

A Simple Goodbye

by *Kaylee McInvale*

“Success is no accident. It is hard work, perseverance, learning, studying, sacrifice and most of all, love of what you are doing or learning to do.”

-Pelé

Hard work has helped me accomplish everything I have done. I set goals and put my mind to it.

Reflecting on my time with the National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA) board of directors, so many things, lessons, memories and experiences come to mind. When I first got onto the board, I immediately opened a Word document and started writing my retirement address. This might sound strange, as I

hadn't been on the board long enough to be thinking about that. However, I wanted to be able to recount everything I did on the board and not dismiss any details or experiences I had during these last three years.

Chaos is a blessing

Honestly, I had no clue what I had signed up for until the week I spent living it during the 2022 VitaFerm® Junior National Hereford Expo (JNHE) while running for a director position. I had always seen JNHE and the junior board's work from an outside perspective, but that week gave me hands-on experience.

At that time, it was hard for me to go with the flow, as everything in my mind followed a perfectly set time and path. As one of only four candidates, we were pulled in all directions. I had to learn, adapt and become quick on my feet. This opportunity shaped me as a person, and now, I am much more comfortable handling things thrown my way. Amid the chaos, I can say that the memories and the people make everything worthwhile.

Adapt and move forward

I am very goal-oriented and like to have everything follow a designated path. If there is a will, then there is a way. During my campaign, the flyers and things I had planned for delegates just didn't work out; I had to adapt and keep going. The following summer, when I ran for a leadership position, I didn't receive one. Then last summer, I ran a second time and didn't receive one once again; I was crushed. This was not what I had imagined, and this wasn't what I had planned. I realized that, once again, I was needed elsewhere for my team.



Kaylee McInvale, retiring NJHA director

These past three years, I had to do a lot of realizing that the things I had set for my path required a few detours. I am grateful for the personal growth these adventures provided for me.

Sometimes, thank you is just not enough

The number of thank you cards I sent while on the junior board was astronomical. And one thing is for sure — a ‘thank you’ is never enough. The amount of support the NJHA receives is grand. The list of people who stand behind every one of us is huge. I cannot say thank you enough. Thank you to the state associations, and the members and advisors who continuously pushed us to do and be better.

Thank you to the associations and groups that helped provide scholastic opportunities to me. Thank you to the royalty program at the state and national level. My world wouldn't be the same without the women who pushed and supported me throughout my National Hereford Queen and maroon jacket journey.



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Thank you to the American Hereford Association's Jack Ward and Shane Bedwell for helping push the NJHA as well as providing opportunities for our junior members. Thank you to the Hereford Youth Foundation of America board.

I want to thank Gary and Kathy Buchholz for their unwavering support. From the time when I was just a little thing running around at the Texas State Hereford Show to my reign as the National Hereford Queen the Buchholz family tirelessly supported junior members, the JNHE and the NJHA board.

To Amy Cowan, Bailey Clanton and Chloé Durian: thank you. I cannot put into words the depth of my gratitude. Thank you to past and present board members for always pushing us. Last, but not least, thank you to my parents and my sister. None of this would be possible without you. Thank you for always helping me be the best I can be.

A Life-Changing Experience

by Isaac Rhode

Serving on the National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA) board of directors has been a life-changing experience for me. Over the past three years, I have traveled, met many people and had doors opened to new opportunities. I have organized contests, led workshops, written columns and been soaking wet at the bottom of a dunk tank. However, I have spent most of my time wearing a maroon jacket and working the showing at Hereford shows across the country.

Working the showing can be an exhausting job. My feet hurt at the end of every show, but with that pain comes a front-row seat to watching NJHA members grow, learn and achieve their goals. When a class enters the showing, I can always pick out the kids that will need extra help and encouragement. Sometimes their heifer won't go. Sometimes their heifer won't stop. Sometimes they just need to know that I have their back. I have watched small and shy 9- and 10-year-olds needing a helping hand in the showing grow into confident and capable teenagers that know how to present their animals to the judge.

Seeing these juniors grow and develop on their journey has helped cultivate my growth, too. I have learned about myself, my strengths and weaknesses, and navigated my own journey out of the NJHA and into adulthood. I have been inspired by every kid I've helped in the showing to work hard, persevere and never quit until I reach my goals. I will forever be thankful to all the NJHA members who have helped me become a better version of myself than I was three short years ago.

Watching juniors grow outside the showing has been another rewarding experience for me. Between educational sessions at the Fed Steer Shootout to the Faces of Leadership conference, I have been amazed with the potential of our Hereford junior members and the leaders we are building every day. From the support our programs receive from the Hereford Youth Foundation of America to the breeders that support its mission and goals; both have been game-changing for our breed. Future beef industry leaders are being made in our programs, and I am confident that these members will make their mark in our industry.



Isaac Rhode, retiring NJHA director

Thank you to all the junior members who have made the last three years the most fun anyone could ever have. Thank you to my fellow board members, past and present, for their teamwork and friendship. The lifelong relationships we have built are very special to me and always will be. Thank you to the parents, advisors and American Hereford Association staff that have guided me through my junior board years. Your wisdom, patience and love have given me strength at times when I needed it the most. The people I have met and lessons I have learned will stay with me as I continue my journey of life. **HW**

