

FCSTN Newsletter

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Spring/Summer 2011

President's Message

by Ronita Jacobsen



Thank you for allowing me to serve as your FCSTN President this past year. It has been one of the greatest learning experiences of my life! The opportunity to work with other professionals to promote Career and Technical Education and more specifically, Family and Consumer Sciences Education has been a rewarding experience. The personal and professional growth gained throughout this year would not have been possible without the support of all FCSTN members!!

We are currently in an exciting time within career and technical education, especially within Family and Consumer Sciences. In the Human Services and Education Cluster, Programs of Study and Pathways are being designed and curriculum is being written in order to provide our students with the 21st Century Skills needed to become career-ready. Collaboration among all education levels and discipline areas has been an integral part of the writing and design process. The creation of partnerships among education and business/industry will allow for its ultimate success. Change is inevitable as we progress. I believe, as FCS teachers, we have the skills needed to cope with change and are able to see the value it holds.

While attending workshops, conferences, and

meetings this past year, I continued to reflect on the book *REWORK* by Jason Fried and David Heinemeier Hansson and have found several of the passages and quotes to be very thought provoking and can be related to the changes occurring within FCS and CTE in general. The statement "focus on what won't change" continues to come to mind as I think about the design process and curriculum writing. The authors stated how "the core should be built on what won't change" and "to invest in things people need today and ten years from now". Also, the statement "no time is no excuse" made me stop and reflect upon my own attitude and on the decisions I make every day. According to *REWORK*, there is

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- School Vegetable Gardens
- Spend less time cooking.....
- Pink Out

President's Message cont'd

no such thing as a "perfect time"; if you constantly worry about timing things perfectly, things will never happen. We all have ideas and that is all they will be unless we "start". Until you actually start something, your brilliant idea is just that, an idea. An idea needs to be put into action. And, you don't have to incorporate all of your ideas into one product. Sacrifice some ideas, cut some of your ambitions in half, and have great results. Worry less about details and planning everything out ahead of time; perspectives change once the work actually begins. *REWORK* is an easy read but will challenge your perspective and, if you allow it, create an opportunity for some great self-reflection.

"FCS... The Key to Unlocking Your Dreams" has been my Program of Work theme. The last statement in my Program of Work Rational reads "Through FCS education we empower students with the essential keys necessary for unlocking their dreams within an ever changing world." Remember this as you work with your students each day and share with them how FCS has given you the keys for unlocking your own dreams. Continue to challenge yourself by evaluating how you market your FCS program, create programs and pathways of study to meet the needs of your students, write rigorous curriculum, and collaborate with other disciplines to create new lessons and units of study. Be willing to step out of your comfort zone. Try something new. Take advantage of a new learning or leadership opportunity. Demonstrate to your students how the "keys" you give them can be used each day.

Through this year of change and adjustment it was exciting to see individuals and committees come together and take on additional responsibilities. I would like to thank all FCSTN members who served on the FCSTN board and chaired committees this past year. The amount of brainstorming, problem solving, and discussion that occurred at our meetings on various topics will no doubt lead to bigger and better things for not only FCSTN members, but for all FCS teachers across the state. I strongly encourage each of you to consider volunteering to serve on one of the FCSTN committees and to even consider holding an office. As in the words of *REWORK*... "there is never a perfect time". The leadership opportunities that lie ahead will be an experience you will never forget!

ACTE Region V Report

by Denise McNeel

The Region V Conference was held in Rapid City, SD, with the theme of "Leadership as a Matter of Choice". Representing the great state of Nebraska were Denise McNeel from Grand Island Northwest (Health Science) and Wanda Samson from Metro Community College (Business Education).

As always, there were many good speakers and breakout sessions. Kevin Honeycutt, the opening speaker, talked about stepping outside the box and giving students many different choices/options to show or demonstrate they have mastered the learning. A business panel representing five South Dakota businesses (some with ties outside SD), answered questions regarding their expectations of their employees. Malcom Chapman discussed five pillars and six character traits. Chapman recommends reading one professional book a week; one he suggests is *Brain Rules* by John Medina. The closing speaker, Pat Bortnem spoke with humor. One of her favorite

Battle Creek for the Cure **Pink Out**

by Angie Mann



The Battle Creek FCCLA Chapter hosted the first ever Battle Creek for the Cure Pink Out on October 7th and 8th 2010 at Battle Creek High School. Thursday night featured a Pink Out Volleyball game with rivals, Norfolk Catholic Lady Knights, and Friday night was a football game with the Madison

Dragons. Activities over the two days included a Pink Raffle featuring pink baskets and a variety of pink birthday cakes made by the Family and Consumer Sciences Foods and Nutrition classes. Members of almost every school organization sold everything pink from beads, wristbands and t-shirts, to popcorn, balloons and jewelry. The two day event also included survivor recognition both nights, including a sur-



vivor lap around the track Friday night at the football game. The lap was lead by Nebraska Senator Mike Flood, FCCLA members and local cancer survivors. It was a great even that raised over \$1,200 for the American Cancer Society and \$1,000 for a Battle Creek family affected by cancer.

