

MONTANA FCCLA

July, 2026

News

National Leadership Conference Highlights

Montana FCCLA was well represented at the 2026 FCCLA National Leadership Conference held in Orlando, with 107 members, advisers, and guests in attendance. Conference highlights included networking with others from all across the nation, leadership training for the state officer team, a National Harbor lunch cruise, exploring all that FCCLA has to offer to members, and the election of one of our own, Brock Romero, to the National Executive Council!



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Congratulations to Brock Romero, FCCLA's National Vice-President of Community Service!

While at the 2026 National Leadership Conference in Washington, D.C., Montana's own Brock Romero was elected as the National Vice-President of Community Service. Brock had this to say about his experience:

"Running for an FCCLA National Office has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my leadership journey. Looking back, I realize that the election process wasn't just about earning a position; it was about growing as a leader, building lifelong friendships, and discovering just how much FCCLA means to members across the country. It pushed me outside of my comfort zone in ways I never expected, something that I will never forget.

The journey required months of preparation, from completing my application and studying to preparing my speech, but the most impactful part wasn't the preparation itself, but the people. Before I even arrived at the National Leadership Conference, I

had already started connecting with the other candidates through social media. By the time we met in person, it felt like we were already close friends and teammates rather than competitors. We all wanted the same thing: to serve FCCLA and represent its members in the best way possible. Throughout the week, that feeling only grew stronger. I often heard from most candidates, "Why can't we just have 26 national officers?"

During the election process, we participated in interviews, leadership activities, and countless opportunities to connect with members from across the nation. While every event challenged us in different ways, one of my favorite moments came from simply talking with members. Hearing their stories, learning what FCCLA had done for them, and listening to what they hoped to see from future leaders reminded me why I fell in love with this organization in the first place.

Of course, the week came with its fair share of challenges. There were moments of excitement, nervousness, anticipation, and even disappointment. Watching our new close friends advance while others saw their journeys come to an end was nothing short of emotional, but what stood out most was how every candidate continued to support one another. Even after receiving difficult news, they celebrated others' successes and continued representing FCCLA with positivity and grace. That kind of servant leadership and resilience is something I'll never forget. No matter the election results, I walked away with far more than I ever expected. I gained confidence, strengthened my leadership skills, and formed friendships with incredible people who inspire me every day. Most importantly, I left with a deeper appreciation for FCCLA and the opportunities it provides to every member willing to step outside of their comfort zone."

Congratulations to Brock, his adviser, Ms. Swenson, and his Manhattan FCCLA chapter for this incredible accomplishment!



Brock Romero (MT)
National Vice President of Community Service

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Montana FCCLA Shines at NLC!

Montana FCCLA's presence was well known at the conference--with competitive events results including one first place award, two second place awards, 17 gold medals, 52 silver medals, and 6 bronze medals, with 14% of our STAR Events entries placing in top ten!

Save the date now for the 2027 NLC, June 22-26 in San Antonio, Texas!



Taking first place honors at the National Leadership Conference was Avery from the Manhattan chapter for her Focus on Children STAR Event!



Second place winners at the National Leadership Conference were: Ali, of Moore FCCLA, for in the National Programs in Action STAR Event and Reese from Powell County FCCLA, in the Pastry Arts Technical Decorating Skills Skill Demonstration Event!



Fourteen percent of Montana's competitive events participants qualified for top ten recognition at the National Leadership Conference!



Congratulations to the Manhattan FCCLA chapter and their adviser Ms. Amanda Swenson. The group received the Explore. Act. Tell. national award for their community outreach freezer meals project!

State President, Hannah, accepted Montana FCCLA's Membership Increase Award



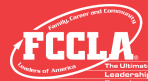
Congrats to Sofia & Emma, and of the Dutton/Brady FCCLA chapter, for participating in the Showcase!



Congrats to Finn of the Ennis FCCLA chapter, for being featured in the NLC Fashion Show!



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Montana FCCLA Shines at NLC!



