

# THE SPOTLIGHT NEWSBLAST



JANUARY EDITION

New Jersey Future Business Leaders of America



## The Spotlight Newsblast!

Thank you to everyone that submitted articles for this month's Spotlight. Due to an overwhelming number of articles, we were unable to publish all of them. If your article is not in this month's publication, look out for it next month!

Remember to continue submitting articles at:  
<https://goo.gl/forms/jq6KEBaKZBDG2Nw63>

We hope you will be able to gain new ideas for chapter initiatives and community service projects from the incredible events hosted by these New Jersey FBLA chapters!

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## Wallkill Valley Regional H.S. John Spadora's Experience in FBLA

When I went to my freshman orientation just over a year ago, I told myself that I did not want to get involved in anything. I figured my one activity could be band; but since that was a regular class, I was fixed on being what is known as a “two-thirty person.” This meant that I wasn’t really involved in anything and went straight home at the bell. When we had gotten back from our winter break, one of the juniors at the time who I was friends with had mentioned to me that I should join FBLA. My first question was, “What’s that?” I had heard of it on morning announcements, but I didn’t really know what it was. I assumed it was similar to student council or something of that nature. After he gave me a brief explanation of the organization, which turned out to be much larger than what I thought it was, I still wasn’t so sure of joining. I was afraid to join something I wasn’t committed to. As a last effort, he knew I liked to travel, so he explained what a leadership conference was; and I thought it sounded fun. I went to my first local chapter meeting in January of 2018. I had no idea I was taking the first step in one of the greatest journeys available to the modern student.

At the end of the meeting, the junior who convinced me to join introduced me to the chapter adviser, Mrs J. The stress I had from the impressive level of professionalism from our local officers had gone away when I saw how friendly they were when the meeting was over. Another thing that made me feel welcomed from the start was the kind character of our adviser who we are all lucky to have. Before I left the meeting, I somehow had been convinced to sign up for parking.

Our first parking event that I attended was the Crawfish Festival located at the Sussex County Fairgrounds. Parking is a favorite of all of our members, and I soon found out why. Our chapter helps with various events by putting on a vest, grabbing a flag, and directing cars to park on vast, sometimes unmarked, fields. It is a challenging work, but we have loads of fun doing it. Looking back at a perfectly straight line of cars and realizing that was your work is very rewarding. Finally, it gives us a great experience of working with the general public. This applies to all parking events. Sometimes, unfortunately, people can become irrational and parking teaches us how to appropriately deal with it and be accommodating without breaking any rules. We had the comforting protection of the Sussex County Sheriff’s Department if anything got too out of hand.

I had just missed the signups for the National Leadership Conference in Baltimore, which I was a little disappointed about; but I soon got over it. After all, we had parking for the State Fair coming up, and I was really excited for that. It was a lot bigger than the Crawfish festival, but that made it all the more fun.

When school started back up, I was awarded with the chapter FBLA Member of the Month, which I later found out was because of my ability to recruit new members. Not too long after school started, we had our Super Night event, which is our way of raising money for the March of Dimes. We are all locked in the school from the evening on Friday until the next morning, with many fun activities to do; and right around the corner was the event I had been looking forward to--the National Fall Leadership Conference in Chicago.

## Walkkill Valley Regional H.S. John Spadora's Experience in FBLA (continued)

I had no idea what to expect at the NFLC, but I was so excited. I enjoy flying, so I was excited for that; but I was most excited to see a new city and see what FBLA really had to offer in its fullest. When I left my house at 2:30 in the morning on November 1, I wasn't even tired because of how excited I was. Our shuttle to the airport left around 3:00 a.m.; and after an enjoyable flight, we landed around 8:00. We dropped off our luggage and went off to eat breakfast. Over the first two days we did many different things including a science museum, a boat tour, SkyDeck in Willis Tower, and more. After the Opening Session, I was a little intimidated by the large amount of people and the fact that I wasn't sure what to do. Once I figured out what I was supposed to be doing, the routine became natural and I was having a stellar time. After all of our workshops and dropping by the Marketplace to get my FBLA logo jacket, it was almost time to go. I was sad that the NFLC was coming to an end, but I had a great time and made lifetime memories with people who I hadn't know a year ago, who I now call friends.

