

New Directions

President's Address

Dear New Jersey FCCLA Members, Advisers, and Alumni:

As the shortened days appear to get colder and the snowflakes put a frigid chill in the air, we tend to hibernate making it a good time to reflect on the goals we want to accomplish and how we can grow as individuals.

This past November, 750 members and advisers attended the 2025 New Jersey Fall Leadership Connection. Congratulations to all who competed in the NJ FCCLA Fall competitive Events. Your hard work and dedication are appreciated and you should be proud of your efforts and accomplishments. In addition to competing in state-level events, members of the Middletown South chapter participated in FCCLA Fall Challenge Tests. Congratulations:

- Aiden, who dove into the "Apparel Fashion Design and Construction" challenge, placing 3rd in the nation
- Ella took on the "Counseling and Mental Health Service" and "Principles of Human Services" challenges, earning 1st and 3rd place, respectively.

We are also proud to recognize Emily Filian, a **New Jersey FCCLA member**, who was selected as a Coca-Cola Scholar Semifinalist. This prestigious honor recognizes exceptional high school seniors who have demonstrated leadership, service, and a commitment to making a positive impact in their schools and communities. Out of 107,000+ applicants nationwide, just 1,238 were named semifinalists. Congratulations, Emily, on this accomplishment. We wish you the best of luck.

Running for state office has been a transformative experience for me. It has revealed a side of myself that I didn't know existed. Initially, the idea of running for state office can be intimidating. But if you take the leap, you will increase your strengths and prepare yourself for a successful future. Serving as a state officer will help develop essential soft skills, such as communication, critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration. These skills will be crucial in securing a job in our rapidly advancing society. Serving as a state leader will connect you with many passionate student leaders from across the US and develop friendships that can last a lifetime. Becoming a state officer can get you **ConneCTed for Success** in the future.

As we shift our focus to preparing for the 2026 New Jersey State Leadership Conference, the State Officers would love a chance to virtually meet with your chapter at one of your chapter meetings and share more information about NJ FCCLA. If you have not already, please get in touch with the state office to set up your virtual chapter visit.

Have a safe and warm winter, and we look forward to seeing you all at the 2026 State Leadership Conference.

Sincerely,

Brian Muirhead

New Jersey FCCLA State President

FCCLA

New Year Kick-Off Message:

By: Ria Kotteswaran, VP of Leadership



Every twelve months comes a new year, each and every month we are blessed with all the things life has to offer. We are blessed with an opportunity to live, strive, reset, set goals and stay productive. With that said everyone has had their fair shares of ups and downs throughout the years, for some it could have been the best moments of their lives and for others it truly could have been the most dreadful. However, when it comes to a New Year the past is in the past and we all move forward. Let's make the best of our precious time and yearn to do better with all the positives that surround us.

In the words of Mehmet Murart Ildan, "The New Year is a painting not yet painted; a path not yet stepped on; a wing not yet taken off! Things haven't happened yet! Before the clock strikes twelve, remember that you are blessed with the ability to reshape your life!" It cannot be said better than this! The best way to enter the new years are as follows: Reflecting on past wins, practicing gratitude and setting goals.

Positive Opening:

- Organize & Declutter: Clear your physical and digital space to create mental clarity
- Daily Affirmations: You can't be positive if you don't think positive. Keep happy by saying positive messages about yourself and raise your self-esteem.

Setting Goals for the Year:

- SMART Goals: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound
- Create a Vision board as an artistic opening to your new year

Reflecting on Wins & lessons:

- Gratitude: List past successes, good memories, and things you're thankful for to build a positive foundation
- Learn from your mistakes: Take a moment to reflect on your mistakes throughout the year and see what you can do differently. You may not be able to redo a moment in time but you can definitely change it for the better.

The 2026 year is your year, it's time to start working and make the progression you want to see. Don't let your past mistakes get in the way of your own success, plan ahead and set goals for the year to keep you on track.

New Year, New Opportunities in Service!

By: Mishree Patel,
VP of Community Service

The new year invites new goals and new attitudes. Launching 2026 provides a new opportunity to make a difference. In FCCLA, chapters are encouraged to find meaningful ways to serve their schools and communities!

- Community cleanup
- Hygiene or clothing drives
- Fundraisers for local organizations
- Culture Night
- Care packages for shelters
- Teacher Appreciation snack carts
- Pasta night for families
- Making family emergency preparedness kits
- Reusable bag drive
- Creating thank-you cards for custodial staff within your school

The new year is not just time for resolutions but can be a new beginning for action with a purpose. See the NJ FCCLA Website and Instagram account for more service initiative ideas. Service guides FCCLA members to turn to new opportunities for an impactful change!

Important Due Dates

- January 26 - Program Cover Design
- February 3 - State Officer Application
- February 12 - SLC Registration
- February 12- SLC Competitive Event. Reg.
- February 12 - SLC Hotel Registration
- February 18 - Red Rose Application
- Feb. 21 - State Officer Candidate Meeting
- March 2 - National Programs Due
- March 2 - Senior Photos Due in Folder
- March 2 - Award/Scholarship Applications
- March 9 - SLC Digital Folders Due
- March 25- 26 - SLC



2025 NJ FCCLA Fall Leadership Connection



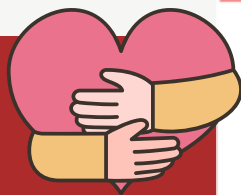
By: Shridhar Garg, VP of Parliamentary Law

New Jersey FCCLA came together this past November 24, 2025 for the Fall Leadership Connection. It was a great success, bringing together members from across the state for an engaging day of leadership development, service, and connection. The Fall Leadership Connection provided a supportive and collaborative environment where members had the opportunity to boost their skills, work with peers, and deepen their understanding of FCCLA's mission and values.

