

2008 National Youth Advisory Council

The National Farmers Union Youth Advisory Council (NYAC) represents youth throughout the United States at NFU's annual convention and assists with planning and staffing the organization's All-States Leadership Camp. Each of the individuals profiled was elected by their peers at the 2007 All-States Camp to serve on the 2008 council.

Andrew Bishop



Bishop

Andrew Bishop lives on his family farm east of Brady, Mont., with his father Todd, a teacher and farmer; mother Tedi, a grant director at Dutton/Brady School; sister Raellee, who attends Montana State in Bozeman, and grandmother Doris, who does charcoal paintings and "charity work" on the farm.

Bishop is a freshman studying mathematics and general engineering at Montana Tech, where he also plays football. He graduated as valedictorian from Brady High School in 2007, where he was involved in football, basketball, weight-lifting, track and field, FFA, Positive Action Committee and National Honor Society.

He said he started attending Montana Farmers Union summer camps "as soon as he was able not to cry when he left his family's farm," which was at eight years old. As he grew up Bishop became more involved in Farmers Union activities, including serving on the MFU Senior Youth Advisory Council. At MFU's convention in October, he received the highest honor bestowed to a Farmers Union youth, the Torchbearer Award.

"Farmers Union is a special organization, but it's more than just an organization to me. It has become a part of my life," he said. "No other camps that I have been to have felt more like a family. I look forward to positively leading camp next year and brainstorming on ideas for next year's camp."

Melissa Bushfield

Melissa Bushfield is the daughter of Mark and Mary Ellen Bushfield of Hitchcock, S.D. Her father is a farmer and a member of the South Dakota Wheat Growers board of directors and her mother works in coding and billing



Bushfield

at a local clinic. She is currently a freshman at South Dakota State University, majoring in pharmacy with a double minor in business and biology. The Farmers Union blue and gold carries throughout her life as she is not only involved in the collegiate Farmers Union chapter at SDSU, but also cheers on the football and basketball players as a Jackrabbit Cheerleader.

Bushfield is a 2007 graduate of Hitchcock-Tulare, where she was student body president and yearbook editor and was involved in cheerleading, volleyball, track, drama and the music program.

Bushfield was introduced to Farmers Union early in life by her grandparents and has been hooked ever since, working her way through the youth education program and receiving the Torchbearer Award, as well as serving on the SDFU Junior Advisory Council in 2007.

"I'm really excited to have been chosen to serve on the NYAC. Farmers Union has provided me with so many opportunities to learn and grow as a person and I'm excited to be able to share my experiences with the next generation of Farmers Union youth and be a positive role model for them. Farmers Union is such an amazing organization and I'm honored to be a part of it."

Kyle Danzinger



Danzinger

Kyle Danzinger of Durand, Wis., grew up as an active member of his family's dairy farm and Wisconsin Farmers Union. He has attended numerous Farmers Union day classes and summer camps from a young age. In 2007, he

was elected to WFU's state Senior Youth Advisory Council.

Danzinger is a senior at Durand High School, where he is involved in FFA, football, student council, weight-lifting, choir, Be a Solid Example (B.A.S.E.) and Teens Against Tobacco Use (T.A.T.U). He is also involved in 4-H, his church youth group and various community clean-up projects. He enjoys pursuing his interests of hunting, fishing and farming.

Danzinger plans to attend the University of Wisconsin-River Falls and one day become an extension agent.

Kyle Johnson



Johnson

Kyle Johnson lives on a small "hobby farm" in rural Atwater, Minn., with his father Keith, an agronomist at Hutchinson Co-op, and mother Janell, city administrator for Grove City.

Johnson is a senior at Atwater-Cosmos-Grove City High School, where he is involved in football, basketball, baseball and concert band. He is also involved in 4-H and his church youth group.

He plans to attend Southwest Minnesota State University in Marshall and major in elementary education, with a possible double-major in music, while playing college football.

For six years, Johnson has attended Farmers Union summer camps and helped with Farmers Union fundraisers.

"I'm excited to be able to serve as a member of this year's NYAC," said Johnson. "I want to spread education about Farmers Union to the youth and teach others about what it is. I hope to make the 2008 All-States Camp a fun and memorable place for everyone and make sure the campers have an experience they won't forget."

