

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 1, 2025

Harford County Future Farmers of America Shine

Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) is proud to announce outstanding achievements of our Future Farmers of America students. North Harford High School Students competed, and excelled, at the 2025 Maryland Future Farmers of America (FFA) State Spring Judging Competition in early April. In addition, several HCPS students earned the prestigious Gift of Blue recognition.

The Gift of Blue Program is an initiative through FFA that allows teachers to nominate active and deserving FFA members to receive an official FFA jacket and tie/scarf free of charge. Each chapter contributes \$20 per student, while the Maryland FFA Alumni Association covers the remaining cost. The FFA blue jacket is a vital part of the official FFA dress, worn at competitions, banquets, and community events.

This year, the following Harford County Public Schools students were awarded the Gift of Blue:

- Harford Technical High School: Abbie Brodeur, Rebekah Layton, and Olivia Melvern
- North Harford High School: Lucy Heisey, Blakely Jackanicz, and Jack Miklos

Additionally, three more students were recognized with the Gift of Blue during North Harford High School's annual FFA banquet on April 29, 2025: Emilie Coogan, Bonnie Parker, and Shane Whaley.

On April 5, 2025, Harford County Public Schools students competed in the Maryland Future Farmers of America Spring Judging, and they shined. The competition was held on April 5, 2025, at the Carroll County Career & Technology Center and the Carroll County Agriculture Center in Westminster, Maryland.

Here are the event results and the participating students' names and placements:

Floriculture: North Harford's team placed 1st in the state and will advance to the National FFA Convention in Indianapolis, Indiana, in October 2025. Participants included Ryan Layman (3rd place), Jonathan VanBuskirk (7th place), Harley Weisman (19th place), and Bryn Cespedes (29th place).

Food Science: North Harford's team placed 1st in the state and will also advance to compete at the National FFA Convention. Participants included Blakely Jackanicz (1st place), Sophie Reinert (6th place), Grayson Whaley (7th place), Miranda Buettner (9th place), and Lucy Heisey (12th place).

Nursery/Landscape: North Harford's team placed 2nd and will travel to The Big E in Springfield, Massachusetts, in September 2025 to compete against teams from 11 other states. Participants included Samantha Hawk (1st place), Aunaleigha Walker (2nd place), Nina Field (3rd place), Emilie Coogan (7th place), Jack Miklos (8th place), and Waverly Iriarte (14th place).

Farm Business Management: North Harford's team placed 2nd and will also compete at The Big E in Springfield, Massachusetts. Participants included Emily Troyer (3rd place), Kelly Gale (5th place), Madison Thomas (10th place), and Georgia Clisham (15th place).

Veterinary Science: North Harford's team placed 2nd and earned a trip to The Big E. Participants included Jayden Holliday (11th place), Allyson Knott (14th place), Lyla Deckman (18th place), and Erin McGovern (20th place).

The Big E, also known as the Eastern States Exposition, is an annual event held in Springfield, Massachusetts, that brings together the best of agriculture, entertainment, and culture from 11 northeastern states. It is the largest agricultural fair in the northeastern United States and serves as a venue for FFA teams to showcase their skills and compete on a regional level.

Dr. Sean Bulson, Superintendent of Harford County Public Schools, expressed his pride in the students' achievements: "The dedication, passion, and teamwork displayed by our students in the Maryland FFA State Spring Judging Competition exemplifies the spirit of excellence that is a hallmark of our agricultural programs. We are incredibly proud of their success and look forward to watching them represent Harford County on both the national and regional stages."

Harford County Public Schools is proud of these students' hard work, dedication, and commitment to agricultural education. Their success at the state level highlights the strength and tradition of excellence in our agricultural programs at Harford County Public Schools.

###