Service was a major focus of this year's conference. Thanks to the generosity and commitment of our members, NJ FCCLA collected 4,200 nonperishable food items to support the Replenish Food Bank. In addition, members collected 112 pounds of pull tabs to help the Ronald McDonald House, helping support families with ill children. Our cupcake competition sales helped raise \$1,600 for the Covenant House for homeless teens, and members also participated in our sock fundraiser, selling 500 socks toward our goal of 700 socks to help fund the construction of a water well in Rwanda. These efforts just demonstrate the powerful impact FCCLA members can make when they work together for a cause.

The conference enjoyed strong and positive involvement among the many NJ FCCLA competitors with so many impressive projects created by members from across our state. Members demonstrated such great creativity, critical thinking, and dedication through a wide range of outstanding projects, reflecting the hard work and strong preparation.

Beyond service and competitive events, the Fall Leadership Connection offered meaningful learning experiences through interactive workshops focused on leadership, membership, and community service. Members left the conference with new ideas, practical skills, and renewed motivation to make a difference in their schools and communities. We are proud of the accomplishments of our members and look forward to building on this momentum throughout the rest of the year.



Winter Driving Tips Every Teen Driver Should Know

By Avadhi Baid, VP of National Programs

Winter driving can be stressful, especially with snow, ice, and freezing temperatures making roads slippery and unpredictable. Knowing a few key tips can help you stay safe behind the wheel.

Before driving anywhere, check the weather and ensure your car is properly prepared. This means having good tires (properly inflated and having plenty of tread), full windshield wiper fluid, enough gas (at least half a tank of fuel in your vehicle at all times), and staying alert. Never warm up a vehicle in an enclosed area, such as a garage. Next, clear all snow and ice off your windows, mirrors, and the windshield so you can see clearly. Icy roads make stopping way harder than usual, so speeding is a big risk in winter weather. Driving slower and keeping more distance between you and the car in front of you gives you time to react if something unexpected happens.

Slamming on the brakes can cause your car to skid. Instead, brake slowly and earlier than you normally would. If your car does start to slide, stay calm and steer gently in the direction you want to go until you regain control. Do not use cruise control when driving on any slippery surface, such as on ice and snow. Black ice is very dangerous because you usually can't see it. It forms most often on bridges, overpasses, and shaded roads, especially early in the morning or at night. If you think you're driving on ice, don't brake suddenly and keep your steering steady.

Keeping an emergency kit in your car is a smart move. Items like a blanket, phone charger, flashlight, extra food and water, warm clothing, a glass scraper, and medications can make a big difference if you ever get stuck or delayed in the cold. Winter driving doesn't have to be scary. With the right preparation and smart choices, teen drivers can stay safe, confident, and in control all season long.





CAPITOL LEADERSHIP: IN REVIEW

By: Pragya Bhatia, First Vice President

This past November, the New Jersey FCCLA State Executive Council traveled to Washington, D.C. to advocate for Family and Consumer Sciences and FCCLA to our NJ Legislators. New Jersey had a strong presence at this National Conference, as one of the only states with all SEC members present.

We were able to meet with Mr. Frank Pallone's staff member and Mr. Donald Norcross's staff to discuss our agenda. Mainly, we focused on the lack of a straight path forward for a degree majoring in Family and Consumer education. Many of our FCS teachers must take the alternate route, usually meaning that they go directly to the field they choose (like culinary, fashion, interior design, etc) because there is virtually no way to obtain a comprehensive degree for teaching. It takes years for dedicated individuals to prepare to teach FCS classes in New Jersey. This, in turn, decreases potential FCS teachers, and as current teachers retire, there are fewer teachers to fill the gaps.

As FCCLA members, we know the impact that our FCS classes and teachers have had on us. FCS classes—like nutrition and wellness, child growth and development, and textiles—teach skills that are vital in every career, and in general, important for independence. FCS classes need to be supported and protected, and that's exactly what the State Officers advocated for this past November in DC. This advocacy is far from finished. Please be sure to support FCCLA as an alumni and continue to support FCS classes. We are working on making a tangible change in our schools, community, and secondary institutions.



ELECTRIFY YOUR CHAPTER: WAYS TO EXCITE YOUR CHAPTER!



By: Jenna Trotman, VP of Public Relations

It's halfway through the school year- the perfect time to raise excitement in your chapter again! Whether it is big or small activities in your chapter, increasing chapter activities will attract new members while retaining those already involved. In addition, this momentum will keep your chapter on everyone's radar. Here are some suggestions:

Spirit Days!

Spirit Days boost morale while creating visibility for your FCCLA chapter within the school. This may require contacting the principal or vice principal of your school, so make sure to develop a solid plan, and practice your public speaking! These are some ideas that can be executed anytime in the year.

- Pajama Day
- Future Career Day
- Throwback Thursday
- FCCLA Twin Day
- And more!

Chapter Bonding Activities

A strong FCCLA community starts with a strong chapter. Participating in these activities within your FCCLA chapter encourages members to create closer bonds by having fun and developing leadership skills!

