Contact:

Gerri Ann Eide

SD FFA Foundation Exec. Dir.

605-765-4865 or gerri@sdffafoundation.org

**“ADVISOR TRIBUTE” SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS CHOSEN**

**STUDENTS RECEIVE SCHOLARSHIPS FOR FFA SUMMER LEADERSHIP RETREATS**

BATH (May 30, 2023) - Agriculture education teachers/FFA advisors make a world of difference for the students they teach. This spring **students put into words**, as part of an FFA Advisor Tribute Scholarship application, **how their ag teachers/FFA advisors have impacted their lives.** Twenty-eight outstanding examples of amazing teachers impacting their students have been chosen out the applicants, and winning students will each receive scholarships to attend a SD FFA Leadership Retreat this summer.

**GDM Solutions**

Brooklynn Krantz, Dells; Faith Genzlinger, Howard; Kenna Schilling, Lennox Sundstrom; Macy Patch, Madison Central; Megan Wiese, Milbank; Nevaeh Podhradsky, Parker; Hilary Polreis, Parkston; Lacie Weber, Rutland; Wendi Silverthorn, Viborg Hurley; and Rhyanna Rudebusch, Wilmont.

**Leonard DeBoer Memorial**

Aubree Miller, Gregory County and Norah Zubke, Webster/Waubay

**Sioux Vallley Energy**

Mikalyn Kelly, Brookings; Connor May, Brookings; and Kate Klein, Madison Cenral.

**Walt Johnson Memorial**

Rachel Lee, Balle Fourche; Taya Kirstine, Belle Fourche; Wyatt Lesmeister, Belle Fourche; Jordan Van De Stroet, Canton; Riley Johnson, Doland; Elizabeth Von Eye, Kimball; Sage Voegele, Parker; Ellie Storm, Sturgis; Claire Campbell, Viborg Hurley; LaMiya Baker, Viborg Hurley; and Micah Pelzel, Wilmot.

**West River Electric Association**

Sebastian Garcia, Rapid City Stevens and Brenna Whitford, Sturgis

The students wrote essays about how their FFA advisors have made an impact on their lives. **Each of these students thinks their advisor is one of the best and is happy to say so**! Here are a few examples of what they shared:

* **Brooklynn Krantz, Dells** sophomore comments, “Mr. Wolff is always there to cheer me and my chapter on. I asked others in school how they would describe Mr. Wolff, and heard, ‘he is an awesome teacher’, ‘he is knowledgeable’, ‘he always has good advice’, and ‘Mr. Wolff is all around an amazing teacher and will forever be someone that has changed my life.’”
* **Faith Genzlinger, Howard** senior comments, “Mrs. Weber has motivated me to be confident in myself in front of a judge and when no one is watching. She leads by example and shows us that being assertive and taking control of a room is not the same as “being bossy”. She brings a positive energy to practices that makes up for how early we had to get there. She has always been and always will be, one of the most positive, inspiring forces pushing me to succeed.”
* **Kenna Schilling, Lennox Sundstrom** sophomore comments, “Mrs. Trocke takes pride in teaching us, and interacting with us in class. She has pushed me out of my comfort zone many times and makes me feel better about myself in what I do, and what I believe in.”
* **Rachel Lee, Belle Fourche** junior comments, “Mr. Bishop has had a positive influence by teaching me and others about the true knowledge of leadership. As a FFA advisor he has guided me and pushed me out of my comfort zones to become a better person and leader.”
* **Norah Zubke, Webster/Waubay** junior comments, “Mr. Fred Zenk has made a tremendous impact on my agricultural career and continues to do so with myself and others. Zenk has spent hours upon hours working closely with students, enticing agricultural practices, and inspiring everyone to apply themselves to agriculture and FFA.”

Scholarships are made possible through the SD FFA Foundation by the West River Electric Association, GDM Solutions, Sioux Valley Energy, and the Walt Johnson Memorial Fund; in memory of two past FFA advisors: Leonard DeBoer and Walt Johnson. Both men led by example and their advice was truly ripened with wisdom. Mr. DeBoer spent his life teaching young people about agriculture and the leadership skills that would make them successful in their career choice. He was the FFA advisor in Chamberlain for almost 40 years where he lived FFA's mission by making a difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for *premier leadership*, *personal growth* and *career success* through agricultural education. Mr. Johnson served as the SD FFA Foundation President, as well as on the SD FFA Foundation board, in Newell as an ag teacher, community supporter and coach for FFA career development events. He was devoted to agriculture education and earned his Honorary American FFA Degree in 2007.

For more information about the South Dakota FFA Foundation and South Dakota's FFA programs, visit [www.sdffafoundation.org](http://www.sdffafoundation.org/).

Here’s what the rest of the recipients shared about their advisors:

