

Youth Movement | **Saying Goodbye**

The Greatest Life

by **Hannah Pearson**

“If you want any one thing too badly, it’s likely to turn out to be a disappointment. The only healthy way to live life is to learn to like all the little everyday things.”

- Gus McCrae,
“Lonesome Dove”

If you’ve watched “Lonesome Dove” or read the book, you know that Gus loves to live life to the fullest by making the most of any situation. I’ve loved this movie from the first time I saw it. The movie’s message helped form my outlook on life. Like Gus, I try to always find enjoyment in the little things.

Reflecting on my time on the National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA) board



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of directors, the little things made this one of my greatest life experiences, from the small conversations that turned into lifelong connections, to special details and all the small things.

Small talk turns into big connections

I’m an introvert. When I was a kid, I would stay at the stall with my cattle and avoid most social gatherings. Being alone is how I keep my battery charged. During my time on the board, I began to appreciate the fact that it seems to take a little longer after each show or conference to recharge my battery.

When I ran for the board, I set a goal to get out of my comfort zone and make more connections. Those little conversations I had while campaigning led to lifelong connections. It might have been the longest week in my life with all the small talk, but I learned and met more juniors that week than ever before. Little did I know when I decided to show a Hereford heifer, like it or not, this introvert would be making connections.

The devil is in the details

We all know the saying, “The devil is in the details,” but did you know it comes from an earlier saying of “God is in the details?” This saying means that everything you do should be done thoroughly and that the details matter.

During my time on the board, I have seen the importance of doing things thoroughly and focusing on the details. This attention to details makes NJHA stand out among other junior livestock associations. The Faces of Leadership in Ohio cemented the value of minute details. When we visited our gracious hosts Rick Malir and Bonnie Coley-Malir at



Hannah Pearson, retiring NJHA leadership chair

their home, they had two large boards with hundreds of thank-you notes covering them. You could find notes from past NJHA board members and many more from different organizations, like FFA. It hit me hard that Rick and Bonnie treasured a detail as small as a thank-you note.

From the little things that Amy Cowan, Bailey Clanton and Chloé Durian have taught us about working in the showring to the hours they dedicate to helping us plan leadership workshops, it’s about ensuring the details are right for the juniors to have their best experience. As I begin to start my journey into adulthood and a career, I will always try my best to work on those little details.

It’s the little things

I’m just a girl from central Nebraska that really loves Hereford cows, old Westerns and art. As I learn my place in the “real world,” I try to make more time to focus on the little things in my day that make it better. For example, a good coffee or something to give me a laugh. These little things grow into a happy life. The little things build into great things.

I cannot thank the Hereford family enough for all the little and big things they have done for me. I truly can't thank everyone enough for giving a ranch girl from Nebraska a chance to serve the best breed.

Hereford juniors, I challenge you to focus on the little things to make a big connection, focus on the details and live a great life. The NJHA's little things have made my time a truly once-in-a-lifetime experience.

Connection. Leadership. Involvement.

by *Lauren Jones*

As I reflect on the end of my term with the National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA) board, I keep coming back to the primary pillars I established at the beginning of this journey: the importance of building connections, fostering leadership and encouraging involvement. This journey has never been about personal recognition, but rather inspiring the next generation of juniors and providing unwavering support to current members. My journey as a second-generation Hereford breeder has been shaped by the opportunities presented to me by my family, state association, community and the remarkable individuals I've met along the way.

Over the last three years, I have had the opportunity to refine and develop my guiding principles. I hope I have lived them every day and can leave the NJHA members with some words of encouragement.

Connect with others

Building connections is not just about networking; it's about creating a community of support and encouragement. From the moment I decided to run for the NJHA board, connecting with fellow juniors has been a priority. As I look back at the memories captured from the 2021 VitaFerm® Junior National Hereford Expo (JNHE) when I campaigned and my following three years of

service, I am reminded of the power of friendship and the joy that comes from caring for one another. My hope is that by setting an example of reaching out and building relationships, I have inspired other juniors to step out of their comfort zones, embrace new opportunities and cultivate lasting friendships that will enrich their lives. While meeting individuals is relatively easy, the challenge lies in nurturing those connections.

Seize every opportunity

If you've ever found yourself hesitating at the threshold of a new opportunity or contemplating stepping out of your comfort zone, I urge you to seize the moment. Embrace every chance that presents itself, for each new experience has the potential to lead you down paths you never imagined. Remember, the worst that can happen is a simple "no," so why not take that leap of faith and see where it takes you?

Be positive and persevere

The way we speak to ourselves holds immense power. I firmly believe that with confidence, anything is achievable. I remember the hesitation I felt when I presented at my first Faces of Leadership and Hereford Homeroom. When we have faith, we can accomplish anything. Stay optimistic, as positivity is contagious.

Be a lifelong learner

Growth is a lifelong journey with a perpetual learning curve, with opportunities for knowledge at every turn. No matter where you are in life, staying open-minded and hungry for learning is crucial for personal and leadership development. Embrace every chance to broaden your horizons, challenge your beliefs and explore perspectives. Stay curious, keep seeking knowledge and never waver in your quest for learning.

Be a gritty leader

Grit is one of my favorite words. I think of it as determination, courage and strength all in one. I believe it is instrumental in accomplishing your goals. Gritty leaders will bend but not break in the face of challenges. They



Lauren Jones, retiring NJHA communications chair

embody unwavering determination to overcome any hurdle. These leaders not only navigate obstacles, but also inspire others with their resilience and strength.

Thank you, NJHA

I truly do not know where I would be today without the NJHA and the people in the Hereford breed. I thank God for giving me the opportunity to drape the maroon jacket over my shoulders and providing me with a platform to serve the "Hereford family" I love so dearly. I have gained lifelong friendships, one-of-a-kind experiences and personal growth. Most of all, I hope I was able to accomplish my goal of inspiring others and fostering connection, leadership and involvement among our association, so that we can continue to grow a pipeline of leaders to keep our breed strong for years to come. Although the end of my time on the board feels very bittersweet, I know this is not the end of my journey in the Hereford breed, and I look forward to staying around for a long time.

I extend my heartfelt appreciation to Bailey Clanton, Amy Cowan and Chloé Durian for their leadership, the 2021 delegates who placed their trust in me to guide the NJHA, all of my fellow board members past and present, my family for their unwavering support and guidance and all those who have played a part in this remarkable journey. **HW**