- FCCLA Game Night (FCCLA Trivia, bingo, board games)
- Vision Board Party
- Potluck with Purpose! (Invite members to bring a dish that reflects their culture.)
- Mini Leadership Workshops
- Power of One strategy and support meeting

Service Initiatives

FCCLA is all about "Service from the heart," and organizing service initiatives ignites many FCCLA skills.

- Care Kits (Hygiene, school supply, or snack kits for local organizations)
- Letters of Love (Write cards for hospital patients, senior homes, etc.)
- Clothing Closet Drive (Start a clothing drive that is just for professional attire for students preparing for interviews)

Get inspired to serve this winter season. We hope these ideas help, and feel free to share your own too!

Competitive Events 101

By: Avadhi Baid, VP of National Programs



Competing in FCCLA STAR Events is more than just preparing a project or presenting in front of judges. It is an opportunity for personal growth, leadership development, and real-world skill building. STAR Events stand for Students Taking Action with Recognition. They challenge members to step outside their comfort zones while applying their Family and Consumer Sciences skills to hands-on experiences. Each event helps students gain confidence and professionalism.

An important benefit of competing is skill development. Competitive Events teach essential skills such as public speaking, critical thinking, time management, and problem-solving. These skills are not only valuable in competition but are also crucial for the future. Members learn how to set goals, meet deadlines, and professionally present themselves. Competing at the state level also encourages leadership and responsibility. FCCLA members take ownership of their projects, make decisions independently, and learn how to accept feedback constructively. Through this process, members grow as leaders and become more confident in their abilities. They also represent their chapter and school at the state conference.

Choosing the right FCCLA event is an important step in having a successful and meaningful competition experience. With a wide variety of STAR and NJ state events available, members should select an event that aligns with their interests, strengths, and future goals. When members are passionate about their event, they are more motivated to put in the time and effort needed to succeed. One key factor in choosing the right event is understanding personal skills and strengths. Some people excel in public speaking and may enjoy events that involve presentations or demonstrations, while others may prefer written projects. Selecting an event that matches individual strengths helps build confidence and reduces unnecessary stress.

FCCLA events allow members to explore career pathways, leadership roles, and real-world applications of Family and Consumer Sciences. Choosing an event connected to future interests can help members gain valuable experience and clarity about possible career paths. Ultimately, the right FCCLA event challenges a member while still allowing room for growth.

Looking Forward to SLC!

By: Pragya Bhatia, First Vice President



The New Jersey State Leadership Conference is an exciting, engaging opportunity for members to increase their leadership skills and network with people all over the state!

The State Leadership Conference will take place on Wednesday and Thursday, March 25-26, 2026. This conference is packed with all you need to become a better leader: motivating keynote speakers, interesting workshops, an exciting fashion show, competitive events, a Fun Night and an awards session! Plan to participate in our Community Service initiatives and give back to those in need. We look forward to your chapter's participation in making the NJ FCCLA State Conference more engaging and exciting.

You will have a chance to network with members from across the state. SLC brings revitalizing workshops for members to learn about leadership development, make connections, and explore FCS careers. Competitive events allow students to gain state-wide recognition while simultaneously resulting in career preparation and real-world exposure—and, if competing in a STAR event, the chance to qualify for the National Leadership Conference in Washington, D.C.!

If you are looking to participate in this year's SLC from March 25-26, please be sure to reach out to your adviser. Remember to start your project now for the best chance of success. Remember to dress for success with business casual clothing. The State Executive Council looks forward to seeing you there!



AVOIDING COMMON COMPETITIVE EVENT MISTAKES

By: Siya Patel, VP of Communications



FCCLA competitive events are a great way for members to showcase their ability with challenges that help them grow. It is possible that some small mistakes sideline competitors and leave them disappointed. One of the most common mistakes is not reading the event guidelines carefully. Missing details like the correct number of pages or submitting materials late can easily lead to a loss in points. Losing points with these small mistakes can potentially determine if your project is awarded a gold or a silver medal! Taking the time to review the rubric and double-check all requirements can make a tremendous difference.

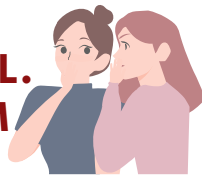
Another error competitors often make is poor time management. Whether it is waiting until the last minute to print pages or forgetting your lines during a presentation, these slip-ups can affect both confidence and performance. It's important to start as early as possible on events while checking with your adviser intermittently. Get your projects reviewed to ensure your best performance and results.

Professionalism also plays a major role in scoring. Start with professional attire. Judges often pay attention to small details like facial expression, posture, eye contact, and confidence. Being confident, respectful, and prepared helps competitors stand out to the judges while bringing their overall message across in a clear manner.

Avoiding these common mistakes allows FCCLA competitors to focus on showcasing their hard work and skills. FCCLA competitive events are not just about winning; they are about growth, self-management, and learning how to perform under pressure. By taking the time to prepare effectively and pay attention to the details, FCCLA members can continue to develop their skills, becoming more accomplished competitors.



