



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Nebraska FCCLA Members Dare to Dream at National Leadership Conference**

Nebraska members proudly represented their schools, communities, and state association at the highly anticipated FCCLA National Leadership Conference (NLC) held at the Orange County Convention Center July 5-9, 2025 in Orlando, Florida. This annual event brought together more than 10,500 passionate Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) student members, advisers, and guests, including 385 attendees from Nebraska.

The conference offered FCCLA members an incredible experience filled with inspiring speakers, hands-on youth workshops, national competitions, and valuable networking with fellow student leaders. With the theme "Dare to Dream," this year's event encouraged members to envision bold possibilities for their futures through Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) education. By exploring careers, building real-world skills, and engaging in advocacy and service, FCCLA empowers members to pursue their dreams and create meaningful change in their families, schools, and communities.

Jaiden Ertzner, a senior at Battle Creek Jr/Sr High School, and Lia Montenegro, a senior at West Point-Beemer High School, represented Nebraska as two of the 26 National Officer Candidates vying for a position on the 2025-26 National Executive Council. After taking an FCCLA knowledge test, participating in interviews and delivering a speech, and having their resume and application evaluated by the nominating committee, Jaiden and Lia were both slated in the top 20 candidates selected to move on in the election process. Following the voting delegate networking session and speeches, unfortunately neither were in the top ten candidates selected to serve as a national officer next year. Jaiden and Lia will continue to serve Nebraska FCCLA as Leadership Liaisons in the upcoming year. Bri O'Brien serves as the Battle Creek FCCLA chapter adviser, and Brianna Wolfe serves as the West Point-Beemer High School chapter adviser.

Harrison Koehn, a 2025 graduate from Elmwood-Murdock Public Schools, was one of the recipients of the national FCCLA Go for the Red Individual Award. This recognition is awarded to individuals who have successfully recruited three or more new members to FCCLA, demonstrating outstanding dedication and leadership. Additionally, Harrison was one of three winners selected to receive a \$150 Amazon gift card for his recruitment efforts. Lisa Hynes is the Elmwood-Murdock FCCLA chapter adviser.

Dawson Conyers, a 2025 graduate from Minden High School, was selected as the Grand Prize winner of the FCCLA Safe Roads Challenge. Over the last year, FCCLA members across the nation participated in the FCCLA Safe Roads Challenge, a national initiative promoting safer driving and responsible road practices in their communities. The competition helped members enhance their driving skills while contributing to their state's overall driving score, with states competing for the top spot. The Grand Prize was an all-expense-paid trip to the 2025 National Leadership Conference in Orlando, where Dawson was recognized for his participation in the challenge and commitment to safe driving. The Minden FCCLA chapter adviser is Pam Johnson.

Blake Dahlberg, Superintendent at Thedford Public Schools, was honored with the 2024-25 FCCLA National School Administrator Award during the Adviser Recognition General Session on Tuesday, July 8. Dahlberg's dedication to Career and Technical Education (CTE) and FCCLA has empowered students to pursue leadership, competitions, and service projects, while also supporting FCCLA chapter adviser Ms. Mikaela Franzen in growing a locally involved and nationally engaged chapter. From championing student initiatives to personally ensuring students could participate in FCCLA along with other school athletics and activities, his commitment to student success is evident. Dahlberg's leadership has strengthened FCCLA's presence in Thedford and across Nebraska, making a lasting impact on students, educators, and the broader community.

Battle Creek FCCLA was the Stand Up National Program Runner Up for their Pink Out event. The FCCLA Stand Up national peer education program guides members to develop, plan, carry out, and evaluate advocacy activities to improve the quality of life in their communities. The Pink Out event raised over \$2,500 to support the HOPE Fund at Faith Regional in Norfolk, providing financial assistance to local cancer patients. FCCLA members engaged the community by partnering with businesses, a local radio station, and schools, while hosting raffles, bake sales, and selling event t-shirts and pink accessories. The event reached 3,500 people through social media and local media promotions, generating significant community support and awareness for the financial challenges faced by cancer patients. Members applied leadership, communication, and financial literacy skills gained from FCS courses, demonstrating FCCLA's mission in action. As the national Runner Up, Battle Creek FCCLA will receive a \$500 cash award.

Sarah Hubel, FCS teacher and FCCLA chapter adviser at Cross County Community Schools, received the 2025 Spirit of Advising Award. This is an honor bestowed on only one FCCLA Chapter Adviser from each state. This award is based upon the ability to recognize chapter advisers who are constantly faithful and often quietly working behind the scenes to ensure the success of their students.

