

The background of the page is a light blue gradient. At the top, there are white snowflake patterns. Below them, the letters "FCCLA" are written in a large, white, serif font. To the right of "FCCLA", the text "Winter 2024" is written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font. The main title "New Directions" is written in a large, white, serif font. Below the title, the subtitle "Connecting New Jersey One Chapter at a Time" is written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font. On the left side, the text "President's Address" is written vertically in a large, white, cursive font. At the bottom, there are dark blue silhouettes of evergreen trees and a white snow-covered ground.

FCCLA

Winter 2024

New Directions

Connecting New Jersey One Chapter at a Time

It's that time of year when we have the first snowfall, where all the beautiful, distinctive snowflakes hit the ground. As the seasons change, it is important to embrace change. Consider that one bad habit you that concerns you. Change it; break away from it this season. I know you can do it!

Speaking of growth, I wanted to thank all of you for your hard work at the Fall Leadership Connection! I hope everyone was able to take something away from that conference. It was nice to see familiar and new faces networking and participating with such positive enthusiasm regarding competitive events and community service initiatives. I want to congratulate all of you on your accomplishments.

Leadership Bootcamp is our kickoff in the new year on January 6th, 2024. Members and chapters across New Jersey will participate in group watch parties, similar to last year. This Year the conference was built on the book Make Your Bed by Admiral William McRaven. Along with this book, conference attendees receive the annual long-sleeved conference T-shirt. We worked with two accomplished FCCLA facilitators as they walk us through leadership topics such as public speaking, communication, team building, and leadership activities!

I cannot wait to see everyone again at the State Leadership Conference on March 20th and 21st. This conference will be held at the DoubleTree Hotel in Cherry Hill. We are currently working on providing you with a great conference experience. There will be dynamic keynote speakers, exciting workshop sessions, college representatives, a fun activity night, an ice cream bar, and much more! This conference is a great way to grow your leadership skills and bring back fresh ideas to your chapter.

With the New Year, I encourage you to escape your comfort zone, meet new people, break bad habits, while keeping a positive attitude. The winter months may seem dark and cold, but you can always find comfort in your peers, especially your FCCLA family! I wish you the best of luck in your competitive events and the rest of the school year! Stay warm and stay confident in your abilities; you've got this!

See you soon,

Isabella Dabbenigno

NJ FCCLA State President

Running for State Office

By: Hitha Srinivas, Vice President of Parliamentary Law

Stephen Covey once said, "Leaders are neither born nor made. Leaders choose to be leaders." You can be a leader by serving on the NJ FCCLA State Executive Council. This is just one of the many opportunities FCCLA provides for individuals as part of the Ultimate Leadership Experience. If you are looking to: serve your community, be a role model to others, passionately advocate for FCCLA and FCS Education, develop your public speaking skills, and reach new horizons, you should consider applying to become a State Officer! It is highly encouraged that you take the next step within your FCCLA leadership journey and get started on the application.

What can you gain from becoming a State Officer?

Being a state officer has always proven to be one of the most gratifying experiences an individual takes within their high school and FCCLA journey. With loads of training, NJ FCCLA helps foster and improve your skills. This includes leadership, communication, public speaking, and teamwork. Leadership training wouldn't be what it is without being delivered by our state staff, alumni, and members of NJ Friends of FCCLA, National Leadership Training Team, and Leadership Academy. The role truly makes you "college and career ready" as you learn to carry out sets of responsibilities and learn throughout the journey.

What are some opportunities for State Officers?

State Officers acquire valuable skills through advocating for FCCLA and FCS Education, engaging at both the state and national levels during the Capitol Leadership Conference or the State Board of Education meetings. Only a few high school students can say that they met with legislators and these students can attest that advocacy is an incredibly fulfilling experience! Moreover, you'll actively contribute to planning statewide conferences, impacting hundreds of students. Your role involves developing membership plans to support chapters and promote FCCLA to teachers across the state at conferences. Officers also showcase their creativity using their term as they select conference speakers and innovate new competitive events, adding a dynamic element to their responsibilities.

How can you become a State Officer?

Before starting the application, we advise you to discuss running for State Office with your family and Chapter Adviser and gain their support on this big step. After, visit the NJ FCCLA website to download the application and get started. Once you finish, please mail it to the State Office by the deadline. You will attend a Candidates Meeting, take an FCCLA knowledge test, and participate in an interview with an alumni panel.

NJ FCCLA website: <https://www.njfccla.org/run-for-state-office>



Get Ready for an Exciting SLC Experience with New Jersey FCCLA!

By Brian Muirhead, Committee Chair

New Jersey FCCLA is gearing up for its highly anticipated State Leadership Conference (SLC), where students from across the state will come together to showcase their leadership skills, compete in various events, and make lasting memories. The State Leadership Conference will occur at the DoubleTree Hilton in Cherry Hill!

The conference will feature engaging activities and events to empower young leaders. The State Leadership Conference is the place for competitive events! Members can participate in state and STAR events for state and national recognition. The topics range from entrepreneurship to public speaking and fashion; participants can excel in their respective areas of interest and be recognized for their hard work. On the second day of this meeting, there will be an awards ceremony to honor the outstanding achievements of FCCLA members. Students who have excelled in their respective events and demonstrated exceptional leadership will be recognized for their hard work and dedication. Students who place 1st or 2nd in their STAR events qualify for the National Leadership Conference in Seattle, Washington!

This conference also provides countless leadership development opportunities! At the opening and closing sessions, there will be engaging keynote speakers. These speakers will share their experiences, insights, leadership knowledge, and personal growth advice to reach their goals and positively impact communities. In addition, the State Leadership Conference has many workshops; the topics range from community service, project management, teamwork, and community outreach. These workshops are facilitated by seasoned industry professionals and experienced FCCLA members and alumni.

Networking is the best way to share knowledge and gain friendships! The State Leadership Conference provides a fantastic platform for students to network with peers from different chapters across the state. Through social events, mixers, and collaborative activities, attendees can connect with like-minded individuals, exchange ideas, and build lifelong friendships.

So, if you are an FCCLA member or adviser in New Jersey, mark your calendars for the upcoming State Leadership Conference on Wednesday, March 20th, and Thursday, March 21st! Get ready for an incredible experience filled with learning, growth, and fun. Stay tuned for registration details and further updates on this exciting event!



HARNESSING THE POWER OF ONE FOR THE NEW YEAR

By: Isabella Dabbenigno, President



As we step into the new year, it's the perfect time to use Power of One for your personal development journey. Power of One is not just a program; it's a roadmap that empowers you to discover your unique strengths. Here's how you can make the most of it in the coming months:

A Better You:

Start the year by focusing on self-improvement. Set personal goals to enhance your traits, whether it's boosting your confidence, improving your communication skills, or fostering a positive mindset. Remember, a "better you" contributes to a better community.

Family Ties:

Strengthening bonds with family is essential to personal growth. Use the Power of One National Program to cultivate better relationships at home. Whether it's through active listening, understanding, or collaboration, strong family ties positively impact all aspects of your life.

Working on Working:

Explore your career aspirations and prepare for the future. Power of One provides a platform to explore work options, refine skills applicable to the business world, and lay the foundation for a successful career. Concurrently, you can use FCCLA State and STAR events to further yourself along your Ultimate Journey. Take charge of your professional journey now.

Take the Lead:

Leadership skills are essential in every aspect of life. Develop and nurture your leadership qualities through the Power of One. Whether it is through leading a group in a competitive event, leading your chapter, running for office, or learning new leadership skills through community service initiatives, there are so many ways to Take the Lead! It's not just about leading others but also about leading yourself towards success.

Speak Out for FCCLA:

Share your positive FCCLA experiences with the world. Use Power of One to amplify your voice and become an advocate for the incredible opportunities FCCLA offers. Utilize tools such as social media, and advocacy visits with your administration and local officials. Your experiences can inspire others to join this transformative journey.

Virtual Lesson Plans:

Don't forget to explore the virtual lesson plans available on the Lesson Plans & Resources page. These resources provide a structured approach to Power of One, offering guidance as you navigate your personal development journey.

As we embrace the new year, let's commit to using the Power of One to its fullest. The skills you acquire through this program will not only benefit you now but will also become valuable assets in your academic, personal, and professional pursuits. Here's to a year of growth, empowerment, and positive change! Wishing you a fantastic and empowered New Year!



GET RED-Y FOR FCCLA WEEK!



By Amanda Chen, FCCLA National President

February 11-18, 2024



It's time to save the date for February 11-17, 2024, because it's almost time for FCCLA Week! Taking place annually on the second full week of February, FCCLA Week is the ultimate celebration for our organization and Family and Consumer Sciences Education. Each day has a theme, featuring daily social media challenges and chapter activities. We encourage you to get involved and show your FCCLA spirit as we rock the red!

Our state association is kickstarting the celebration early on Sunday, February 11, with New Jersey's theme, "FCCLA Family Day"! We challenge you to set aside time to spend with your loved ones. Whether you are cooking a delicious meal with your family or playing board games together, there are many ways you can make the most of your family time and enjoy each other's company.

