



The Chicago Farmer

A Publication Of The Chicago Farmers

FALL 2014



Students and their teacher from the Chicago High School for Agricultural Sciences attended a recent TCF meeting. They included, standing, Dakota Trueba, left, and Brooke Bennett, and seated, from left, Chima Ikoro, Raina Emery, Mike Doyle, teacher, and Dylan Dennehy.

Chicago high school nurtures agricultural education

By Denise Faris

You know you have connected with something unique when a telephone call to the Chicago High School for Agricultural Sciences is answered by a recorded message voiced by WGN-Radio broadcaster Orion Samuelson. Indeed, this Chicago magnet high school that focuses on agricultural education is the only one of its kind in the Midwest and one of only a handful in the United States. The school also is a beneficiary of The Chicago Farmers' Scholarship Fund. This past school year, some of the funds were devoted to a scholarship for a graduating senior and the remaining dollars supplemented students' needs. A TCF group got a firsthand look at the school during a summer 2010 visit.

While the four year high school provides a core

curriculum composed of mathematics, language arts, science, social science, French, Spanish, and physical education, and has a Special Education Department, its curriculum also incorporates the study of agriculture. Located on the Southwest Side of Chicago on the former site of the last surviving farm within the city's limits, the school has an enrollment of 693 students and boasts a graduation rate of more than 90 percent. Of these graduates, 86 percent go on to higher education at either a two or four year college, according to Sheila Fowler, chair of the Agriculture Department and advisor to the school's FFA Chapter. All students are members of the FFA.

"We are gradually increasing our enrollment

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Mission Statement

The mission of The Chicago Farmers is to provide those with an interest in agriculture a means to enhance knowledge, profitability, stewardship, consumer awareness, and fellowship.



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President's Message



Happily, as anticipated, we had the best crops since I started farming forty years ago. We also had one of the longest, drawn-out harvests in quite some time, and it is still going on for a few.

Tonight as I write this, my "nomad" farmer neighbor just pulled in to harvest a field of corn next to us. He

no more got started than it began to rain. He is now left to hope it doesn't rain too much or the ground freezes hard enough to allow him to finish harvest before the crop deteriorates. There are definite risks to renting lands fifty to a hundred miles away as some overly eager beavers are beginning to discover.

My sons always help with harvest and field work, and as their families grow the things they have to schedule around seem to multiply as well lots of soccer events, cheerleading, junior league football, band, 4-H, etc. I don't recall my children being so busy, and surely we didn't demand so much of our parents, did we? Surely not.

In this season of giving thanks I am so grateful for those little ones who make my children's lives so complicated. It is such a pleasure to have them come to visit, excited, and anxious to ride with Grandpa in the combine. I suspect part of the attraction is the stash of grapes, string cheese and

mini candy bars in my lunch box, but even without snacks, the true farmers among them will happily ride with me for hours, mesmerized by the tall corn disappearing into the mouth of the big machine. Hopefully, I can help make it possible to fulfill their vocation for those grandchildren with farming in their blood.

It is easy to find things to complain about, some people are better at it than others; however, we all have a lot for which we are thankful. Treasure your blessings and spread good will to those around you. I wish you and your families the very best this holiday season.

Eric Rund

P.S.

Don't miss our very special holiday meeting on December 8th at the University Club. Not only will we have a delicious meal in elegant surroundings, but we can expect a very informed and educated presentation by our guest speaker Dr. Robert Easter, president of the University of Illinois, fellow member of The Chicago Farmers and always a friend of agriculture. To add to the festivities, Orion Samuelson will be on hand to introduce Dr. Easter.



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Chicago high school, from page 1



Agricultural Finance students attend a food conference at the 1871 facility in Chicago to learn about entrepreneurship in the food/ag business.

numbers because our cap of 600 students was lifted recently," said Ms. Fowler. "Our enrollment for the 2015-2016 school year will be 720."

