

WELCOME!

The FFA Mission
FFA makes a positive difference
in the lives of students by developing
their potential for premier
leadership, personal growth and career
success through agricultural education.

PAL to PAL is sponsored by Kraft
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WINTER 2001-2002

PAL to PAL

A Newsletter for FFA Advisors and PALS Mentors

The Reading Team

Everyone from First Lady Laura Bush to number crunchers at the Departments of Education and Labor has been speaking out about the importance of teaching the nation's children to read. The numbers speak for themselves—children who have trouble reading are much more likely to drop out and end up in trouble. Did you know that 82 percent of the U.S. prison population never graduated from high school?

A former FFA member who is now teaching third grade in Warden, Washington, teamed up with his agriculture teacher and members of the Warden FFA Chapter to help his students improve their reading skills. "At the beginning of the year, my students were tested on their reading skills and comprehension levels," says Dan Caballero. "Most were below grade level, scoring from .8 to 2.2 (instead of 3)."

Caballero approached Randy Wiggins, the high school agriculture teacher, and discussed the situation. Long story short, the PALS mentors decided to focus

their efforts on improving their elementary mentees' reading skills. Each Friday when the FFA members visited their mentees, they took turns reading to one other. Sometimes the high school student would read to the elementary student, and sometimes it was the other way around.

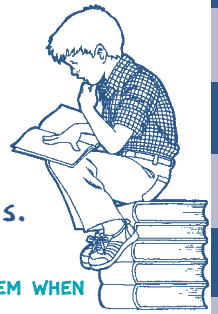
"Everyone enjoyed it," Wiggins says. "They sat on bean bag chairs and the younger children generally selected the books they would read. It was a fun atmosphere and it really helped the high school students by teaching them responsibility. Their outlook on school work changed and they were more motivated to learn."



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ACTIVITY

National Ag Day is March 20. You can help celebrate by teaching your pal how to make a bookmark and helping develop his or her reading skills.



Reading is the foundation for all learning. Research indicates that children who are read to and with have a better vocabulary than their peers. There are many great children's books with an agricultural subject or theme. Select several of these types of books to read with your pal.

Here's a list to consider:

- **CLICK, CLACK, MOO: COWS THAT TYPE** BY DOREEN CRONIN AND BETSY LEWIN, AGES 4-8
- **TWIST AND ERNEST** BY LAURA BARNES AND CAROL A. CAMBURN, AGES 4-8
- **FREDDY AND THE BEAN HOME NEWS** BY WALTER R. BROOKS AND KURT WIESE, AGES 9-12
- **GRANDPA'S JOHN DEERE TRACTORS** BY ROY HARRINGTON
- **FARMER BOY** BY LAURA INGALLS WILDER, AGES 9-12
- **FARMING** BY GAIL GIBBONS, AGES 4-8
- **COWBOY SMALL** BY LOIS LENSKI, AGES 4-8

OBJECTIVE:

High school students work with their elementary pals to develop reading skills and make a bookmark.

SUPPLIES:

Each pair will need the following items, some of which may be shared with other pairs.

- BOOKS
- DICTIONARY
- A COPY OF THE BOOKMARK ON THIS PAGE (130%) OR YOUR OWN DESIGN
- A PAIR OF SCISSORS
- COLOR CRAYONS OR PENS

Of course, you may want to stick with books available in your pal's school library or classroom. If so, attempt to choose books with some relation to agriculture.

Good reading instruction includes working with your pal on letters, sounds and blending sounds. Students learn to blend letters and sounds to form new words. When your pal comes across a word with which he or she is unfamiliar, explaining the word and what it means is very important. Having a dictionary nearby is also helpful so you can look up words together. In fact, even when you know and can explain the new word, helping your pal look it up in a dictionary is a good practice.

When you've finished the book, ask your pal questions about what you've just read. Discussing what they've read reinforces the information and helps children understand that they can learn new things by reading.

After you've read and discussed a book with your pal, work together to make a bookmark. Photocopy the artwork on this page and help your pal cut out, trim and color the bookmark. The children can use the bookmark themselves or give it as a gift. If time allows, read another book with your pal.

FFA members may also want to consider giving reading materials to their pals or donating books to organizations serving children from disadvantaged backgrounds whose homes may not be filled with magazines, newspapers and books. Schools and libraries serving students from disadvantaged backgrounds may also appreciate the gift of new or used children's books throughout the year.

