

Students to compete at FCCLA national conference

By Lisa Magers/CISD Community Services

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Cleburne High School Family, Career and Community Leaders of America member Allie Wheat is one of nine students who qualified to compete at the FCCLA National Leadership Conference in Nashville. Wheat, with teammates Destiny Vicencio and Kayla Ingram, will compete at the conference as regional and state champions with their project that involved a campus drive to collect jeans for homeless teenagers.

For the third consecutive year, members of the Cleburne High School chapter of Family, Career and Community Leaders of America will compete at the student organization's National Leadership Conference, set for July 12-16 in Nashville.

Cleburne students Sara Shelley, Destiny Vicencio, Allie Wheat, Kayla Ingram, Jordan Kelly, Valeria Aldaz, Fatima Flores, Jared Cappers and Logan Pence qualified for the national contest after achieving first or second places finishes at the state leadership conference held April 21 in Corpus Christi.

The first level of competition began in early spring with statewide regional contests. Shelley enters the national competition as a regional and state champion with her presentation, which publicizes the culinary arts opportunities available to students through membership in FCCLA.

A 2009 CHS graduate, Shelley will study culinary arts at the Charlotte, N.C. campus of Johnson and Wales.

Cleburne's regional and state champions include Vicencio, Wheat and Ingram, all first-year members of FCCLA.

Their entry in the junior illustrated talk event is an overview of their efforts to collect more than 80 pairs of new and gently used jeans for homeless teens in conjunction with the national Teens for Jeans project.

“Our goal in choosing a project relating to the homeless and participating in Teens for Jeans was to promote awareness on our campus and provide assistance,” the three freshmen told members of the CISD City Council of PTAs during a presentation on FCCLA. “The number of homeless in America is growing dramatically. There are more than 1,000 teenagers in the Dallas/Fort Worth area who do not live in their homes. Some are runaways and some are throwaways.”

The Teens for Jeans project is sponsored by clothing retailer Aéropostale and **dosomething.org**. Jeans donated to the program are distributed to shelters and nonprofit organizations across the nation that provide services to the homeless.

The development of an action plan for the CHS Culinary Arts Department’s role as caterer of the Cleburne Chamber of Commerce’s 2009 annual membership banquet earned Kelly and Aldaz regional and state championships.

The pair will compete in the junior life planning event at the national conference. A presentation on the accomplishments and efforts of the CHS chapter of FCCLA over the past school year earned Flores, Cappers and Pence a berth at the national contest, after placing first at regionals and second at state.

They will compete in the senior chapter showcase event.

CHS chapter advisers Ann Lowrie, Michelle Stone, Holly Kelley and LaNae McClure will accompany the students to Nashville and the Gaylord Opryland Convention Center, where the meetings will take place.

There are 215 members involved in FCCLA at Cleburne High School.

This year, the CHS chapter organized 25 teams for participation in the FCCLA’s STAR Awards competition, with entries ranging from culinary arts to community service.

Family, Career and Community Leaderships of America is a national student organization which addresses personal, work and societal issues through family and consumer science education.