

Where Are They NOW?

LIFE AFTER FFA



WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE

This month's article features women who are in agriculture 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.



LIZ (JOST) THOMPSON

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

"Ag Education gave me a basic knowledge and understanding of the industry I would eventually work in. FFA gave me the leadership skills, self-confidence, and network to be successful."

"If you are happy with who you are, treat others with respect and kindness, and leave the world a better place than how you found it, then you've succeeded."

What advice would you give to FFA members?

"FFA members, try a lot of different things, even if you're scared – especially if you're scared. Every time I tried something that scared me – public speaking, running for office, etc. – I ended up a stronger person because of it."

What were your favorite moments in FFA?

"Attending my first National Convention was amazing for me. Walking into the auditorium filled with all those blue jackets made me realize I was a part of something so much bigger than I'd realized before. Other than that – it's all about the people. From my first chapter meeting to my last conference as part of the National FFA Staff, I met and worked with some really great people, many of whom I keep in touch with to this day."

Liz...

- Joined the Warren Hills FFA Chapter in 1985
- Served as a State FFA Officer from 1989-1991
- Attended Ohio State University
- Received her American Degree in 1991
- Currently serves as the Director of Policy Development and Communications for the New Jersey Farm Bureau



Sandra...

- Joined the Allentown FFA Chapter in 1982
- Attended the University of Idaho and received her PhD
- Currently works for FMC as a Group Leader for the Herbicide & Production Service Teams and Global Lead for an active ingredient project



SANDRA (BYRNE) SHINN

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

"Throughout my career and when I run a meeting, I often refer back to the skills that I learned in FFA. The leadership, teamwork, and public speaking skills that were obtained from being an officer for three years as well as competing in state and national events are priceless."

What are your favorite FFA memories?

"The friendships that were made. 30+ years later, I am still close and keep in touch with a few people, as well as get together a few times a year."

How would you define a "successful" life?

"Success is about waking up every morning and wanting to get to the office to start your day. It's based on a passionate feeling of accomplishment within yourself and your career."



"Take advantage of opportunities to develop new skills and friendships because they can last a lifetime throughout your career. Always be willing to be mentored and mentor others in return."



SHARON (DUCKWORTH) KINSEY

How would you define a “successful” life?

“I feel that if you are proud of who you are and content with the work that you are doing then you have met your own definition of success. Life is all about choices. Choose to pursue what you are passionate about and surround yourself with positive people who support you.”

“FFA members, put in the effort and work hard. Become known for meeting your responsibilities and delivering quality work. Believe in yourself! I would not have set and attained my goals without the support, guidance and care and concern of teachers, the state FFA advisor, and other adult mentors.”

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

“The collective experiences I had as a seven-year FFA member set the stage for my career in communications/journalism and education. I realized my passion for writing while serving as a state officer. Every meeting, every event, every speech I wrote and delivered brought me one step closer to gaining necessary workplace skills, such as communication, problem solving, team work and leadership. Though I have changed jobs several times over my career, my skills have always been transferable.”

What is your favorite memory in the FFA?

“My best memories are wrapped in the time I served as a state officer. Serving on two state officer teams, meeting ag education students at chapter visits, helping lead FFA conferences and state convention, and traveling around the state to promote Ag Ed and the FFA was one of the best times of my life and ones I will always be thankful.”

Sharon...

- Joined the Belvidere FFA Chapter in 1985
- Served as a State FFA Officer from 1990-1992
- Attended Rutgers University, Cook College for her B.A. and later attended Seton Hall University for her M.A.
- Received her American Degree in 1991
- Currently serves as a 4-H Agent and Associate Professor for Camden County in the Department of 4-H Youth Development at Rutgers Cooperative Extension



Amanda...

- Joined the Woodstown FFA Chapter in 2004
- Served as a State FFA Officer from 2007-2008
- Attended Delaware Valley University for her BA and received an associate’s degree in Veterinary Technology
- Received her American Degree in 2008
- Currently is a high school Science Instructional Assistant, an Adjunct Instructor for Veterinary Assisting, a registered Veterinary Technician at an animal health clinic, and owner of RAS Dairy Farm



AMANDA (HALL) SHANK

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

“Ag Education gave me the confidence and resources to pursue opportunities I previously would not have taken. This led to leadership and professional development events, which furthered my confidence and gave me the opportunity to meet many different people.”

“If you tend to take on many responsibilities, learn that it is okay to say no or kindly delegate a task to another member or teammate who may have the resources and skills to get the job done. This is called leadership. Do what you enjoy doing and surround yourself with people you enjoy being with.”

What is your favorite memory in the FFA?

“In high school, I enjoyed attending the Washington Leadership Conference. As a state officer, I enjoyed the State Presidents’ conference. Overall, I loved attending the National FFA Convention!”



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!