On **Monday, February 12**, we celebrate "**FCCLA Member Monday**"! Feature your chapter members and share what FCCLA means to you. You can do this by creating a member appreciation wall, spotlighting members on chapter social media accounts, or sharing your FCCLA journey with your peers to encourage them to join FCCLA.

Tuesday, February 13, is "**FCCLA Day of Service**". With community service being an integral part of our organization, we encourage you to develop your leadership skills by serving your community. You can share who has influenced your life and how you influence others with acts of service! Make an effort to give back to others through service projects and consider partnering with organizations like WeHelpTwo or Funds2Orgs.

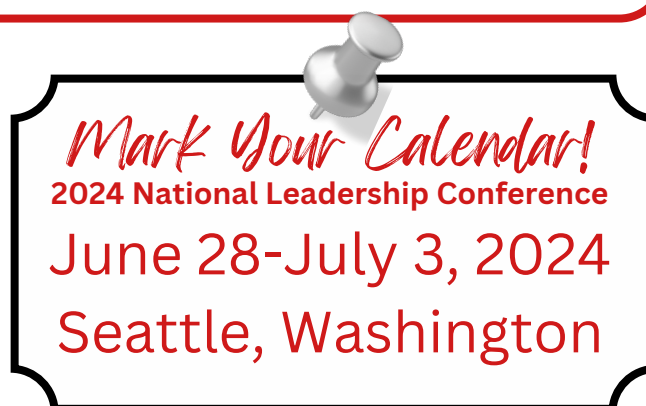
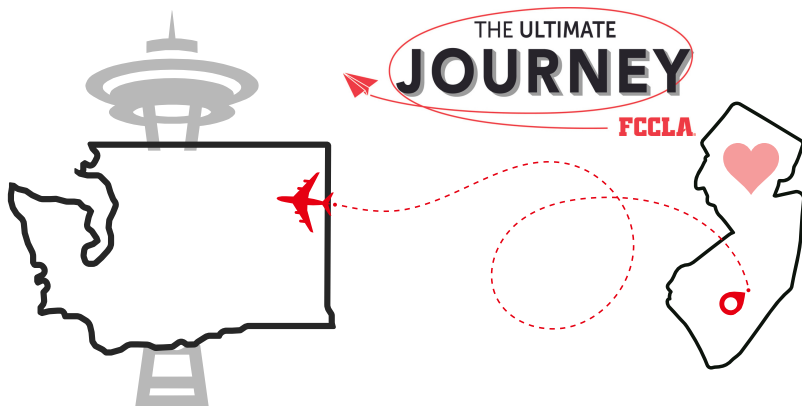
Get ready to celebrate the special Family and Consumer Sciences educators in your life with "**FCS Educator Day**" on **Wednesday, February 14**! Show appreciation for their hard work and dedication by thanking your FCCLA advisers and sharing how they said Yes to FCS. Writing personalized thank you letters, hosting a breakfast or luncheon for teachers, or creating gifts as a chapter are impactful ways you can share the love!

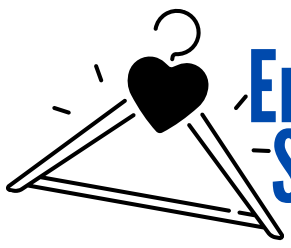
On **Thursday, February 15**, we celebrate "**Alumni Day**"! FCCLA helps you to develop skills for college and career readiness, equipping you with the necessary real-world skills for success. You can share how our organization prepares you for adult life and highlight our special FCCLA (or FHA-HERO) alumni! Consider requesting alumni to be guest speakers at chapter meetings, writing letters of appreciation to former FCCLA members, or creating a bulletin board spotlight to showcase achievements of past members!

It's time to share our love for FCCLA on **Friday, February 16**, for "**FCCLA Spirit Day**!" Rock the red by wearing red FCCLA apparel, creating FCCLA signs and decorations, and compete as a chapter in FCCLA trivia! Speak out for FCCLA by posting on social media, submitting press releases, and advocating for FCCLA programs!

Lastly, New Jersey FCCLA's theme for **Saturday, February 17**, is "**FCCLA Leadership Day**!" Document and share your leadership legacy by reflecting on your journey, setting future goals, and creating a vision board! You can even take the leap and consider running for chapter or state office.

FCCLA Week is a fantastic way to promote FCCLA and raise awareness for your chapter! From social media initiatives to exciting chapter activities, celebrating with over 237,000 members is an experience you won't want to miss. Not only are you able to get involved with your fellow FCCLA members and advisers, but you can also recruit new members and encourage them to join the fun. We highly encourage you to set up chapter committees for each themed day and seek input from members to fully engage everyone in the process. Happy FCCLA Week!





Embrace the Chill in Sustainable Style!

By: Emma Larsen, Vice President of Communication

As winter blankets us in its chilly embrace, there's no better time to explore the world of thrifting for cozy and stylish wardrobe additions. Thrift stores are treasure troves, especially when it comes to winter essentials like jackets. Let's delve into the beauty of sustainable fashion and discover the warmth of giving back.

The Thrill of Thrifting Jackets:

Thrift stores are bursting with an array of jackets that not only keep you snug but also add a unique touch to your style. From classic wool coats to trendy puffer jackets, you'll find an eclectic mix that suits your taste and beats the winter blues.

Sustainable Style:

Thrift shopping isn't just about scoring great deals; it's a sustainable choice that reduces your carbon footprint. By giving a second life to clothing, you contribute to the fight against fast fashion. Embrace the thrill of finding hidden gems while being kind to the planet.

Donate and Spread Warmth:

As you update your winter wardrobe, consider donating gently used clothing to local thrift stores. Your donations could be a source of warmth for someone else. Spread the joy of giving this winter and let your unused jackets find new homes, making a positive impact in the community.

Winter Fashion Trends 2023-24:

Wondering what styles to look out for this winter? Here are some trends that have taken the fashion world by storm:

1. **Chunky Knits:** Stay cozy and chic with oversized, chunky knit sweaters. They're not just warm but also incredibly stylish.
2. **Bold Outerwear:** Make a statement with bold-colored or patterned jackets. Stand out in the winter crowd with eye-catching outerwear.
3. **Faux Fur Elegance:** Keep it cruelty-free with faux fur accessories and jackets. They add a touch of luxury while being ethically conscious.
4. **Vintage Vibes:** Channel the past with vintage-inspired winter wear. Think retro silhouettes, faux leather, and timeless style.

This winter, let your fashion choices reflect your values. Thrift your way to a sustainable and stylish season, and don't forget to share the warmth by donating to those in need.

Happy thrifting and warm wishes for a stylish winter!



SLC Service



By: Malav Shah VP of Community Service

The New Jersey FCCLA state association stands as a beacon for youth empowerment and social change. Members, students, teachers, and advisers are profoundly committed to fostering responsibility and engaging citizens through the power of community service. This year is no different; which is why, at the 2024 State Leadership Conference, there will be three service initiatives.

Fundraising is one of the many ways NJ FCCLA is able to offer help to the less fortunate, and with multiple chapters participating, it is necessary that we put our best effort forward. For a second year, we are partnering with The Covenant House of New Jersey to help improve the lives of many teenagers who have had to fight for themselves in our cruel world. They have faced many obstacles, and have found their safe haven with this organization. Residents are able to fulfill their endeavors in employment, education, and wellness. We have the ability to change lives of many less-privileged people our age, so, I urge all members to develop a fundraising plan within their chapters to then donate to The Covenant House. The state officers are suggesting a minimum of \$200 per chapter.

Another impactful service partner of our association is The Ronald McDonald House, who has triumphantly helped over 27,000 families with sick children this past year. Their mission to provide a refuge for families with hospitalized children has resonated with NJ FCCLA for many years. So, we ask that all chapters continue their pull-tab collections, which cost the members nothing but a little effort. These pull tabs are widely accessible, abundantly found in school cafeterias and on top soda and food cans. They hold a great deal of fundraising power for The Ronald McDonald House, helping in their mission to provide a comfortable sanctuary for families to flourish. Every pull-tab counts, so start collecting now!

Our last initiative is new to FCCLA and involves items found in your home....books! NJ FCCLA is collecting books. All book types are being donated to a New Jersey organization called Book Smiles. This local organization is taking major steps in improving literacy rates in New Jersey, one book at a time. Chapters can facilitate book drives in their schools and help free up closet space. From kindergarten to high school level, we are accepting all books. The books can be used, but not torn. This is a simple way for all members to share resources that are highly valued in our communities,

All in all, our service initiatives for the 2024 SLC are effective, impactful, and done with purpose. Enjoy the process and make the most of it!





Chapter Success: Red Rose Chapter Award

By: Hitha Srinivas, Vice President of Parliamentary Law

Are you searching for ways to increase your chapter's engagement in FCCLA activities? The Red Rose Chapter Award is a prestigious recognition given to chapters throughout New Jersey that show a diverse and extensive "program of work" that motivates active participation in their chapter.

This award recognizes the leadership, community service efforts, personal development, competitive events and conference participation. After all, FCCLA's core values are character development, creative and critical thinking, interpersonal communication, practical knowledge, and career preparation. The award emphasizes not only the quantity but also the quality of a chapter's initiatives.

