

Where Are They Now?

LIFE AFTER FFA

AGRIBUSINESS & RELATED CAREERS

This month's article features those who are in agricultural related careers, 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.

Hanna...

- Joined the Cape May Tech FFA Chapter in 2004
- Served as a State FFA Officer from 2008-2010
- Graduated from Stockton University
- Serves as a Natural Sciences/Marine Biology teacher and FFA Advisor at Cape May Tech
- Is a certified boater's safety instructor, allowing her students to obtain their boating certificate through her instruction



HANNA TOFT

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

"FFA played a huge role by giving me the confidence to speak in front of others and by teaching me valuable knowledge needed to be an FFA advisor and good teacher. Being a state officer taught me time management, organization, leadership, teamwork and social skills that I use every day."

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

"Having the right balance of work and play. To do the hobbies you want to do, it is essential to work so you can afford to do them. A life rich of culture, traveling, and new experiences is a great way to live, and if you can achieve all or some of that through your work, even better! Being helpful and nice to others whenever you can is also a good way to live by, because in the end, it will make you happy with yourself."

"The more you put into FFA, the more you get out of it! FFA offers some amazing opportunities, but they will not find you, you need to get out, be involved and do as much as you can!"

What is your favorite FFA memory?

"My favorite memory was probably getting the opportunity to attend National Convention with my chapter. My sister and I won the Agriscience Fair together and it was a great experience to compete on the National level with her. Nationals is ALWAYS an amazing time!"



DAVID BOND

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

"The FFA taught me communication skills. My Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) program was the beginning of the business I currently own."



"FFA members, get involved! Work hard and have fun!"

How would you define a "successful" life?

"If you love what you do, you will never work a day in your life!"

What are your favorite memories in the FFA?

"All of the good times we had as a chapter. We had fun no matter what we were doing."

David...

- Joined the Hunterdon Central FFA Chapter in 1988
- Served as chapter president, received the Star State Agribusiness award and American FFA Degree
- Attended Delaware Valley University
- Owns Dave's Equipment Sales, buying and selling farm equipment
- Currently serves as the South Hunterdon FFA Alumni President, and his daughter Myranda is the current State FFA President.

Zachary...

- Joined the Cumberland Regional FFA Chapter in 2002
- Attended Delaware Valley University
- Received the American FFA Degree, as well as the DVU Founder's Award, National Ag Spokesman/Communication Award, and more
- Currently serves as the State Fair Coordinator for the Pennsylvania Dept. of Agriculture, working with ag and community fairs, FFA and 4-H Programs
- Serves as the Membership Chair on the Farm Show Scholarship Foundation, and is a Fellow of the Rural Urban Leadership Education Program



ZACHARY GIHORSKI

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

"FFA and Ag Education gave me the skills I needed to be successful in a growing field. It taught me the value of networking, as well as the importance of being a voice for our farmers and agricultural community members."

What is your best FFA memory?

"State Convention. I really think it is a special experience surrounded by so many other intelligent, talented, motivated and inspired individuals that just simply being there gives you rocket fuel!"

"I am a product of the NJ FFA Family. I can attribute all of my successes to lessons I learned in the blue jacket. I was encouraged to seek out great mentors and that's what I found in Mrs. Trivette, Mrs. Noble, Mr. Griffith, Mrs. Carroll, Dr. McLean, Ms. Butch, Mr. Ritter, Mr. & Mrs. Roszel, Ms. Sopchak, Mr. Petey, Mr. Christian, and of course Mr. Rudderow, and so many other people who took the time to believe in me. I am forever grateful for that."

What advice would you give to FFA members?

"Be Bold! Never forget where you come from, but always remember where you're headed! The moment you put on the jacket, you've taken the first step in achieving your dreams. Put yourself out there and make friends. I still have so many great friends that I made while in FFA from chapters all around the state."



MARGIE FINERAN HURLEY



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

"In high school, my employer was Fischer Flowers. One of my assignments was to sell and service conventions, taking orders for plants and flowers, speaking with the management of the Convention Hall, interacting with exhibitors from all over the US and abroad. At a young age, it gave me the direction and ultimately led me to the amazing job I currently have."

"Keep open to opportunities. FFA membership and Agricultural Education have amazing avenues to advance your career, gain knowledge and make a difference in your community. The FFA has provided me with many opportunities; I am truly appreciative of my advisors, friends and employers along the way."

What is your favorite FFA memory?

"Meeting members, learning about the vast agricultural spectrum in New Jersey, learning the power of public speaking and how one persons' impact can change the discussion."

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

"Remaining positive and having the support of your family. Finding balance in doing what you love as a career, or having a hobby that you find joy in, and sharing that with others."

Margie...

- Joined the Oakcrest FFA Chapter in 1974
- Served as a State FFA Officer from 1977-1979
- Attended Atlantic Community College
- Received the American FFA Degree in 1980
- Currently serves as the Convention Services Manager and operational support to the Sales Team of Meet AC in selling and securing meetings, trade shows, and conventions in Atlantic City
- Helped host the "Hurley in the Morning" golf open and charity, raising over \$600,000 for Atlantic County and area charities



tell us
**YOUR
STORY**

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!