

Youth Movement | Grateful Leaders

Gracious Servant

by *Montana Lawrence*

It is difficult to sum up what the past three years of serving on the National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA) Board of Directors have meant to me. When I was elected to the board, my goal was to impact my fellow junior members. Now, I realize that I am the one who has been impacted. I hope that I have made a difference for my fellow junior members, but more than that, I am beyond thankful for the way this experience has changed my life.

Even in my wildest dreams, I didn't believe that I would have a chance to serve as a board member. Frankly, as a young showman, I thought my talents were better served outside the showing, and I almost chose to stop showing

altogether. As I grew older and became more invested in my state association, I realized I cared deeply for the people that showed alongside me. I wanted to have the honor of representing those people on a national level. I still had doubts about my abilities and qualifications, but I knew that "Hereford people" were my people, and I wanted a chance to contribute to our organization.

With gratitude

I could write many articles about the ups and downs of my journey, but I really want to say, "Thank you." Thank you to the breeders, mentors and friends who continue to donate their finances, time and talent to the NJHA. You are the force that drives this association and causes positive growth for so many young agriculturalists. I know this to be true because I am one of them. Without your faithfulness, I would not be where I am today, and I know countless others who would share the same testimony.

Thank you to the staff of the American Hereford Association (AHA). I have had the privilege of working closely with and learning from the amazing people who keep this association running. I have never met a group of people as dedicated and hard-working as our AHA staff. They work non-stop to execute the vision of our junior board, and they are committed to ensuring that our Hereford youth have every opportunity to learn and grow together.

Thank you to my fellow board members. I have served on many different teams throughout my life, but I have never been as proud of my teammates as I am of my fellow board members. I have truly never met a group of young people as



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professional, dedicated and hard-working as the 11 board members I served alongside. We have had some amazing adventures together, and I consider myself extremely blessed to have such wonderful people as colleagues and friends.

Finally, thank you, junior members. So many things have contributed to my personal growth over the last three years, but it was the members I was elected to serve who have contributed the most. From the moment I began campaigning for a position on the NJHA Board of Directors, I have felt fully embraced by the members who make up this association. Juniors, thank you for your time, your commitment, your tenacity and your friendship. It has been an honor to serve you for the past three years. Thank you for believing in me!

I am so excited for the future of this association. If the past three years have taught me nothing else, they have taught me that this association is full of world-changers in a world that desperately needs change. Juniors, keep up the good work, and remember, you are capable of anything.



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Encouraging Words

by *Abby Spindle*

I could not be more thankful for the opportunity to serve the National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA) over the past three years. The past few years have been full of challenges; yet, those challenges allowed our association to show resilience and optimism. I could not be prouder to be part of a group of such determined and tough people. With that said, I'd like to leave you with a few words of encouragement.

Breaking barriers

Throughout my life, it has been ingrained in my mind that personal growth is essential. Personal growth should be a priority, and conscious actions should be taken daily to do so. I ran for the junior board the summer after my freshman year of college, knowing this would be a challenging, yet rewarding, opportunity.

Coming from a state with very few Hereford juniors, it took an enormous amount of courage to put myself out there in front of many people I did not know. Looking back over the past three years, I could not be more grateful that I broke the barriers of my comfort zone and decided to run for a position on the NJHA Board. It has truly given me the opportunity to challenge myself and grow every day.

Everyone is a leader

This journey on the board taught me the true power of influence. Wearing the maroon jacket is not something to take lightly because it is an opportunity to serve and influence those around you. Nearly every person who runs for the board does so because as a young person, he/she looked up to those that wore the maroon jackets.

I was encouraged to run for the same reason. However, you

do not need to be in a leadership position to influence and lead those around you. Leadership is an action. Leadership is motivation and



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influence. To lead, you must push yourself and motivate those around you to the highest level.

I am beyond blessed to have been surrounded by an incredible group of young leaders. Just as iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another. It is important to keep that in mind when choosing who you spend time with.

Reasons to be grateful

Every day, find something for which to be grateful. The past three years have taught me a lot about juggling priorities. With

that said, I cannot thank those people enough who have helped me along the way. I'm grateful for my parents and siblings for keeping things going at the home front, keeping the cattle up to par and always offering a listening ear and words of encouragement. I'm grateful for our courageous and wise advisors, who spend just as much time as we do to benefit the NJHA. Finally, I'm grateful for all those who served with me over the past three years. Countless hours and many brainstorm sessions from the junior board have led to continued growth for our association, and I could not be prouder.

Serving on the NJHA Board has been a blessing beyond measure. I am truly grateful for the opportunity to serve an association of this caliber and be a part of the Hereford family. **HW**