Until recently, the CHSAS students studied five agricultural pathways in addition to the core curriculum. These included: agricultural mechanics, agricultural finance, horticulture, animal science, and food science. A sixth pathway, agricultural education, was added this year in an effort to groom future agricultural teachers, who are in short supply across the United States, said Ms. Fowler. Students are exposed to each pathway during their freshman and sophomore years (they switch pathways every eight weeks), and then select one pathway to pursue during their junior and senior years. Internships and job shadowing round out the students' education.

The school has 72 acres, with 33 acres under cultivation. It also has a swimming pool, exercise room and a three-hole golf course, which students designed and built. These resources are available for the community's use.

The school's property includes a 12 acre pasture that was donated several years ago by the Chicago Park District. Last spring, that pasture provided grazing ground for four cows that were donated by the Nebraska LEAD Fellows. Students built a shelter

for the animals, which included crossbred Angus, Hereford and Charolais cows, each of which weighed about 600 pounds. They fed, watered and cared for them. The cattle were slaughtered late in the fall and portions of the meat were sold to Horse Thief Hollow, an eatery in the Beverly neighborhood, not far from the school, and to Moraine Valley Community College for its culinary arts program. The remaining beef was kept by the school and will be used for various events at CHSAS. The money generated from the sales will fund the purchase of more cattle this spring, said Ms. Fowler, and the cycle will begin again.

CHSAS counts nine horses, 45 laying hens, one goat, and eight turkeys among its livestock in the Animal Science Department. In January, the school will receive a pregnant sow that will farrow in February. The students will raise the piglets and prepare them for market. The turkeys' time is limited, noted Ms. Fowler. They are raised in preparation for the 19th Ward's Thanksgiving celebration for senior citizens of the community. CHSAS donates the turkeys to the event, which is held at the school, and the high school students help to prepare and serve the food.

Thanks to partners like Eli's Cheesecake, CHSAS is able to reach beyond its neighborhood. The school maintains 35 beehives and sells some of the honey the hives produce to Eli's for use in their products. Eli's Cheesecake stores also sell the bottled honey, just as the school's Farm Stand does. Sales of honey bring the school about \$6,000, said Ms. Fowler. In addition to the honey, Farm Stand, which is 100 percent supported by the community, sells crops grown by the students. Some of this produce also is sold to local stores. In other business related projects, the students raise tilapia in their aquaponics facility that they sell to a nearby seafood shop. Basil that is grown in water beds is sold to a North Side Co-op. The basil also is dried by the students in a dehydrator, ground, bottled and sold at Farm Stand. Floral arrangements that are created by horticulture students are seen at functions at the CPS headquarters and at area weddings. Poinsettias, grown from plugs planted by the students in the summer, will be sold for Christmas displays.

Looking to the future, Ms. Fowler said the school hopes to receive a \$100,000 grant from Farmers Insurance that would help fund the construction of a therapeutic riding center at the Animal Science barn.

A group of CHSAS students attended Chicago Farmers' November meeting with their social science teacher, Mike Doyle, and enjoyed the occasion. Brooke Bennett a junior at the high school, said, "I enjoyed going to the farm bill meeting because I got the opportunity to learn how much the bill affects farmers all over the state and how important each decision is and that each vote matters. It was also interesting to meet women farmers and get an idea of how much pressure goes into the bill."

Ms. Fowler related, "The students are busy and involved in a number of interests. There are a lot of activities that connect the business world with what the students are learning in their classes. Occasionally, our students attend Chicago Farmers' meetings so that they are aware of our partners.



All students at the high school are members of FFA. Pictured are seniors who are the FFA Chapter officers.

They also attend to learn more about things they study in class, such as the farm bill. We would like The Chicago Farmers to visit us when our students are here. Spring would be a good time; the ground has thawed and we would be able to walk around the grounds."

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What are our scholarship recipients doing now?

Thanks to the generosity of The Chicago Farmers' members, thousands of dollars in scholarship money have been awarded over the years to deserving students at the University of Illinois, University of Wisconsin, Iowa State University, and Purdue University. Funds also have been granted to the Chicago High School for Agricultural Sciences to supplement student needs. Recently, Barbara Clark, chairwoman of the Scholarship Committee, caught up with some of our past recipients so that we could see what they are doing now.

