



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Adviser

Contact: Kelly Gauck,

Phone: 719-328-5690

Email: denise.gauck@d11.org

HOLMES MIDDLE SCHOOL FCCLA MEMBERS PLACE AMONG TOP 10 IN THE NATION

While in Washington D.C. on July 9 – Kalie Miller, Betty Comfort, Anna Pargas and Isabelle Gardner of the Holmes Chapter of Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) earned national recognition by placing among the top 10 in the nation at the 2026 FCCLA National Leadership Conference, NLC, held July 6–10 in Washington, D.C.

Kalie competed in Personal Finance; Betty competed in Career Investigation while Anna & Isabelle competed in National Programs in Action – STAND UP and earned Top 10 National Finalist recognition. Each event challenged participants to plan, prepare and execute a project related to one of the many aspects of Family Consumer Sciences Education. Alongside these young ladies mentioned, five other members participated in NLC. They include Makenzee Thomas who received a gold in Food Innovations, Ezmie Outlaw earned a gold in her Professional Presentation, Ingrid McCall and Emma Saunders competed in Focus on Children and received a gold also. Ethan Jones, an eighth grader, led his chapter in the National Programs – FACTS, Families Acting for Community Traffic Safety and was selected as the top middle school in the nation. This 1st place program taught students and community members about bikes, scooters, seatbelt and pedestrian safety.

STAR Events, which stands for Students Taking Action with Recognition, allow FCCLA Members to apply the knowledge and skills they develop through Family and Consumer Sciences education to real-world projects, presentations, and career-related challenges. Participants advance through local and state competition before earning the opportunity to compete at the national level.

“FCCLA is the road map to planning my career in law”, stated Betty Comfort, a sixth grader from Holmes Middle School. Learning how to handle money and set financial goals are two things I learned through my Everfi Personal Finance course, Kali Miller, a seventh grader.

Helping students achieve goals and becoming confident young leaders are some of my goals as an adviser. FCCLA offers several opportunities to develop personal skills, career readiness traits, and provide service to others. Kelly Gauck states as she wraps up her thirteenth national leadership conference.

The Holmes FCCLA Chapter had nine students attend conference among more than 10,000 FCCLA Members, Advisers, and guests from across the nation, Puerto Rico, and American Samoa who attended the conference.

The FCCLA National Leadership Conference brings students and educators together for Competitive Events, leadership development, career exploration, educational workshops, and national recognition. The 2026 conference was especially historic because it was held in Washington, D.C., during the America 250 celebrations.

“Hosting the 2026 National Leadership Conference in Washington, D.C., during the America 250 celebrations created a powerful and historic opportunity for FCCLA Members,” said Sandy Spavone, CEO of FCCLA. “These students are building the skills, confidence, and connections to make an impact in their schools, careers, families, communities, and country right now.”

For more information or to learn how you can support the Holmes FCCLA Chapter, please contact Kelly Gauck at denise.gauck@d11.org. A thank you goes out to the Colorado Springs School District 11 & Career & Technical Education Department for their financial assistance.

About FCCLA

Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) is a national Career and Technical Student Organization that prepares students for careers that support the family through Family and Consumer Sciences education. Since 1945, FCCLA has provided leadership development, workplace readiness, and career preparation opportunities that equip students with the skills needed for success in life and work. Guided by dedicated Family and Consumer Sciences educators, FCCLA Members develop critical thinking, communication, collaboration, leadership, and problem-solving skills while exploring career opportunities aligned with the national Career Clusters. With more than a quarter of a million FCCLA Members in over 5,500 chapters nationwide, FCCLA continues to prepare the next generation of leaders to make a lasting impact in their careers, families, and communities.

###



Holmes Middle School National FCCLA competitors: Front row – Ingrid McCall, Ezmie Outlaw, Makenzee Thomas, Isabelle Gardner. Back row: Ethan Jones, Kali Miller, Betty Comfort, Anna Pargas, Emma Saunders & Adviser Kelly Gauck.