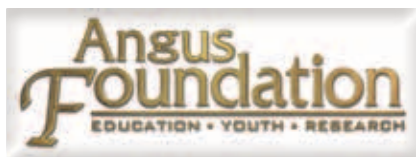


# Inside the NJAA Board

Angus Foundation support allows junior directors to travel coast-to-coast representing NJAA members.

by *Katie Allen, Angus Foundation*

They are sought after and dreamed about by many. The green jackets worn by the National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) directors can be seen at cattle shows and leadership conferences and other Angus events across the country. These jackets mean much more than a dream come true for those who wear them; they also mean dedicated service to the Angus breed, agricultural industry and the nearly 7,000 members of the NJAA — young people who are the future of the breed.



The visibility of the 12 junior board members wearing those green jackets and serving as role models and leaders for other junior members is due to the financial support of donors to the Angus Foundation.

“Since the Angus Foundation’s inception in 1980, supporting Angus youth has been a priority, and the NJAA board is a logical starting point to annually dedicate funding from our budget,” says Milford Jenkins, Angus Foundation president. “We have a responsibility to empower and equip these outstanding young men and women with the resources they need to effectively carry out their duties while serving on the NJAA board.”

## What the support covers

Jenkins says core expenses for the NJAA board that are covered by the Angus Foundation include airline fares, mileage and lodging during their stays at events and other similar travel expenses.

“Providing opportunities for the NJAA board to gain invaluable training to further develop their leadership skills, public speaking and communication abilities is a great investment in these young leaders’ lives,” Jenkins says. “These experiences enable the

NJAA board to then pass on the training they received to the NJAA members.”

Robin Ruff, director of junior activities for the American Angus Association, says junior board directors get to represent other juniors across the country and help these juniors grow and develop into effective leaders within their own states. In turn, the directors

themselves develop into more independent and mature young adults while serving their two-year terms on the board.

“When you are selected as an NJAA director, you have the opportunity and obligation to make decisions not based on yourself, but on others as well,” Ruff says. “Being on the junior board helps young people learn how to think outside of the box, and they pass this on to the juniors they represent.”

The directors recognize that the growth and maturity they experience is only because of Angus Foundation dollars that support them and their activities.

“It’s amazing how a lot of the stuff that the junior board is able to do is because of the Foundation,” says Megan Ahearn, NJAA Foundation director from Wills Point, Texas. “[The Foundation] provides our budget, and we are able to travel across the country and see all of these juniors and impact the lives of these youth. I can’t even put into words how it has impacted me. I’ve gotten to travel. I’ve gotten to meet new people. I’ve learned so much about youth and the Angus breed in general. Each time I go on a trip, I can’t imagine coming back not having learned something, having a great experience or meeting someone.”

## Preparing tomorrow’s leaders

In addition to supporting the NJAA board, the Angus Foundation also funds other youth activities, such as scholarships, the annual

Leaders Engaged in Angus Development (LEAD) Conference and two Raising the Bar leadership training conferences each year. Junior board members plan LEAD and Raising the Bar.

“Our Angus youth are tomorrow’s leaders of the Angus breed, American Angus Association, agriculture and beef cattle industries, in addition to the countless other leadership capacities these young people will fill over their life’s journey in their local communities, states and, for that matter, our country,” Jenkins says. “The NJAA board’s leadership impact on our Angus youth is simply immeasurable, as these young men and women wearing the ‘green jackets’ are truly a remarkable group. One can’t help but be inspired by the enthusiasm, energy and passion they have for helping their fellow Angus peers achieve their goals and dreams as a member of the NJAA!”

Ruff says Angus Foundation support allows the junior directors and many other juniors throughout the country to learn from one another by sharing ideas and networking with other juniors and adults. The donors should be thanked for making this all possible.

“I think the best thing you can do is tell donors your story,” Ahearn says. “The donors donate for a reason, and they want to see how your life has been impacted and how they’ve helped you.”

JanLee Rowlett, NJAA chairman from Hurricane Mills, Tenn., says seeing all that donors have allowed her to do has inspired her to want to give back one day.

“Hopefully, one day I will be in a position where I can give back,” Rowlett says. “I think that if every generation can keep that going, we can keep putting money back into the things that we all benefit from.”



**Editor’s Note:** *Katie Allen is director of marketing and public relations for the Angus Foundation.*



JanLee Rowlett

Sally Yon

Megan Ahearn

Meghan Blythe

Jennifer Ewing

Kelli Retallick

## Words from the NJAA directors

*The current NJAA directors weigh in on what Angus Foundation support means to them.*

### **JanLee Rowlett, NJAA chairman, Hurricane Mills, Tenn.**

*Building life skills in young people*

“There’s no question that the biggest things I’ve taken away from the National Junior Angus Association probably originated at the Angus Foundation. [The Foundation] provides us with the opportunities that give kids the best experiences and the best opportunities to learn. LEAD Conference goes to the top of the list as far as a way to develop yourself and become a leader, and also just learn how to interact with other people.”

