

Mary E. (Lizzy) Vajnar

Preferred First Name

Lizzy

High School

Hays High School

Chapter Name

Hays

Chapter Number

KS0070

Semesters of Agricultural Education Completed

8

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

Agricultural & Natural Resource Communications, Minor; Agriculture Sales

Career Objective

Marketing, Public Relations, Communications, Agribusiness Manager

FFA and Agriculture Education Experience

Supervised Agriculture Experience Program and Scope

My SAE is a Turf Grass Management Placement at Hays K-Lawn in which I contact customers, create service tickets, select appropriate fertilizers and pesticides, record EPA codes, and schedule services. I handle new client calls, check availability, and measure lawns to ensure accurate service. I manage up to 80 clients daily, help maintain over 2,000 accounts, and assist in supervising staff. Through this experience, I have developed strong skills in turf care and agriculture communication.

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

President, Northwest District, 1 year (2025-2026), Kansas FFA Board of Directors Northwest District Representative, 1 year (2025-2026), Kansas FFA State Officer Residency Committee, 1 year (2025-2026), Hays High FFA Officer, 3 year (2023-2026), Hays High FFA National Chapter Application Co-Author, 3 years (2024-2026)

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

Washington Leadership Conference- 1 year, Kansas State Board of Education Career Technical Student Organization Day Featured Speaker (Kansas FFA Representative)- 1 year, Northwest District Star in Agricultural Placement- 1 year, Kansas FFA Leader Lab- 3 years, Northwest District Leadership School- 4 years, National Land & Homesite Evaluation CDE- 1 year, District Officer Conference- 1 year, Kansas State FFA Convention Attendee & Competitor- 3 years

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

Hays High DECA- Member (2 years), Kansas DECA Professional Sales National Qualifier (1 year), Vice President of Career Development (1 year), 4-H- Member (11 years), Council President (1 year), Hays High Yearbook- Staff Member (2 years), Student Life Editor (1 year), Hays High Honorary Journalism Quill & Scroll Society- Member (1 year), Treasurer (1 year), National Honor Society- Member (2 years), Hays High Chamber Singers- (2 years), Northwest 4-H Agriculture Ambassador- (1 year), Ellis County 4-H Water Ambassador- (5 years), Hays CYO- Member (4 years), Leadership Team (2 years), Local Parish Church volunteer- Lector (2 years), Server (8 years), Cantor/Choir (7 years)

Essay Questions

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

One of my biggest accomplishments was being able to serve the Northwest FFA District as President. I ran on the platform of representing every member and making every voice heard.

Being involved in a range of activities: FFA, 4-H, Yearbook, Chamber Choir, and DECA; I am constantly surrounded by individuals with different perspectives on politics, faith, and daily life. I believe no one should be ignored because of their background or opinions. An effective leader needs to support people and understand their perspectives. This lesson helped me effectively serve the Northwest District.

Outside of FFA, I have also encountered situations where my peers were hesitant to speak up. Last spring, our USD 489 School Board decided which technology device should be provided to our high school students. Most students preferred a laptop over the recommended iPad, but few voiced their opinions. Our DECA chapter collected 470 responses, and when it came time to present to the BOE, many DECA members chose not to. Along with another student, I stepped forward to share the data and give students a voice. Through this experience, I learned the importance of advocating for others.

As a leader, I have learned to prioritize and set goals for the good of the organization. I have been guided by incredible teachers and mentors. The experiences in my education, participation, and interactions with others are of value. These experiences have allowed me to encourage those around me, in and outside of FFA.

I believe in "Only Quality People," or OQP, a value my dad instilled in me. The people we surround ourselves will influence our experiences and actions. I strive to build meaningful relationships and positively impact those around me, whether guiding younger yearbook staff, helping each Greenhand member find their SAE through my workshop at this year's NWD Greenhand Conference, or creating floriculture practice materials and scheduling practices for my FFA chapter encouraging interest in a new CDE. I aim to grow by surrounding myself with quality people while also being one in the lives of others.

This led to a successful leadership role in Northwest District FFA. I went from a scared freshman wanting to fill the shoes of my older brothers to becoming a confident leader in my chapter and district, unafraid to share my love for agriculture. I believe these experiences have cultivated my leadership style into one that is civic-minded and encouraging to others.

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

My election will allow me to serve and represent Kansas FFA by promoting the organization on a larger platform. My main focus will be to help members recognize the opportunities available in their FFA journey. In FFA, I have been given opportunities for which I am incredibly grateful. My FFA career has included Degree Applications, Proficiency Awards, Star Application, Washington Leadership Conference (WLC), Scholarship Programs, the Agriscience Fair, and participation in 12 CDEs and 8 LDEs. I have strived to participate in as many of the experiences and programs offered through Kansas FFA. This has helped me to better understand the application processes and the events available.

I want to be a member-focused leader who encourages FFA members, advisors, and school administrators to be knowledgeable of FFA activities, to reach their full potential, and to provide resources that help FFA members succeed within local schools and in their communities. I am passionate about helping the Kansas FFA Association continue to grow and thrive across the entirety of our state.

To achieve these goals, I will be a valuable teammate and leader for Kansas FFA, examining and finding areas to improve FFA opportunities. I will utilize my leadership, collaboration, and communication skills to serve as a state officer who is both proud and humble in representing the Kansas FFA Association, while actively striving to help it grow and innovate.

I will actively work to showcase the hard work of all chapters and members by writing handwritten thank-you notes, highlighting their achievements through social media and journalism spotlights, and networking to connect them with valuable FFA resources. Driven by my passion for agricultural advocacy and service, promoting and supporting the different chapters and members in our state is extremely important to me.

It is also vital to create an environment where all members have opportunities to be involved in a variety of activities. As their skills and interests are as diverse as the programs within our state, we must work together to foster a positive and inclusive environment for all members, helping students thrive in their chapters, whether urban or rural, by providing the resources and guidance they need to succeed. The skills developed in FFA and my experiences in communication have well prepared me. I will bring a strong work ethic, fresh ideas, and creativity to Kansas FFA Association.