

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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National FFA Organization President Visits North Harford High School and North Harford Elementary School During National Agriculture Week

On March 12, National FFA Organization President Luke O’Leary, from California, visited North Harford High School and North Harford Elementary School. Mr. O’Leary was in Washington, D.C. promoting National Agriculture Week, celebrated March 10-16 this year, when he took the time to visit with the North Harford schools.

During his visit to North Harford High School, Mr. O’Leary met with the members of the North Harford FFA chapter and traveled with them to North Harford Elementary, a scheduled stop on their Ag Literacy Project tour.

North Harford FFA was recently selected by the National FFA as the recipient of the Greatest Advocate Challenge for their Ag Literacy Project. The Ag Literacy Project, in its second annual year, is a program designed to engage elementary school students, specifically second graders, in agricultural education through interactive books. The North Harford FFA partners with the Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation to select a book and develop a lesson plan that helps promote the significance of agricultural in the everyday lives of students.

“I am humbled to be a part of this program and proud of my students for recognizing the importance of agriculture and educating youth. They are not only serving as leaders, but positive role models that the second graders can look up to,” said Erika Edwards, North Harford FFA advisor.

The North Harford FFA members travel to interested elementary schools to read the book to second graders and provide follow up activities that emphasize the importance of the story. In addition, a copy of the book is donated to the school’s library.

“Informing children about agriculture through Ag Literacy is important considering that they are the next generation of agriculturists and stewards of the land,” said Emily Boling, North Harford FFA president. “They will be the ones who feed the world, and their knowledge of where food comes from and how it grows is only a stepping stone to growing an educated generation!”

This year, the book selected was *Right This Very Second*, a short story that details the life of farmers who are at work every minute of the day to provide food and the importance of the agricultural community.

North Harford FFA members will visit 12 elementary schools with their message this year, reaching more than 1,000 second graders. As a recipient of the Greatest Advocate Challenge, the National FFA awarded the North Harford FFA \$300 to cover the cost of transportation to the elementary schools and the cost of purchasing the copies of *Right This Very Second* that will be donated to the elementary school libraries.

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“The most rewarding part of participating in Ag Literacy is that you can see when one of the kids is intrigued, and I love being able to spark that interest in kids who haven’t necessarily been exposed to agriculture,” said Shanyn Wolfe, North Harford FFA historian.

About the North Harford FFA

The North Harford FFA, established with the opening of North Harford High School and chartered in 1951, currently has 100 members. The organization’s other outreach programs include Food For America, an event where second graders tour the North Harford High campus farm and participate in activity stations; and Ag Heritage Day, also known as Tractor Day, for North Harford High students to participate in learning stations on campus. The North Harford FFA members also participate in the Harford County Farm Fair at the "Barnyard" and show livestock as a part of the organization’s show team.

About the National FFA Organization

With more than 669,000 FFA members in 8,630 chapters in all 50 states, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, the National FFA Organization has a strong presence as the largest student-led organization in the nation. National FFA staff is focused on engaging students, supporting advisors, and telling the FFA story by growing leaders, building communities, and strengthening agriculture.

The National FFA Board of Directors and the National FFA Officer Team work together on matters of policy, long-range strategy, and fiscal oversight of the organization. National FFA staff implements their recommendations.

FFA looks to its mission as it develops programs and creates opportunities for FFA members.

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