University of Illinois 1948-1949, Harold Guither

Harold Guither, professor emeritus of agricultural economics at the University of Illinois, remembers attending a special recognition program in 1995 for The Chicago Farmers' scholarship recipients. He is the first Chicago Farmers' scholarship recipient that the University of Illinois has on record. He received a \$500 scholarship during the 1948-49 school year. Professor Guither completed both his Bachelor of Science and Master of Science degrees at Illinois and in 1950 began his career with Doane Agricultural Service in St. Louis.

During his years with Doane he worked as an editor and agricultural economist in the economic research division. In 1956 he returned to Illinois, working as assistant extension editor and completing his Ph.D. in agricultural economics. Professor Guither's work then took him overseas for several years to work for a University of Illinois—USAID contract in Jordan. He returned to Illinois in 1966 and joined the Department of Agricultural Economics as professor of agricultural policy.

In addition to his teaching and research, Professor Guither served as the university's representative on the Farm Foundation North Central Policy Education committee and as secretary-treasurer of the Illinois Society of Professional Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers from 1986 to 1998. He also spent a sabbatical leave in Washington D.C. in the office of Congressman Paul Findley in 1975, and he was a member of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Extension Service visiting staff in 1985.

He retired from the university at the end of 1995, but has continued to write on agricultural issues and historical events. Professor Guither authored the 75th anniversary history of the American Society of Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers in 2004 and the centennial history of Champaign County Farm Bureau in 2011.

Purdue University 2008-2009, Jacob Smoker

Jacob Smoker graduated in May 2010 and then spent three years with Aldi as a district manager on the South Side of Chicago. Using his Aldi experience, Jacob became owner of Smoker Brothers Horticultural Services in Wanatah, Indiana. The pumpkin production business he started in high school is expanding. They have begun construction of greenhouses and are adding production acreage for field production.

2009-2010, Samantha Downey

Samantha Downey graduated in 2011 with a Bachelor of Science degree in plant breeding and genetics. After a summer internship at Beck's Hybrids, she continued her studies at Washington State University and graduated in December 2013 with a Master of Science in Crop Science. Samantha's research focus was on identifying potential rust resistance genes and working to develop rust resistant wheat. In January 2014 she started as a developmental sales representative with Syngenta and is currently located in Bakersfield, California, serving as the Kern County sales representative.

2010-2011, Keith Hoeing

Keith Hoeing graduated in 2011. Following graduation he traveled to Brazil and Argentina for four weeks and then started working with Elanco Animal Health in Greenfield, Indiana. For the past two years he has lived in Brookings, South Dakota, where he is getting used to the cold and is working in the Dairy Business Unit with Elanco, covering North Dakota and South Dakota. Keith also runs Guys and Dollies, a moving and storage business at

Continued on page 8

Scholarship recipients, from page 7

Purdue University. He thanks The Chicago Farmers for its support.

2011-2012, Alysha Wetli

With the help of The Chicago Farmers' scholarship in 2011-2012, Alysha Wetli graduated in 2013 with a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture Sales and Marketing and an associate's degree in Agronomy. She started her agriculture career with Helena Chemical Company as a sales trainee/crop advisor in Owensboro, Kentucky. Alysha worked for about five months with Helena's Wholesale and Retails in Kentucky, Southern Illinois and Southern Indiana, and then she took a new position within Helena as a seed specialist in La Porte and New Carlisle, Indiana. Alysha lives in La Porte and works between both Helena locations. She works with salesmen and growers to sell three brands of seed - Syngenta, Mycogen and Monsanto. Without the help of TCF's scholarship she believes she would not be where she is today. Thanks very much, Alysha said.