* **Wyatt Lesmeister, Belle Fourche** junior comments, “Without Mr. Bishop, some of us wouldn't even be taking agricultural classes, and for those of us who would have, we would not have gotten the same experience as we get through him. With his help, we've been able to do more than just basic farming and ranching lessons, we've been able to see the broader aspect of the agricultural industry.” **Taya Kirstine. Belle Fourche** junior comments, “Mr. Bishop cares about each and every one of our members and we see that on a daily basis. From asking how your day was to pushing us outside of our box on many different tasks, Mr. Bishop encourages us to be our best self each day.”
* **Mikalyn Kelly, Brookings** junior comments, “Mr. Johnson saw the potential in me the second I walked in his classroom door, and he pushed me to compete in Creed Speaking. It took some convincing, but because I had so much support from him I became involved.” **Connor May, Brookings** junior comments, “He makes an effort to make a personal connection with all of his members and opens up his classroom for whoever wants to meet or people who just want to have a conversation.”
* **Jordan Van De Stroet, Canton senior**, shares about both her advisors, **“**Ms. Carter and Mr. Swanson see my potential, have high expectations and push me to reach my goals. I plan to pursue an Agricultural Education degree and they are preparing me to be successful. Mr. Swanson helped in Agriculture Metal Fabrication and let me continue to do it on my own time to further my technique. Ms. Carter is letting me be her teacher's assistant in one class, to get real teaching experience. They cheer me on and encourage me in whatever I do in FFA and help any way they can, so I achieve what I set my mind on. Both have pushed me to be the best person and leader I can be in FFA and life.”
* **Riley Johnson, Doland,** “Mrs. Coats leads by example. She encourages her FFA officers to be the best they can be and pushes them to step outside of their comfort zone. She offers guidance and leadership skills that not all students are exposed to in other parts of their lives. She believes in FFA members when they do not believe in themselves.”
* **Aubree Miller, Gregory County** sophomore comments, “Ms. Mollie Andrews has inspired me to shoot for the stars. She has influenced me to try hard at absolutely everything. I like that she pushes and encourages me because if she didn't, I don't think I would have gone to state FFA twice as a freshman.”
* **Elizabeth Von Eye, Kimball** freshman comments, “Mrs. Walsh has inspired me to go into ag education and become an FFA advisor because she has done so many great things for this chapter and helps whenever she is needed.”
* **Macy Patch, Madison Central** junior comments, “I very much appreciate Mr. Bigge for giving me, along with others, the little push that we needed to find out that FFA is actually super fun.” **Kate Klein, Madison Central** senior adds, “Mr. Bigge has pushed me to do better and work harder for my goals that I have set for FFA. As president, he encouraged me to plan and lead many parts of our chapter and help the underclass members with transitioning into new events.”
* **Megan Wiese, Milbank** sophomore comments, “She shows us how to stand up for ourselves, make an impact on agriculture and our local communities. During LDEs this past fall, Ms. Colombe showed us what it means to be a leader. She showed us the different parts of FFA and opened up a whole new side of myself I never knew about.”
* **Nevaeh Podhradsky, Parker** junior comments, “Mrs. Dunkelberger believes in us when we don't believe in ourselves. She's the happy person everyone can use in their lives to keep their spirits up. With her, there is never a dull moment and I know that FFA will be the most fun and rewarding thing I do in high school, as well as the most fun I will have.” **Sage Voegele, Parker** sophomore adds, “Mrs. Dunkelberger literally means the world to me. I left my old school just so I could have her as an advisor. To me, 4-H and FFA is my “sport”, and just like athletes that join travel teams for the best coaches, I was willing to put on a few extra miles for school to have the best FFA experience.”
* **Hilary Polreis, Parkston** sophomore comments, “Miss Morgan Ackerman has taught me a lot of different things about FFA and agriculture. She encouraged me to get out of my comfort zone and try new FFA activities. She has taught me different skills which are not only used for FFA but for other activities that I'm involved in.”
* **Lacie Weber, Rutland** sophomore comments, “My FFA advisor, Mr. Elsinger, has encouraged me to step out of my comfort zone and try new challenges like Land judging and LDEs and CDEs that I might not have tried. He encouraged me to experience National Convention and bring back what I learned to the chapter.”
* **Sebastian Garcia, Rapid City Stevens** senior comments, “Mrs. Genetie Hendrix is a big reason why I’m here in the first place, making me feel bigger than I am, and she has helped me through rough times of stress. Thanks to her, I was able to be a better assistant drum major, a better musician, a better student, and a better friend to those around me.”
* **Ellie Storm, Sturgis** sophomore comments, “Ms. Meghan Jensen always pushes me to get out of my comfort zone and choose events I wouldn’t usually do. She helped me get better in everything I do, because there is always room for improvement. Not only with school and FFA, but she has helped me with my volleyball career! She comes to games and supports me, and helps me work up the courage to ask people for fundraising! **Brenna Whitford, Sturgis** senior also comments, “Meagan Jensen has helped me develop the skills and knowledge I need to succeed in life. Through her guidance and support, our chapter members have built confidence, developed leadership skills, and learned the importance of teamwork and collaboration. One of the most significant ways my FFA advisor has influenced me is by helping me discover my passions and interests.”
* **Wendi Silverthorn, Viborg-Hurley** junior comments, “Mr. Knutson is always there when we need someone to rely on. He stays after school and helps us with our CDE’s and LDE’s to make us better. He loves to spend time with us kids and loves to see how much we grow in the years we have been in FFA.” **Claire Campbell, Viborg-Hurley** 8th grader comments, “Mr. Knutson respects FFA as an organization and wants to reward you if you really are committed to it.” **LaMiya Baker, Viborg-Hurley** junior also comments, “Mr. Knutson is an amazing motivator. He has inspired many members, of all ages, to try something new within FFA. He is influential, always there whenever someone needs help or life advice. He pushes me to do my very best, not just within the FFA. I would not have all of the accomplishments I do without him.”
* **Rhyanna Rudebusch, Wilmot** junior comments, “After each failure or set back, Mrs. Schacherer helped me get better. I tried so many things that I would have never done without her. I may not be good at everything, but I tried them because of my ag teacher. She has been a big inspiration.” **Micah Pelzel, Wilmot** alsocomments. “Mrs. Schacherer is the reason I am in FFA. It was her 6th grade intro to agriculture where she asked who lived on a farm and then we talked about FFA. She would eventually ask who wanted to join FFA. I didn't know right away so I went home and thought about it. The next day I said that I would and helped with FFA week.”