

STAR EVENTS

Congratulations

to our 2025 NLC STAR Event Top 10 Finalists

Focus on Children Level 2, Kate Bates, Elijah Schofield from Camden County Technical School
Food Innovations Level 3, Ericka Bennett, Ryan Somers from Camden County Technical School
Entrepreneurship Level 2, Neko Faust, Nia McCann from Gloucester County Institute of Technology
Promote and Publicize FCCLA Level 3, Nishant Baandal, Tejas Pawar from John F. Kennedy High School
Sustainability Challenge Level 3, Mishree Patel from John F. Kennedy High School
Chapter Service Display Level 3, Kritika Manwani, Shridhar Garg, Neha Nirgude from John P. Stevens High School
Job Interview Level 3, Omar Serrano from Ocean County Vocational Technical School
Teaching Strategies Level 3, Natalia Prajzner from Union County Vocational-Technical Schools
Entrepreneurship Level 2, Rajganesh Srinivasan, Virenda Rautela from John P. Stevens High School
Interior Design Level 1, Graceann Gunderson, Aubrey Vandenberge from Southern Regional Middle School
Event Management Level 2, Hasini Vummaji from Edison High School
Nutrition and Wellness Level 2, Hasini Yedlapalli, Aparna Nair, Harshvitha Parthasarathy from John P. Stevens High School

FALL FITNESS & FUN

BY: JENNA TROTMAN, VP OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

As the temperature drops and leaves begin to fall, this is a perfect time to get active and have some fun! Whether you prefer playing football with some friends or taking a walk in the park with a pet, there are a wide variety of ways to stay fit in the fall.

If you enjoy being outdoors, you can spend your time:

- Hiking on local trails
- Walking in a park or around your neighborhood
- Apple picking with family or friends
- Playing sports in the park (football, soccer, tennis, etc.)
- Leaf raking in your backyard (and maybe your neighbor's too!)
- Biking on scenic routes
- Participate in an outdoor yoga class

If being outdoors doesn't interest you, here are some indoor activities:

- Start a gym membership at a local gym
- Swim in an indoor community pool.
- Join a dance class or find dance videos online
- Follow along with home workout videos
- Create a fall-themed obstacle course to do with you and your friends

Whatever way you choose to work out this fall, make sure to have fun and, if possible, share those moments with friends or family!

NATIONAL PROGRAMS EMOJI PUZZLE

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2. 🍎🧘‍♀️♀️🧠🛌 _____
3. 💰💳💵📉📊 _____
4. ✋📢✅ _____
5. 💪💡👩♀️ _____
6. 🏠👪❤️🥇 _____
7. 🧹🌍🤝❤️ _____
8. 👪🚗🛑🚦 _____

Answer Key

1. Career Connection – learning skills that lead to a career
2. Student Body – eating right, staying active, making healthy choices
3. Financial Fitness – managing money wisely
4. Stand Up – speaking up for what's right
5. Power of One – making a difference personally
6. Families First – strengthening family relationships
7. Community Service – giving back to your community
8. FACTS (Families Acting for Community Traffic Safety) – promoting traffic safety