EXPLORE. ACT. TELL. (E.A.T.) PROGRAM



BY: MISHREE PATEL, VP OF COMMUNITY SERVICE

What is it? National FCCLA is partnering with the “Explore. Act. Tell.” (E.A.T.) Program, which was created in collaboration with the Foundation for Impact on Literacy and Learning (FILL) and funded by Nourishing Neighbors from the Albertson’s Company Foundation. This program is available for students in grades 6-12. The E.A.T. program helps students learn about food insecurity through four interactive lessons. Students then design a project to fight hunger in their community, create a public service announcement (PSA) video, and participate in an annual challenge where they can win grants. The first 30 chapters to submit a project are eligible for a smaller grant of up to \$100.

Why should you get involved? The “Explore. Act. Tell.” (E.A.T.) Program aligns with Family and Consumer Sciences Education. National FCCLA describes it as “an off-the-shelf, project-based learning program that provides engaging lessons and a project challenge for students. Student projects may win grants to provide additional resources for a community non-profit organization serving those experiencing food insecurity or your local public school.” This program will help develop future leaders, enhance student engagement, provide educational resources and training, and strengthen community impact. Lastly, if you participated in our food drive initiative at the Fall Leadership Connection for the Replenish Food Bank, you may already have the project done and only have to apply now.

How can you sign up? Register at <https://exploreacttell.org/registration/> at no cost. Their annual challenge deadline is on May 15, 2026, and the early deadline is on January 9, 2026. Registered educators receive a Welcome Kit, a dedicated educator consultant, and access to professional development workshops. Explore additional resources at exploreacttell.org/resources/. For questions, contact njfccla@gmail.com or hello@exploreacttell.org.



The Covenant House

By: Liam Chang, VP of Membership

At every annual NJ FCCLA Fall Leadership Connection, we sell cupcakes to raise money for a charitable organization. This year, at our 2025 FLC, we sold cupcakes to donate the proceeds to the non-profit organization, the Covenant House.

What is the Covenant House and how is this money being used?

The Covenant House was founded in 1972 by a Catholic Priest who was deeply concerned with the growing number of homeless and runaway youth who were living on the streets. The founder, Father Ritter, believed that no young person should be forced to face homelessness alone, so he created the Covenant House as an emergency shelter where homeless youth could have a safe place to sleep and be fed. What started as a small shelter quickly grew, and so did the need for support. The Covenant House expanded its mission beyond an emergency shelter, by creating a center to rebuild the lives of youth through counseling, education, job training, and life-skills programs.

Today, the purpose of The Covenant House is to rehabilitate and create a haven for youth who have gone through homelessness or human trafficking; a mission that very nicely aligns with FCCLA's initiatives.

FCCLA is youth based, so it's no wonder that FCCLA would be such a great supporter of the Covenant House and its mission... Teens and young adults supporting other teens and young adults. This past fall NJ FCCLA showed its support for the Covenant House with a \$1,600 donation that was raised with the sale of the cupcakes from the Cupcake Challenge Competitive Event. NJ FCCLA members participated in cupcake wars by creating and selling delicious little works of art using their culinary and baking skills.

The Covenant House has been a close partner with NJ FCCLA for many years now, and we plan to continue our support. Located in Newark, Atlantic City, and Montclair, the Covenant House is open year-round and always open to your donations. Visit <https://covenanthousenj.org/> to donate today!

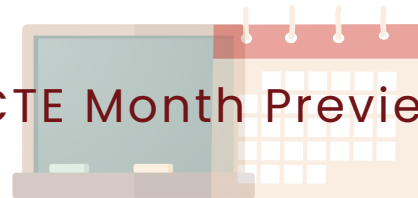
Join the Free Rice Challenge!



Join NJ FCCLA by participating in the "Free Rice" Challenge! Last year members answered questions by playing this game and donated over 10 million grains of rice! You can be a part of this great initiative too! Be the chapter with the most grains of rice by FCCLA Week to win a prize at SLC!

1. Visit www.freerice.com
2. Click Login in the top right corner.
 - a. Create an account if you are new
 - i. Username should include your school initials (ex.: SRHSBrianM)
 - b. Login if you are returning
3. Click the ≡ menu in the top left corner.
4. Click on Groups.
5. Join existing group with this code:
L6SHEGEX
6. Click "back to game" and have fun while donating grains of rice!

CTE Month Preview



By: Brian Muirhead, State President

Career and Technical Education, or CTE, provides students with the knowledge and skills they need to be prepared for college and careers. CTE gives learning purpose by emphasizing real-world skills and practical knowledge within a selected career focus. Every February, the CTE community celebrates CTE Month. By allowing students to apply classroom knowledge through leadership development, career exploration, and community service, FCCLA, a student-led Career and Technical Student Organization, directly integrates CTE. During February, you can celebrate CTE month by competing in either a state or STAR competitive event, submitting an FCCLA National Program, or advocating for the importance of CTE to your local or state legislators. All of these activities encourage members to celebrate CTE Month by staying ConneCTEd for Success through FCCLA, leadership, and real-world learning.

Staying **ConneCTed** Through Social Media

By: Siya Patel, VP of Communications

Social media is one of the easiest ways for New Jersey FCCLA members to stay connected for success! The media plays a major role in keeping members informed, engaged, and inspired. Platforms like Instagram and Facebook allow members from across the state to keep in touch and update, even if they cannot see each other in person every day.

By following NJ FCCLA accounts, members can stay updated on conference deadlines, leadership opportunities, and member highlights. Social media is also an important tool for engagement. Chapters can share their own service initiatives, fundraising efforts, and competitive event experiences to inspire others. Commenting, liking, and reposting NJ FCCLA content helped spread awareness and build a bigger and stronger community statewide.