Earning the Red Rose Chapter award requires your chapter participation in the dynamic leadership conferences and activities NJ FCCLA has to offer. The requirement to qualify includes completing the required activities plus earning an additional 20-point minimum. Recognition will be awarded to these dedicated and highly motivated chapters at the State Leadership Conference. Please visit njfccla.org under membership to fill out the application. They are due on February 20th to njfccla@gmail.com

Here are some examples of the requirements:

- Chapter participation in FCCLA @ the Table (Show promotion and proof of participation)
- Send Chapter Photos of activities, events, or conferences to NJ FCCLA
- Create an FCCLA bulletin board for the hallway of your school.
Attach a picture of the board.
- Chapter attendance at the 2024 NJ FCCLA Leadership Bootcamp.
- Participate in 3 FCCLA Week promotions and show proof with documents and photos.
- Provide an article for the New Directions Newsletter.
- Complete a national program other than Power of One. Attach the application confirmation or proof from the portal.
- Run a chapter member for the State Office by February 1st.



Working toward earning The Red Rose Chapter Award is a great way to motivate your members and create excitement within your chapter. Remember to apply.



www.njfccla.org



The NJ FCCLA Website:

A Treasure Chest of Resources

By: Stuti Shah, Vice President of Public Relations

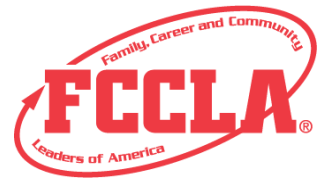
The New Jersey FCCLA Website (<https://www.njfccla.org/>) is THE resource for all your FCCLA needs! Information about Competitive Events, Membership, Meetings, National Programs, Leadership, and Service are organized for your benefit. The "Resources Tab" holds essential information for you and your chapter. This includes resources for your Adviser, members, the New Directions Newsletter, and a section for links to chapter pages. Making a chapter web page is a great way to organize information and make it available to all your members! Linking your chapter page to the New Jersey FCCLA website will allow your website to be recognized by the state and highlighted for others to see!

Get connected today!



BECOMING A CHAMPION OF FCCLA:

ADVOCACY TIPS



By: Lucas Romo, Vice President of Membership

We can all agree that without FCCLA and our Family and Consumer Science courses, we would not be the capable and passionate student leaders that we are today. As we work towards our own growth and success, we must help this path to Destination → Leadership! remain open for years to come. However, even with a passion for FCS, advocating for the support of your school's Family and Consumer Sciences department and our student organization, FCCLA, can be daunting. Here are some tips for speaking out for FCCLA!

Speaking out for FCCLA can begin in your classrooms, by talking to your classmates about becoming a member. Find opportunities to invite your peers to learn more about ways FCCLA can be a great place for them to learn and grow. Share your FCCLA story and discuss your success while inviting them to join this journey. As you gain members in your chapter, you can build confidence to attend school board meetings to report on your chapter's latest activities. Your chapter's success story is a launching pad to request resource allocation and vocal support.

"Elevator speeches" are an incredible way to share FCCLA highlights with your administrators. An elevator speech is a quick message that is concise and powerful. Here are some tips: they should be less than thirty seconds and enough to introduce yourself, your organization (FCCLA!), and what you do (the purposes of FCCLA/ chapter activities). You can make this pitch your own, but remember to be direct!

Share your FCCLA story in any advocacy opportunity. When you share your experiences from conferences, competitive events, and chapter service initiatives, you offer a window into the benefits of membership in FCCLA. This also highlights the need for support from the FCS department and educators who guide your leadership journey. Share all the news about New Jersey FCCLA by bringing a copy of this newsletter and including conference reports in your advocacy meeting.

Do not underestimate the power of dressing the part. When advocating in front of regional legislators/administrators keep your attire minimal, professional, and clean. Hair combed back or styled, minimal makeup, and a pressed outfit can make the difference!

Your advocacy meeting should reach an ultimate point: your big ask! When the state officers visited the United States Capitol in October, we asked for the support of Perkins funding (funding that allows Career and Technical Organizations, like FCCLA to thrive) and new laws that would support aspiring and experienced teachers. Your ask may be a proposal for a declaration of FCCLA Week or financial support for your travels. Whatever it is, make sure your "ask" is known by the end of your meeting. Appeal to your audience when making your request; if they have supported funding before or have been involved in FCCLA recognition, thank them for their efforts and encourage continued support. Offer a way to compromise and leave them with your adviser's contact information and a written record of your request.

Take one deep breath before you speak, and lead with a smile. You would not be attending a meeting with local leaders if you were not meant to be there. Thank you in advance for your growing support of our dynamic student leadership organization, and we wish you luck as you begin your advocacy journey.



Capitol Leadership 2024



Ignite Participation: Building a Stronger Chapter Together!

By: Emma Larsen, Vice President of Communication

As we kick off another exciting chapter year, let's focus on making every meeting and event engaging and impactful. Your participation is not only vital for the success of our chapter but also for making a positive difference in our community. Let's dive into some strategies to ensure our time together is dynamic and purposeful with a lasting impact.

1. Create a Welcoming Atmosphere:

Begin each meeting with a warm welcome. Encourage members, both new and returning, to share a bit about themselves. Building a sense of community fosters a supportive environment where everyone feels valued and eager to contribute.

2. Interactive Meetings:

Transform routine meetings into interactive sessions. Incorporate icebreakers, team-building activities, and discussions that allow members to express their thoughts. Engage everyone in the conversation, ensuring diverse perspectives are heard and respected.

3. Set Clear Objectives:

Clearly define the purpose of each meeting or event. Establish specific goals and outcomes, whether it's planning a community service project, discussing upcoming competitions, or brainstorming creative initiatives. Having a clear focus keeps members invested and motivated. In addition, seek feedback from your members! It is a great way to see what went well and what needs to be changed.

4. Showcase Member Achievements:

Celebrate the accomplishments of your members. Whether it's academic achievements, community service efforts, or personal milestones, recognizing and applauding individual successes creates a positive atmosphere and inspires others.

5. Collaborate on Impactful Projects:

Make a real difference by collaborating on meaningful community service projects. Identify issues that resonate with your chapter members and work together to address them. This not only benefits the community but also instills a sense of pride and purpose among members. Remember, the strength of our chapter lies in the active participation of each member. By engaging in our meetings and events, you contribute not only to the success of our chapter but also to the positive change we can bring to our community. Together, let's make this chapter year one to remember!



Cupcakes for the Covenant House



Covenant House
New Jersey

By: Malav Shah, Vice President of Community Service

Every year, NJ FCCLA hosts a Cupcake Challenge competitive event that requires participants to develop a cupcake with a required theme and specific criteria. During our conference, the cupcakes are sold to all those in attendance. During the conference all the members in attendance have the opportunity to purchase 6 cupcakes for \$5. The members peruse the cupcake displays and select their favorite flavors. The cupcakes are boxed and stored on the student's lunch tables ready to take home.

Our members exceeded the standards and strived to achieve their best! Each participating team of three students had to make and display 60 cupcakes. Our state delegation donated the proceeds from the Cupcake Challenge to our service partner, the Covenant House of New Jersey. Representatives of the Covenant House were on site to explain their mission and speak with the chapter advisers.

Several competitors won awards for the Cupcake Challenge, and at the same time members bought and enjoyed the cupcakes while contributing to the Covenant House. What a delicious way to make a difference!

The funds raised from the Cupcake Challenge totaled \$1,400. The Covenant House will be able to use this donation to continue its program in supporting teenagers who have suffered human trafficking or face homelessness. This organization fosters a safe space and provides individualized programs for homeless teenagers. With our donation, they will be able to provide care, education, and employment opportunities for these teens.





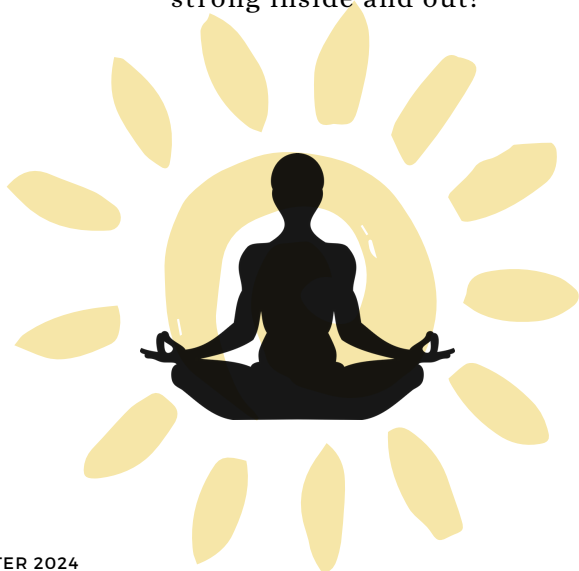
BOUNCING BACK: GETTING OUT OF THAT WINTER RUT

By: Stuti Shah, Vice President of Public Relations

The seasonal shift to winter means more hours of darkness, and many people fall into a winter rut or depression. This is extremely common but often debilitating as these ruts often stifle productivity. Thankfully, there are many ways to get through this season!

