

# FCCLA: NAVIGATING 'HYBRID'

**Q & A with Rutherford High School's  
Keira Yablonsky, Class '22 & Emma Wong, Class '21**  
Fall Conference Medal Winners  
**Mrs. Howard & Mr. Bergen, Advisors**

**Q:** What was the most challenging aspect of preparing for the Fall Conference, with regard to hybrid engagement with fellow students, staff, school building & community?  
How did you overcome this challenge?

**Keira:** The most challenging aspect of preparing for the Fall Conference was knowing that this year's conference was going to be so different, however, the project still had to be done well! We didn't know what to expect but were able to overcome the uncertainty that came with the virtual conference by working together and motivating each other.

**Emma:** For my group, the most challenging aspect of preparing for the Fall Conference was being unable to meet in person to collaborate on our event, Virtual International Food Experience. It was difficult because our project had many different components that needed to be delegated and discussed, including a PowerPoint slide show and a video presentation. We overcame this challenge by communicating with each other at every step of the project through video chats and text messaging to ensure everyone understood their role and to prevent any confusion. Although it was a different experience than previous years, each group member worked diligently to complete their part of the project and we were able to combine all the pieces successfully.

**Q:** What structure and support did you receive as you were preparing for the conference?

**Keira:** While preparing for the conference, our advisors and my fellow officers motivated each other to work hard and help one another even though there were so many strenuous circumstances. We reminded each other of what FCCLA was truly about and the growth that was going to take place from the experience we were being given.

**Emma:** As we prepared for the conference, a large amount of support came from our advisors and the other members of our chapter as we navigated the entirely new requirements of our events. Whenever we had a question or were unsure how to approach a certain aspect of our project, our advisors were helpful in figuring out exactly what to do. Across the entire chapter, all members were also very supportive of each other. Everyone was willing to offer advice and encouragement to another group if they had competed in the same event in past years.

**Q:** With respect to the foundational values FCCLA embraces, what has the 2020 year taught you?

**Keira:** 2020 taught me the value of family and community. As a community, we had to critically think of ways to safely help one another in order to push through this year. Using the skills that I have gathered throughout my time with FCCLA, I was able to offer more to my community. Also, this year has taught me that personal growth is essential- whether it be mentally or physically. It's hard to help your community without being able to help yourself.

**Emma:** In the same way FCCLA values the growth and personal development of its members, 2020 has given me the opportunity to grow in preparation for my adult life. Throughout life, there will always be uncontrollable changes that you are required to overcome, and overcoming the obstacles of 2020 has helped aid that development. 2020 has taught me the importance of being able to adapt to any situation I may face now or in the future, and this past Fall Conference was an excellent experience in adjusting to change as everything was moved online.

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# FCCLA: NAVIGATING ‘HYBRID’ (CONTINUED)

Q: What is one FCCLA memory that will stand out for you as you reflect on the 2020 year?

**Keira:** Besides seeing the excitement of my fellow classmates receive their awards, the laughter that came with creating my projects with my partners, and the conversations we had at our meetings. The thing that stood out to me the most from FCCLA was the variety of different workshops available. This demonstrated the different ways different organizations and fellow high schoolers from around the state live their lives and approach situations differently.

**Emma:** One FCCLA memory that I will never forget from 2020 was the first meeting of the year in September. This was the first time we had a hybrid meeting where half of the members were in-person and half joined through Zoom. It was an interesting experience because our advisor had to speak to both groups at the same time and various members spoke in school and from home. I also knew FCCLA would be a unique experience compared to previous years, but I was still looking forward to the virtual conferences and workshops. I will always remember 2020 as the year we were challenged both as students and future leaders of America.