By acknowledging posts and sharing them with others, imagine how many people could be inspired by what NJ FCCLA has to offer! Most importantly, social media gives members a voice. It allows members to celebrate achievements and connect with peers who share similar experiences.

Networking doesn't just end at the end of conference; by using social media safely, there are endless opportunities to network with other members and keep in touch even after conferences. Staying active online helps ensure that no member is left out of the loop or disconnected from the organization, and can also introduce many new opportunities to connect with others. Be sure to follow @njfccla. It will be fun and informative!



Activities To Improve Mental and Physical Strength

By: Ria Kotteswaran, VP of Leadership

The winter months tend to drain our energy, and the cold weather really does put us in the "couch potato mood." We have been guilty of this, regardless of our age; even the most productive of people can relate. The shorter daylight, the blasts of cold air, heavy snowfall, and freezing temperatures all add up to the winter spirit. However, even in the coldest times, it is still important to maintain good mental and physical strength to stay on our toes. It is always better to be sharp than lacking. Take the time with your family or even yourself to boost your mood and wellness. Even the smallest of actions can make the biggest difference in your daily activities.

Practice Yoga and Meditation:

Yoga is the best form of physical exercise that helps alleviate stress and calm the nerves. Yoga doesn't require advanced techniques; even the simplest forms of meditation are considered yoga. Grab a water bottle, find a comfortable spot on the floor, and watch a tutorial.

Read an inspirational book:

Take the time to sit down, cozy up, heat a cup of hot chocolate, and read a book. Reading can often be overlooked; it doesn't have to be as boring as it sounds. Make it your way, whether it is reading at night or reading on your couch. Ultimately, reading helps center you on one focal subject and promotes mindfulness.

Sleep:

That's right, sleep is definitely a big factor when it comes to reducing stress and staying mentally well. A nap or even a good night's sleep is all you need to recharge and reset.

Build a snowman with your family:

You are never too old to play in the snow; we must go back to our childhood to recollect some of our core moments. Get your winter gear and take a trip to your backyard, or even a local park, and start rolling some snowballs. These types of activities help foster creativity and boost our mood.

So don't fight the winter, embrace it. New Jersey is blessed with four seasons, therefore make the most of these opportunities.



A Strong Foundation for Membership

By: Liam Chang, VP of Membership



FCCLA is more than just an organization; it is a community of hardworking and dedicated leaders who support and thrive with one another. This community is created through its members, and through the members, this organization can complete all of the goals it strives to accomplish. Members are the most important part of this organization; so making sure you have a strong foundation for membership within your chapters is vital to keep our community going!

Members are active contributors that ignite and support our organization. Strong membership includes peers who are active, motivated, and supported by teammates, advisers and administrators. Active members attend meetings consistently, participate in community service initiatives, and should understand and exemplify the missions and goals of FCCLA. Active members are the heart of FCCLA and their school community!

A successful membership campaign involves the three R's: Recruit, Retain, and Recognize. These three R's are all important for a thriving membership; however, during this time of year, it is extremely important to encourage retention and recognition. After the first couple of months of resuming your chapter where efforts to recruit members is a priority, it is important that chapters appreciate the active members they have, so every member can feel valued. Recognition is significant to retention, so coming up with creative ways to appreciate members is always a great idea!

1. Decorate Senior (or Officer) Lockers

This is a great way to recognize your seniors or officers by giving them a cute surprise! Decorating lockers can be a fun way to not only collaborate with your team to make these lockers amazing, but also a way to make your officers or seniors feel special.

2. Member of the Month

Having a member be recognized for their accomplishments or involvement in your chapter each month is a great way to make members feel seen for the work they do and encourage them to continue to stay involved.

3. Chapter Parties

Holding chapter parties or dinners is a great way to reconnect with your chapter and discuss some of the things everyone is doing! This also helps members to open up about their journeys and their projects to connect with their peers.

Membership is important, and using some of these recognition strategies to promote active members will help your chapter thrive.

WeHelpTwo:

Let's Build a Water Well!

By: Mishree Patel, VP of Community Service

WeHelpTwo is the official fundraising and service project partner of FCCLA for the 2025-2026 school year. Their goal for this year is to provide clean drinking water to 100,000 people! New Jersey FCCLA partnered with WeHelpTwo to sell funky socks for \$6 a pair at our Fall Leadership Connection to support this incredible cause.

New Jersey FCCLA's goal is to sell 700 pairs of socks, which would raise enough funds to build an entire well with clean water in Rwanda. Four hundred pairs of socks were sold at the conference. Additionally, people who bought two or more pairs of socks were entered into a raffle. Two members received an FCCLA swag tote bag. Lastly, one member and their adviser received 50% off their registration for the State Leadership Conference on March 25 - 26, 2026.

When we did not meet our goal of selling 700 pairs of socks, some dedicated NJ chapters offered to take some pairs to their school to sell.

Thank you to the:

- East Brunswick Chapter
- Gloucester Institute of Technology
- Hunterdon Polytech
- John P. Stevens
- Union City Chapter

This brought our total number up to 500 pairs of socks being sold. With that being said, we still have to sell 200 more pairs of socks! The New Jersey State Executive Council highly encourages chapters to help us reach our goal of selling 700 socks by reaching out to the New Jersey FCCLA state office at njfccla@gmail.com or a state officer to sell more socks. Help NJ FCCLA make a powerful difference with global impact. Change the world, one pair at a time. Let's bring hope, health, and clean water together





FCCLA @ the Table
By: Shridhar Garg,
VP of Parliamentary Law

What is FCCLA @ the Table?