2012-2013, Evan Rich

Evan Rich is completing his last semester at Purdue with one final class in his Agricultural Communication major and the four remaining classes for his minor in Crop Science. Although he is winding down some of his extracurricular commitments and transitioning responsibilities to other students, Evan continues his involvement with the College of Agriculture Ambassadors, the annual Purdue Ag Week, WBAA (Purdue Public Radio), and Boiler Steam, an organization working with prospective students through the Office of Admissions. He is excited that his time at Purdue has yielded a position with Channel Seeds, which he will begin following graduation in May. Last summer Evan interned with Monsanto in the northern half of Indiana and was fortunate enough to be offered a full-time role beginning as a district sales manager trainee near Charleston, Illinois. During his last semester, Evan is focusing on his studies and preparing for his new job and the move.

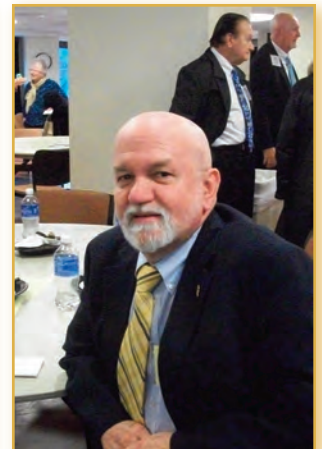
Roll Call



Jeri Moore, George Clark and John Rutledge



TCF President Eric Rund and recent speaker Jonathan Coppess



William Francis



Mary Mossman, Margaret McGrath and Robert Wold

Continued on page 14

Still Time to “Tip Toe Through the Tulips”

By Jim Ward, Travel Chairperson

As we go to press, there are a few seats left on the 2015 Study Tour to The Netherlands, which benefits our Scholarship Fund. The week-long annual event leaves Chicago on a KLM flight on April 19, non-stop to Amsterdam for an escorted motor coach tour visiting farms, dairies and a Monsanto seed facility. The famous Rotterdam world port and many cultural features are included. Lodging will be at three star hotels.

TCF members are also allowed two guests. Late sign-ups will be given “wait listed” status, pending our ability to obtain additional group seats from KLM, or in the event of cancellations.

Sign up deadline is December 31st. What a lovely Christmas or New Year’s present!



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Tell us something about you that might surprise us

By Denise Faris

We asked some of our Chicago Farmers' members to share some interesting facts about themselves that their fellow members might not guess about them. Their responses were enlightening.

Chuck Cassata reported that his family is a proud owner of a drone. "It is



wonderful," he said. "We were able to get an aerial view of waterways on the farmland and see obscure places we could not get to on

foot. The drone helps you to pinpoint water puddling or bad spots that require attention."

Karen Hawes is a member of The New Horizon Band, whose membership is composed entirely of 55-years-old and plus adults. Karen plays the clarinet and said the band is fun. "There are some very good musicians in the band, she observed." The band is preparing for the Holiday Concert at Benet Academy in Lisle, Illinois, on December 13 at 3 p.m.



Andy Holstine recalled that his middle school was an old township school located in the middle of the country, a 15 minute bus ride from the town where he grew up. In sixth grade, Andy's class elected him and a fellow sixth grader, a girl who was to become his wife a number of years later, to serve as the two homeroom officers. "Unbeknownst to me," said Andy, "this was only my first taste of life lived by her rules."

Margaret McGrath went through bus driver training for the Milwaukee County Transit System as part of her first management job. "Driving a sixty feet long articulated bus is



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not much different than driving a tractor pulling two hay racks,” remarked Margaret.

David Oppedahl served as a military intelligence officer during the Cold War in the U.S. Army in the Republic of Korea and West Germany.

Rachel Riley was a piano student as a child, but she was never very fond of the instrument. She yearned to play the harp, she said. Rachel now has taken harp lessons and rents a harp from her instructor. Her birthday is approaching and she is dropping hints that she would like to unwrap a birthday box that contains an Irish bard’s harp.