Up next was the Breakfast with Santa that the FBLA runs. This was the first event that I volunteered to chair. Halfway through my planning, I decided I needed someone to delegate the workload to and recruited a co-chair. We worked hard with planning, decorating, and collecting donations; and despite a recent event followed by a snowstorm, it went exceptionally well. Soon after, I participated in competitive events. I competed in political science; I didn't place, but I learned a whole lot about the field.

From the start of the school year, I have been Co-Chairing the chapter's Community Service Project along with that same junior who recruited me and who is now a senior. As we are close friends, we make a great team for the project; and we are both looking forward to the State Leadership Conference and making our presentation.

People often ask why I try so hard to recruit members. I don't do it to get Member of the Month; to be honest, I didn't even know that existed until I received it. I do it because I want other people to see how many amazing, life-changing opportunities FBLA has. I do it because I want my peers to be a part of this great organization. FBLA has so much to offer between events and projects, many of which are quite challenging, but well worth it. I encourage anyone I can to come to a meeting and see what it's all about. I constantly try to remind them that I too was hesitant to join, and it is now very important to me. I believe there is something for everyone, especially because of how flexible it is. Joining Future Business Leaders of America was one of the best decisions I've ever made; and when I look back to high school in 40 or 50 years, I will think of this organization, and I will smile. I will smile not because of what I did for FBLA, but because of what FBLA did for me.

It is clear John Spadora has had an incredibly fulfilling FBLA experience from community service projects to conferences and been an instrumental aspect of Walkkill Valley Regional High School FBLA Chapter's success especially in membership recruitment. We wish him the best of luck as he continues forward with his FBLA journey!

## **Pequannock Township High School Has Been Busy... The First Pequannock FBLA Middle-Level Chapter**

The Pequannock FBLA Chapter has given countless high schoolers the opportunity to learn and develop business skills over the years. These same opportunities are now accessible to those within the Pequannock District Middle School. Pequannock's first Middle Level general membership meeting took place in the cafeteria of Pequannock Valley Middle School on October 17th, 2018 at 3 PM. Before the beginning of the meeting, middle schoolers were given the opportunity to converse with various members of Pequannock's FBLA Executive Board.

To commence the meeting, the Executive Board formally introduced themselves to the attending middle schoolers. They then discussed the opportunities provided by FBLA, such as business, social, and leadership skills, competitions, various educational programs, community service, and travel. They also introduced an ice breaker. The icebreaker of "Marble Madness" reduced the middle schoolers' anxieties; it also taught them the importance of communication skills and teamwork. "Marble Madness" consists of two opposing teams creating a path for a marble with PVC pipes which require team members to continuously shift to the end of the line in order to drop the marble in a bucket approximately 20 feet away. Once the activity was finished, FBLA Executive Member Paul Acquaviva led students through a discussion that examined the skills needed to successfully complete the task.

## **"Jeans Day" - Pequannock FBLA's March of Dimes Fundraiser**

The Pequannock FBLA Chapter has partnered with March of Dimes in order to raise money for their cause. The March of Dimes is a charitable organization committed to preventing birth defects and infant death. The organization works toward its mission through education, advocacy and research aimed at prenatal health, genetics and birth defects.

On Friday, November 30th, the Pequannock FBLA chapter coordinated a fundraiser, "Jeans Day," with Pequannock High School teachers. To support the cause of March of Dimes, teachers wore jeans and donated \$5 in a basket set out in the school's main office in exchange for a March of Dimes wristband.

Throughout the day, teachers could be spotted proudly strutting in their jeans, absolutely delighted to be supporting such a good cause.

The "Jeans Day" fundraiser raised over \$80 in the small high school, and all proceeds were donated to the March of Dimes Organization.

## Pequannock FBLA Hosts Holiday Festival

This year, the Pequannock FBLA Chapter's Community Service Committee chose to fund a child's wish through the Elle Foundation. The child chosen is the adorable Ty, whose wish is to see the Radio City Rockettes. The Pequannock FBLA Chapter was able to find her through the Elle Foundation. The Elle Foundation's website explains that they are "the only wish granting organization whose primary mission is to grant wishes for children with a recurrence of cancer. Granting final second wishes requires an extraordinary financial commitment." The Pequannock FBLA Chapter's Community Service Committee leaders, Alyssa Romano and Holly Padko, kept in touch with the Elle Foundation's President and Chairman, Laurie Richmond, in order to coordinate funding Ty's wish.