ACTE Region V Report cont'd

statements is, "You must be present to win."

The Friday evening dinner and Silent and Live Auctions were enjoyable and successfully raised \$3,233. One half goes to CTE Legislative Support; the other half goes to the Fellows Program which encourages and supports younger individuals to become involved.

During the awards, Pat Olson was recognized for being in the top four in Outstanding Teacher in Community Service and Janet Butler was in the top five for Teacher of the Year. AC-TEN's newsletter, *The Communique*, received an outstanding publication award.

This was a very good conference with opportunities to network with colleagues and make new friends. Next year's Region V will be held in Jackson Hole, Wyoming April 11-14, 2012, at the Snow King Resort. Salt Lake City will be the host in 2013. If you have an opportunity to attend, it will be worth your time.



Denise McNeel (above) & Wanda Samson (below) presenting at the Region V Conference in Rapid City.



Teens search for ways to . . . *Spend less time cooking and more time to eat and have fun!*

By Jan Smaus – FCS Instructor at BMS



The FCS student learning communities (SLC) focused on ways to save time while preparing food in the kitchen. First they did a little research by interviewing friends and adult family members. Cooking web sites and classroom procedures were viewed to get a few more ideas. They also examined their home kitchens to see what large and small equipment their family members used most often. Many ideas were shared, but a few of the top ideas included: having more people help, preparing ahead of time, get organized before starting your recipe, clean as you prepare and making large amounts and freeze for later use. The top equipment savers included the microwave, Crockpot, toaster, blender and food chopper.



To try some of these time saving tips, students prepared a fruit salad and microwave apple crisp.



As part of the learning, students took a short field trip to the BMS cafeteria kitchens to find out how preparation time is saved when cooking for more than 400 people. Large equipment, large quantities of food stored and much organization by a few workers were the main factors for the fast preparation and service.



Microwave Apple Crisp

Ingredients:

2 apples – peeled, cored, and thinly sliced
 1/3 cup all-purpose flour
 1/3 c quick cooking oats
 1/4 teaspoon salt
 1/4 tsp cinnamon
 3 Tablespoons sugar
 3 Tablespoons melted butter

Directions:

1. Place sliced apples into a microwave safe dish.
2. Melt butter in microwave, using a liquid measuring cup or custard cup.
3. Combine all other dry ingredients in a separate bowl.
4. Stir melted butter into dry ingredients. Mix until crumbly.
5. Sprinkle over top of apples.
6. Microwave 10-12 minutes or until apples are tender.

Scottsbluff High School Creates a School Vegetable Garden

by Suzanne Meyers

Scottsbluff High School Family and Consumer Science Students have been involved in developing a school garden. During the spring of 2010 students in foods classes planted peppers and tomatoes that were grown by the school's horticulture class. The produce was harvested and used or preserved for labs in the foods and ProStart classes. This was successful so this spring the environmental science instructor, Heather Haberman, with family and consumer science instructor, Suzanne Myers applied for and received a \$500 grant from the North Platte Natural Resource District Outdoor Classroom Program that has en-



abled them to convert another small school courtyard into a vegetable garden for their foods classes.

Fall foods and ProStart classes will harvest and preserve produce. Some of the vegetables will be used to teach basic food preparation and knife skills and others will become ingredients in student selected recipes. Plans are to use pumpkin for pies for a Thanksgiving community meal, tomatoes and peppers for chili and other soups for a local soup kitchen and several vegetables as featured ingredients for "Iron Chef" type cook-offs in the ProStart labs. (ProStart is a two year



program developed by the National Restaurant Association to prepare high school students seeking careers in the hospitality or culinary fields.)

The vegetables in the garden will be grown with organic practices in order to educate the students about sustainable farming practices. Community members have volunteered to help with the garden over the summer and to help educate students about the value of growing healthy foods to use for their families. Plans are to eventually include a compost container for garden refuse as well as food scraps from labs. It has been an exciting and will hopefully be a rewarding project.



