

# TELLING OUR STORY

Angus juniors use writing to tell stories of NJAA goal achievement, career aspirations and their roles in the Angus industry.

compiled by *Kasey Brown*, special projects editor

Everyone loves a good story. Storytelling is an art to connect a writer or speaker to his or her audience, and National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) members are learning that at an early age. Three NJAA members combined storytelling, writing skill and Angus cattle to win the NJAA Creative Writing Contest at the National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) in Des Moines, Iowa, July 9-15.

Co-sponsored by the NJAA and the Events and Education Department of the American Angus Association, the writing contest is designed to encourage the enhancement of written communication skills while providing another opportunity for NJAA members to compete prior to the NJAS. Entries were due May 15 and evaluated before the NJAS.

Junior entrants were asked to write an essay between 300 and 500

words describing one goal they have within the NJAA and their plans to achieve it.

Intermediate entries used 600-800 words to explain their choice of career within an Angus entity [Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB), Angus Foundation, Angus Genetics Inc. (AGI), and Angus Media] and why.

Senior entrants used 1,000-1,200 words to answer the prompt: As a junior member, what role do you play in the Angus industry? How will this impact your future career?

Contest victors were Ella Jordan, Saint Joseph, Mo., junior division; Marcie Harward, Richfield, N.C., intermediate division; and Heidi Tremaine, Oconomowoc, Wis., senior division. See the photos with this story for those placing second and third in their respective divisions.

Here are the winning entries.

## TALON YOUTH EDUCATION LEARNING PROGRAM

by *Ella Jordan*, junior winner

The National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) has been offering awesome adventures since 1980. I have set several goals for myself in the five years I have been an active member. My top goal is to become a student that goes through the Talon Youth Education Learning Program, which is an internship that pairs motivated Angus youth with a registered Angus cattle ranch to give youth valuable education and work experience during the summer months.

You see, when I look down the road, I envision myself as a large-animal veterinarian. The practical experience learned through this program will be a valuable asset to my career goal.

This program is the legacy of Camron "Cam" Cooper of Talon Ranch. Cam worked with the Angus Foundation to fund a holistic educational experience for students. This internship program is very important to me, because I currently don't have the experience of daily farm life. Going to a ranch would provide hands-on experience to prepare me for field work in the future.

New knowledge gained through this

internship would include practical veterinary tasks, pregnancy checking, beef nutrition and much more. Being able to learn new things from other people who have more experience than me and who know the ropes could benefit me in many ways. And perhaps there will be something they can acquire from me.

Active involvement in the NJAA is one way that could help me get into this program. I participate in several contests that the NJAA sponsors. These include public speaking, photography, graphic design, poster, quiz bowl and the *Certified Angus Beef*® Cook-Off. These life skills contests help me gain more knowledge about the beef industry and help prepare me for job interviews in the future.

Taking leadership roles in my state association and local organizations will also help achieve this goal. I currently serve as the treasurer in my local 4-H Club, and I hope to join the FFA in high school. Building a relationship with my club and church leaders, as well as teachers and advisors, will lead to good recommendations for the application.

I would like to major in animal science with a pre-vet option in college, which will

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— *Ella Jordan*

also help, since those areas of study are given strong preference. It is also important for me to take school seriously and earn good grades.

It would be an amazing opportunity to serve as an intern on an Angus ranch. With a lot of hard work and setting my action plan into motion, I hope to one day earn the internship through the Talon Youth Education Learning Program. Cam Cooper loved the

land and Angus cattle. She believed in educating young people and promoting the future of the beef industry. Cam once said,

“If we don’t help young people, we won’t have a legacy to leave.” I hope to one day earn this opportunity and keep her legacy alive.

## ANGUS MEDIA INFLUENCES MY FUTURE

by *Marcie Harward*, intermediate winner

**O**btaining a career where I can devote my life to the Angus breed and promote its distinctive greatness would be an amazing opportunity. If I could choose any career within the American Angus Association entities, it would be a communications position in the Angus Media organization.

Angus Media promotes the Angus breed while also educating cattle producers about the news going on in the breed, as well as featuring information on the next generation. Angus Media encourages people to get excited about the Angus breed and informs consumers and producers about the improvements and advancements the Angus Association has made. This is also a major reason why I would choose a career with Angus Media. To be able to be a part of a bigger picture in helping to increase the Angus breed as we know it would be the best opportunity ever!

