

Clara Joyce Gfeller

Preferred First Name

Clara

High School

Chapman High School

Chapter Name

Chapman FFA

Chapter Number

0025

Semesters of Agricultural Education Completed

7

Years in FFA

4

In what level of education are you currently enrolled?

High School

If you will be enrolled in post-secondary education following election to state office, where will you be attending?

Kansas State University

Anticipated College Major

Agriculture Education

Career Objective

Agriculture Teacher and FFA Advisor

FFA and Agriculture Education Experience

Supervised Agriculture Experience Program and Scope

My first SAE is Grain Production Placement. I started by just being a runner/ helper but now make decisions on 100 acres of our ground. I communicate with the co-op, crop insurance, market grain, oversee planting and harvest, crop rotation plans and record keeping. My second SAE is Swine Production Entrepreneurship. I purchase pigs in the Spring for showing in late summer. I monitor their growth, make decisions about feed needed to support their growth, and am responsible for their daily care.

FFA Leadership Experience: (Office/Committee Assignment, Organization/Group, Year Held) - List up to 5

North Central District FFA President - 2 years (2024-2025, 2025-2026)

Kansas FFA Board of Directors North Central District Representative - 2 years (2024-2025,2025-2026)

Chapman FFA Vice President - 2025-2026

Chapman FFA Secretary - 2024-2025

Chapman FFA Filling the Need Committee Chair - 2025-2026

FFA Activities: (Chapter, District or National Events; CDEs; LDEs; Leadership Programs; and other FFA sponsored activities) - List up to 10

State Prepared Public Speaking LDE - 2 years

State Employability Skills LDE 1 - year

State Agriculture Sales - 1 year

National Parliamentary Procedure LDE - 1 year

North Central District Greenhand Conference - 3 years

North Central District Kick-off - 2 years

National Chapter Growing Leaders National Finalist Interviews - 1 year

Chapman FFA Middle School Academy - 4 years

Washington Leadership Conference - 1 year

National Convention - 2 years

Other Leadership and Service Activities: (Community, School, 4-H, Church, Sports, Clubs, etc.) - List up to 10

Chapman High School Varsity Girls Tennis - 4 years
Geary County 4-H Club President - 3 years
Geary County 4-H Ambassador - 6 years
Magdalene Project Volunteer - 3 years
Chapman High School Girls Track - 2 years
Elementary and Middle School Tutoring - 2 years
First United Methodist Church JC member - 17 years
Chapman High School Morning Announcements Presenter - 3 years
Chapman High School Student Athlete Leadership Team - 4 years
Junction City Fresh Start Homeless Shelter Volunteer - 2 years

Essay Questions

What is your biggest accomplishment up until now? How has it shaped you and your leadership style?

The biggest accomplishment in my life is not an award I display or banner I hang, it is my personal journey with anxiety. As a young girl I struggled having self-confidence and putting myself out there due to my anxiety. I was often found hiding in the back, avoiding talking to others. I always felt very secluded and on the edge of every social activity because I was too anxious to join in with my friends or get involved. I struggled with panic attacks and isolation making it hard to live my life. In 5th grade I began seeing a therapist and taking medication to make it easier to play sports, hang out with friends, and go to school.

Once I got into high school, my anxiety was still a part of my life but was no longer a roadblock to becoming involved. FFA soon entered as a place where I found my footing and a group of people that supported me and allowed me to find my strengths and personal interests. It was then through the experiences that I took in FFA that this was no longer something that was holding me back but was pushing me to do better in each contest or in running for leadership positions. Being on the other side of my anxiety turned it from something I struggled with, to a strength. Had I not put focus on addressing these feelings in earlier years, I feel confident that I wouldn't have taken the chances or risks that I did once these opportunities presented themselves.

Now, as a leader in FFA and other areas in my life, I always find myself encouraging others, without pressuring. I know now that leaders help bring people to a realization on their own without having to force them into it. Trying new things helped me to become comfortable in my own skin, on my own time. Overcoming this challenge and turning it into an accomplishment, has shown me that everyone has something going on in their life and deserves grace while finding their resolutions that will turn it into their greatest accomplishment as well. FFA members deserve to have someone to support them. They deserve to find their strengths and passions through agriculture. They need to be met where they are at. I am thankful to have received these life changing lessons and now have the opportunity to apply them in spaces that need them the most.

If elected, how would you positively influence the Kansas FFA Association?

In 2023-2024, my family had the opportunity to host a foreign exchange student named Anna. She is from Japan to Kansas knowing nothing about Kansas agriculture or what my family as producers do. Due to my involvement my sophomore year, she quickly became aware of FFA and assumed that it was just a club for farmers. After many questions from Anna and hours of her and I talking about it, she discovered all of the opportunities it had to offer. Shortly after, she started coming to officer meetings with me in the mornings a stayed for the chapter fun nights in the evening. She rode in the combine with us, worked with show pigs, and even tried her hand at working cattle. Through experience and me answering her questions, Anna learned just how important Kansas agriculture and the agriculture industry as a whole is. The majority of her questions were basic, questions that a person even remotely connected to agriculture would be able to answer in their sleep. However, I knew that as simple as her questions may have been, she was just trying to understand. Understand why we did the things we did, why we're so passionate about something so seemingly mundane, and what this organization was that I spent so much time in. I answered all of her questions, being careful to never make her feel less capable because she didn't know. Anna was my greatest experience in advocating for agriculture. Being able to teach and communicate about agriculture with her, I was able to connect with a person with no agricultural background. Anna unknowingly helped me develop the skills to effectively communicate with those with a different background than mine. I am confident that this skillset will allow me to connect with all members of our organization with or without an agricultural background. Not only will I positively impact our members but also connect with business professionals about how important this industry is and why supporting it has value. Having Anna in my life made me better suited to meet the needs of new members to the organization and to agriculture, and I now have a wider scope of abilities. She taught me the importance of and how to bridge the gap of knowledge without belittling. If elected to serve as a Kansas FFA State Officer I would positively impact the association by utilizing these skills of communication and agricultural knowledge to ensure that FFA is a space where all people feel welcome, regardless of background, and feel they can learn.