1. **Meditation** can help with feelings of anxiety and stress. Meditation is relaxing and can help you get in tune with your body!
2. **Self-care** is vital in these months, as the cold weather means more nights confined to home. Making your favorite recipe, taking a relaxing bath, watching a fun movie, or starting a new book are all ways to take care of yourself this winter season.
3. **Exercise** is not only healthy for your body but also your mind. Endorphins released mimic the chemicals for happiness. In addition, exercise is a great way to blow off steam, let go of anxieties, and strengthen your core.
4. **Socializing** is a great way to get out of the winter rut, and break the feeling of isolation. Hanging out with friends and family can help remind you that you are not alone! If the weather prevents you from getting out with friends, Zoom is a great way to reach out even when you are home alone.

I hope you use these tips this winter to feel strong inside and out!



Inside Activities with Friends

By: Isabella Dabbenigno,
State President



With the change in seasons comes a change in activities. More often than not, you get “pushed” inside to find shelter from the cold. Being stuck inside with nothing to do is no fun, and you might even feel bored with the same activities every time you and your friends get together. If you are running out of ideas, check out the list below!

Games:

Playing games can be a great way to connect with friends, especially if you have a group with a competitive nature! There is a wide variety of games that you can play with friends, such as board games like Monopoly, Checkers, Uno, and Sorry! These games are both competitive and entertaining! You can also play video games. A few of my favorites to play with friends are Just Dance and Mario Kart! If board games and video games aren't for you, I suggest you try a group game! You can create trivia questions about yourself and play, make a Jeopardy board, or even Family Feud! You also can't forget card games and puzzles! Puzzles are classic and a great opportunity to get to know others and share interests!

Food:

The great thing about food is that it always brings people together. It doesn't matter if it's something sweet or salty, a meal, or a snack; food always excites people! Baking is a creative way to incorporate food and fun! You can bake something together with your friends or even have a bake-off. In addition, having a potluck is also an opportunity to incorporate food. If you want to step it up a notch, I suggest you make it a theme or character night. An example would be bringing food from your favorite TV show or Disney movie. Not only will you have delicious food, but it puts a twist on the challenge at hand.

Miscellaneous:

This category includes even more ideas... some classic, some trending, and some for self-care! If you are an artsy person, a craft night may be for you! Even if it's not everyone's thing, it can still be fun to see what everyone comes up with. For specific ideas, Instagram and Pinterest are great places to look! You can also have a self-care night and pull out the face masks, eye masks, lotion, and anything you may find relaxing. Going hand in hand, you can have a spa night and paint your nails, eat some great snacks, relax, and have fun!

I hope the next time you get stuck inside, you can invigorate your evening with new fun activities that everyone can enjoy!





National Leadership Conference

By: Isabella Dabbenigno, State President

One of the biggest and best ways to explore your leadership opportunities through FCCLA is the National Leadership Conference! The National Leadership Conference is a week-long national conference held in late June where members from across the country gather to participate in competitive events, network with youth, gather community service and fundraising ideas, receive leadership training, explore new cities, and make friendships that last.

This year's National Leadership Conference is scheduled for June 29 - July 3, 2024, in Seattle, Washington! There are several different sights to see and places to visit. One of the must-sees is the first Starbucks, located conveniently across from Pike Place Market, filled with small independent businesses. You also can't forget about the Space Needle, an observation tower with 360-degree views of the city.

To compete at the National Leadership Conference, you must place within the top two in your category and level in a STAR Event at the New Jersey FCCLA State Leadership Conference (March 20-21, 2024). From there, you will have the opportunity to improve your competitive event using the critiques from any advisers and peers. After that, you will take your project to the National Leadership Conference, where you will compete with members from around the country. If you place in the Top 10 at NLC, you will have the opportunity for stage recognition. Gaining recognition does not stop at the stage; New Jersey also holds a recognition party, where members are honored for their work. Remember placing in the Top 3 or 10 is not everything, and the experience you will gain from STAR events will make you feel like a winner!

At the national conference make sure you take the opportunity to meet new people and form stronger bonds with the people you already know. This meeting has great networking opportunities with the 8,000 attendees through competitive events and workshops. Each state has its own meeting where you will engage with the members from New Jersey and form strong bonds with the NJ FCCLA members. One of the best ways to meet new people is to trade pins with them! Pin trading is a fun way to meet people from each state!

Finally, if you are able to attend NLC this summer, take advantage of all the dynamic and educational workshops at the National Leadership Conference! Workshops are super fun and provide several fundraising and community service ideas that you can bring back to your chapter.

I cannot wait to see everyone at the National Leadership Conference! Good luck with your competitive events and have a great conference



LEADERSHIP BOOTCAMP: THE ULTIMATE STOP IN YOUR LEADERSHIP JOURNEY

By: Emma Larsen, Vice President of Communication

Attending the annual New Jersey FCCLA Leadership Bootcamp is a great way to embark on an exciting leadership journey! This dynamic event is designed to equip you with valuable skills, foster teamwork, and ignite passion for making a positive impact. Led by esteemed FCCLA alumni and the State Executive Council, the NJ FCCLA Leadership Bootcamp this year was a blend of fun activities and insightful sessions that enhanced our members' leadership prowess.

Event Highlights:

- Engaging Activities:** Leadership Bootcamp is a one-day conference filled with interactive activities aimed at improving leadership skills. From team-building challenges to creative problem-solving exercises, each activity is crafted to bring out the leader in you.
- Alumni Insights:** On Saturday, January 6th, our members learned from the best! Our FCCLA alumni shared their experiences and insights, while providing members with valuable lessons and perspectives to fuel our leadership journey. Their success stories inspired and motivated members to reach new heights.
- State Executive Council Guidance:** The State Executive Council shared their valuable experiences as they guide members through various aspects of leadership.

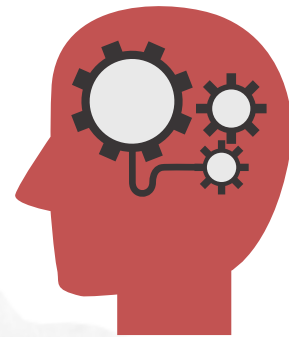
Why Members Attend?

- Leadership Growth:** Members develop essential leadership skills through hands-on activities and expert guidance.
- Networking Opportunities:** Members connected with other FCCLA chapters, alumni, and the State Executive Council for valuable networking opportunities.
- Exclusive Merchandise:** Each attendee receives a leadership book and a special long-sleeved T-shirt. Sport your Leadership Bootcamp tee shirt proudly and delve into the leadership book provided to continue your growth beyond the event.

For those of you who participated, thank you for joining us for a day of learning, growth, and fun as we collectively strengthen the bonds of leadership within our FCCLA family.



Career Exploration



By: Isabella Dabbenigno, President

Deciding on a future career can be daunting, especially when you have no clue what you want to do. All of us have been in that position at some point where we sit and contemplate what we really want to do with our lives. Everyone told us growing up that we can be whatever we want and accomplish anything; however, as we enter early adulthood, many of us feel pressured to pick a high-paying career. In this process, we tend to ignore our interests and happiness, and no one wants to be stuck with a job in which they have no interest. It is said that if you “do something you love, you never work a day in your life.” If you are sitting in that same position and wondering which direction to take, I want to introduce you to career exploration through FCCLA STAR events.

STAR stands for Students Taking Action for Recognition, and they are FCCLA competitive events where members compete at the state and national levels. There are over 30 STAR events in various categories: fashion, interior design, web design, entrepreneurship, culinary and pastry, budgeting, nutrition, hospitality, leadership, and so much more! STAR events require students to create a project based on guidelines within the category of their choice.

All STAR events fit into one of the 4 career pathways: Human Services, Hospitality and Tourism, Education and Training, Visual Arts and Design. STAR events provide a realistic insight into what you might experience within a given occupation. This is a great way to explore your career interests! These STAR events show you what a career may have in store. A pro tip: you can complete a different event every year to help widen your horizons, especially if you're torn between two of your favorite interests!

But that's not all! All of your hard work for these STAR events doesn't go unseen! When you choose to participate in competitive events, you get recognized for your accomplishments! When you compete at the state level, there are gold medals, silver medals, and bronze medals. Additionally, if you place in the top two for your event you can take your STAR project to the National Leadership Conference in Seattle, Washington in 2024! At NLC, you can present your project for recognition among the top competitors nationwide.

These projects are a great resource to use when exploring different career options! Another resource if you're not sure what event you want to participate in, you can take this event quiz: <https://fcclainc.org/compete/competitive-events/star-events>
I wish you good luck and am confident that you will find a career that will leave you feeling fulfilled and excited!





Mastering the Digital Realm

By: Emma Larsen, Vice President of Communication

In today's digital age, the power of social media is unparalleled. It's not just a platform for sharing selfies and memes; it's a dynamic tool that can elevate our chapter's presence, engage members, and amplify our impact. Let's explore how we can effectively leverage social media to take our chapter to new heights!

1. Choose the Right Platforms: Different social media platforms cater to various audiences. Identify where your target audience (your chapter members and potential recruits) spends their time. Whether it's Instagram, Facebook, X, or others, choose platforms that align with your chapter's goals.