The Pequannock FBLA Chapter gathered funds for Ty through a Holiday Festival event. The event took place in Pequannock Township High School, on December 14 from 5:30 to 8 P.M.. The event was open to Pre-K through Grade 5 students, who were charged \$5 admission. The children could partake in fun activities in 4 different holiday inspired rooms: Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter. All rooms were decorated to the nines by volunteers and executive board members. All proceeds from the event are being donated to fund Ty's wish. They look forward to hearing about her experience at Radio City Hall!



## **Pequannock FBLA Hosts Food Drive**

The Pequannock FBLA Chapter is dedicated to supporting its community. For the holidays this year, the Pequannock FBLA Chapter held a Food Drive to assist the Pequannock Township Food Drive. The Food Drive was held on December 12.

The First Reformed Church of Pompton Plains, another sponsor of the Pequannock Township Food Drive, describes the food pantry as such: “The Pequannock Township Food Pantry is a project that is sponsored by over 17 different organization in Pequannock, Pompton Plains, Lincoln Park and the surrounding communities. It is housed in Friendship Hall at First Reformed Church and serves over 90 families in our community. Neighborhood donations enable us to provide food, paper goods, cleaning agents, personal care items, and gift cards for fresh produce to local residents.”

The Pequannock FBLA Chapter’s Food Drive collected numerous donations during their monthly General Membership Meeting held on December 12. Members were told that if they brought in two cans for the Drive, they could receive a free slice of pizza at the meeting.

The Chapter’s members, however, surpassed that expectation: The majority of students that brought in cans had more than 2 to donate. The Chapter is delighted to donate this sum of cans of food to their local food pantry.

## **Pompton Lakes Educates on Depression and Anxiety**

The Pompton Lakes Chapter of FBLA has been working hard to fight against the epidemic of mental illness throughout the nation. Although not talked about, the presence of anxiety and depression is evident within our school and community. Committed members made captivating presentations in the elementary, middle, and high schools, educating the students about the warning signs and effects of depression and anxiety and the many resources that are available to anyone who experiences these signs. The chapter also worked alongside town officials and the local Board of Education to pass a resolution certifying the Pompton Lakes School District as a Stigma-Free School District, being the first district in Passaic County to do so. This achievement, along with other work in conjunction with the Board of Ed, has allowed our chapter to spread our message throughout a majority of our community. Pompton Lakes FBLA will continue to work towards continuing the conversation in hopes of helping others battle their depression and anxiety.

## South Brunswick FBLA Participates in High School Heroes

South Brunswick High School FBLA participated in the Junior Achievement High School Heroes program. Through High School Heroes the members of the South Brunswick chapter went to a district elementary school to teach the students about the basics of business. High schoolers were assigned to a class and worked together with a corporate member from Johnson and Johnson.

Students were given the opportunity to interact with both children younger than them, and adults in the workforce. High school students were able to be role models to the elementary school students. By being in the position of a teacher and a peer, both responsibility and respect were learned by chapter members. While teaching the elementary school students chapter members learned to voice themselves and to be patient. Becoming the role model places responsibility within the high school students. Chapter members taught the students about money management, wants and needs, and buying and selling. These lessons provided the kids with the basics of business and allowed them to understand the purpose of money. Additionally, members were able to network with the Johnson and Johnson employees and ask about their careers and experiences. Through this JA experience not only were the elementary school students able to be educated about the business world, but the high school students were able to learn from being in a position of responsibility and influence. High School Heroes proved to a rewarding experience for everyone who participated; SBHS FBLA plans to repeat the program next year and expand to other district elementary schools as well.



## Piscataway FBLA Hosts Senior Winter Wonderland

Piscataway's Chapter of FBLA hosted its 3rd annual Senior Winter Wonderland event at the Piscataway Senior Center. FBLA members and officers volunteered to celebrate the Christmas spirit with the senior citizens.

In order to make this event possible, the officer board contacted the Senior Center and arranged a date and time for the event to take place. Through advertising in meetings and our Instagram page, volunteers were recruited and given more details about the event.