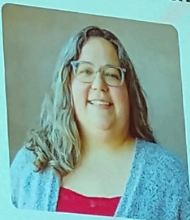
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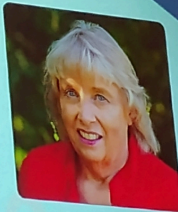
Adviser of the Year Top 15 Semi-Finalists



Jennifer Frye
Mississippi



Jennifer Wray
Mississippi



Cathe Felz
Montana

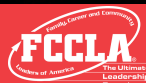
Cathe Felz, of Three Forks FCCLA, was recognized as a top fifteen finalist for Adviser of the Year. Congratulations to all who received recognition at NLC!



Recipients of adviser awards were Amanda Swenson, Manhattan FCCLA, with the Spirit of Advising award and Adviser Academy honors. Lorie Martinez of Columbus FCCLA, was recognized for her Adviser Academy participation.



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Montana FCCLA Shines at NLC!

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It's Time to Register for the Fall Leadership Rally!

Montana FCCLA's Fall Rally is back September 27-28 at the Billings Hotel & Convention Center! Advisers may register three chapter leaders, three State Outreach Project leaders, and three new members, in addition to any District Officers.

Consider arriving to Billings early to check out the optional pre-conference event at ZooMontana! Pre-registration is required.

Facilitating our State Outreach Project Career Connection track will be Lindsey Cobble, of FCCLA's Leadership Training Team. Brooklynn Gross is back to lead our New Leader training, and our keynote speaker Rhett Laubach will share his leadership wisdom with our chapter and district officers in their training.

Attendees will receive a registration gift, as well as training in their designated area.

Registration is now open, with early rates through September 1. The registration system closes September 13. Find more details on the [Montana FCCLA website!](#)



Keynote Speaker & Officer Track: Rhett Laubach



State Outreach Project Track: Lindsey Cobble, LTT



New Leader Track: Brooklynn Gross, LTT Trainer

Chapter Spotlight: Forsyth FCCLA!

In Forsyth, one of our main fundraising events is a Hee Haw Show and Pie Auction. Every November, FCCLA members write a script and the whole school has the opportunity to act in the show. Community members show up to watch a show full of laughs and music and bid on pies that the FCCLA members made. It's a great way to create connections with our chapter, school, and community.

~Harper Icopini, First Vice-President



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Is Your School Ready to Become a ProStart Program?

As we gear up for our annual ProStart Data Collection, we want to encourage all Montana schools offering culinary or hospitality coursework to consider becoming a Confirmed ProStart School. Whether you're already doing great things in your classroom or just beginning to explore culinary curriculum options, this is your opportunity to join a program that opens the door to valuable resources, support, and opportunities for your students.

What Is ProStart? It is a nationally recognized, career-focused culinary and hospitality program designed for high school students. It offers educators access to free curriculum, training, competitive opportunities, and direct connections to industry professionals. But you don't have to compete to be part of the program—you're likely already doing many of the required components in your classroom. Becoming a ProStart school is easier than you think!

 **Myth-Busting Alert:** Think ProStart is only for schools with large programs or competitive teams? Think again! Click to view the [Common ProStart Misconceptions Poster](#) and see how attainable it is for your program to participate and begin their journey to preparation for a career in one of Montana's top industries!

Ready to add ProStart? Here's What You Need to Do:

- Step 1: Watch for the ProStart Data Collection Form, coming your way soon.
- Step 2: If you're not already a confirmed program, fill out the Confirmed ProStart School Educator and Proctor Application. Already a ProStart school? You're all set—just complete the data collection when it's released.

Why Join?

- Access to classroom resources, culinary and educator trainings
- Eligibility for student scholarships and competitions
- State and national recognition
- A strong, supportive professional network
- Increased funding and benefits for Montana schools through expanded participation

We're Here to Support You!

If you have questions or want to learn more, don't hesitate to reach out to jordan@mtfccla.org. Let's work together to grow Montana's ProStart community and give students the tools they need to succeed in the culinary and hospitality industries!



ProStart Certificate of Achievement



Have any of your students been working summer jobs?