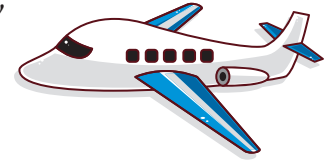


John Rutledge related that he ran the Naperville Half Marathon in November in two hours and 27 minutes. He also shared that he played the baritone (an instrument similar to a euphonium or oversized French horn) for eight years in the Mason City (Illinois) High School band. “I was drafted into the big leagues from fifth grade band,” said John.



Max Stucker is proud of his family’s farm in Rensselaer, Indiana, that dates its inception to before the Civil War. But he also has fond memories of his years as a CPA in the international division of Arthur Anderson. He traveled the world in that capacity.

Jim Ward said he has many interests. Over the course of the years, he has served as editor of his college newspaper, the Daily Northwestern; college coordinator at the World War II Office of Civilian Defense, working for Eleanor Roosevelt; and fighter director on an aircraft carrier in the Pacific Ocean in Task Force 58. Jim also collected antique lighting through the Rush Light Club. He held a private pilot’s license; operated “Mr. and Mrs. Greenthumb,” a mail order plant business; is the editor of the Clishmaclaver, the newsletter for the Clan Donnachaidh; and the photographer for the Skol Club (travel professionals) of Chicago.



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ACES at Illinois: Returns for Life

Many families save for years to be able to send their children to college. And students often must obtain student loans or work while attending school to be able to afford their college education. This investment in higher education usually pays off in terms of higher salaries, more job opportunities, and a higher quality of life for years to come. This is certainly true at the College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences (ACES) at the University of Illinois, which has a proven record for positioning its graduates to achieve success through a fulfilling and lucrative career.

With an array of 11 majors, more than 40 concentrations, and 12 minors to choose from, ACES students can find a career path in almost any interest area. Areas of study include agricultural engineering, agribusiness markets and management, consumer economics and finance, public policy and law, broadcast journalism, pre-veterinary and medical science, plant biotechnology and molecular biology, dietetics, food science, sustainable landscapes, fish and wildlife conservation, agricultural education, child and adolescent development, family studies, and more. While on campus, ACES students can participate in 40 student organizations and study abroad in such places as Belgium, Ireland, Argentina, and Taiwan to gain a global outlook and diverse perspectives. Students often share how they appreciate the experience of a Big Ten campus while enjoying the supportive atmosphere of ACES.

There is no doubt that the College of ACES offers a world-class education. The University of Illinois' return on investment, as defined by the expected salary over a 30-year period, is the highest in the Big Ten and among all Midwestern colleges offering similar programs. On average, U of I graduates earn over \$1 million in additional income over high school graduates. Also, U of I graduates, on average, finish their degrees in less time than most other programs. They are also highly sought after by Fortune 500 companies and other major employers and are accepted into top-ranked graduate programs. It's an investment that brings returns for the rest of their lives.



While the return on investment from a degree from the University of Illinois is very high, many students and families need financial assistance. The College of ACES is committed to helping families. In addition to providing need- and merit-based awards to help cover tuition, the college is proud to also provide scholarships to support enrichment experiences in leadership, research, and study abroad. Assistance is also provided to traditionally underserved groups and those underrepresented in the food and agricultural sciences. A large percentage of this support to help students and their families comes from the generous donations of ACES alumni, corporate partners, and other friends of the college. The College of ACES and its supporters are proud to be developing future leaders who will solve tomorrow's complex global issues.

To support ACES student scholarships or College of ACES Annual Fund, please contact the Office of Advancement at 217-333-9355 or visit <http://advancement.aces.illinois.edu/>.

Editor's note: The University of Illinois College of ACES is a Visionary Level Sponsor of The Chicago Farmers.

Roll call, from page 8



Karen Hawes, left, and Rachel Riley



Joanne Long and Kurt Lokenvitz

2014-2015 Calendar of Events

December 8: Dr. Robert Easter
President of the University of Illinois
Cathedral Hall, University Club

January 12: Ag Education

February 7: Farmland Forum
Weitendorf Agricultural Center
Joliet Junior College

March 9: Big Data
Evening Meeting

April 13: Land Values

May 11: Annual Meeting, Estate Planning
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