

Donors Make the Sky the Limit for Hereford Juniors

Faces of Leadership — an immersive educational and personal growth opportunity — drew 92 National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA) members from 22 different states and Canada. This year's conference was in Billings, Mont., Aug. 3-6. "Sky's the Limit," was the theme.

Juniors toured Hereford operations in Big Sky Country,



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listened to inspirational and educational speakers, participated in sessions hosted by the NJHA board of directors, toured the iconic Public Auction Yards with owner, Joe Goggins, and rafted on the Yellowstone River.

Insightful leadership lessons were provided by the keynote speakers. Amanda Radke, NOLZ Limousin, kicked off the sessions with an emphasis on being leaders in the industry and sharing agriculture's story with the public.

"More important than your passion is to find your purpose," Radke explained. "Passions can change, but your purpose will not."

Leading a purpose-driven life was emphasized in the Hereford ranch tours.

Denton Stapleton, Clinton, Ill., and his twin brother, Clayton, both attended the Faces of Leadership conference for the first time and shared a special story about themselves. Both were diagnosed with cerebral palsy at a young age. One thing about Amanda's talk that stuck out to Denton: "Go out and be your authentic self while making connections." He does this every day, creating a social media following as he shares parts of his daily life and the obstacles he overcomes.

The first evening was spent at Mohican West Polled Herefords, Laurel, Mont., where NJHA members had the opportunity to see Mohican Blueprint 69B. The next day brought tours of ORigen, Billings, Mont., where juniors saw how the company manages bulls and provides opportunities for seedstock and commercial producers. Attendees then traveled to L Bar W Cattle Company, in Absarokee, Mont. There, they heard from McKenzie Johnston of Nebraska, before going on a hayride to see more



Denton Stapleton, Clinton, Ill., along with his twin brother, Clayton, were able to attend the Faces of Leadership conference for the first time.

cattle. L Bar W Cattle Company provided high-quality viewing of Line 1 Hereford females as well as a strong line of F1 Hereford-Angus cross cattle.

The NJHA board of directors prepared for the event for months leading up to the days in Montana, and hosted workshops throughout the week for the attendees. Workshops ranged from a personality test to assess leadership strengths to lessons assisting with change and learning individual habits, rituals and patterns.

The closing keynote speaker, Cheryl Mitchell, joined the attendees during the entire event, participating in each tour and activity, as well as coaching the NJHA board of directors on the proper way to host their workshops. By attending the different aspects of the conference, she was able to bring highlights of the week into her keynote, using the white water rafting as an analogy, the tours as learning material and the speakers as inspiration.

“Your mind is the most powerful organ that you have,” Mitchell said, as she emphasized the importance of being a good leader and taking care of your body, mind and spirit, in order to lead others. “It is where you win and lose every decision, every choice in your life. From the minute you get out of bed, you make 35,000 decisions each day all within your mind. So how are you using it and strengthening it?”

While attending Faces of Leadership, Mitchell used a photo of her father, an Illinois dairy farmer, to describe the face of a leader.

“Hearing about Cheryl’s dad helped me realize that anything is possible, and the sky is the limit,” Clayton Stapleton said. “As a kid, I wanted to be a cop, but didn’t think I could do it with my disability, but I now realize anything is possible if I put my mind to it.”

Foundation for the future

The Faces of Leadership conference is funded in part by the Hereford Youth Foundation of America (HYFA) and Rick and Bonnie Coley-Malir through their Coley-Malir Leadership Endowment.

“Rick and I feel like we were so blessed to grow up in organizations like this, and we wanted to give back,” Bonnie said. “We’re providing opportunities not just in the showing or breeding cattle; we’re providing opportunities for education and leadership development.”



Faces of Leadership conference attendees view cattle at L Bar W Cattle Company.



Hereford juniors pose for a picture after touring the Public Auction Yards in Montana.

The Malirs attended this year’s conference in Billings and were rejuvenated by the excitement and involvement of young Hereford people.

The 2023 Faces of Leadership conference will be hosted in the Malir’s hometown of Columbus, Ohio. Stay tuned for more

information regarding next year’s conference, where participants will prepare to be the best leaders they can be. **HW**

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More than 90 NJHA members attended the 2022 Faces of Leadership conference in Billings, Mont.