READING COACH TIPS

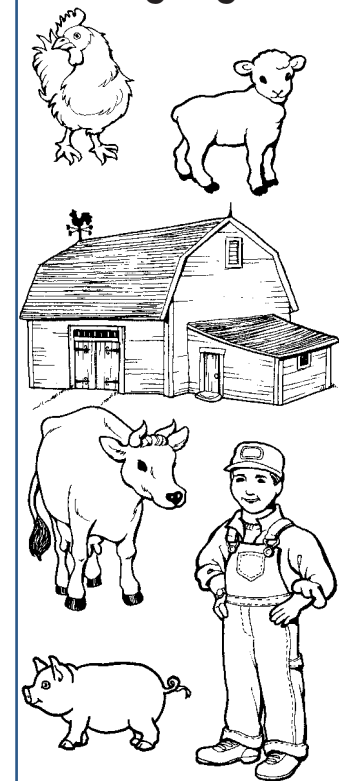
Here are a few more tips to help your pal develop his or her reading skills.

- READ ALOUD TO YOUR PAL OCCASIONALLY. HEARING WORDS ALOUD AND IN COMPLETE

SENTENCES WILL HELP THEM WHEN THEY READ BY THEMSELVES.

- WHEN YOUR PAL DOESN'T KNOW A WORD HE IS READING, HELP HIM EITHER SOUND OUT THE WORD IN CHUNKS OR SYLLABLES OR PUZZLE OUT THE WORD'S MEANING BY LOOKING AT HOW THE WORD IS USED IN THE SENTENCE.
- PLAY WORD GAMES WITH YOUR PAL SUCH AS SCRABBLE, BOGGLE, CROSSWORD PUZZLES AND WORD FINDS.
- POINT OUT HOW HAVING GOOD READING SKILLS HELPS YOU IN DAILY LIFE WITH MAPS, DIRECTIONS, RECIPES, INSTRUCTIONS, SIGNS, MENUS, ETC.

Reading Together



Makes the World Better!





Join the Ag Day Celebration

From sea to shining sea, America's landscapes are as diverse as its people. Land throughout the United States has many different purposes. It is used for schools, city skyscrapers, national parks, grazing cattle, growing crops and its rivers for fishing, dams and transporting cargo. The 2002 National Agriculture Day program celebrates America's diversity of landscapes and how agriculture sows them together and brings harmony to our great land.

Each year, the National Agriculture Day program gathers members of the industry together in an effort to educate consumers about American agriculture. Focused on sharing how agriculture provides almost everything we eat, use and wear on a daily basis, the Ag Day program helps educate millions of consumers each year.

Annually, the agricultural community engages tens of thousands of volunteers and organizations to assist in the education of consumers about the exciting role agriculture plays in our modern lives. Join in March 17-23 and celebrate National Agriculture Week.

Your help is needed to share the story of agriculture with children and consumers. Contact the Agriculture Council of America 913-491-1895 for ways to support this vital effort. Or, visit the Ag Day web site at www.Agday.org for everything from fun facts about agriculture to more information on National Ag Day events.

March 17-23

National Agriculture Week



PERSONAL GROWTH

PALS Mentoring Conference

The smiles were in plentiful supply on October 24 when nearly 500 elementary students were introduced to FFA and its PALS program as part of the 74th National FFA Convention. The elementary students were paired with FFA members from more than 60 chapters.

"It was kind of scary meeting a stranger, but now we are brothers for a day," says Oliver Stewart a third-grade student from Pineview Elementary.

"This is good for us because we can take things we learn here back to our chapter and our local PALS program," explains Brittany Smith of the Bunnell FFA Chapter in Florida.

After meeting their PALS, each pair of pals were presented with a coloring book activity by Really Big Coloring Books, Inc., which was based on FFA and agriculture. Then, they participated in other activities presented by FFA chapters from across the country.

The activities were designed to introduce urban students to the world of agriculture while helping FFA members develop their leadership skills and learn more about the PALS program. One group of students learned how to milk a cow. Another group played "food bingo" and still another made cookies in a bag by mixing the raw ingredients to take home and bake.