For many years, eating as a family was a natural part of life, a significant thing that just happened. However, today, with the hectic world we live in, it is difficult for families to find time to eat together. Family dinners have become a rare thing due to work, school, sports, and all other activities that keep us busy.

Family meals, however, are still important. Studies confirm, and experience prove that eating together is a relationship builder which, in turn, leads to healthier eating habits. Additionally, sharing meals opens up the communication channels and is beneficial for our psychological and emotional well-being. This creates, among other things, a sense of closeness and a feeling of being part of a family. Children do better in school and are less likely to experiment or engage in harmful activities such as drug use.

Nationally, through the FCCLA @ the Table initiative, members are engaged in the campaign to communicate the worth of family meals and purposeful time together. Besides being a great time to bond as a family, this initiative advocates sharing, planning, and preparing meals together. The essence of the FCCLA @ the Table is not in the complexity of the dishes, but in the effort made to reserve family time and nutrition, no matter how simple the meal is.

How can NJ FCCLA participate?

The NJ FCCLA State Executive Council invites all members to engage in and show their support for the initiative FCCLA @ the Table. This experience provides an opportunity to practice meal planning and nutrition skills, strengthen family connections, develop leadership through responsibility and initiative, and promote healthy lifestyles within the home.

After the meal, members can take a picture of their family at the table and upload it to social media with the #njfcclaathetable hashtag to appear on the NJ FCCLA Instagram account. With the help of this program, we can create an impact on positive lifestyle habits, quality family time, and the core values of FCCLA one meal at a time.

The Ultimate Winter Time Bucket List



By: Avadhi Baid, VP of National Programs

Winter time is more than just cold weather where you are stuck inside and have to bundle up with many layers. It should be a refreshing time of year to try new activities both indoor and outdoor, set goals, reset and re-organize indoors, a time to make the most of what some think of as a dreary time of year. This winter, make lasting memories and create a bucket list of things to do for yourself.

Embracing the cozy moments is one of the best parts of winter time. Whether it's binge-watching a new show while sipping warm hot chocolate by a crackling fire, baking some delicious cookies, or curling up on your couch with a good book. These comfort-filled experiences are what will help you reset and power through the school days.

Moreover, these moments, including taking time to relax, sleep in, and enjoy quiet moments, can help you recharge both mentally and physically.

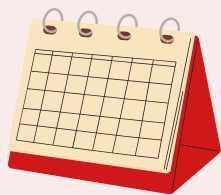
Reconnecting with family and friends is also one of the perks of the winter time. During this time, you could plan game nights, sleepovers, or movie marathons, creating memories that last a lifetime. Seasonal activities, such as ice skating, sledding, visiting holiday light displays, or taking winter photos together, add excitement and help make the most of your winter.

Another great opportunity during winter time is to take time to reset yourself and your space. Cleaning and reorganizing your room, creating a vision board, updating playlists, or setting goals for the new year can be great ways to set yourself up for a successful year.

Make time to infuse small "glow-up" habits to boost your motivation and confidence. Try a new hairstyle, skincare routine, or hobby. When you look good, you feel good and have the right mindset to take on challenges.

Finally, winter time is a chance to explore your creativity and try something new. Whether you try learning a new skill, painting, writing, reading a new book, or volunteering, the opportunities are endless. These experiences help you feel accomplished without overwhelming yourself throughout the school year. By choosing a few things that bring you joy, help you relax, and inspire you, you can create a bucket list that makes you feel both fun and refreshed, setting you on a great start to the new year.

Plan A Strong FCCLA Week



By: Ria Kotteswaran, VP of Leadership

National FCCLA Week is coming up and it's a great time to start planning. FCCLA Week is an annual celebration that happens during the second full week of February to highlight the impact of Family, Career and Community Leaders of America. It's a great week to showcase how FCCLA has helped students develop skills through career preparation, leadership opportunities, service, public speaking and education. New Jersey FCCLA is adding an additional two days to increase awareness and bring FCCLA to our homes and communities, making the week more meaningful and interactive. This week is one of the month's highlights celebrating CTE Month. Let's take a look at some daily themes and activities to help kickstart your planning for FCCLA Week.

Family Sunday: Bring FCCLA into your home by sharing a meal with your family and discussing what you are contributing your FCCLA chapter. Share the service initiatives from the state level while communicating with your family.

FCCLA Member Monday: Spotlight members from your chapter and recognize them for their efforts and success.

- Post on Social media with member recognition
- A special gift for dedicated members

Day of Service Tuesday: Organize a community service project.

- Host a shoe drive
- Start a clean-up project around your community
- Community service recap of the entire year on social media

FCS Educator Day Wednesday: Honor and take the time to appreciate FCS teachers.

- Adviser Appreciation breakfast
- Handwritten thank-you notes
- Check in and ask if they need help!

Alumni Day Thursday: Take the time to reach out to alumni and show your appreciation.

Invite alumni to speak at your chapter meeting

- Alumni spotlight on social media
- Personal thank you to Alumni

FCCLA Spirit Day Friday: "Rock the Red" and wear FCCLA apparel to show pride.

