



# Community Connection

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## Two Westfall FFA members win national recognition

Two Westfall FFA chapter members were lauded for their years of hard work recently at the National FFA Convention & Expo in Louisville, Ky.

The FFA chapter is a satellite program of Pickaway-Ross Career & Technology Center.

Austin Wippel, a junior at Ohio State University and a member of FFA since 2009, received the American Star Farmer award, one of the most prestigious awards the National FFA presents to a student.

Austin has been running a straw business since he was a teen, starting with 5,000 small square bales of hay.

Today he raises 65 acres of corn, soybeans, wheat and alfalfa hay in rotation. Between the hay and straw, he handles an average of 23,500 small square bales of hay and straw per year.

Austin said winning the American Star Farmer award is a big honor.

"It was extremely exciting," he said upon hearing his name called at the national convention.

Winning the award is a culmination of sorts for Austin's FFA career. But his agricultural pursuits will continue. He will graduate from Ohio State in 2017 with a degree in agronomy and return to work on the family farm in Orient.

He encourages other FFA members to put in the effort that's required for success.

"Don't be afraid to make the most of the opportunities that come your way," Austin said.

Maggie Hovermale, a senior in Pickaway-Ross' Veterinary Science Technologies program, did just that and was recognized as the national winner in the Agricultural Processing Proficiency Area.



Maggie Hovermale and Austin Wippel, middle, received high honors from the National FFA. Shown with them are their advisors, Rachel Scior, left, and Rick Metzger, right.

tural Processing Proficiency Area.

Maggie has worked at Honeyrun Farms in Williamsport and is involved in the processing, bottling, labeling and distribution of products.

During the 2014 summer, Honeyrun had her work at the North Market in Columbus and she cited the sales and customer experience as a great accomplishment in her award application, highlighting that she increased Honeyrun's sales by 7 percent.

Maggie said winning the award is very rewarding and renewed her goal to interview for a state FFA officer position.

"My mom (Joy) has always told me since I was little that I could do anything if I put my mind to it and then put the hard work into it," Maggie said.

## Students' needs come first for Croyle

At a July meeting of Circleville's Rotary club, Christine Croyle stepped up as song leader. As club members sang *Singing in the Rain*, Christine accompanied them in sign language.

The administrator at Brooks-Yates School, Christine has always thought of those with special needs and has spent her career – and her free time – working with children with disabilities.

A speech pathologist at the Ohio State School for the Blind in Columbus, she has traveled to Honduras since 2003 to help repair schools and realized that children with disabilities were not included in the classroom.

Disabilities

were misunderstood and, to an extent, even feared.

This recognition helped guide Christine to co-founding the Center for Inclusive Education through Schools for Children of the World in 2007 and, in 2011, pursue a doctorate, studying Educational Leadership at Ashland University.

"I went back to school with a specific focus: to lead a program in Honduras," she said. "But I had to figure out how to be a leader."

Christine's background and her work toward her doctorate helped her decide to apply for the administrator position at Brooks-Yates in 2013.

"I love a challenge and this is certainly a challenge," she said. "But more than that it's about making sure the kids get what they need."

Meeting students' needs is one trait that appealed to ESC Superintendent Ty Ankrom, who played a role in interviewing her.

"Evidence of her work ethic, passion for serving children, awareness of what it takes for each child to receive what they need and a desire to create an environment where students and staff are provided opportunities for continued growth was apparent through the interview process," Ty said.

Her recognition of the perceptions of children with disabilities in Honduras became her dissertation topic and resonated among special education professionals.

An advisor on her dissertation committee asked her to present her findings at the biennial conference of the International Association of Special Education, held in June in Wroclaw, Poland.

Speaking to colleagues from around the world was a great moment for Christine, who said she likes being a part of a group who has an impact on education for students with disabilities.

"I love to encourage people. Knowing how to help people move to the next level makes me tick."



Christine Croyle, left, speaks with an attendee at the International Association of Special Education biennial conference.

## SUPERINTENDENT'S CORNER: Teamwork's lessons last a lifetime

As a high school student, I played baseball and basketball. At the time, these were opportunities for fun and some healthy competition.

But as an adult, I look back and am indebted to these group activities for what I learned.

Being a member of a team taught me that practice doesn't always lead to perfection but it does make you better. More important, practicing can prepare you for situations you face during competition.

Happily, I can look back on my baseball seasons with pride as my team was very successful, winning our league championship my senior year and several summer league championships. This taught me to be a good winner and to be appreciative of those wins.

Conversely, my basketball team



Ty Ankrom

was not that good and so I learned to be a good loser.

This also was important, teaching me to never quit. With my teammates, we evaluated what we were

doing wrong (almost everything) and worked together to get better.

Having a common goal is a crucial factor in teamwork, be it on a basketball court or in a classroom.

By working together, we beat Waverly High School in our final regular season game of the year during my senior year. Waverly had only lost three games before our game and was in the OHSAA state

championship Final Four that year.

Defeating a team as successful as Waverly was then was a feather in our team's cap and one that we can look back on proudly.

Being on a team also requires a sense of discipline. You either develop it or you hone it. Either way, that is a skill that will always be useful.

An unusual benefit of being on a team is that I made a number of lifelong friends from the schools that we competed against.

I hope young people competing today recognize that the color of a school's uniform doesn't negate the possibility that opposing players can be friends.

Ty Ankrom is superintendent of the Pickaway County Educational Service Center. He can be reached at ty.ankrom@pickawayesc.org.

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