2. Create Compelling Content: Craft content that is not only visually appealing but also aligns with the values and goals of our chapter. Share highlights from meetings, behind-the-scenes glimpses, member spotlights, and updates on upcoming events. Visual content, such as images and videos, tends to capture more attention. Also, stay up to date with trends, as they can be a great way to reach your audience!

3. Establish a Posting Schedule: Consistency is key in the world of social media. Establish a posting schedule to keep your audience engaged. Whether it's regular updates about chapter activities, fun facts, or reminders about upcoming events, a consistent posting schedule ensures your chapter remains top-of-mind.

4. Encourage Member Engagement: Social media is a two-way street. Encourage members to actively engage by liking, commenting, and sharing posts. Create polls, ask questions, and foster discussions to make your social media platforms interactive. Member engagement not only strengthens our digital presence but also builds a sense of community.

5. Utilize Hashtags: Create and use unique hashtags for your chapter. This not only helps in branding but also makes it easier for members to find and share content related to our chapter. Encourage members to use these hashtags in their posts to further extend our reach.

6. Showcase Achievements: Use social media as a platform to celebrate your chapter's achievements. Whether it's successful events, awards, or community service projects, share these victories with your digital audience. It not only boosts morale but also showcases the positive impact we are making.

7. Monitor Analytics: Most social media platforms offer analytics tools. Monitor these metrics to understand what content resonates most with your audience. Use insights to refine your social media strategy and ensure that your efforts are driving the desired outcomes.

In the digital era, social media is a powerful ally. By using it effectively, we can strengthen our chapter, engage members, and create a lasting impact within our community. Let's embark on this digital journey together and make our chapter shine in the virtual spotlight!

MEMBERSHIP: RETAINING ACTIVE MEMBERS

By: Lucais Romo, Vice President of Membership

The beginning of the school year is an exciting time for membership growth for the Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America. But, every chapter has felt nervous when the second chapter meeting lacks the attendance and energy from the first. The New Year is a great time to refresh and shift focus to member retention. Here are some strategies to fall back on to keep those new members coming back and to offer fresh activities for existing leaders.

Try Something New

Reflect on which activities engage your members! If your chapter is excited by a bake sale fundraiser and culinary competitive events like the Fall Cupcake Challenge, look for new activities and initiatives for foodies.

Guest speakers are a great way to excite your members and expand their horizons! Speakers from the local fashion or culinary school or speakers who work in the industry are just a few examples. Plan a fun event packed with leadership and career-readiness training that shares the spotlight with multiple Family and Consumer Science disciplines (culinary arts, fashion design, child development, etc.) In FCS, there is something for everyone!

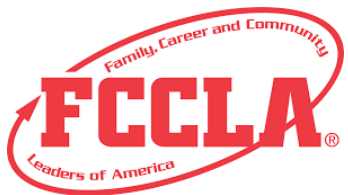
Find A Partner

Reward students for membership in FCCLA by finding a local business to sponsor a discount event for affiliated members or those supporting our organization. Dine-to-donate programs are held by certain restaurants and chains for a set period of time. A partnership like this is a direct win-win: more business for a partner and a membership perk for your chapter. New partnerships can be made for community service. Get your chapter ready to serve in more ways than one by involving interests or skills unique to your members in a new service partner or initiative.

Provide Leadership Experience

Setting a space for younger members to serve as committee chair or representative roles in your chapter ensures their voice is heard. Set aside a select collection of events for them to shine in: a service initiative, fundraiser, and a membership event, for example. Guide your junior members entering high school to senior membership by establishing a mentor program that pairs older members with younger ones. Have them find individual or team goals alongside each other and serve as accountability partners to keep one another on track.

In all membership efforts, remember that a servant leader is concerned with the good of the team and the success of many. Having the title of leader is a great responsibility, so remember to make decisions that consider the opinions and contributions of your chapter.



Setting Yourself Up for Success with STAR Events!

By Amanda Chen, FCCLA National President

One of the most highly-anticipated opportunities in FCCLA is participating in STAR Events! Students Taking Action with Recognition (STAR) events are competitive events that members can compete in at the state and national levels. With over thirty events to choose from in areas ranging from education to culinary arts, there is something for everyone! Taking part in a STAR event can help you apply skills you learned within your Family and Consumer Sciences classes into real-world settings, develop interpersonal and real-world skills, and identify issues affecting families, careers, and communities to make a lasting difference.

The first step to competing in a competitive event is to select one of interest to you! Whether you try something new or explore an area that fascinates you, identifying an event you are passionate about will make it a fun and rewarding experience. There are STAR events that are individual or teams of up to three members, so be sure to read the guidelines to see which you would like to be part of. Consider taking the “Which STAR Event Is For You?” quiz on the national website to help you!

Successful projects start with proactive behavior! Avoiding doing work last minute will help ensure that you can put your full effort into completing your project. Carefully read the guidelines and rubric to make sure that you do not miss any important information. If you are working with a team, practice open communication and enhance your leadership skills through a collaborative effort. Being open to feedback from your chapter advisers and checking in often for guidance is a great step to improving your work. Preparation is key, so practicing any presentational elements is important. Asking for advice and continuously practicing will help you increase your confidence in yourself and your event.

Competing in a STAR Event at the State Leadership Conference offers the exciting chance of qualifying to compete at the 2024 National Leadership Conference in Seattle, Washington! If you have any questions regarding competitive events, please reach out to your chapter adviser or contact the state office at njfccla@gmail.com. We hope to see you make this opportunity part of your ultimate journey.

"Art" of Service

By: Lucais Romo, Vice President of Membership

New Jersey FCCLA is on fire with service this year! Beyond the service contributions at the 2023 Fall Leadership Conference (see Fall Leadership Conference in Review article), chapters across the state have served their communities and exemplified FCCLA's mission and goals. And, members have made beautiful creations in the process.

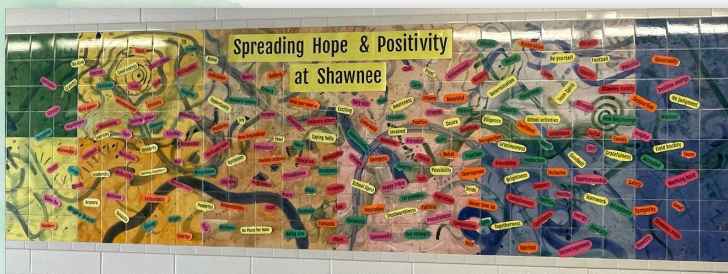
Southern Regional High School - Painting Braces for Socktober

This year the Southern Regional High School Chapter took on the "Socktober challenge." They went above and beyond to make WeHelpTwo's efforts known and to share the stories of children born with clubbed feet worldwide. They did this by painting designs on a collection of children's braces, one set of equipment in a trail of procedures to restore their feet.

Shawnee High School - Mural for School Violence Awareness Week

The Shawnee Chapter raised awareness for the end of school violence in a big way! Spreading positivity, they created a beautiful mural filled with kind words in their school. It took many hands and colorful paper, but even the process set an example of their message: join together in peace and harmony!

Elevate the community service game in your chapter this year with a creative art project that can be made by all members of your chapter. Perhaps a group of knitters can create projects for the colder months that can be sent to a local shelter or nursing home. Take a page out of Shawnee's book and partner with your school to make meaningful displays centered around an initiative decided on by your chapter members. Take full advantage of the "art" of service this new year!



(Mural at Shawnee High School)



It is important to fundraise for your chapter, not only for the ability to attend conferences but also to help keep your chapter members engaged throughout the whole year! The winter can be a slow time, but these enjoyable winter fundraising activities will ensure your members are engaged!

Winter Wonderland Raffle: Organize a raffle with winter-themed prizes like cozy blankets, hot cocoa gift sets, or even a ski trip. Sell raffle tickets to students, teachers, and families to raise funds for your FCCLA chapter.

Valentine Bake-off: Invite FCCLA members and the community to participate in a Valentine-themed bake-off. From heart-shaped cookies to sweet and lovely cupcakes, participants can showcase their baking skills. Charge an entry fee for participants and sell the delicious treats to raise funds.

Winter Craft Fair: Set up a winter-themed craft fair where FCCLA members can sell their handmade crafts and creations. From knitted scarves to delicious baked good, there's something for everyone. Encourage local artisans and vendors to participate as well, and charge a small fee for booth rentals.

Winter Sports Challenge: Organize a winter sports challenge where participants can take part in activities like ice skating, skiing, or snowboarding. They can collect pledges from family and friends based on their performance or completion of challenges. The more they participate, the more funds they raise for your FCCLA chapter.

The Winter Season is a wonderful time for fundraising! It allows for your chapter members to work together and foster positive relationships and provides your chapter with funds to use for state conferences and even national conferences! We hope you and your chapter spread the winter spirit through these FUN-raising initiatives!



