

# BRIDGING the Gap

**Networking event allows young people to meet potential educators and employers.**

by *Libby Rushton*



**B**ridging the Gap is one of the highlights of my week each year at the VitaFerm® Junior National Hereford Expo (JNHE). Bridging the Gap allows junior members to connect with industry professionals from across the country. Since its debut in 2019, countless junior members have had the opportunity to step out of their comfort zone and take a step toward their future, whether it be through internships or career opportunities. Throughout the years, Bridging the Gap has changed and evolved, with the 2022 event being unlike any other.

In 2022, Bridging the Gap included speed networking roundtables, which allowed participants to make the most of their time. Last year's event included many agricultural businesses, colleges, graduate programs and more. Whether you were still in high school looking for continued-education options or a college student looking for a job

or internship, there was truly something for everyone. The excitement for the event was strong as participants arrived with resumes in hand, ready to network and learn about future opportunities.

Julia Studer, Frankfort, Kan., attended the event and says, "Bridging the Gap was an excellent way for many other juniors

and myself to meet with employers to learn about future internships and potential job opportunities within the industry. I enjoyed getting to meet with companies to learn more about their programs and expand my industry knowledge while networking with others."

Each year, National Junior Hereford Association members participate in competitions at JNHE to improve their knowledge and

leadership skills, which will serve them well in the future. Along with increasing these skills, events like Bridging the Gap allow young people to put those skills to the test in a real-world setting and make connections with future employers and colleagues.

"Bridging the Gap gives Hereford youth the chance to speak with industry professionals to gain perspective on real-world opportunities," says Salem Sifford, Goldvein, Va. "It was great for me because I had the chance to speak one-on-one with people from all across the agricultural industry, gaining knowledge for future internships and job opportunities." Participants like Salem have seen firsthand the experience Bridging the Gap gives and what it has to offer our membership.

I have attended Bridging the Gap every year since it first began, and every year my connection and networking skills grow. It provides the perfect opportunity to learn more about



different colleges, majors and internships. Each person I have visited with offers a different perspective and experience in the agricultural industry. As the years have passed, I have been able to stay connected with the employers I have met through Bridging the Gap, and I will be

able to utilize these connections as I begin my post-college job search. It can be intimidating at times to walk up to someone who could be your future employer, but making the first step is all it takes. That first step could be the first one toward your future. Speed networking roundtables

will be part of Bridging the Gap again this year. We are looking forward to more schools, more industry professionals and more connections to make. Don't miss out on Bridging the Gap this summer at the 2023 JNHE "Mad Dash to the Hereford Bash" in Madison, Wis. **HW**

## **PENNY** for a Cause

### The National Hereford Queen gathers funds during JNHE to support mental health.

by *Madison Katzenberger*

Fellow Hereford enthusiasts, I know you have all had a very busy winter show season and are diligently preparing for your state and regional preview shows as you start your "Mad Dash to the Hereford Bash" here in my home state of Wisconsin. The Wisconsin Junior Hereford Association and I are very excited to host you all at the Alliant Energy Center, Madison, Wis., for the 2023 VitaFerm® Junior National Hereford Expo (JNHE).

As the National Hereford Queen, I have the opportunity to organize a service project to give back to the community.

This year, I will be hosting a Penny War. Like other fundraisers you may have seen in your community, there will be five separate containers for five Hereford celebrities. Place any loose change or bills in your favorite container. The winner will



be announced during the Thursday afternoon awards ceremony where they will be "crowned" with a cheese head — in true Wisconsin fashion. Be ready to empty that

**“All proceeds will go to TUGS: Talking, Understanding, Growing, Supporting, an organization specializing in mental health coaching and support for struggling individuals.”**

cupholder full of change; the Penny War will start during trailer check in and will end Wednesday morning. All proceeds will go to

TUGS: Talking, Understanding, Growing, Supporting, an organization specializing in mental health coaching and support for struggling individuals. Your support is deeply appreciated, and I look forward to crowning the winner of the Penny War. So, come prepared and be competitive.

To all my young, future Hereford queens, please join me for my Queen's Tea, where we will build a buddy. This activity allows my fellow queens, princesses and aspiring youth to build themselves a friend that will be with them always. I look forward to seeing everyone back in Wisconsin and am excited to share my passion for the Hereford breed with all of you. **HW**