

Greenwood FFA Celebrates Anniversary

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MILLERSTOWN (Perry Co.)

— There's a common thread that runs through everyone's testimonial. After being closed for 18 years, the Greenwood School District reopened the FFA chapter 10 years ago.

When talking to various community members, school officials, and students, they all say the same thing — the FFA chapter is a vital part of the school and offers a unique learning experience for 20 percent of the school's population.

Ten years ago, through the efforts of school board members and a community that values agriculture, the school district reopened the chapter. Of course, there were previous years of cam-

aigning to reorganize everyone's thinking and energies.

When it did open, it "started on a shoestring," said Glenn Cauffman, the first part-time instructor.

Over the past 10 years the program has grown in leaps and bounds.

"It's a great organization - I learned a variety in my first year. Last year I was really shy, but being in public speaking contests brought that out. I also learned a lot of leadership skills," said Heather Benner.

Heather is a freshman at Greenwood and the 1991 Star Greenhand. During the past year she attended the National Convention in Kansas City, the State Leadership Conference, speaking contests, including competition at

Penn State. She also showed market hogs, market lambs, and breeding sheep through FFA.

In addition to her FFA activities, Heather is the President of Perry County 4-H Livestock Club and newsreporter for 4-H County Council. At school she is involved in student council and plays basketball and softball. Her goals are to possibly become an agriculture teacher and learn more about the family farm. "I'm starting to understand the 'why' of what I've been doing all these years," she said.

Amy Byers' senior year will be spent being president of the local FFA chapter as well as Area President, covering Perry, Cumberland and Dauphin counties.

FFA has given Amy the opportunity to learn leadership skills. "Her first year all she could do in front of a crowd is giggle - now she's providing the leadership and giving speeches!" said advisor MeeCee.

Over the past few years, Amy has attended the National Convention, state mid-winter convention, and FFA week at Penn State. Her other activities include State Legislative Conference, speaking contests, parliamentary procedure team and prepared public speaking. She has advanced to area competition in speaking and dairy foods. Amy is also part of the livestock judging team and exhibiting animals at the county fair and Farm Show.

Amy is active in the community as well. She is vice president of the Perry County 4-H Livestock Club, president of the church



Alumni return to help celebrate the 10 years of reinstating FFA at Greenwood. Pictured, left to right, Alton Brookhart, Marvin Pontlus, Harold Brookhart, Glenn Benner, John Byers, Roy Byers, Glenn Cauffman, and John Allen Hall. John Allen Hall was the first state officer.



Heather Benner, left, MeeCee Baker, and Amy Byers share the excitement of celebrating 10 years of FFA at Greenwood School.

youth group and a member of SADD (Students Against Drunk Drivers) as well as student council.

Involvement in FFA has "given me more self-confidence and helped me be more accepting of others," she said.

MeeCee Baker is a hard-working individual who sincerely cares about the students, and as agri-science teacher, has done much for FFA at Greenwood.

Baker is just ending her 4th year at Greenwood. Prior to teaching at Greenwood, she taught in New Jersey, in Susquehanna School District (Perry Co.), and the governors school, plus many other professional growth experiences. At present she is pursuing her Ph.D. in Ag. Education at Penn State. Her research is on "Career Paths

and Gender Differences in Ag Educators."

When coming to Greenwood, the FFA program was still going through many growing pains. "I have to give the district a lot of credit. They made the commitment to support the program and had a very visionary approach to agriculture."

One of her first tasks was to build the program. "We revamped the curriculum to change it to be agri-science oriented, then recruited like crazy! We now have 20 percent of the student population in FFA which is in line with the percentage of employment in agriculture in Pa."

Undoubtedly one of the biggest contributing factors to the growth of the program was Baker's idea

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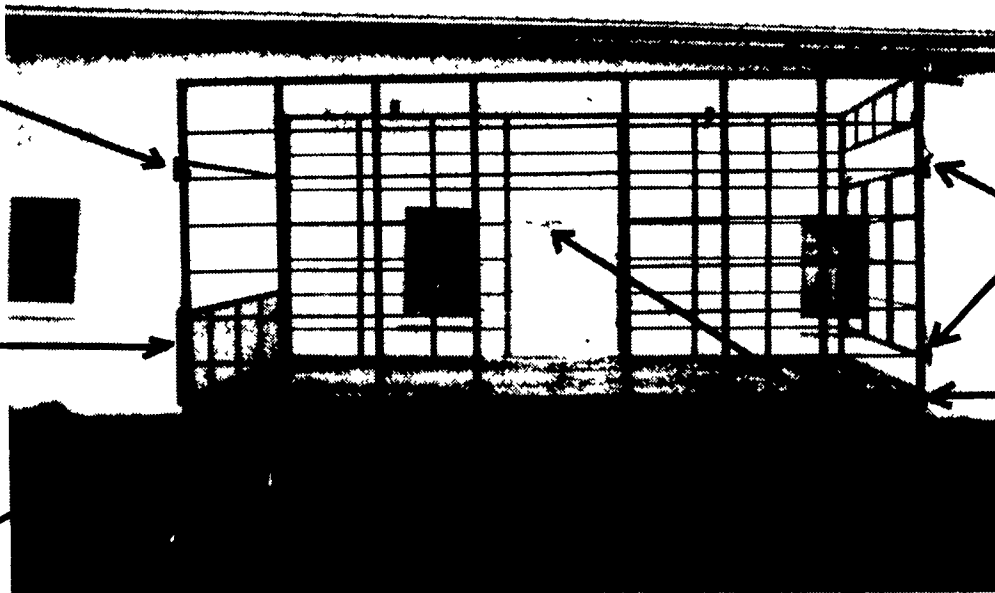
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