- Take a chapter photo with all FCCLA gear
- Hold an FCCLA apparel fundraiser

Success Saturday: Focus on leadership and future success.

Host a leadership or career-readiness activity

Encourage members to reflect on their goals and FCCLA experiences

FCCLA Week is right around the corner, so start planning now to make the best of it. Flood your social media posts with red, post member journey videos, and use #FCCLAWeek. Show your pride and appreciation for FCCLA by taking part in this special week.

FCCLA Week

Red Rose Chapter Award

By: Brian Muirhead, President

Your chapter's success starts with setting goals and beginning with the end in mind. The New Jersey FCCLA Red Rose Chapter Award is the perfect place to start when setting goals for your chapter for the entirety of your school year. This prestigious award recognizes well-rounded chapters that contribute to the State Program of Work and go above and beyond to exemplify leadership within your chapter!

To be eligible for this award, chapters must take part in membership development, community service, conferences, leadership activities, national programs, and competitive events. These activities directly reflect the FCCLA mission by preparing members for leadership and success beyond the classroom walls. In addition, to be recognized for this prestigious award, chapters must complete all of the required elements as well as 20 out of 105 possible points of the additional point options.

Applications for the Red Rose Chapter Award are due February 18, 2026. Chapters that successfully meet all required and additional criteria will be recognized at the 2026 New Jersey State Leadership Conference.

This award gives your chapter the opportunity to be recognized for all the hard work and leadership you demonstrate throughout the year.

2025 Red Rose Award Chapter Recipients



Winter Fashion Trends to Stay Warm

By: Siya Patel, VP of Communications

Winter fashion doesn't mean choosing between style and warmth, it means finding stylish ways to stay warm this winter season. A popular trend all year round is wearing wide-leg pants, by wearing an additional layer of leggings or sweatpants underneath you can stay warm! This is a practical option for colder days without having to sacrifice your favorite pair of jeans for warmer weather options.

Layering tops is another fashionable solution. Wearing a thick long-sleeve shirt underneath a short-sleeve top adds both warmth and dimension to an outfit. This trend allows people to mix different colors and textures of clothing, while also allowing them to continue wearing a favorite summer t-shirts all year round.

Scarves are also another key winter accessory, but there are so many ways they can be styled! Usually, scarves are wrapped traditionally around the neck very loosely, but styling a scarf over the head is a popular trend this winter. Styling a scarf over the head adds elegance and additional warmth around the head.

This fashion-forward touch, and by wearing matching shoes, can make you look put together and ready for the upcoming winter days. By experimenting with layering, using cozy accessories, and adapting trends for colder weather, anyone can create outfits that are both functional and expressive!

Winter Service Initiatives

By: Mishree Patel,
VP of Community Service

Happy winter season to all chapter members, advisers, and alumni! With the cold weather and gloomy skies, it is important to bring a warm smile and the light of hope back to our communities anyway we can. Community service is an integral part of FCCLA. So, here is a suggested list of community service initiatives your chapters could do during the winter months:

- **Clothing Drive:** With the temperature dropping and the cold weather, it is now more important than ever to host a clothing drive. Collect warm clothes such as coats, gloves, hats, etc., for those in need in your local communities.
- **Holiday Cards:** The winter season could get slow and lonely at times for senior citizens. Your chapter could write fun, creative, and personal cards to centers to raise their moods.
- **Make Blankets:** During the cold weather, not everyone has a roof over their heads. Donate blankets to local shelters to help those in need find some warmth and hope.
- **Food Drive:** Though our government has reopened SNAP benefits, being shut down still has a big impact on those in need. Many people are struggling to provide meals for themselves and their families. Local food pantries could always use your help to restock and feed the many people in our state who live with food insecurity.
- **Shovel Snow:** During the winter, the weather is always unpredictable, especially with snow. Your chapter could come together on a snow day to shovel snow for senior citizens or disabled people in your community. This small act of kindness could have a huge impact!

Hopefully, this list of service initiatives is beneficial for you and your chapters. I invite you to participate in a service initiative from the list this winter or create some of your own!



Adviser's Corner:

Starting the Year With Intention: Using Power of One With Seniors

By: Ms. Joshlyn Adams,
Hospitality & Tourism Teacher and FCCLA Adviser
Newark Vocational Technical School

January is a natural reset. It's the time of year when students are encouraged to reflect, set goals, create vision boards, and think intentionally about the year ahead. That makes January the perfect time to introduce or reintroduce FCCLA's Power of One, especially with seniors preparing for life after graduation.

This year, I am teaching seniors, and we are using Power of One to help students turn New Year motivation into meaningful action. As graduation approaches, students are balancing academics, relationships, work, and postsecondary decisions. Power of One provides a clear structure for goal setting and reflection, guiding students through the FCCLA Planning Process as they set goals across multiple areas of their lives.

Power of One Program

What makes this work especially impactful is that it builds on prior learning. When this class was in 10th grade, I introduced them to the FCCLA Planning Process through a Hospitality and Tourism career exploration project where students compared two careers within the industry. Now, as seniors, they are revisiting that same process with greater maturity, clearer priorities, and real-life decisions on the horizon. The growth and the intentionality are evident.

Integrating FCCLA into the classroom shows students that FCCLA isn't an add-on; it's a life skill. January's focus on fresh starts pairs naturally with Power of One's emphasis on reflection, goal setting, and follow-through, helping seniors move forward with confidence and purpose.