### **Sally Yon, NJAA vice chairman, Ridge Spring, S.C.**

*Providing a way to give back*

“I think it is really neat how there are so many adults in the Angus Association who want to give back to youth, and the Foundation is the perfect way for them to do that. Whether it’s scholarships or LEAD Conference, kids can benefit in several different ways.”

### **Megan Ahearn, NJAA Foundation director, Wills Point, Texas**

*Developing interconnectedness throughout the Angus breed*

“[The Angus Foundation] is bridging gaps between all parts of the Association. You’ve got the research and the youth and all of these different departments. If you can bridge the gaps, that is amazing. You’re bringing the research to the youth and breeders and connecting them back to the donors. It’s just perfect how the Foundation connects all parts of the Association.”

### **Meghan Blythe, NJAA membership director, White City, Kan.**

*Creating opportunities for vast junior involvement*

“I think the help that the Angus Foundation gives to sponsoring the events we hold throughout the year is really important, because it makes those events more accessible to juniors. Through the financial support, more juniors are able to attend those events, and it enhances the experience for everyone.”

### **Jennifer Ewing, NJAA communication director, Rushville, Ill.**

*Making a difference for future Angus leaders*

“I recommend that juniors tell their stories about how the Angus Foundation has impacted them in a way that makes their peers aware of the opportunities offered to them, while allowing donors to see the way their contributions shape the lives of our industry’s future leaders. Talking at state banquets and sales about the opportunities available through the Angus Foundation not only will encourage juniors to get involved, but it will also inspire prospective donors to make a difference.”

### **Kelli Retallick, NJAA leadership director, Glen Haven, Wis.**

*Helping farming and ranching families*

“Having the opportunity to receive scholarships from the Angus Foundation has helped me immensely on my career path and throughout my education. Coming from a family farm and growing up in that type of atmosphere, there [weren’t] always extra dollars. I’ve been very fortunate to be awarded those scholarships. Without a doubt, without those Foundation scholarships, I don’t know if I could be where I’m at today.”

### **Jacy Alsup, NJAA director, Gravette, Ark.**

*Preparing future advocates for agriculture*

“I’ve been so lucky to be able to travel across the nation with this association. There is nothing else like it. Having this background and this knowledge of agriculture in general, I can be an advocate for agriculture no matter what I do in my daily life.”

### **Maggie Jasper, NJAA director, Versailles, Ky.**

*Supporting juniors in and out of the showing*

“Sometimes I think showing cattle is the least that we do. [The NJAA] does so many different contests and programs — like the poster contest and the video contest — that you don’t even have to go to nationals to participate in, but you still get recognized for your work. Those are really important for people to take part in, because they can improve skills in a certain area.”

### **Daniel McFarland, NJAA director, Keithville, La.**

*Tying generations together*

“I tell Angus Foundation donors who I am and where I’m from, my Angus story. I tell them the drive that a lot of these juniors have for the Association and talk about how their money goes toward making another junior’s life better. Then I go on and explain how essential they are in our lives. Just think about it, a lot of people couldn’t go to school without some of the scholarships, and a lot of people couldn’t do the activities the Foundation sponsors, such as LEAD.”

### **Lucas Nord, NJAA director, Wolverton, Minn.**

*Networking with others across the country*

“The traveling aspect and the networking has helped quite a bit, getting to know Angus breeders, putting yourself out there and making the most of it. I’ve made a lot of ties and actually have a lot in common with other people throughout the U.S.”

### **JenaLee Wagner, NJAA director, Billings, Mont.**

*Granting scholarships to young people*

“With the Angus Foundation, my first year of college I didn’t have to pay tuition, so I didn’t have to keep a full-time job. I can focus more on my schoolwork and other clubs and activities that I’m involved in that are going to create those career opportunities for me. It takes a big weight off my shoulders.”

### **Paige Wallace, NJAA director, Stotts City, Mo.**

*Going beyond what is expected*

“Because of the Angus Foundation, I’ve had an immense number of opportunities to travel the country, meet new people and overall learn more about the Angus breed. As a member, I’ve experienced the generosity of the Angus Foundation through attendance at LEAD and Raising the Bar conferences, national Angus shows and as the recipient of leadership awards. Now as a director on the NJAA board, my eyes have been opened to the support offered to us during our two-year term. Overall, I hope juniors understand and appreciate the immense impact the Angus Foundation has on Angus youth.”



Jacy Alsup



Maggie Jasper



Daniel McFarland



Lucas Nord



JenaLee Wagner



Paige Wallace