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National officer celebrates FFA Week in county

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MIDDLETOWN -- National FFA Secretary Landan Schaffert urged his peers Wednesday to pursue their dreams, despite obstacles they may encounter.

Schaffert, who is legally blind, said a doctor told his parents he would never read or write. His parents told him otherwise.

"My parents told me, 'if you work hard and believe in yourself, any dream you have can become a reality,'" Schaffert said at the National FFA Week Breakfast at Middletown High School. "It certainly has been true in my life."

This year's FFA theme, Infinite Potential, suggests each person has unlimited possibilities to make what they desire come true through hard work and determination, Schaffert said. He said the FFA helped him build good character, be organized and think critically.

"FFA has helped me with so many things in life. Believe in your infinite potential to make your wildest dreams realities," Schaffert said.

America has always been the breadbasket of the world, and the people gathered to celebrate the FFA will continue to make it happen, Middletown High School Principal Jay Berno said.

"World population is rising at such a fast rate it will take agriculture to cultivate the soil, produce food and raise livestock to feed the people of the world. And though a lot of people believe these FFA kids don't have the work ethic their parents had, that's not true," Berno said. "These kids have the mental toughness and discipline necessary to be successful in agriculture."

Frederick County Commissioners President Blaine Young attended the breakfast.

"The FFA is an integral part of our community and the future of agriculture," Young said. "Agriculture is still a strong component of Frederick County, and the FFA represents the future leaders of our county and I'm here to show my support."

This year's Infinite Potential theme coincides with FFA's goals, said Mandi Ramsburg, a Walkersville High School FFA alumna.

"Everyone has potential for something they want to do in life, whether it's becoming a veterinarian, an FFA chapter officer or a straight-A student, and FFA helps them meet their goals," Ramsburg said. "I believe our mission says it all: FFA makes a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success."

FFA members look forward to FFA Week all year and work hard to plan fun and exciting activities, said Sarah Shriner, Middletown High School agricultural educator and FFA adviser.

"This breakfast was a way to thank those community members who support them and to mingle with the National FFA officer," Shriner said. "The chapter members received a once-in-a-lifetime chance to meet Landan and to attend his leadership workshops."



Photo by courtesyPhoto

National FFA Secretary Landan Schaffert speaks to state and local FFA students Wednesday during the National FFA Week Breakfast at Middletown High School.

Schaffert's presence in Frederick was part of a six- day stint of visiting FFA students, chapters and leaders throughout Maryland to celebrate National FFA Week.

Following breakfast, Schaffert led an FFA officers workshop at Middletown High School and then traveled to the Frederick Career and Technology Center for lunch, where he participated in a series of afternoon workshops with chapter members in the county.

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