



# Where Are They NOW?

LIFE AFTER FFA

## “FOREVER BLUE”

This month’s article features those who turned their passion for the FFA into a career by helping to grow the members of the FFA Organization.

“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.

### Eric...

- Joined the Newton FFA Chapter in 2006
- Served as a State FFA Officer from 2009-2011
- Graduated from Centenary University
- Serves as a Program Manager within State Officer Programs for the National FFA Organization, managing and preparing budgets for Blast Off, State Presidents’ Conference, and the International Leadership Seminar for State Officers



### ERIC NELSON



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

“Through my experience as a state FFA officer, I was able to develop my interpersonal, advocacy, and networking skills meeting with students and industry leaders across the country. I’ve learned management skills, financial consciousness, and how to lead and develop young people as the Alumni President, Nominating Committee Coordinator, and State FFA Facilitator. Without a doubt, every skill I currently possess and utilize on a daily basis was both realized and sharpened through the organization and ag ed.”

#### How would you define a “successful” life?

“A life where you feel purpose and passion every day. If you don’t know what gets you out of bed in the morning, you’re not truly living with purpose.”

“I almost didn’t join FFA, and sometimes I wonder how different my life would be if I didn’t. Sometimes the opportunities are intimidating, but they’re always worth it. Take it from me, the possibilities are truly endless if you just dive in with your full heart and mind, and soak in everything your FFA journey has to offer.”

#### What is your favorite memory in the FFA?

“I can’t say I have a specific favorite memory because they’re all different and I’m incredibly fond of all of them. Every single moment through my time in FFA has been worth savoring from member, to state officer, to alumni member, to state staff, and now national staff. In just my 25 short years, I’ve made a lifetime of memories with the blue and gold.”

### CHRISTINE WHITE

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

“Ag Ed and FFA helped me to find my purpose in life and the desire to help students develop and grow as leaders. It also helped me to gain skills such as effective communication, teamwork and leadership. These are just some of the power skills that I utilize on a daily basis in my current role.”



“FFA members, take advantage of every opportunity that is presented to you. Do not worry about what others say or think. Find your unique purpose and strive to do your best to grow as an individual and serve others.”

#### What is your favorite FFA memory?

“Zipping up my FFA jacket for the first time. It gave me a sense of belonging to something bigger than myself. Looking back, I never knew that day would have defined my journey with the organization as a lifelong career.”

#### How would you define a “successful” life?

“A good life, to me, is being happy and knowing that what I do makes a difference in this world. It is not about money or material things, but about serving others and making them feel valued. That is how I measure my success in life, by the impact I have on others and helping them to achieve their goals.”



### Christine...

- Joined the Woodstown FFA Chapter in 1992
- Served as a State FFA Officer from 1995-1997
- Graduated from Delaware Valley University, and received a Master’s Degree from Capella University
- Serves as the Director of the Leadership, Education, Assessment and Development (LEAD) Division with the National FFA Organization
- Received her Honorary American Degree and NAAE “Teachers Turn-the-Key” Award
- Currently is a Ziglar Legacy and Habitudes Certified Trainer

### Erin...

- Joined the Allentown FFA Chapter in 1996
- Served as a State FFA Officer from 2000-2002
- Graduated from Delaware Valley University in Secondary Education (Agriculture) and received a Master's Degree in Ag Ed & Communications from the University of Florida
- Received the Honorary American FFA Degree in 2012
- Served on the National FFA Board of Directors from 2011-2014
- Currently serves as the NJ State FFA Specialist, planning statewide leadership and career development events, and coaching the State FFA Officer team



## ERIN NOBLE

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

My involvement in FFA opened the door to an internship in the Office of Agricultural Education which shed light on other careers in Ag Ed. Everything I learned while participating in FFA events and interning in the OAE helped in my current career. FFA further developed my professional skills such as public speaking, planning/organizing, communication, interpersonal abilities and leadership skills. Participation in many career development events and leadership conferences helped me with what to expect when planning for these events in my career."

"Money can't buy you happiness, but the love from family and friends can. A good life is one surrounded by people who have the same morals and values as you and who support you in all of your pursuits. A successful life is one that is full of purpose and accomplished goals."

### What are your favorite memories in the FFA?

"From Land Judging in Oklahoma to meeting President Bush in Washington, D.C., there are many great memories from my time in FFA as a member. However, there is one event that changed my life forever – Washington Leadership Conference. It was at WLC that I decided I wanted to be an Ag teacher. My focus was switched from being a three-season athlete with aspirations of being a marine biologist, to dedicating all my time to FFA activities as I pursued a career in Ag Ed. WLC helped me find my purpose in life which is to grow leaders."



## BRYAN LEH

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

"By taking Ag in the beginning of my sophomore year in high school and becoming more involved in the FFA, I was inspired to become an Agricultural Educator."

### What advice would you give to FFA members?

"Take advantage of every opportunity. You never know what may happen to set you on your career path."

### What are your favorite memories in the FFA?

"My favorite memories are still in the making. I love seeing my students work hard and being successful in their FFA activities and later in their career successes."



### Bryan...

- Joined the Phillipsburg FFA Chapter in 1973
- Attended Delaware Valley University, and received a Master's Degree from Rutgers University
- Currently teaches Ag Ed at Belvidere High School, and has been the Ag teacher and FFA Advisor for 39 years
- Received NJ FFA Advisor of the Year, BHS Teacher of the Year, and the Warren County Board of Ag Award for Outstanding Accomplishments

"A good and successful life, to me, is being able to look in the mirror and know you gave everything your best effort and have tried to help others."



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!