



THE GOLDEN SLATE

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State FFA Leadership Conference: Reflections From An Ag Teacher

By Heather Varallo, Sonora High School

State conference is a mixed bag of emotions. As teachers we both love and dread it sometimes but after every conference, I am left with this sense of purpose again. We regain our passion, and it drives us to do better, to teach better, and to lead better. And we do this selflessly, without question, because this is just who we are. In the months approaching the trip, we are burnt out, the students are burnt out, and we start counting the days until summer break. This conference is a much-needed opportunity for us to ground ourselves and regain the path to our true North again. Reflecting on this trip leads me to want to thank the supporting pillars of this foundation, the people sacrificing their sanity to commit to this conference to make it happen every single year.

I am a teacher who recently entered this profession but recognize the profound effect that this conference has on students, teachers, and our community. On these trips, we are blessed with a golden opportunity to cultivate relationships with our students, watch them as they become engulfed in FFA leadership, smile as they laugh and meet new friends, and witness their desire to share this experience with their own chapters. I am always so impressed with the state officers, all they sacrifice, and all they do for their fellow members. The caliber of their commitment is astonishing to me and these individuals will do so many great things.

The thing I love most about our state officers is that they show our students firsthand that they can be up there one day. THEY can be more than just ordinary, THEY can be extraordinary. This takes advisors and dedicated people like yourself and many others behind the scenes that we are not even aware of. The commitment, sacrifice, dedication, and determination for greatness is exemplary. I know that this is mainly a thankless job at most times but also one that gets criticized for the smallest of things; however, I hope that you know the difference you all make in the lives of others and that you continue to embody the FFA motto, "living to serve."

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