Adviser Academy is a professional development opportunity available in three courses: Explore: Future Adviser Academy (pre-service teachers), Engage: New Chapter Adviser Academy (1-3 years of experience), Excel: Adviser Academy 2.0 (4-5 years of experience), and Elite: Master Adviser Academy (6+ years of experience). Each academy included quarterly virtual meetings hosted by national FCCLA throughout the past year, featuring timely topics, networking opportunities, and mentoring sessions. Nebraska chapter advisers who successfully completed the Adviser Academy this year include:

- Harleigh Claussen, Wayne State College, Explore: Future Adviser Academy
- Alexis Cherry, University of Nebraska Lincoln, Explore: Future Adviser Academy
- Emma Krysl, Lexington, Engage: New Chapter Adviser Academy
- Jaki Moeller, Logan View, Engage: New Chapter Adviser Academy

The National Say Yes to FCS Signing Event was held during the Member Recognition General Session on Monday, July 7. This event recognized more than 30 graduating high school seniors from across the country who have committed to a future career as a Family & Consumer Sciences (FCS) professional. Shayla Jacobsen, a 2025 graduate of Plainview Public Schools, participated in the signing event, with her FCS teacher and FCCLA chapter adviser, Ronita Jacobsen, as she committed to studying Early Childhood Education and Elementary Education at Northeast Community College this fall.

A key highlight of the conference was students competing in a variety of Competitive Events, including Online Challenge Tests, Skill Demonstration Events, the FCCLA/LifeSmarts Knowledge Bowl, and STAR (Students Taking Action with Recognition) Events. This year, 256 Nebraska student members competed in Online Challenge Tests, Skill Demonstration Events, and STAR Events, with 176 entries across all events.

FCCLA Challenge Tests, presented by G-W Publisher, are 50-question tests aligned with the National Standards for Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) and provided members with the opportunity to demonstrate the skills they have acquired through their FCS courses and involvement in FCCLA. There were nine student members from Nebraska who took 12 Online Challenge Tests.

Skill Demonstration Events provide opportunities for FCCLA members to demonstrate college- and career-readiness skills in FCS related areas, including but not limited to, Culinary Arts, Education & Training, and Visual Arts & Design. Skill Demonstration Events allow members to demonstrate skills and showcase knowledge learned in their FCS courses and through their involvement in FCCLA. Nebraska had 24 members compete in six different events this year. The top three

finalists from Nebraska in these events are:

### **Second Place**

- Ivy Korus, Lindsay Academy – #TeachFCS, Level 3
- Karly Korth, Lindsay Academy – Interviewing Skills, Level 2
- Briley Dohmen, Lindsay Academy – Lesson Plan Development and Modifications, Level 2
- Clara Preister, Twin River – Interviewing Skills, Level 3

### **Third Place**

- MaHaylee Dotson-Monroe, Cross County – Culinary Food Art, Level 3

STAR Event competitors were recognized for their proficiency and achievement in chapter and individual projects, leadership skills, and career preparation. The collaboration between youth and adults in managing the events and evaluating participants allowed students to develop real-world skills and gain valuable insights. With more than 35 events to choose from, participants have the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge, skills, and abilities by actively addressing important issues concerning families, careers, or communities. By researching the topic and implementing projects to advocate for positive change, students acquire valuable skills and industry insights needed to thrive in the 21st century.

Of the 5,500 competitors, Nebraska had 235 participants who came home with 114 Gold medals, 104 Silver medals, and 17 Bronze medals. There were 61 top ten award-winning entries and those winners include:

### **First Place**

- Lynn Miner, O'Neill – Career Investigation, Level 1, Gold
- Hadley Grutsch, Nora Lange, & Jocelyn Reyes, Hartington-Newcastle – Chapter in Review Portfolio, Level 1, Gold
- Jozy York, O'Neill – Digital Stories for Change, Level 1, Silver
- Quinn Ross, Elmwood-Murdock – FCCLA Chapter Website, Level 1, Gold
- Gracen Eckert, Boyd County – Job Interview, Level 2, Gold
- Charlotte Welsh, O'Neill – National Programs in Action, Level 2, Gold
- Lily Heikes, Brooke Kalin, & Lauren Uldrich, Hartington-Newcastle – Promote and Publicize FCCLA, Level 1, Gold
- Kaygan Witthuhn, Angel Johnson, & Chenney Dishman, Callaway – Repurpose and Redesign, Level 3, Gold
- Kiarra Kennedy, O'Neill – Teach or Train, Level 1, Gold
- Katelyn Uldrich, Hartington-Newcastle – Teach or Train, Level 2, Gold

### **Second Place**

- Lausyn Matthes & Layla Borowiak, Twin River – Chapter Service Project Display, Level 1, Gold
- Zuri Booth & Brylee Ramaekers, Twin River – Chapter Service Project Portfolio, Level 1, Gold
- Addilyn Doke, Ainsworth – Fashion Construction, Level 1, Gold
- Jailyn Romesser, O'Neill – Focus on Children, Level 1, Gold
- Aracely Negrete & Lillie Shoemaker, Ord – Focus on Children, Level 3, Gold
- Klayton Rinne, Dundy County Stratton – Teaching Strategies, Level 3, Gold

### **Third Place**

- Brittin Fink & Madisyn White, Medicine Valley – Chapter in Review Display, Level 1, Gold
- Claire Holoubek & Chloe Indra, Clarkson – Chapter in Review Display, Level 2, Gold
- Mary Licking & Emerson Pettit, Thedford – Food Innovations, Level 1, Gold
- Vayda Lippert & Ziva Stratman, Hartington-Newcastle – Interpersonal Communications, Level 2, Gold
- Vayda Lippert & Ziva Stratman, Hartington-Newcastle – Interpersonal Communications, Level 2, Gold
- Brooklyn Eckert, Boyd County – Promote and Publicize FCCLA, Level 3, Gold