Promoting the Angus breed and showing the world why this breed of cattle is Number 1 is my first reason why I would pick a career with Angus Media. I have grown up on a beef cattle farm that raises predominantly commercial cattle, as well as a herd of 70 registered Angus cows.

Growing up on both sides of the commercial and purebred industry has shown me the tremendous benefits of including Angus genetics in any cattle operation. I desire to work with Angus Media to assist with showing farmers the quality they receive when breeding and raising their herd with Angus cattle.

With Angus Media we would also show consumers that they are receiving the most qualified beef there is when they choose to eat [the] *Certified Angus Beef*® [brand]. By being able to reach out amongst local and nationwide families and farms, Angus Media is able to influence thousands of consumers and producers each year.

**“BY BEING A PART OF THE ANGUS MEDIA FAMILY, I WOULD BE ABLE TO ADVOCATE TRULY HOW AMAZING THE ANGUS BREED REALLY IS, SHOWING THE WORLD THAT ANGUS GENETICS WILL MAKE YOU SUCCESSFUL IN FEEDYARDS AND ON THE DINNER PLATE.”**

— *Marcie Harward*

Angus Media handles the recent and updated news about what is going on throughout the breed. This would be my second reason for why I would like to choose a path through Angus Media. Angus Media gets to advertise the new genetic advancements through the breed and shows the world why Angus is still Number 1 amongst the breeds of cattle. It also gets to show how our association is doing their best to advance and improve the breed as a whole.

Not only does Angus Media advertise the advancements of the Angus breed, they also show the accomplishments of the breed by interviewing and publicising individuals in the Angus world. Angus Media shows how Angus farms have been successful throughout the world. These farms have only been this successful through the breeding of Angus cattle. By being a part of the Angus Media family, I would be able to advocate truly how amazing the Angus breed really is, showing the world that Angus genetics will make

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### CREATIVE WRITING



► Winning the junior division are (from left) **Ella Jordan**, Saint Joseph, Mo., first; **Lauren Wolter**, Aviston, Ill., second; and **Izabella Bear**, Aurora, Ind., third.



► Winning the intermediate division are (from left) **Hannah Tremaine**, Oconomowoc, Wis., third; **Nicholas Pohlman**, Prairie Grove, Ark., second; and **Marcie Harward**, Richfield, N.C., first.



► Winning the senior division are (from left) **Heidi Tremaine**, Oconomowoc, Wis., first; and **Derek Wolf**, Windthorst, Texas, second. Not pictured is **Sierra Day**, Cerro Gordo, Ill., third.

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you successful in feedyards and on the dinner plate.

My final reason for why I would like to work with Angus Media is that it showcases the next generation and why the world should be excited to be a part of the future of the Angus breed. Showing the accomplishments of juniors and the hard work they have put into improving their own Angus herd is what would make a job in Angus Media very beneficial for me. Angus Media is more than just showing the new sales that are coming up or marketing; it also promotes the educational opportunities for

juniors. It shows juniors why they should be excited about the Angus breed and the opportunities they can receive through the organization. By promoting youth and their accomplishments, Angus Media exhibits their dedication to the future of our industry and the importance of developing a strong youth foundation.

While the Angus breed is indisputably one of the best beef breeds in the world today, it is the people behind the breed that continue to push the breed forward and continue its excellence. Angus Media is a vital proponent to this success through their dedication

to promoting the breed, its people, its opportunities and its future.

Throughout my time in the National Junior Angus Association I have seen firsthand the benefits of Angus Media and their impacts on our breed and the beef industry as a whole. The Angus breed and the people of the breed are not only the best in the world, but have also impacted my life the most. Therefore, I would choose to be a part of Angus Media where I could in return help promote the Angus industry as the greatest beef breed in the country!

# FROM START TO FINISH: PAYING IT FORWARD TO THE BREED IN THE LEAD

by *Heidi Tremaine, senior winner*

I remember it like it was yesterday; sitting on the wooden bleachers, my mother and father beside me, grateful to be missing a day of school, eagerly awaiting what was to come. The loud voice of the auctioneer filled the sale barn and people began to raise their bidding numbers from all around. The noises seemed overwhelming at first, but after awhile, seemed to comfort me.

Then, out of nowhere, my mother pinched the back of my neck. This was my cue. I shot my arm into the air, and the man standing near me yelled my bid toward the auctioneer. My heart was pounding.

Another bid came in. "\$2,200, are you in?" the man asked. Another hard pinch. I nodded. The auctioneer rambled on for what seemed like forever before the gavel pounded hard onto the wood block.