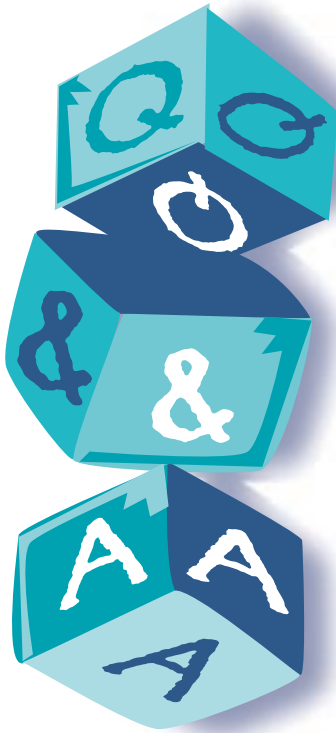
Katy Poth, national eastern region vice president, addressed the PALS conference and urged the FFA members to take advantage of the opportunity. "It takes all of us working together to make an impact on these young peoples' lives," Poth said.

"If the elementary students have experience with PALS, they might like what they see and join FFA when they get older," says Anna Carvo of the Aiken FFA Chapter in South Carolina.

The PALS Conference was sponsored by Greater Louisville, Inc. and The Metro Chamber of Commerce as a special project of the National FFA Foundation. Kraft Foods, Inc. provided lunch for all of the participants as an in-kind contribution.



WORLD HUNGER FACTS



Q The recent war in Afghanistan has brought with it many images of starving people and stories about large groups that do not have the resources to feed themselves. Although food is abundant in the United States, we, too, have citizens who sometimes go to bed hungry. Why are so many people hungry when there seems to be so much food available?

A Virtually every country in the world has the potential of growing enough food on a sustainable basis for its population. However, the issue isn't production, the problem is distribution.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations has set the minimum requirement for caloric intake per person per day at 2,350. Worldwide, there are 2,720 calories available per person per day. Unfortunately, more than 50 countries fall below that requirement; they do not produce enough food to feed their populations, nor are they able to afford to import the necessary commodities to make up the gap. Most of these countries are in sub-Saharan Africa.

In many countries, the problem stems from politics. Civil wars and leaders who rule through keeping their population downtrodden, such as Afghanistan's Taliban, are often at the root of the problem. Early in the war effort, the media carried many stories about how food aid being sent to Afghanistan's people from other countries was

ending up in the hands of the Taliban and being used for the military rather than for starving citizens.

In the United States, there is an elaborate social system to care for people who are down on their luck. However, many people either don't like the system or are suspicious of it and choose to make their way without public assistance. Since the economy is now in a recession, attendance is up at soup kitchens, homeless shelters and other places that serve these people.

Poverty is the main cause of hunger. Poor people often lack land to grow food or have inadequate income to buy food. Nearly one in four people, 1.3 billion—a majority of humanity—live on less than \$1 per day. According to the United Nations, one in twelve people worldwide is malnourished, including 160 million children under the age of 5.

Many hunger experts believe that ultimately the best way to reduce hunger is through education. Educated people are best able to break out of the cycle of poverty that causes hunger. There are many different ways students can make a difference by helping others understand hunger. Kids Can Make A Difference® (KIDS) is an educational program for middle- and high school students that focuses on the root causes of hunger and poverty, the people most affected, solutions and how students can help. For more information, click on [www.kidscanmakeadifference.org]. For more information on world hunger, visit the Bread for the World web site at [www.bread.org/hungerbasics/international.html].



PAL to PAL is the newsletter of PALS (Partners in Active Learning Support), the National FFA Mentoring Program.

The Agricultural Education Mission

Agricultural education prepares students for successful careers and a lifetime of informed choices in the global agriculture, food, fiber and natural resources systems.

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\$25 for Your PALS Program!

We pay \$25 for each idea we publish! If you have an activity idea to share with other PALS programs, send it to *PAL to PAL*, National FFA Organization, P.O. Box 68960, Indianapolis, IN 46268-0960. We hope to hear from you!

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THE READING TEAM, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The same was true of the elementary students. At the end of the year, the students took the Iowa Test of Basic Skills and showed a vast improvement. In fact, by the end of the year all of Caballero's third-grade students were reading at or above grade level.

There are many good programs designed to help young people learn to read and there are many grants available. Caballero's school received a grant from the American Reading Corps with which to

purchase materials and books. However, the bottom line is focusing on the subject and practicing, practicing, practicing by reading, reading, reading.

This particular exercise can be much more enjoyable when youngsters are teamed with older students and it makes a great focus for PALS programs. To find out more about this successful program, contact Wiggins at 509-349-2581, ext. 1348, or Caballero at 509-349-2311, ext. 1538.