

Family and consumer science (FCS) teacher and FCCLA Janel Franks directs her students in the instructions for the balloon relay following the business part of the FCCLA meeting in April. Franks returns home after eight year teaching away from Southern Wells. Now in her sixth year at her alma mater, Franks teaches a varied curriculum which includes Nutrition and Wellness, Fashion and Textiles, Adult Roles and Responsibilities and Child Development, among others.

Balloons are distributed to club members who will be letting loose of their air-filled projectiles in a two-team race across the room. Emry Hoening, 7th-grader, joined the group in part because of all the "fun things they do."

"I wish I had joined FCCLA a little earlier," said senior Vanessa Haigh. Haigh plans to work with children some day. As a student in Child Development class Haigh feels she has gotten a start in her career.



FCS + FCCLA: Everyone welcomed to learn, laugh, compete, give back



The club's vice president stands at the front of the room. It's a half hour before the start of school and there's plenty on the agenda.

While FCCLA secretary Meaghan Thompson, vice president of membership, assists Cassie Chickard, who is also the state vice president in charge of STAR Events, asks for volunteers to work

at a school dinner, followed by suggestions on what to bring in for an upcoming welcome back party for another absent club member.

Seventh-grader Emry Hoening suggests bringing in peaches and balloons. Other club members excitedly suggest adding streamers cantaloupe, and other healthy treats.

"I love this club," Hoening said. "I joined because I like to help people and there are always fun activities."

"Those (activities) are my best PR," laughs FCCLA sponsor and Southern Wells' alumnus Janel Franks.

Some of the helpful and fun activities have included the team-building games following the business part of the meeting, along with marching in the Bluffton Street Fair parade where the members handed out materials in support of "Don't Text and Drive."

"Mrs. Franks is so much

fun, sophomore Allison Blevins said. "We can talk about everything with her."

Under Franks' leadership, the Southern Wells' FCCLA has been named an "Honor Chapter," one of only nine in the state.

And no wonder. The club's food drive raised over 800 cans in a school of 400 for the national outreach project, "Fighting Hunger."

The group has cooked and served meals at events like the Veteran's Day breakfast; volunteered at the Wells County Blood Draw, in addition to other activities.

"The difference in our subject area is that you can go home and use what you learned today," Franks said.

"We're not a class where students have to wonder when they are going to use the information."



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: Allison Blevins enters the date of the FCCLA national convention in Nashville, Tennessee this summer where she will attend learning seminars, visit displays and meet fellow FCCLA students.

Leading the chapter meeting, junior Cassie Chickard serves as state vice president of STAR Events, in addition to vice president of the local FCCLA.

FCCLA students work together with a single length of yarn to create a "star" the symbol of FCCLA in response to a challenge by their sponsor/teacher Janel Franks. STAR stands for "Students Taking Action for Recognition."