

Where Are They NOW?

LIFE AFTER FFA

PLANT & LANDSCAPE INDUSTRY

This month's article features those who are in a career involving the plant & landscaping industry, utilizing the skills gained through the FFA.

"Where Are They Now?" highlights former New Jersey FFA members who once wore the blue jacket and are now in successful careers. Through the interpersonal skills and support it provides, the FFA leads its members toward successful careers.

Annaliese...

- Joined the Northern Burlington FFA Chapter in 2004
- Served as a State FFA Officer from 2008-2009
- Graduated from Delaware Valley University
- Currently works for GROWMARK FS, providing sales of seed, plant nutrients, lime, crop protection materials, precision Ag and more.
- Is involved with her local fire department and the Central Jersey Tractor Pullers Association



ANNALIESE GANCARZ

How did Ag Education and FFA help prepare you for your career?

"FFA and ag education helped me get to where I am today. Before joining the FFA and enrolling in an Ag class, I was very quiet and shy. Going to leadership conferences and becoming a chapter officer helped me break out of my shell and be more outgoing. Working in sales, you have to step out of your comfort zone and I wouldn't be able to do that without the experiences I had in FFA."

How would you define a "good" or "successful" life?

"One word: happiness. Life is hectic and stressful but at the end of the day all that matters is your own happiness."

"Step out of your comfort zone and get involved, whether it be doing a CDE or running for chapter office. You won't regret it! The FFA is more than Agricultural Education, you grow as a person and a leader."



What is your favorite FFA memory?

"It is hard to pick just one. I have to say being a state officer is one of my favorite memories. Traveling the state and meeting students and working with them was the most rewarding experience I have had. It was a busy and sometimes stressful year but looking back almost 8 years later I am beyond thankful for the year I served."



WESLEY BOUCHELLE



How did Ag Ed and the FFA prepare you for your career?

"Ag Education has helped me in many ways to become prepared for my career. I learned a lot about mechanics, welding, and other life skills that I use on a daily basis. FFA has prepared me to be a better public speaker, planner, and have better time management, which are skills I use every day."

"A successful life is finding a career that makes you happy, and one you enjoy doing."

What are your favorite memories in the FFA?

"My favorite FFA memory was attending the National FFA Convention in Indianapolis, IN."

What advice would you give FFA members?

"Try different CDEs that make you step out of your comfort zone, because you never know what different areas of agriculture might strike your interest."



Wesley...

- Joined the Northern Burlington FFA Chapter in 2008
- Served as a Chapter Officer for multiple years
- Graduated from Delaware Valley University
- Currently works on his family's vegetable and cut flower farm, planting, harvesting and selling their crops
- In September, Wesley will become an Agriculture Teacher and FFA Advisor at Northern Burlington

BERNARD "BJ" KELLY



How did Ag Ed and the FFA prepare you for your career?

"I utilize horticulture and landscape knowledge I gained through education. More importantly it's the strong communication skill set that has established me in a leadership role in my company."

"Life is all about balance. Most important is a life full of joy and love for those around you. Choose a career you enjoy but balance that with one that allows you the time and financial freedom. Most importantly, never stop growing and learning."

What advice would you give FFA members?

"Learn to fail. When you focus on nothing but being successful and only take advantage of opportunities you know you'll succeed at you miss the opportunities to learn and grow as an individual. You do not have to be perfect or the best at everything you do. No one has ever been truly great at anything without falling down along the way."

What are your favorite memories in the FFA?

"Introducing myself in front of the National FFA Convention as the National Officer Candidate. Standing in front of an audience that large, if only for a few seconds, was fantastic."

Bernard...

- Joined the Phillipsburg FFA Chapter in 1992
- Served as a State FFA Officer from 1996-1998
- Graduated from Delaware Valley University
- Currently serves as a Branch Manager at BrightView Landscape Services, leading a team of 80+ individuals in the execution of services over a portfolio of clients including companies such as Bayer, CNBC, and Kraft Foods

Debbie...

- Joined the Passaic County Tech FFA Chapter in 1983
- Served as the Chapter FFA President in 1983
- Currently works for Walt Disney World in Disney's Horticulture. Debbie works on the Epcot Flower and Garden Festival, and the Professional Internship Program. She has a team of over 500 Cast Members including arborists, irrigation specialists, pest management techs, and gardeners



DEBBIE MOLA MICKLER

How did Ag Education and FFA help prepare you for your career?

"I attribute all of my success to the PCT Ag Ed program. I was a shy, awkward young adult trying to find a place to fit in and PCT provided that for me. Horticulture was one of the classes I chose and it was a perfect fit right from the start. I learned so many horticulture techniques that I still use today."

"Agricultural Education and the FFA are so important, and were a big part of my successes today. Joining the program may help you find what you would like to study."

How have you stayed involved in agriculture after graduation?

"After graduation I landed a job with Artistic Landscaping, and then later moved to Rohsler's Allendale Nursery where I worked in the garden center and in greenhouse production. Without my training from the FFA, I would not have been hired."

What is your favorite FFA memory?

"Taking the horticulture class; Mr. Bania and Mr. Wilkerson were incredible mentors. I learned so many horticulture techniques, and my class all became members of the FFA in my senior year and I was voted in to be president."

Everyone has a story to tell. We want to hear yours!

How has the FFA made a difference in your life?

Share Your Story with us at

<https://form.jotform.com/NJFFA/WhereAreTheyNow>

and be featured in a special issue!