Kristen Kvalheim



Kvalheim

Kristen Kvalheim of Sun Prairie, Wis., attends the University of Wisconsin-River Falls, where he is studying agriculture education. He is involved in Agriculture Education Society and judging parliamentary procedure contests. He has a work-study program in the meat plant and food science labs processing animals and setting up labs. He is also active in a rock-climbing club, Delta Theta Sigma fraternity and a broom-ball team.

A 2007 graduate of Sun Prairie High, Kvalheim was involved in FFA and wrestling. He was also involved in Boy Scouts, earning the Eagle Scout rank, 4-H, his church youth group and Boys State. He is passionate about farming and playing the guitar.

He has been an active Farmers Union youth member, attending and staffing WFU summer camp, serving on his state Senior Youth Advisory Council and achieving the Farmers Union Torchbearer Award.

"Farmers Union has been a large part of my life, and I am really excited to be on NYAC," Kvalheim said. "The opportunity to go to the National Farmers Union Convention and take part in and learn how the Farmers Union is run on the national level is one I will take advantage of. It is an amazing experience to be on NYAC and have a larger voice in this organization. I hope to use what I have learned and experienced from the opportunities provided by the Farmers Union to educate others when I am an agriculture teacher."

Tirzah Lily



Lily

Tirzah Lily, of Lily, S.D., is a freshman studying English and business at Oklahoma Wesleyan University in Bartlesville, Okla. She hopes to one day become an editor and to work with the illiterate.

Lily graduated from high school in 2007, where she was involved in yearbook,

newspaper and music. In January of 2007, she served as a South Dakota legislative page. She also was involved in writing for a farm newspaper, Girl Scouts, the Buffalo Plains Historical Foundation and multiple church group activities.

During the South Dakota Farmers Union Convention in February, Tirzah will receive the Torchbearer Award, the highest recognition bestowed on a Farmers Union youth.

"Farmers Union means so much to me," said Lily. "Not only has this organization provided me with many leadership opportunities and lifelong friends, but Farmers Union has also given me the experience, confidence and knowledge that will continue to impact me for years to come.

"Being elected to the NYAC is one of the greatest moments in my life," she said. "Serving the Farmers Union organization and my fellow youth on a national level even tops that. I cannot wait to see what is in store for the National Convention and the 2008 All-States Leadership Camp."

Jamie Ottmar



Ottmar

Jamie Ottmar of Mott, N.D., is a senior at Mott/Regent High School.

He is involved in basketball, concert, jazz and pep bands and choir. He is also a member of the local 4-H and church

youth groups.

After high school, he plans to attend North Dakota State University to pursue a major in computer engineering. He hopes to return to rural North Dakota to work.

"It gives me great pleasure to have been elected to the 2008 NYAC," Ottmar said. "I've been going to Farmers Union camps, day classes, and county meetings as long as I can remember. I hope I can use the skills I've learned in the past years to help create an All-States Camp where kids can learn, have fun, and create memories to last a lifetime, much like All-States did for me!"



Valley

Ben Valley

Ben Valley of Sun Prairie, Wis., has been traveling throughout France since graduation from Sun Prairie High School in 2007.

In high school, he was involved in track and field and choir. He also was a teaching assistant at his church Bible school. His interests include guitar, rock climbing, snowboarding and canoeing. He also plays in a band.

His goals include training in wilderness survival emergency medical systems and to be a musician.

Valley attended WFU Kamp Kenwood for 10 years and he worked on the Farmers Union camp staff in the summer of 2007.

"I believe in progress for love and peace in the world and Farmers Union Camp supports those values," Valley said. "I like the idea of inspiring people to do good and progress."

Project Citizenship All-States Leadership Camp July 13-18, 2008

NFU Education Center, Bailey, Colo.

Under the theme "Project Citizenship" you will explore your role as a community and organizational leader, advocate and citizen. You will also participate in outdoor activities, field trips and numerous other activities.

If you are up to the challenge, contact your state Farmers Union office for more information, or contact Laura Johnston Monchuk at 202-742-9410, laura.monchuk@nfu.org