

# MISSION: Hereford Youth Serving Others

*Young Hereford enthusiasts are upholding the mission of the NJHA in multiple ways.*

by **Robin K. Kleine**

The mission statement of the National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA) is “To create and promote enthusiasm for the Hereford breed while providing opportunities through leadership, education and teamwork thus ensuring a brighter future for youth and the cattle industry.”

A few outstanding young people from across the country have gone above and beyond this statement, working through various Christian ministries to ensure a brighter future for the youth of other countries, using leadership, education and teamwork.

Kristin Bielema, 19, of Grand Rapids, Mich., went to the Dominican Republic in 2010 with her local church.

“After my trip, I realized that we are very blessed to live in America, on our farms with our cattle. While we might want more, we don’t need it usually,” she explains. “In the Dominican they didn’t have much, but they were happy with what they did have. Helping them was a simple, humbling experience.”



Kristin Bielema, Grand Rapids, Mich., currently serves on the NJHA board of directors. Here she works the ring at the Junior National Hereford Expo.

Not only are juniors such as Kristin active in the Hereford breed here in the U.S., but they are making a difference in lives around the world using lessons they learned through the NJHA.

## **Educating others**

As part of their mission work, the Conley sisters from Surgoinsville, Tenn., educated others about Jesus and what it means to be a Christian.

Sinclair, 12, and Sadie, 11, went to Belize in 2012. The girls saved all of their winnings from exhibiting their Hereford cattle at local shows, as well as their birthday and Christmas money, to finance their trip.

After their mother had gone the previous year, the duo knew they, too, wanted to go and help the impoverished people of Belize.

While in Belize, the girls worked with a group teaching Bible school, working on various building projects and doing village evangelism, which they both say was their favorite part. They traveled to nearby villages, stopping and praying at houses along the way. Visiting and sharing

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— *Kristin Bielema*

the gospel with the families, they always left bags of rice and beans. These small gifts were enough to feed each family for a few days.

“I always thought, ‘The food is going to feed their stomachs, but what we were telling them was going to feed their souls,’” Sadie says.

Cody Crum, 24, of Rushville, Ill., graduated in May 2011 from Northwestern College, a Christian school in St. Paul, Minn. Cody always knew he wanted to go on a mission trip, but as a student athlete playing football and running track and still actively showing in NJHA events during the summer, it was not possible. After graduation, he knew it was time to go.

In July 2012 Cody traveled to San Ramón, Costa Rica, with e3 Partners Ministry. His group used sports ministry and materials from “I am Second,” a movement that inspires people to live for God and other people.

After lunch each day on his weeklong trip, he spent about two hours doing door-to-door evangelism, giving personal testimonials of his belief in Christ. Cody even used the public speaking skills he learned in NJHA contests.

“Looking back, it was one of the most rewarding parts of the trip because it got me out of my comfort zone,” Cody says.

In addition to teaching evangelism, these junior members learned the value of teamwork on their mission trips.

### **Teamwork**

While participating in NJHA activities, juniors are taught to work together in order to achieve a common goal, whether it be in competition, fundraising or philanthropic endeavors.



Sadie (left) and Sinclair Conley spend time on their family's operation, Conley Farms, in Surgoinsville, Tenn. The girls have shown Herefords for three years, using their show winnings to fund a mission trip to Belize.

Teamwork was a huge part of Kristin's trip to the Dominican Republic. Her group was tasked with removing rocks, leveling floors and pouring concrete in a six-room schoolhouse. But the local children made the backbreaking work more enjoyable.

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— Sadie Conley

“At about 11:30 a.m. each day, the village kids would trickle into the buildings. We would hang out and play games. They were always smiling, because they knew what we were doing was really going to make a difference in their lives,” Kristin says.

Sinclair and Sadie use teamwork every day at home as well. Their parents, Richard and Monica Conley, have opened their home to foster children. The girls gladly share a room to create extra space and enjoy showing their younger foster siblings the way around the cattle barn.

“We teach them not to be afraid and to get their hands dirty,” Sinclair explains. “We're taking them to Cow Buddies, a group that helps younger kids. We help them in the ring, on the halter and with the show stick. They help us with feeding and cleaning the stalls too.”

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— *Cody Crum*

Both girls are thankful for the responsibility they have learned through their Hereford projects. Their mother, Monica, says that they do their own work in the barn. We always feel like when we win, it's a win for the family, she explains. Sinclair and Sadie are becoming leaders in their small Tennessee community and abroad.

#### True leaders

With more than 20 years of NJHA experience between them, Kristin and Cody are veteran members, both well decorated and respected by their peers.

Kristin credits her role on the NJHA board of directors for helping her grow as a person and as a leader.

“Serving on the board has made me more responsible and just a better person in general.

Plus the Christian church teaches us to be stewards,” she says. “Going to the Dominican Republic taught me that I'm blessed. I can give my time and effort to help others, and others can learn by watching.”

Cody won numerous awards through the NJHA, including the prestigious Golden Bull Achievement Award in 2010. He is accustomed to being a leader in the showing and on the football field.

After his mission trip, Cody wanted to give back to his local church, Rushville Free Methodist Church. There he started an “I am Second” small group, serving as the group's leader. The group of 10 young adults meets every Wednesday night, using some of the same materials he used in Costa Rica.

“It's nice to know that the lessons are the same all over the world,” Cody adds.

Additionally, Cody's “I am Second” group is talking about doing mission work in Costa Rica or somewhere similar. He thinks that a trip is a real possibility for his small group within the next few years.

#### A call to serve

Cody easily summed up his desire to serve others.

“Growing up on a farm, we learn to serve through agriculture and the food we grow. As Christians, we are also service-oriented.” He adds, “They are definitely correlated for me.” **HW**



Cody Crum (holding ball), Rushville, Ill., spent 10 days in Costa Rica in July 2012 with e3 Partners Ministry. He and others in the group used sports to reach out to local children.