Winter Service Projects

By: Malav Shah, Vice President of Community Service

This season make someone's day winter-ful! The winter can be gloomy but service creates a feeling of positivity and "sunshine." See the Service Projects that are uploaded to njfccla.org every season under the "Community Service Tab". See the suggested service activities below,

1. Help cook a holiday dinner for an elderly neighbor or relative.
2. Build a Blizzard Box, with supplies like a flashlight, blankets, and non-perishable food items for those who do not have access to shelter programs.
3. Host a scarf, mitten, and coat drive for the needy.
4. Knit scarves and blankets as a group for the winter season.
5. Set up a thank you station for school staff and teachers with goodies to help them throughout their day.
6. Read to children in elementary schools and daycares to brighten their day.
7. Make treats for the animals at your local shelter.
8. Shovel snow in neighborhoods, parks, schools, parking lots, etc.
9. Collect books for the 2024 SLC!
10. Bake and decorate cookies for special workers around your town in honor of Valentine's Day.

These service ideas range from small actions to bigger projects, so everyone can find a way to help. Serving your community and those around you is a great way to make the holiday season memorable for everyone. Start your year of service on a high note with these service ideas!



Embracing Culture in Your Chapter

By: Lucais Romo Vice President of Membership and Brian Muirhead Committee Chair

FCCLA provides a space for everyone to learn, lead, and express their individual creativity and identity. In your home chapter, you too can host a space that fosters inclusivity and makes every member feel welcome. One energizing way to emphasize the unique identity of your many members is through a Culture Day at your next chapter meeting.

- First, set an atmosphere for your cultural expedition! Ask your members to share appropriate music representative of their culture or songs that feel like home with a chapter officer through a digital survey. Compile those tunes into a playlist that can run in the background. Engage in icebreakers that let members share their identities and cultural intelligence. Try "Cultural Bingo" with spaces containing prompts like "has visited another country," or "is learning another language."
- Highlight cultural art and symbols. Invite all your members to bring the flags of their cultural roots. Display these flags in the front of the room or as centerpieces on tables. Art exists all over the world, and creating an explorative art gallery of cultural art creates a beautiful picture of the diversity already within your chapter.
- Let members "strut their stuff" in cultural dress. What better way to link Family and Consumer Sciences with the uniqueness of culture found in our chapters! Members can attend this meeting in garments representative of their identity. And, if time allows, they can walk in a cultural dress fashion show backed by that diverse playlist you collected earlier.

Take part in the fun of celebrating culture all year round in your chapter and encourage the growth of cultural intelligence through the sharing of fashion, art, language, and activities. Do this through holiday announcements in your chapter and on social media. Also, through the participation in competitive events with international subjects. Many beautiful, tasty, projects can stem from the International Food Competitive Event offered at the New Jersey FCCLA State Leadership Conference on March 20-21, 2024.



Leading your Chapter to Success Through Engagement and Promotion!

By: Malav Shah, Vice President of Community Service

Creating ideas for service projects and fundraisers can be time-consuming and encouraging others to participate is the most difficult part! To have successful service initiatives, consider these topics:

The Engagement:

Participants should enjoy the service project, so make it fun and exciting! The project should be an action that contributes to the community's well-being but should also be interesting enough so people want to participate.

The Effect:

Your service project should work towards leaving a long-lasting impact or effect on the community, and meaningful actions should be taken. Ensure to make the impact of the service project the focus, so members can understand what they are working toward!

For fundraisers, these are the main aspects...

The Budget:

Know your budget and how much each part of the fundraiser will cost. To earn profit, you need to make more than you spend.

The Audience:

Define your audience and target your incentives and goods accordingly. This is the deciding factor of success in your fundraiser, so use it while planning!

The Appeal:

Your fundraiser should fit and have a specific interest catered towards the intended target audience and should benefit them in one way.

Goal:

Set an end goal, and work toward it. This will lay the foundation for your fundraiser. From establishing a goal, and setting criteria, you can create a plan of action to start the initiative. This process also allows you to have realistic expectations and detects lacking elements in your fundraiser.

Promotion:

Promoting your fundraiser sets you up for success! Use different platforms to publicize your project, including school newspapers/magazines, bulletin boards, social media posts, speaking to administration, or even at Board of Education Meetings. There are countless ways to promote your initiative, so take advantage of all the student-run platforms at your school!

Strive for success with these tips, and consider them when leading your chapter to a new service project or fundraiser. Community is an integral part of FCCLA, and prioritizing the actions to improve them will boost leadership, service, and connections!



National Programs

By: Stuti Shah, Vice President of
Public Relations



FCCLA offers 8 National Programs that help you develop real-life skills and continue your leadership journey! The programs cover family, advocacy, finances, and your career. This article will highlight (4) of these peer education programs and offer ways to implement them in your chapter:

Community Service:

This program guides members to seek out community issues and carry out projects to improve them. Community Service includes 3 units: Learn, Lead, and Serve. Ways this National Program can be used in your chapter: running a book drive, writing letters to veterans or nursing homes, hosting a park or beach cleanup, and tutoring fellow students!

Families First: This national program is all about the family, which is one of the main focuses of FCCLA! The Families First National program allows leaders to take action to strengthen their family as a basic unit of society, fostering healthy relationships, and learning how to nurture a family. This national program has 5 units: Dynamics (understanding family), Balance (prioritizing self-care and overcoming obstacles) Development (learning how to care for children), Safety (prioritizing and practicing family safety), and Skills (strategies to be a good family member). Some project ideas are: making a bulletin board for National Family Week, having a chapter-led event to discuss issues faced by families, hosting a chapter potluck where members invite their family members, and discussing strategies to support the family.

Career Connections: Equip members with career-ready skills and helps them discover their strengths! Career Connection has 4 units: My Skills (practice productivity, and employability skills, and link personal interests to careers), My Life (where members learn to manage their roles in their families, careers, and communities) My Career – gain understanding about finding a job and work, My Path (create goals and find steps to their dream career and lifestyle). Some project ideas are: educating your peers about different career options, completing the “Career Search” competitive event, inviting industry professionals to chapter meetings, and hosting a mock job interview!

Stand Up: This National Program is all about advocacy; which is gaining support for your cause by speaking out! Stand Up allows members to develop, plan, and follow through with activities to improve their quality of life, and speak about FCCLA and Family Consumer Sciences. Stand Up has 3 units: Assess current needs, Educate others regarding concerns, and Advocate so that they can make a difference. The great thing about this program is that you can advocate for issues that YOU stand for! Some examples include Teacher Shortage, global warming, clean energy, and tobacco usage in teens.

FCCLA has so many opportunities to improve your community, your family, and your life! The other 4 National Programs are FACTS, Financial Fitness, Student Body, and Power of One. Whether it is exploring careers, advocating to your officials, being there for your family, or serving your community, FCCLA has it all and there are many ways to involve these incredible National Programs in your chapter. Look for more information about all the National Programs on the National Website. Check with your adviser for details about each of these programs



The Ultimate Journey: Ways to Promote Driver Safety in FCCLA!



While traveling on your ultimate journey, it is important to practice safe driving habits! If you are a driver or passenger, ensuring you do your part to keep yourself and others safe can help create safer roads for all. Through FCCLA, there are many opportunities to explore driver education and implement projects that promote driver safety. The initiatives even include cash prizes and are a great way to impact your community!

Looking to make a positive impact on others? Consider developing and implementing a national program project! FCCLA National programs are peer-to-peer educational programs where FCCLA members can make a difference in their communities by educating and involving their peers in addressing important personal, work, and societal issues. The Families Acting for Community Traffic Safety (FACTS) national program helps members learn about personal, vehicle, and road safety to educate others and support community traffic safety enforcement through local rules and regulations. Teenagers who utilizing this national program can help to establish basic safety habits and deepen their understanding of what it means to drive safely. You can develop a FACTS project by relating to the three units within this program: People, Vehicles, and Roads. Help your peers make informed decisions as a driver and passenger, understand vehicle safety, and address safety hazards that you may encounter on the road. Be sure to submit your FACTS award application to the FCCLA Portal by March 1, as you could win a cash prize of \$1,000!

Need an idea for a FACTS project? The Safe Rides - Save Lives PSA Contest is a creative way for members to develop a strong message on traffic safety and reduce the risk of crashes. The winning PSA video could win a \$3,500 cash prize! This year's theme is Passenger Self-Advocacy. The goal is to encourage and empower passengers to speak up for their safety when being in a vehicle that is being driven unsafely. To participate, create a 25-second video PSA for teen drivers and passengers by March 1, 2024. Access resources at fcclainc.org (National FCCLA) and nrsf.org (National Road Safety Foundation) to help effectively craft your video message. The winning PSA will be able to work with an award-winning production team to turn their submission into a professional PSA video that will be shared nationwide. I hope to see you on stage at the 2024 National Leadership Conference in Seattle, Washington, as we share your winning PSA video!

Another project idea for the FACTS national program is to conduct a Rural Teen RSA! The Rural Teen Road Safety Assessment (RSA) promotes teen driver safety by encouraging students to look at roads used every day to determine whether they are safe for everyone in the community. As members, you can focus on areas of your community by noting whether intersections are unsafe or dangerous through a road safety assessment, leading to influential changes by bringing greater awareness to geographic areas that impact teens. By engaging fellow peers, school administration, and local law enforcement, studying intersections near your school and communities can increase education and improve infrastructure. This year, FCCLA is partnering with the Ford Motor Company Fund, where chapters can earn national recognition by leading an RSA in their community. By submitting both the FACTS application and RSA Report Form, your chapter could be eligible to earn one of the twelve \$1,000 prizes offered to the top projects! The deadline for consideration is March 1, 2024, so you won't want to miss out!