"Sold!"

I shot a beaming smile to my parents, and they wrapped me in a warm hug. I had just bought my first Angus heifer.

As my final year comes to a close and I reflect upon my time as a member of the National Junior Angus Association, I find myself returning to this particular memory. Not only was Maple Lane Blackcap 340 my first major financial investment, but she also became a foundation for my growth as an individual in the Angus industry.

Fourteen years have passed since this time, Blackcap recently gave birth to her 11th calf,

and my herd has grown substantially. As a junior member, the activities and experiences that I have been a part of, from the purchase of my first heifer until where I am now, have allowed me to impact the Angus industry with my contagious passion, leadership skills and desire to educate the general public.

Not many first-graders get to go to school and tell all of their friends that they bought a heifer, but this was the unique opportunity that I was presented. Even better was when I got to bring my "cow" (as she was now referred to by my peers) to school for show-and-tell. It was at this very moment when my true passion for the Angus industry was ignited. There I was, 6 years old, standing in front of all of my classmates, explaining every last detail about my heifer.

My father had always told me that "Angus is the breed in the lead," and while I did not fully understand his statement at the time, the past years within the Angus industry have proven to me that Angus truly are superior to other breeds. Whether it is the joyful feeling of unloading black animals at an all-breed show, talking to prospective customers in the pasture, or selling meat to consumers that you can proudly claim as home-raised Angus beef, there is a sense of pride attached to this breed, and from a very young age, it is something that I have internalized and molded into a sheer passion for the Angus industry.

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— *Heidi Tremaine*

This passion has encouraged me to take on leadership roles that have allowed me to share with others some of the many benefits associated with the Angus breed. One of my favorite leadership opportunities is hosting clinics on the farm where 4-H and FFA members from around the county get to come and learn new information and skills. Even though the Angus cattle are not the focal point of the demonstrations, it is rewarding to have youth come up and compliment or ask questions about the animals and then have the chance to enlighten them about the Angus breed. Watching youth interact with the animals and grow as individuals is truly a rewarding experience.

Another leadership opportunity that has had a lasting impact on me was hosting Angus Field Day for the members of the Wisconsin Angus Association. This day was a time when my family and I could showcase the genetics we use within our herd, as well as enjoy the fellowship of farmers from around the state. Talking to fellow breeders about the bulls that have worked well in our herd, various practices that we have implemented with success, and future goals of our operation was a unique leadership experience that I got to take part in. Thanks to my involvement within the Angus industry, I get to develop and foster my innate leadership skills each and every day, and put these skills to work by helping the youth from around my county.

These leadership skills have pushed me to travel outside of my comfort zone to educate the general public about the Angus industry. I live in a very urban county. This means that when county fair rolls around each year, hundreds of people walk through the barns like empty buckets just waiting to be filled with valuable knowledge about the

breed. Many of the people I talk to bring up the *Certified Angus Beef*<sup>®</sup> (CAB<sup>®</sup>) brand, but it is nothing more than a label to them. They know that they want to purchase CAB, but they never can explain why. This opens the door for me to explain what it means to be CAB and the strict guidelines associated with the brand. Sharing the specifics about this kind of beef makes them realize that they were investing in more than just a label, but rather a commitment and dedication to excellence.

I wish to continue educating the public, as well as the next generation of youth, in my future. My presumptive role as an agriculture instructor and 4-H leader will provide me with ample opportunities to impact the lives of those around me. As an Angus producer, I look forward to selling show calves to 4-H and FFA members that can raise and exhibit project animals that they are proud of. Also, it is my goal to continue using the most proven Angus genetics to create offspring with the utmost carcass characteristics so that meat customers will always be satisfied with their purchase. My desire to educate the

public about the Angus industry stems from my passion [for] the breed and requires my leadership skills to convey clear and accurate messages to my audiences.

I am overcome by a very bittersweet feeling when I think about my time as a member of the NJAA coming to an end. I have gained a multitude of skills and experienced things that I never would have gotten to if I had not been around cattle or fellow breeders and exhibitors. I will miss the feeling of “show day jitters,” waiting anxiously in the hall to present my speech to the judges at the National Junior Angus Show, and sitting in the exhibit playing games with Angus friends from around the country. However, it is time for me to pay it forward to the next generation of Angus youth.

Buying my first cow ignited the passion for the breed, my leadership skills were fostered through various events, and my desire to educate others is burning within me. It is time for me to harness these attributes and put forth my best effort toward being a difference-maker within the Angus industry.

