



Ashley Willits

National FFA Eastern Region Vice President

Age: 21

Birthdate: Sept. 4, 1995

Hometown and State: Copenhagen, N.Y.

Parents: Jennifer and Melvin Phelps

Siblings: Ryan Willits, Brandon Phelps, Garrett Phelps, Wyatt Phelps, Brianna Willits

FFA Stats

Chapter: Lowville FFA

Enterprise: Diversified Livestock, Agricultural Processing, Outdoor Recreation

State Office: 2013-14 New York State FFA President

College Stats

Year: Junior

Major: Agricultural Education

School: Tarleton State University, Texas (Morrisville State College, New York, 2014-16)

College Activities: Collegiate FFA, Dairy Club, Agriculture Future of America, Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society, Circle T (Tarleton State University Bible Study)

Future Career Goal: To be an agricultural education teacher.

Ashley Willits believes that it is important to live with passion, love for others and a desire to be secretly incredible.

"I intend to represent this organization in a way that allows me to serve students authentically, help develop strong advocates of the industry of agriculture and build relationships with industry professionals to gain support for FFA," Willits says. "The foundation of FFA is one member making the choice to grow, and I want to be the catalyst that helps students in that process by building personal relationships with them."

Willits was elected to the 2016-17 National FFA Officer Team as the eastern region vice president at the 89th National FFA Convention & Expo.

A student at Tarleton State University majoring in agricultural education, Willits is involved in Tarleton Collegiate FFA and Circle T, a bible study for agriculture majors. While studying agricultural business at Morrisville State College, Willits was involved in Dairy Club, Collegiate FFA, Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society, Dairy Challenge Social Media Team, National Farm Bureau Collegiate Discussion Meet and Agriculture Future of America Leadership Conference. A member of Lowville FFA, she served as New York State FFA District VI President (2012-13) and New York State FFA President (2013-14).

Her supervised agricultural experiences have been in diversified livestock production, agricultural processing and outdoor recreation. Through her diversified livestock SAE, she raised Boer goats and Brown Swiss cattle on her family's farm and exhibited her animals at local and state shows. Her agricultural processing SAE allowed her to learn the fundamental skills of maple syrup production by tapping 50 to 150 maple trees annually and then working with a local producer to process the sap into maple syrup. Through her outdoor recreation SAE, she was a ski instructor at a local ski slope and was trained as a facilitator for the high and low ropes courses at Oswegatchie Educational Center.

As for future plans, Willits says she has always had a passion for educating others about agriculture. "As a young adult, I plan to turn my passion into a career by becoming an agricultural education teacher. I aspire to give students the opportunity to learn about their role in the industry of agriculture and help develop their potential for premier leadership and personal growth and ultimately provide pathways for career success."