

Thalia Barrett - 9th Grader Donald F. Harris Sr. Agriscience & Technology Center, Bloomfield

My name is Thalia Barrett. I am a 9th grader representing the Donald F. Harris Sr. Agriscience & Technology Center in Bloomfield. I chose to be a part of the Agriscience Center in Bloomfield because I thought it would be a great way for me to learn about the real world beyond High school and College. Some things I've learned at the Agriscience center were how to determine the water quality of any body of water by just collecting the macroinvertebrates and examining them to produce a final lab which tells you how healthy the water is. Also the growing process of Salmon solar which is Atlantic salmon, we were given 400 total eyed eggs and our goal is to raise and release these Salmon along with more than 70 other schools working with the Atlantic Salmon Association to aid in the reintroduction efforts of the Ct River water-ways. Another activity I've been currently doing at the Agriscience center is "Kids N' Critters". While doing "Kids N' Critters" I've learned about Ball Pythons, Bearded Dragons, and all sorts of other reptiles we currently have down at the Center. We were then assigned to an animal to do further research and be able to present a simpler explanation of the animals to elementary school students. This type of public speaking platform will help me to earn my Greenhand Degree in the FFA but most importantly prepare me to articulate how important Agriculture programs are to students like myself.

The teachers in the Center are very passionate about what they do they are the ones that are helping adolescents like myself refine what we would do for a career when we finish High school and College. Many students in town and in other districts want to be a part of the Agriscience experience but can't because we are provided with little funding. If given more funding from the state we can extend our building and activities so that more "Ag Kids" can benefit. When I think about agriscience I just don't think of it as a class I decided to take, I think of it as a Community where students get the opportunity to explore the outside world little by little building up their knowledge. It gives me a chance to interact with different communities and spread our ideas to make the environment better. Agriscience Centers around the town are finding ways to produce plants by simply using water and fish waste. It's a

healthier way to grow produce with out harming the environment. Where else would a high school student be exposed to these areas of science? Only at a school like mine.

I would like for you to take a moment to think about the opportunity for students like myself being the Future Farms of America. Myself along with many other students are finding ways to make healthier lifestyle choices not just for the benefit of one town but maybe even the world. If your child was a part of this program would you hold them back? Would you stop them from exploring the world little by little or just throw them out there unprepared? Providing more funding to Agriculture Centers can enable more students to build a strong foundation that will support our communities. Just last year I was one of the class clowns who rarely did work because I thought it was pointless. After my current teacher Mrs. Edwards came down to my middle school and talked about the benefits of the program, my whole attitude changed towards school and life. After completing half of my freshman year in her class, she's taught me the importance of taking my work seriously and has opened my mind to careers in the field of agricultural. It would mean so much to the Harris Agriscience Center along with the fellow Agriscience Centers around the state if we have the opportunity to broaden our reach so other students can be a part of a life changing program. Thank- You