I highly encourage you to take part in these initiatives and make an effort to practice safe driving each and every day! Visit fcclainc.org for more information on how you can get involved and make a difference!

TAKE A LEAP ON FEBRUARY 29TH!

BY: STUTI SHAH, VICE PRESIDENT OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

This year, 2024, is extra special, as it is a Leap Year! A Leap Year only occurs every 4 years due to the solar orbit of the Earth around the Sun. An ordinary orbit is about 365.2422 days long, so after 4 years, it is 366! The concept of the leap year is human made. It helps us stay on track with the seasons and dates back to the 16th century! This goes back to the Roman Empire when Emperor Julius Caesar declared that the year 46 B.C. would be 445 days instead of 365. After that, he adjusted the number of days in a year to 365.25, which we still use now!

Here are some fun facts about the Leap Year:

- Leap years are celebrated every 4 years, except for years divisible by 100—unless they are divisible by 400!
- Cultures that use the lunar calendar have to add whole months to each year, to keep track of the holidays!
- In Greece it is bad luck to get married on February 29
- Queen Margaret of Scotland ruled that women could propose to men on February 29th. The catch is, the men could not say no!
- There is a special society for leap-day babies, or leaplings! It is called "The Honor Society of Leap Year Day Babies"
- Some Leaplings celebrate their birthdays on February 28, March 1 or every 4 years.
- In the Emilia-Romagna Region of Northern Italy people have a special name for the leap year, l'ann d'la baleina, which translates to whale's year in English
- Anthony, Texas is known for being the "Leap Day Capital of the World". This is because a woman proposed a Leap Day Festival, which the town council agreed to! Leap Day festival is a large attraction for the town! Leap Year and the Leap Day are full of interesting traditions from cultures all around the world!



How are you going to celebrate this extra special year?

2023 National Fall Conference In Review

By Amanda Chen, FCCLA National President

From November 10-12, 2023, New Jersey FCCLA traveled to Birmingham, Alabama, for the 2023 National Fall Conference! Over 1,400 members, advisers, and guests attended this dynamic event. Members listened to inspirational keynote speakers, attended general sessions, competed in skill demonstration events, and learned from engaging workshops to build real-world skills and explore FCCLA's four Career Pathways.

Kickstarting our conference, the National Executive Council led a lively Opening General Session, where we raised the energy to lead into a weekend filled with learning and fun! Our New Jersey State President, Isabella Dabbenigno, enthusiastically represented our state association on stage as we welcomed all states in attendance. We were joined by keynote speaker Monti Washington as he presented his address, *From the Streets to the Stage*. As he shared his story, he challenged us to be confident as we travel on our personal journeys.

Our New Jersey members participated in competitive events by challenging themselves in the FCCLA/Lifesmarts Knowledge Bowl, Skill Demonstration Events, and Online Challenge Tests. Congratulations to Isabella Dabbenigno (NJ FCCLA State President) for placing second in the Interior Design Online Challenge Test and Malav Shah (NJ FCCLA VP of Community Service) for placing second in the Culinary Food Art Skill Demonstration Event! At NFC, the JPS FCCLA Knowledge Bowl team came in the Top 16 teams! Through a competitive process starting with forty teams, their hard work has landed them a spot to compete at the 2024 National Leadership Conference in Seattle, Washington. Congratulations to all competitors!

At the National Fall Conference, we watched the special screening of the short film *One Small Visit*. This inspirational film was based on the true story of an immigrant Indian family who travels through Neil Armstrong's hometown following the 1969 moon landing, where they can meet with Armstrong's parents and share their stories. Following the thirty-minute film, we heard from the writers and producers of *One Small Visit* through a panel discussion, where they shared insight into the filming process and the takeaway messages.

At the Closing General Session, the National Executive Council recognized competitors through an Awards Session and shared ways members can get involved in FCCLA in the upcoming year. Then, keynote speaker Joshua M. Evans delivered an address, empowering us to embrace our challenges and overcome uncertainty. NJ FCCLA ended the night at the special event, *Urban Air*, where we enjoyed having fun at the trampoline park and meeting new members.

Overall, we had a great time exploring Birmingham and getting involved in all that FCCLA has to offer. We look forward to the next stop on our journey: the 2024 National Leadership Conference!



Chapter Visits: Level Up Your Meetings!

By: Lucais Romo, Vice President of Membership

- Does your chapter need help kick-starting one of these retention strategies, preparing for conferences, or organizing a chapter event?
- Are your chapter members looking for something new and exciting?

Invite a group of state officers to your next chapter meeting! Find the request form under the Membership Tab of the New Jersey FCCLA website or email the state office directly to request a visit. Include topics you would like to discuss along with the date and time of your upcoming meetings, and we will pinpoint the best time to connect via Zoom!

The state officers are looking forward to visiting with your chapter!

Capitol Leadership In Review!

BY: HITHA SRINIVAS,
VICE PRESIDENT OF PARLIAMENTARY LAW



The New Jersey State Executive Council had the opportunity to travel to Washington, D.C. on October 9-11 and attend Capitol Leadership. Capitol Leadership is a unique experience where advocacy is the main focus! We experienced advocacy training, where we prepared for our legislative visits and learned how to be an advocate in our own states. We also had the opportunity to use what we learned in a unique way by advocating on Capitol Hill. This conference is designed to enhance leadership skills, allow state officers to meet with elected officials, and develop necessary advocacy skills to help them be stronger leaders on, both the state and local levels. We were allowed to meet with legislators and advocate for Family and Consumer Sciences and Career and Technical Education, promote FCCLA, and support Perkins Funding and pending legislation.

Upon arrival, the conference was started with a Capitol Leadership Kickoff hosted by the Leadership Training Team. Everyone was given tips and information on the do's and don'ts of advocacy at Capitol Hill. In the end, the officers were allowed to apply the information they learned as different scenarios were given to them through a Hill Day Role Play!

The next day, the State Officers visited their district legislators: Andy Kim, Frank Pallone, and Donald Payne. It was an honor to meet with their staffers and on behalf of our State Executive Council, we are thankful for the time that was given to us as it enabled us to have a dynamic experience. Each officer advocated and brought up a different set of concerns to be discussed with the legislators.

Topics that were discussed:

- The importance of Perkins Funding as it helps maintain and support CTE Education throughout the state.
- The importance of Family and Consumer Science Education.
- The modernization of the career clusters and the possible impact on FCS Education and FCCLA.
- How FCS is connected to STEAM.
- The lack of an opportunity to major in Family Consumer Sciences Education at local New Jersey colleges such as Montclair University, Rutgers University, Rowan University and Stovkton University.
- Promote FCCLA and the various leadership opportunities it provides its members while being exposed to CTE Education first-hand.

Along with their visit, the State Officers were given a tour of the Capitol. This tour included visits to iconic rooms like the Rotunda and Statuary Hall, providing insights into U.S. history, architecture, and the legislative process. It truly was one of the most memorable and incredible experiences!



Mark Your Calendar!

2024 State Leadership Conference

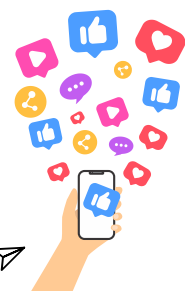
March 20-21, 2024

Check the NJ FCCLA website for more information. www.njfccla@gmail.com

Registration due February 9, 2024

Follow us on Social Media!

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Fall Leadership Connection in Review

By: Stuti Shah, Vice President of Public Relations

On November 20, 2023, over 650 New Jersey FCCLA members and advisers gathered at Pines Manor for the annual Fall Leadership Connection! The Fall Leadership Connection is a dynamic conference with activities and competitive events. The main focus of this meeting was Community Service, as our Ultimate Journey through FCCLA leads us to our Destination → Leadership! This one-day conference was jam-packed with activities, including breakfast, a fun and meaningful opening session, pull-out and workshop sessions, awards, and lunch! Let's dive into the NJ FCCLA Fall Leadership Connection!



Members, advisers, and chaperones gathered to watch an opening session led by the State Executive Council. The council discussed New Jersey's participation in the National Leadership Conference and Capitol Leadership while reminding attendees about our community service efforts, public relations, and Thanksgiving! Our service initiatives included, used shoes for Funds2Orgs, FCCLA socks for the FCCLA Ultimate Leadership Fund, Pull Tabs for the Ronald McDonald House, non-perishables for REPLENISH Food Pantry, and cupcakes for the Covenant House! This session also involved an engaging keynote speaker, Dr. Laymon Hicks. Dr. Hicks gave a talk involving an anecdote about his childhood and inspired students to never give up! His speech empowered members to take action and reach their goals.

