

Looking Back

Looking back on our three years as National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA) board members, we have experienced more than we ever could have imagined. We've laughed more in a packed van ride than we ever thought possible, traveled on some crazy flight schedules and made some friends we'll never forget.

When we had our telephone chat to collaborate on our reflection article, we thought, "How can we possibly put all of that into 500 words?" We decided it was impossible to capture the whole NJHA experience in one piece of writing, so instead, we're going to give you a condensed version of what we're taking away from our three years — one life lesson from each year on the board.

LIFE LESSON 1

Be true to yourself.

Three years ago, both of us were completely different people. Naturally, life takes you down roads that you would never expect to travel, and you have to accommodate as you go along. But what you don't want is to have someone else tell you where to turn or to lie about what direction you're taking. Something we've both learned is that people will like you more for being yourself — faults and

everything — than if you try to please everyone. If you smile only when you mean it, your smile will mean so much more than if you're wearing a constant grin.

LIFE LESSON 2

You don't always get what is coming to you, but you have to live with the hand you're dealt.

Sure we've all been told, "Life isn't fair," at one time or another. But how many of us believe it? Well, juniors, it's true. Life can deal you a hand of cards that is really hard to play. But the truth is you have to make the best of what you're given. Any member of a team has to live with a decision that wasn't his, but you can't jump off the wagon when your idea doesn't fly; you have to stick with the team and work just as hard to make that other idea a success.

LIFE LESSON 3

Thank everyone and work hard to hang on to the friends you make.

It can't be stressed enough that you're nothing without your closest friends. The two of us have become more than just friends with some of our fellow board members; they are a lifelong support system. Why? Because we never forgot that we couldn't

be a board without each person. One person cannot accomplish anything alone, and that is a fact that many forget. And don't only thank your peers; thank your parents, your sponsors, your mentors and everyone who has ever made an impact on you, because they are a part of you forever. Keeping friendships takes work, and the friends you make now will be your allies forever. Keep them close and cherish those who are true.

Keeping with our own advice, we would like to thank each of you for giving us this opportunity. These past three years have been completely unforgettable, and we don't take a single moment of it for granted. To every person we've encountered, you've helped us become who we are today, and we couldn't be more grateful. **HW**

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