The smile on the senior citizens' faces resembled how successful this event was. The volunteers loved doing Christmas crafts and dancing to music with the seniors. Spending a day with a large group of teenagers really made the seniors relive their youth. Both the volunteers and seniors showed interest in hosting an event like this again. It was truly amazing!

## Piscataway FBLA Organizes Haunted High

Every year around Halloween, the Piscataway chapter of FBLA organizes a student-run community event called Haunted High School, where District children and their families can trick-or-treat in a safe, indoor environment at Piscataway High School from 5pm to 7pm. Overall, PHS clubs come together to decorate different classrooms with Halloween themes for younger children to enjoy!

This event took about six weeks to plan! In order to stay organized and on task, FBLA officers and members split into four different committees – decoration, scaring, operations, and cleaning. The decoration committee painted the glass windows in our school to spread the word and planned the layout of FBLA's haunted classroom. On the day of, they spent two hours setting up the classroom as a spooky computer lab. The scaring committee brought the classroom to life. Members of the operations committee were in charge of guiding visitors to the right location and making sure the event is running smoothly.

Throughout all the challenges faced, our chapter successfully raised \$525 for the March of Dimes Foundation, which is a nonprofit organization that works to improve the health of mothers and babies by preventing birth defects, premature birth and infant mortality. Thanks to all the support from student and staff volunteers, administration, and the generous members of Piscataway community who came out and participated, our chapter was able to host a successful event! We hope to do the same next year!

## Absegami High School FBLA Holds First Annual “Alumni Night”

Absegami High School’s Chapter of Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) held its first annual “alumni night” on January 11th in the school’s senior cafeteria.

To celebrate its 5th year as a reactivated chapter, FBLA invited former members who graduated in 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018 back to the school for pizza, desserts and memories. The night began with an ice breaker that matched graduates with current students. Alumni shared words of wisdom, gave updates on college life, and let current members know how to take advantage of the opportunities FBLA and life has to offer.

The current members spoke about the progress and growth the chapter has experienced since being reactivated in the 2014-2015 school year with 36 members. The organization now has 88 active members, had 3 state winners go on to nationals, had a state scholarship winner, has expanded its community service efforts, and has increased its participation in state leadership conferences each year. Additionally, alumni were given information on becoming part of the “professional division” of FBLA and were encouraged to stay connected to the chapter. Both alumni and current members thought the evening was a “great success” and look forward to the next event!



# UPCOMING EVENTS



## Union County Vocational to Host Project Hope - All Chapters Welcome!

The Union County Vocational FBLA Chapter is excited to announce the return of Project Hope! An annual tradition in the North Central Region, Project Hope combines a variety of artistic segments to create an extravaganza of student-led talent to benefit the less fortunate. Project Hope's goal is to raise money for a global or local charity and raise awareness for their causes. More recently, Union County Vocational FBLA has supported more local charities, including "A Birthday Wish." This charity has a goal to give children in foster care a birthday gift and card selected specifically for them. Through generous monetary and physical donations, they have been able to grant hundreds of birthday wishes to children in the New Jersey foster care system. Union County Vocational will partner with them again this April to create an unforgettable night of fun and joy.

Project Hope has attracted students and FBLA members from all over New Jersey and plans to do the same this year. Project Hope has grown to include a fashion show, singing, dancing, lip-sync battles, alumni recognition awards, and open mic comedy. Mixing it up each year, the fashion component features about 15 couples styling different outfits revolving around themes or seasons. Past fashion categories include "90s," "Power Trip," and "Paradise Island." Another segment of Project Hope includes various talents like singing and dancing. The event has been bolstered by shower singers to pre-professional students studying at nationally recognized schools of dance. Faculty members within the district chapter have also pitched in to grow a crowd by performing in student-faculty lip-sync battles. If you are interested in modeling, performing, or partnering with our chapter for this event, please contact Co-Presidents Hannah Bondalo ([hbondalo@ucvts.org](mailto:hbondalo@ucvts.org)) and Jake Roy ([jroy@ucvts.org](mailto:jroy@ucvts.org)) for more information.



## Other Important Dates

Dues Payment Deadline for SLC: February 1st

FBLA-PBL Week: February 3rd-9th

Shark Tank Competition: Business Plan due February 15th

NJ Leaders in Action Scholarship Deadline: February 15th

State Fall Leadership Conference: March 20th-22nd