Members and officers split up into groups for workshop sessions. Selected chapter officers attended a Presidents Workshop facilitated by Isabella Dabbenigno (State President) and Lucais Romo (VP of Membership). This session covered membership strategies and provided officers with ways to engage their members. The second pull-out session, facilitated by Malav Shah (VP of Community Service) and Emma Larsen (VP of Communication), focused on fundraising/service. Malav and Emma provided officers with community service and fundraiser ideas, including tips to make these events successful!

The workshops for members were equally as interesting. Level Up Your Leadership and Common Ground gave members new leadership skills! Level Up Your Leadership, facilitated by keynote speaker Dr. Hicks focused on leadership advice, where attendees learned from Dr. Hicks' experiences! Common Ground is a workshop about Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI); Amanda Chen (National President) and Brian Muirhead (Committee Chair) discussed fun ways to include members and promote an environment where they feel safe!

After the workshop sessions, attendees gathered for an awards and closing session. The closing session wrapped up the event and announced the success of our community service efforts. The state officers want to say THANK YOU to the Cupcake Challenge participants. Without the delicious cupcakes, we could not have donated \$1,400 to the Covenant House. We are proud to say that our Cupcake Challenge Cupcakes sold out this year and the other service initiatives were successful! Competitive Event participants raised the bar this year and earned medals in their events!

All in all, the 2023 Fall Leadership Connection was a success! There were many opportunities to learn, showcase your skills, and network with other members! I hope to see you next year at the 2024 State Leadership Conference where there will be many opportunities for learning and serving.

LEAD4CHANGE

By: Malav Shah, Vice President of Community Service

This year, the New Jersey FCCLA State Officer Team is submitting a Lead4Change application to seek recognition for our outstanding service project conducted at the 2023 Fall Leadership Connection.

The Lead4Change Student Leadership Program is a Leadership Curriculum with a Framework for Community Service. Since 2012, over 2 million students have been through the Lead4Change Program and put their leadership skills to work to better their communities. Lead4Change is a serve and leadership partner for National FCCLA. This national outreach project empowers young individuals to create positive change in their communities. It was designed to help middle and high school students develop leadership, empathy, and social responsibility, much like FCCLA!

Submitting a Lead4Change application has the potential to provide resources that will allow NJ FCCLA to continue helping service organizations that are making a difference in the community. This organization works mostly with local chapters. The state officers are submitting this application to help set the example for all of our local chapters to participate as well.

This program has partnered with FCCLA to reach a broader audience and nurture the next generation of leaders to make a positive impact. Students learn teamwork, communication, and problem-solving. FCCLA and Lead4Change collaborate to highlight the importance of empathy, diversity, and cooperation in a complex world where change is necessary. Facilitating these projects provides skills and the motivation necessary to drive change within many communities. Lead4Change has 2 opportunities to submit application. The first date to submit an application is February 2024. The last date for this school year is sometime in mid-April.

To continue serving the communities around you, NJ FCCLA urges you to take the initiative and submit a Lead4Change application with your chapter! Lead4Change is a great way to foster harmony and make a difference in your community!



Winter Safety Tips

By Brian Muirhead, Committee Chair

Winter is here. It's time to discuss staying safe and healthy during this chilly season. Let's delve into some tips for winter safety that will help you navigate the weather comfortably. From dressing to being cautious on surfaces, we've got you covered! So, let's begin and ensure you have a worry-free winter!

1. Dress in layers; Layer your clothing to keep warm. Wear a hat, gloves, and scarf to protect your extremities.

2. Stay hydrated; It's easy to forget hydration when it's chilly outside. Staying hydrated is just as important in winter as it is in summer.

3. Be careful on surfaces; Watch out for sidewalks and driveways. Walk slowly. Wear shoes with a grip to prevent slips and falls.

4. Keep your home warm; If you're using a space heater, ensure it is three feet away from flammable objects. Also, remember to check your smoke detectors!

5. Avoid frostbite. Hypothermia: Limit your time in extremely cold temperatures, and if you start shivering or feeling numbness, head indoors immediately to warm up.

6. Take care of your skin. Make sure to take care of your skin during the cold weather. It can be quite harsh. Remember to apply moisturizer to keep it hydrated. Also, pay attention to the importance of sunscreen in winter, as the sun can still impact your skin.

7. Carbon monoxide alarm safety. Be sure your CO alarms are working. Avoid using your oven or stovetop to heat your home. Check your vents outside to be sure they are clear of debris. If the CO alarm sounds leave your home immediately and call 911. Stay outside until you are told it is safe to re-enter your home.

Stay warm, take care of yourself, and enjoy all the winter activities. Remember, safety always comes first, so keep these tips in mind as you embrace the winter wonderland. Have a fantastic Winter!



French Onion Soup: A Classic Cozy Dish!

By: Malav Shah, Vice President of Community Service

A classic comforting soup recipe that is sure to beat the bitter winter cold! The combination of caramelized onions, flavorful broth, and melted cheese offers a unique flight of flavor. Both satisfying and warming, Martha Stewart is a master in this kitchen, with this soup being a prime example.

Recipe:

Yield: 6 Servings

Ingredients:

- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 3 pounds sweet onions, such as Vidalia, halved and thinly sliced (9 cups)
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 clove garlic, minced (1 teaspoon)
- 3 thyme sprigs
- 1 bay leaf
- Kosher salt and freshly ground white pepper
- ½ cup dry vermouth or dry white wine
- 2 quarts beef stock, preferably homemade
- ⅓ cup sweet Marsala, Madeira, or port wine
- 6 slices French bread or other soft country loaf (each 1 inch thick), lightly toasted
- 8 ounces Gruyère, coarsely grated (2 cups)

Directions:

Heat oil in a large, heavy pot over medium. Add onions and cook, stirring occasionally, until soft and beginning to turn golden, 35 to 40 minutes (if onions develop color quickly, reduce heat).

Add butter, garlic, thyme, bay leaf, 2 teaspoons salt, and 1/4 teaspoon pepper. Cook, stirring a few times, until golden brown, 15 to 20 minutes more. Add vermouth and boil, scraping up browned bits from bottom of pot, until mostly evaporated, 1 to 2 minutes.

Stir in stock and Marsala. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to low and gently simmer for 45 minutes. Season to taste.

Preheat broiler. Ladle soup into broiler-safe crocks or bowls set on a rimmed baking sheet. Nestle a piece of toast into each, partially submerged, and top each with 1/3 cup Gruyère. Broil until cheese is melted, bubbly, and golden brown in places, 2 to 4 minutes. (Soup without toast and cheese can be cooled and refrigerated in an airtight container for up to 3 days, or frozen for up to 6 months.)



Delicious Linzer Cookie Recipe!



By: Hitha Srinivas, Vice President of Parliamentary Law

Linzer cookies, with their tender almond-flavored base and a center filled with rich raspberry preserves, embody the essence of comfort during the winter season. As you savor each bite, the combination of the nutty dough and fruity filling brings a sense of coziness, making these cookies a perfect sweet companion for chilly winter days!

Dry-Ingredients:

- 1 1/3 cups all-purpose flour
- 3/4 cup almond flour
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- Powdered sugar, for dusting

Wet-Ingredients:

- 3/4 cup unsalted butter, softened
- Zest of 1 lemon
- 1 large egg yolks
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- Raspberry jam



Instructions:

1. To make the dough: Beat the butter, sugar, and zest (or cinnamon) until light and fluffy, scraping the bowl as needed, about 3 minutes. Add the yolk and vanilla and beat until combined.
2. Meanwhile, whisk together the flour, almond flour, and salt. Add the flour mixture to the egg mixture and mix until just combined. Don't over-beat.
3. Divide the dough in half, and pat each half into a disc. Wrap in plastic wrap, and refrigerate until firm, about 1 hour.
4. To assemble: Remove the dough from the refrigerator and let it soften for 5 to 10 minutes until it feels soft enough to roll. It should still feel cold but shouldn't feel rock-hard. On a floured surface, roll one disc of dough out about 1/8"-thick. Using a 2 1/2" round cookie cutter, cut out cookies. Transfer rounds to a parchment-lined baking sheet. Gather the scrap dough, roll, and repeat. If the dough becomes sticky and hard to work with, refrigerate it for about 20 minutes or until firm.
5. Place the cut cookies (you should have 15 cookies) in the refrigerator for 30 minutes and preheat the oven to 350°F.
6. While the first half of the cookies are chilling, cut 15 rounds from the remaining dough. Once you've transferred these cookies to a baking sheet, use your smallest cookie cutter or the end of a round piping tip to make a peekaboo cutout in the center of each. Place cookies in the refrigerator for 30 minutes to chill.
7. To bake: Bake the cookies for 12 to 15 minutes or until the edges are just brown. Let them cool for 5 minutes on the pan, then transfer to a rack to cool completely.
8. To fill the Linzer cookies: Place the cookies with the holes in them on a cookie sheet and sift confectioners' sugar over the top. Turn the remaining cookies flat side up and spoon 1/2 teaspoon of jam or lemon curd into the center, spreading it slightly. Top with the sugar-dusted cookies.

*Storage information: Store filled Linzer cookies, well wrapped, at room temperature (when filled with jam) or in the refrigerator (if filled with curd) for several days; freeze for longer storage.