



The National Association of Agricultural Educators, Inc.

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NEWS RELEASE:

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Eastbrook Selected for Outstanding Program Award

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – The Eastbrook Young Farmer/Adult Education program at Eastbrook High School in Marion, Ind., is one of only six programs nationwide that received the National Association of Agricultural Educators (NAAE) Outstanding Postsecondary/Adult Program (OPAP) Award on November 18th at the NAAE annual convention in Nashville, Tenn. The program is coordinated by Kevin Pluimer.

Pluimer believes that learning is a life-long process and teaches his adults using hands-on experiences to help them become more engaged in the learning process.

“In this challenging field we must continue to expand our knowledge by becoming involved with community organizations and sharing knowledge with everyone we come in contact with,” said Pluimer.

The Eastbrook Young Farmers are very involved in the community. They park cars and work the concession stand at home football games and collaborate with the local the Farm Bureau, Cooperative Extension Service, and area businesses to host Kids Farm Adventure, a two-day event for first graders that teaches them about agriculture. Members train local firefighters, police and EMS to better prepare them for agricultural accidents, prepare snack bags for farmers during planting and harvesting seasons and have even organized a benefit dinner and auction for a fellow member’s family, raising \$23,000. They host an adult pedal tractor pull at the Van Buren Popcorn Festival that raises scholarship funds and they often tour area dairies and grain operations to learn practices they could incorporate on their own farm.

The Eastbrook Young Farmers Chapter has produced the state association president four of the last five years and has received Star Chapter and Chapter Safety awards for the last eight years.

“The Young Farmers chapter at Eastbrook has become a source of pride in the school system and community,” said Kenneth Yocum, teacher and community member. “They have become cheerleaders for our school district and promote agriculture for this county.”

Each of the six regional OPAP winners received a two-year lease on a Toyota Tundra, expense paid trip to the annual convention, a special dinner and reception in their honor, and a plaque. Toyota sponsors the Outstanding Postsecondary/Adult Award as a special project of the National FFA Foundation.

NAAE is the professional association for agricultural educators. The mission of NAAE is “professionals providing agricultural education for the global community through visionary leadership, advocacy and service.” The NAAE office is located in Lexington, Ky.

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