Adviser Takeaway: Power of One in January

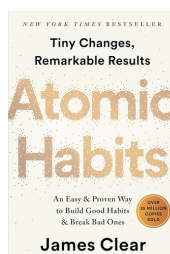
- January is an ideal entry point, students are already thinking about goals and change
- Power of One turns resolutions into structured, achievable plans
- Seniors benefit from revisiting the Planning Process with real postsecondary decisions in mind
- FCCLA integration strengthens classroom instruction while preparing students for life beyond high school

2026 Leadership Bootcamp Chapter Participants

*Congratulations to the following chapters that completed this year's NJ FCCLA
Leadership Bootcamp Training of the Atomic Habits by James Clear*



-Camden County Technical School
-Edison High School
-Gloucester County Institute of Technology
-Herbert Hoover Middle School
-Hunterdon County PolyTech
-John Adams Middle School
-John F. Kennedy High School



-John P. Stevens High School
-Middletown High School South
-Monroe Township High School
-Newark Vocational High School
-Southern Regional High School
-Southern Regional Middle School
-Union City High School



2026 National Leadership Conference

Washington, DC!



By: Brian Muirhead, President

There is no better way to close the school year and to celebrate the nation's 250th anniversary than by getting ConneCTed at the National Leadership Conference, taking place from July 6th through the 10th in the heart of our nation's capital, Washington, DC.

At NLC, you will grow your skills, explore career opportunities, and shine on the national stage through STAR Events, Challenge Tests, awards, and more. This is the event you've been working towards, and you will not want to miss it. Get ready to Rock the Red in DC. Celebrate everything you have accomplished this school year and prepare for the upcoming one.

Centered around the theme "ConneCTed," this inspiring conference will bring together thousands of FCCLA members, advisers, and guests. Members will have the opportunity to network with peers from across the country, explore historic Washington, DC, talk to industry professionals, and participate in hands-on workshops that will help them develop leadership skills and be ready to lead.

Mark your calendars and plan to be in Washington, DC, from July 6th through 10th. This is where your journey leads, where leadership grows, and where you get ConneCTed for Success.



By: Shridhar Garg, VP of Parliamentary Law

Chapter Visits are a support tool available to every NJ FCCLA chapter that lets you connect with the State Executive Council. It provides an opportunity for your chapter to gain accurate information, new inspiration, and personalized instruction from our team of State Officers who truly want your chapter to succeed and grow.

Chapter visits might come in handy to support...

- **Membership growth and engagement:** Is your chapter struggling to recruit new members or retain current ones? State Officers can come into a chapter meeting to present FCCLA to the students, explain why involvement is beneficial, and how their involvement can be interesting and meaningful.
- **Competitive events assistance:** Is your chapter unsure about competitive events, how to select events that interest members, or how to prepare and compete? A chapter visit can provide clarification, motivation and next steps.
- **Community service ideas:** Does your chapter want to expand its community service potential? State Officers can provide suggestions for projects by assessing what's needed locally and provide next steps to transform ideas into action.
- **Individualized assistance:** No two chapters are alike, and visits can be customized to cover specific concerns your chapter may have throughout the year.

How To Request a Visit:

Chapter Visits can be virtual or in-person. Chapter advisers can email the NJ FCCLA state staff at njfccla@gmail.com to get more information and fill out the Chapter Visit Request Form on our website njfccla.org. We strongly encourage all NJ FCCLA chapters to take advantage of Chapter Visits as a way to gain support, strengthen involvement, and set the foundation for a successful and productive year.



Ask Edna

By: Pragya Bhatia, First Vice President



Dear Edna,

2026 is here, and I am feeling utterly unprepared. This year, I want to accomplish so many items—like winning gold at an FCCLA state conference—but I don't even know where to begin. Can you give me some tips for this?

Motivated but stuck,
FCCLAMember31

Dear FCCLAMember31,

Thanks for reaching out! A new year can be overwhelming, but this opportunity can be a fresh start as well. Here are some ways to help you along your journey of a new year:

- 1. Journal your goals:** Write down three goals that you feel are the most important to you this year. Then, write down the steps of how you will achieve this goal. Write this down in your planner, digital calendar, or wherever you keep track of things in your life.
- 2. Put in consistent effort:** Winning a gold medal at an FCCLA conference, and any other goals you might have, require consistent effort. For me, I've done well when I physically track the days that I complete my goal. Apps, like "Evoday," which help you see your daily "streak" of completing a habit, can be very useful and motivating. Consistent effort is key to success.
- 3. Manage your time:** Effective, focused sessions are important to distribute your time to all the extracurricular activities, like FCCLA and classes you might be committed to. The Pomodoro technique is one that has helped many students; it involves doing 25 minutes of studying, followed by a 5 minute break, and so on. If this works for you, you might play around with the numbers—maybe 50 minutes of studying followed by a 10 minute break.
- 4. Figure out what motivates you:** Motivation is one part of the equation to success. I like to use the app "Focus Friend," which turns the number of minutes you focus into a way to decorate the room of a character you choose. It incentivizes you to put your phone down and get started on your work. If this doesn't appeal to you, you can try playing specific music, sitting in a designated "focus" area, or perhaps find a different app that you like.

I hope these tips and tricks help. Good luck, and keep me updated!

With love,

Edna P. Amidon