

# Look to the Future

There are many reasons why the National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA) is so strong and thriving today, when a vast majority of youth could be spending more time on the soccer field, baseball diamond, basketball court or football field. Of all the reasons you and I could come up with, one reason sticks out among the rest — *passion*.

The key reasons for the continued success of the NJHA are the passion that lives inside each of us, the love of the Hereford breed and the people who make up our association and industry. Without those pieces, our breed and our junior association would not be the great entity that we all enjoy. We have an awesome group of youth, parents, advisors and staff working passionately on our behalf to constantly improve membership growth, program development and scholarship support.

## PRIDE continues to improve

Take for instance the Program for Reaching Individuals Determined to Excel (PRIDE) Convention. It has been four years since the NJHA made the decision to restructure

our fall leadership/educational event that was in Kansas City for many years. It took a lot of work, dedication and backbone from a great group of young leaders to see a need to make a change for the better. It worked.

PRIDE has been a continuing success, and each year the content of the program improves. Attendance has grown and maintained a steady pace, while the interaction between the NJHA board and membership has increased dramatically. And at the heart of it all was the passion inside a few people who saw a need for change and followed through. Having a set goal and the determination to reach that goal on all levels has resulted in a “can’t miss” junior Hereford event.

What inspires close to 100 junior Hereford members and advisors to travel to the PRIDE Convention each year? I honestly think it stems from a sincere passion that they have for the NJHA, the Hereford breed and the people involved. I have always felt that the personal feeling of belonging and being among great people and friends creates a sense of drive and passion inside us all.

## The little things

The belief in and concern for individuals ignites a strong base for developing character and respect that will, in turn, be invaluable in our future in terms of building personal relationships and finding our place in the world — long past our years as members of the NJHA.

The thought that the junior members are an important asset to the American Hereford Association (AHA) is shown on the faces and heard in the voices of many. Take for instance the words of encouragement from a fellow junior board member or an AHA office staff member to a junior who is new and looking for that pat on the back. Or by the simple act of calling someone by name, just think

how much someone is affected by hearing his or her name called. Hopefully, it is for a good reason.

It’s the little things that leave an impression. Passion drives us to places we never thought possible. It comes from the human side in all of us, building lasting relationships with those you care for deeply or working to accomplish that goal that you always felt was out of reach. Passion allows you to reach for it anyway and your future will be better because you tried.

I feel really confident in saying that many junior members probably couldn’t remember who won a particular contest at the Junior National Hereford Expo (JNHE) or who was named as one of the champions; however, almost everyone who participated became friends with someone they had never spoken to before. It is the friendships that drive our program forward, so I encourage all of you to get out of your comfort zone — meet new people, make friends, participate in contests and attend PRIDE Convention. Just get out there and get involved. Your future will be better because you did.

## Thanks for the opportunity

I have really enjoyed serving the past three years as a member of the NJHA board of directors. The memories, the friendships and the goals reached are all important, but the one thing that stands out from all the rest is that I got out of my comfort zone and did something that I was not really sure about in the beginning.

When I ran for the board, I did not know how it would turn out; I had really no intention of running. Well, guess what, it may be one of the wisest moves I have made thus far.

So again, I encourage you to go beyond status quo and reach big! The little things can open doors we never imagined. You can only gain what you set out to achieve, so achieve the impossible. “Look to the Future.” God bless. **HW**

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