### **Fourth Place**

- Brittany Borchers, Battle Creek – Chapter in Review Portfolio, Level 3, Gold
- Magdalyn Hansen & Grace Hoffman, Chambers – Event Management, Level 1, Gold
- Makenah Steffen, Crofton – Instructional Video Design, Level 1, Bronze
- Sarah Wiese, Summerland – Nutrition and Wellness, Level 3, Gold
- Kinley Proskocil & Daisy Shafer, Ord – Professional Presentation, Level 1, Gold
- Emma Bowder, O'Neill – Say Yes to FCS Education, Level 1, Silver
- Trevor Timmerman, Chambers – Sustainability Challenge, Level 1, Silver

#### **Fifth Place**

- Talon Kurtz, O'Neill – Fashion Construction, Level 1, Gold
- Addison Birmeier, Boyd County – Interpersonal Communications, Level 3, Gold
- Natalie Lytle, Ord – Say Yes to FCS Education, Level 2, Gold

#### **Sixth Place**

- Maci Walz & Audrabel Werth, Mullen – Food Innovations, Level 1, Gold
- Trevor Hoffman & Elizabeth Hoffman, Leigh – Professional Presentation, Level 3, Gold

#### **Seventh Place**

- Adelyn Ten Kley, Logan View – Career Investigation, Level 3, Gold
- Stanley Allen, Neil Olson, & Hannah Scribner, David City – Chapter in Review Display, Level 3, Silver
- Molly Connelly, Layney Matthes, & Myah Rinkol, Twin River – Chapter in Review Portfolio, Level 2, Gold
- Paige Walahoski, Overton – Event Management, Level 2, Gold
- Brye Burnham, Bozley Conrad, & Brady Spencer, Burwell – Interpersonal Communications, Level 1, Silver
- Owen Wynia & Nolan Samuelson, Wayne – National Programs in Action, Level 1, Silver
- Payton Becker, Bethany Preister, Elissa Reynoldson, Madison Reilly, Melany Preister, Miranda McGill, & Myah Rankin, Boone Central – Parliamentary Procedure, Level 3, Silver
- Claire Reiman, Boyd County – Teach or Train, Level 3, Gold

#### **Eighth Place**

- Julia Stewart, Cross County – Chapter Service Project Display, Level 2, Gold
- Polly Belmer & Emily Larsen, O'Neill – Chapter Service Project Portfolio, Level 2, Gold
- Juliana Cline & Paige Wendt, Boyd County – FCCLA Chapter Website, Level 1, Gold
- Allison Huesers, Hartington-Newcastle – Job Interview, Level 2, Gold
- Nora Bertrand, Humphrey – Repurpose and Redesign, Level 3, Gold
- McKenzie Bruning & Maddie Steffen, Hartington-Newcastle – Sports Nutrition, Level 3, Gold
- Alivia Rajae, Battle Creek – Teach or Train, Level 1, Gold

#### **Ninth Place**

- Emily Odle, North Platte – Fashion Design, Level 2, Gold
- Brynnlei Rogers-McCoy, Chambers – FCCLA Chapter Website, Level 1, Gold
- Tasha Anderson & Kayla Wilken, Milford – Interpersonal Communications, Level 3, Silver
- Sherridan Kirby, Battle Creek – Leadership, Level 2, Gold
- Makenna Devine, Alexis Pedro, Breklyn Landauer, Brynna Hagemann, Eloise Martinez, Lily Thieman, & Shaelynn Stokes, Boone Central – Parliamentary Procedure, Level 2, Silver
- Alaina Rogat, Battle Creek – Promote and Publicize FCCLA, Level 2, Gold
- Taelyn Baumert, Clarkson – Repurpose and Redesign, Level 1, Gold

#### **Tenth Place**

- Abby Ehlers, Chambers – Career Investigation, Level 2, Gold

- Peyton Olberding, West Holt – Entrepreneurship, Level 2, Gold
- Carmin Gramke, Minden – Fashion Construction, Level 3, Gold
- Shayla Jacobsen, Plainview – Job Interview, Level 3, Gold
- Josie Urban, Twin River – National Programs in Action, Level 1, Silver

## **About FCCLA**

Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) is a dynamic and effective student-led nation-based organization supporting youth on their journey to become the leaders of tomorrow and helping them address important personal, family, work, and societal issues through Family and Consumer Sciences education. FCCLA has over 255,000 members in more than 5,400 chapters across the nation, with over 2,500 members in 100 chapters in Nebraska.

FCCLA: The Ultimate Leadership Experience is unique among youth organizations because its programs are planned and run by members. It is the only intracurricular Career & Technical Student Organization (CTSO) with a central focus on careers that support families. Participation in national FCCLA programs and chapter activities aid members in becoming strong leaders in their families, careers, and communities.

Nebraska FCCLA is supported through the Nebraska Center for Student Leadership and Extended Learning at the Nebraska Department of Education.

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