Not sure? Ask them! Once students start returning to school, ask them about their summer and see if that includes working a summer job - specifically in the hospitality industry. If they have, they may be well on their way to earning a Certificate of Achievement (COA)! Students who work in the hospitality industry, help with catering events, work concessions at school, and many other related activities are unknowingly gaining invaluable skills that could be checked off a list to help them earn this COA. Some of the traits needed include: proper handwashing, showing up to work on time, measuring ingredients accurately, counting change back correctly, and many other things. While there are some specific technical and culinary skills on the list, it is not as intimidating and advanced as you might think. Earning this can set students apart from the competition in the job market for higher wages or jobs that are past entry-level. We as Montana ProStart will also recognize the efforts of these students at our State Leadership Conference.

Please reach out to me at jordan@mtfccla.org for more information if you think you might have students who meet some of these requirements.

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SEPTEMBER 27-28, 2026



BILLINGS HOTEL &
CONVENTION CENTER

2026 FALL LEADERSHIP RALLY

TRAIN YOUR LEADERS. LAUNCH YOUR CHAPTER. BUILD YOUR PROGRAM OF WORK.

WHERE
LEADERS
ARE MADE



KEYNOTE SPEAKER
RHETT LAUBACH

Inspiring leaders to grow,
connect, and take action.

Learn more about Rhett at
yournextspeaker.com



WHO CAN ATTEND?

- Three Chapter Leader attendees
- Three Chapter Officer attendees
- Three State Outreach Project training attendees.
- Additionally, all District and State Officers, and Chapter Advisers



REGISTRATION

Regular registration fees.
Conference materials, dinner Sunday,
lunch Monday, and an attendee gift!

\$75

EARLY REGISTRATION

Reserve places; add names
between **May 27-September 1**

\$100

REGULAR REGISTRATION

Register your members
between **September 2-13**.



Registration closes **September 13**.

No registration changes can be
made after **September 13**.

All balances are due by **September 20**.



LODGING

- Billings Hotel &
Convention Center
- \$122 per quad room plus taxes;
includes free breakfast
- To register, visit
billingshotelmt.com
or call 406-248-7151.
- Room block is
released **September 1**.



KEY DATES

Sept 1 Early registration deadline
Hotel room block released

Sept 13 Registration closes
No changes after this date

Sept 20 All balances due



PRE-CONFERENCE SPECIAL EVENT!

Arrive early and explore ZooMontana for
only \$5 per person; Pre-registration is
required for this special event.

**Attendees must arrive between
9:30-9:45AM on September 27.**

PARTICIPATION OPTIONS



CHAPTER & DISTRICT OFFICERS

Chapter Officer attendees and District Officers will hone
leadership and teamwork skills, developing plans to enhance
opportunities for their chapter program of work for the year.

- Each chapter may register three attendees for this track,
as well as any FCCLA District Officers from their chapter.



NEW LEADERS

New Leader attendees will explore all that FCCLA offers to
members, developing a personal plan for engagement and
growth during the year.

- Each chapter may register three new chapter leaders
for this track.



STATE OUTREACH PROJECT LEADERS

State Outreach Project training attendees will explore the
FCCLA national program Career Connection, developing a
plan for local outreach projects sharing career exploration and
preparation activities for the year.

- Each chapter may register three State Outreach Project
track attendees.



CHAPTER ADVISERS

Adviser professional development sessions focus on chapter
management, Montana FCCLA programming, and a deep dive
into integrating Career Connection into FCS coursework, as
well as networking and mentorship opportunities. Advisers in
their first three years of advising are encouraged to arrive early
for New Adviser Training, starting at 11:30 on September 27.



Count on the Montana FCCLA Fall Leadership Rally to offer training for your Chapter
and District Officers, New Leaders, State Outreach Project Leaders and professional
development for advisers.

The full conference agenda will be available in late May. Expect the conference to begin
at 2PM on Sunday, September 27 and conclude by 2:30 on Monday, September 28.



**FALL LEADERSHIP RALLY IS
HOSTED BY YOUR 2026-27
STATE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**



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**SECURE YOUR CHAPTER'S SPOT TODAY!
REGISTER ONLINE AT
MTFCCLA.ORG**