Cup Cake Wars

by Mary McKenny, Student Teacher-Blair High

Two Foods II classes took part in this project. We invited three guest judges consisting of other teachers and faculty to come during the last 30 minutes of our Block scheduled classes.

Prior to the "war" they were given half a block to plan for their labs - what cupcake they wanted and how they wanted to decorate them. We had a couple of shortened blocks due to a pep rally so those days were spent just baking the cupcakes. We froze them and the following class the students decorated all of their cup cakes and picked the top three for judging.

They had to explain to the judges what they made and why, what techniques they used while baking and decorating, and what challenges they had during the process. The judges were given a rubric to judge the groups and the winning group was given five extra points.

We had a blast and they learned a lot about baking, decorating, and presenting a product.



Food Deserts and the Cost of Living across the World

by Roni Dorsey

Students in Palmer, Ravenna, and Red Cloud gathered to take part in a world-wide video conference. The main topic was the evolution of "food deserts" across the US as well as in other nations across the world.

A "food desert" is defined as a food environment unsupportive of health; defined by barriers which restrict access to healthy foods. Barriers may include access to food retailers, availability of nutritious foods, and affordability of foods. Research has defined food deserts quantitatively or by neighborhood characteristics such as economic and social barriers.

DelValle, TX and other urban areas are now suffering from these food deserts. DelValle explained that within their 176 square mile school district, there is not one single grocery store. In rural Nebraska, that may seem normal, but the difference is there are approximately 350,000 people living in that school district.

This is a fairly new phenomenon - beginning in the

1990's - but quickly becoming one of the nation's greatest concerns. Michelle Obama has been making numerous presentations about this very subject and is gravely concerned. The majority of the concern is that individuals in today's society are being urged to eat healthy meals, but the availability of healthy, fresh and unprocessed foods

is dwindling in our nation's largest cities.

The question was then asked whether or not canning is taught in FCS classrooms.

Due to desperate situations some urban areas are being forced into - between the food deserts, increasing price of gasoline, and decreasing overall health of the population - a possible solution of canning and preserving our own foods was brought up by individuals in southern Ohio. Ironically enough, students in North Carolina and Pennsylvania did not know what we meant by the word canning. Needless to say, the majority of students in Nebraska were more than capable of describing what happens in the canning process.

The question was then asked whether or not canning is taught in FCS classrooms and sadly enough, I had to admit that in the 10 years of teaching FCS, I had never taught how to can or otherwise preserve food. I have talked about it in class, but never took the time to teach it. If food deserts are becoming a reality, I have to wonder if it is just as important now as it was 20 years ago to teach the art of preserving healthy, unprocessed foods for our consumption.

In addition to talking about food deserts, we also discussed and compared the cost of living in other parts of the world. This year we had a much greater and diverse population with feedback about the costs of living. We received information from all over the world including Taiwan, Iran, South Africa, Moscow, Pennsylvania, Ohio, North Carolina, Guatemala, Korea, and Texas. The main comparisons we discussed were the prices of foods, gas, housing, and fast food.

The food prices varied slightly for the most part when you take into consideration inflation and average

Food Deserts and the Cost of Living across the World

cont'd

household income comparisons. The greatest difference was in the cost of milk. In the United States, we consume a lot more milk and the average price per gallon is about \$3.25 while individuals in Taiwan do not drink very much milk and their prices are near \$10 US per gallon. The average price of gasoline across the US were all very

comparable at approximately \$3.20 per gallon while Taiwan pays nearly \$6 US per gallon. Taiwan's cost of housing was also the highest of all the comparisons with the average 2 bedroom 1 bath house coming in near \$300,000 US. In contrast though, Taiwan's average rent for a small house/apartment is \$100-\$300 US versus the quote of \$1200-1400 for a small house/

apartment in DelValle TX (a suburb of Austin). One other interesting comparison was the cost of a "meal deal" at any local fast food restaurant. While the average US price was closer to \$7 per meal, those in Taiwan shell out about \$4 per meal for fast food (their portions are also smaller than the US).

State Department Report

by Carol Ringenberg

When this "Year in Review" report hit's the press, I will have been in this position not quite a year. It's been an interesting, eventful and challenging year. We are seeing programs closed down, and full time positions downsized. Yet, on the flip side - programs are being re-opened with additional teachers being hired to fill the student demand.

The challenge that we as professional educators have is, education as a whole too often falls into the "what's worked", as a result of workload and time constraints. That's a good practice *as long as it continues to work*. Unfortunately, often times it's rec-

ognized too late when the "what we've always done" isn't working as it had in the past. This is an uncomfortable place to be in, and often times with it comes a "strong resistance to change" phenomena. Now is the time to be keenly observant, quick to evaluate and nimble enough and willing to take action. We are not immune to change and all that goes with it, known and unknown.

I have asked all of you five hard questions over this past year, your answers have been used as the building blocks for the foundation of hard work that needs to be done at the state and local levels. To quote Rich Katt "This is not the time to retreat,

circle the wagons or surrender - it's time for action!" We are the spokespeople for our programs - and as a professional body of CTE educators, we are at a tipping point, both locally and nationally. As my broken record continues to play "We have been handed an opportunity. It's in our hands how we use it." We have exciting work ahead of us.

Thank you for all the hard work you do in your schools and communities. Over this past year I have been humbled by the outstanding work that has been done in the past and continues to be done with limited time, resources, and the commitment to your own families at home.

Marketing Poster Completed and Available Online

by Ronita Jacobsen

The creation of a marketing tool to promote Career and Technical Education in schools and communities began at the 2010 Nexus Leadership Meeting held during the 2010 NCE Conference. The goal was to create a marketing tool which would unite all CTE disciplines while promoting individual disciplines. With suggestions from various discipline leaders throughout the year, the poster design was modified slightly from its initial viewing in order to create the desired united image.

Posters were created for each discipline which could be used for marketing purposes within individual schools or as a discipline organization. To access the posters, go to the ACTEN website and look for "Promoting CTE" under the About Us tab or click on this link <http://actenebraska.org/>

[page id=1225](#) and follow the directions online. The design can be saved to your computer and used to promote programs within your school and community. Suggested uses are to

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add the visual to e-mail signatures, web pages, mailings, and posters/signs in the classroom and community. Designs may be sent to a printing company to make promotional items of your choice. The design could be used on anything from a t-shirt, mug, water bottle, note pads, pens, etc. Items could be used as a gift/thank you to administrators, staff, guest speakers, etc. throughout the year. Any need for design altering or additional design creations can be directed to Anthony Thompson of Thompson Design Studios from the link on the "Promoting CTE"

page or by contacting me at rjacobse@esu8.org as I have the disk with the original designs in a greater resolution than allowed to be saved on the webpage. I have additional designs in which to select from.

As more disciplines within one school use the posters, more of an impact can be made to demonstrate how disciplines are united to form Career and Technical Education. With this united front, CTE will demonstrate to students and communities the broad spectrum of Career and Technical Education and the impact as a whole it has on preparing



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Prove Your Value and Build Your Program

by Kathleen Kennedy

It's hard to understand how much K-12 education has changed in the past 20 years. Curriculum standards weren't introduced until 1991, and even then they were voluntary national guidelines; today they dictate much of what is taught in our schools. In addition, while many states had their own accountability systems in place prior to the passage of No Child Left Behind, there was no national mandate for assessment and public reporting until the law's passage in 2002. These two developments have dramatically reshaped public education.

In today's environment of budget cuts, teacher shortages and closing programs, we need to be able to show student impact and attract CTE support through evaluation of programs. Too many programs fail to evaluate, assuming that their hard work is having a positive impact. If you prove that you can take limited resources and produce real and measurable outcomes, especially in a time of limited resources and increased demands, you will certainly earn the credibility you deserve.

To begin this process, you need to step back and lay out the big picture: specifically, define your intervention and the out-

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comes you intend to produce. The use of a *logic model* lays out the logic behind your intervention: what resources you invest, what activities you undertake, and what outcomes - short, medium, and long-term - you produce as a result.

The Logic Model

1. Inputs

What you invest in your program: Money, volunteer hours, donated equipment, expertise or other support.

2. Activities

What actions are involved in your program: pairing students with mentors, engaging children in after-school STEM projects.

3. Outputs

What actually happened: ten teachers were trained on STEM activities; 25 students participated in...

4. Outcomes

The impact of your work: teachers have increased coverage of STEM content; increase in graduation rate...

While inputs and activities

are self-explanatory, note that there is a difference between *outputs* and *outcomes*. Outputs refer to concrete things that happened as part of your program: a certain number of students went to a career fair, or all CTE teachers at your school spent two weeks on-site at a local company. Outcomes, in contrast, speaks to the meaning and impact of those outputs: students became more interested in careers in certain fields or industries, or became more aware of school and certain careers; teachers participating in a summer internship better understood the link between the classroom and the workplace, and were better able to infuse real-world content into their classrooms.

There are a number of ways to look at the work you are doing. "Hard" data like test scores can make up part of your evaluation, they do not represent the best data you can find. A few options to consider:

Pre/Post Surveys One of the simplest, and most common approaches, involves giving the same assessment prior to, and after, your intervention. This allows you to track changes over time, whether those changes involve knowledge, interest, perceptions or something else.

Prove Your Value and Build Your Program cont'd

Observations Evaluators and program leaders alike can observe program participants and report their progress, particularly in areas such as interpersonal relations or development of certain skills.

Interviews You can always interview the participants at the end of your program to find out what they thought, what they

learned, and how it affected their lives. These sorts of anecdotal reports can be particularly powerful in telling the story of your program.

Subject Activity Another important metric: changes in behavior, such as taking a more challenging course of study, college-going rates, and participating in CSTO competitions.

The important thing is, you start tracking and measuring the impact of your work, using the best information and methods available to you. Proving the impact of your intervention will pay great dividends in sustaining and growing your program over time, and giving you a voice as a partnership leader in the future of your district.

FCSTN Legislative Chair Report

by Sheree Moser

Workshop participants gathered in the Capitol Cafeteria to share a continental breakfast, pick up folders and learn of the day's events. Workshop participants were from Chambers, Kearney High School, Plainview, St. Edward, Wahoo, Wakefield and West Point High Schools. Deb Wolken, a representative from NBEA also attended.

The group traveled to the Warner Chamber where Senator Tony Fulton shared his feelings about serving within government so he can have an influence on changing things to improve the quality of life for all citizens of Nebraska. Senator Fulton sits on the Appropriations Committee and his priority bill this year was to establish a commission on industrial relations.

This commission settles disputes by comparing the wages of the same career making more money and better benefits. He also sponsored a bill to revise the drunk driving laws in Nebraska.

Senator Kate Sullivan served as the workshop sponsor and keynote for the morning session. She represents District 41 which includes 8 counties in central Nebraska. Senator Sullivan's concerns for this coming Legislative term include the budget shortfall, the structure of the revenue going towards education in Nebraska and she will work hard to keep the funding for the Student Leadership Center at the Department of Education. The Student Leadership Center supports the FCCLA State Director at the Nebraska Department of Education.

Senator Sullivan also enjoys being involved in shaping public policy. "The salvation of the state is the watchful eye of its citizens" is the motivation Senator Sullivan draws upon while working at the Legislature. With 800 Bills being introduced this year and only one fourth of them with the chance of being passed, the job is daunting. She uses these concepts as motivation when making decisions as a Legislator....she believes citizens need to seize the opportunity, seek and take advantage of leadership and make good decisions that are from your heart and your head.

Challenges Senator Sullivan sees for today's people include Family and Consumer Sciences as a core. Childhood obesity, credit card debt, family discord, and anger management are just a few she mentioned. She is working on a bill to restructure

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FCSTN Legislative Chair Report cont'd

the districts within the state as required every 10 years within Nebraska. Another issue she is working on includes a bill to hold the pipeline company legally liable for any leaks or damage as they begin construction above the Ogallala Aquifer. She enjoys staying in touch with the people close to her home and makes an effort to get around to each county during the session and her time off during the summer and fall.

After the speakers in the Warner Chamber, the participants took a tour of the Capitol before heading to the Legislative Chamber. Bills being debated included LR37 on Child Welfare Reform, LB 264 requirements for acquiring properties that the state

would have to pay to upkeep, LB 326 which would eliminate committees on intergovernmental cooperation, and LB 12 which would eliminate "without parole" provisions relating to life imprisonment.

For lunch the workshop participants met up with the FCCLA state officer team and advisory board at the Governor's Mansion. Senators attending included Greg Adams, Lydia Brasch, Tom Carlson, Charlie Janssen, Tyson Larson, Chris Langemeier, LeRoy Loudon, Dave Pankonin, Paul Schumacher, Kate Sullivan and John Wightman. The students participating within the workshop split up to sit near the Senators and FCCLA state officers to talk with them about their career paths, the

importance of students being involved in the legislative process and student organization work within their schools and our state. The FCCLA President addressed the group.

After lunch the workshop participants participated in a tour of the mansion, then moved back to the Capitol to sit in on hearings within the capitol. Participants were given a questionnaire to evaluate the workshop and to write a personal thank-you to Senator Sullivan and their home Senator and/or representative who may have stopped by for the luncheon.