

# 2016-2017 RECIPIENTS

## D.J. KURTENBACH

*From Angela Hudson, 4-H youth leadership development volunteer mentor:*

"When I was asked to write something to describe the characteristics and leadership of Daniel or D.J., as I know him, I thought "piece of cake." Wrong! This young man has been a strong leader in every aspect of the word. From the moment, I met him more than ten years ago, I knew he would grow to make a huge impact on his community but never imagined the world. D.J. not only is active in school with his extracurricular activities, but he also has a passion for 4-H and is ambitious in life.

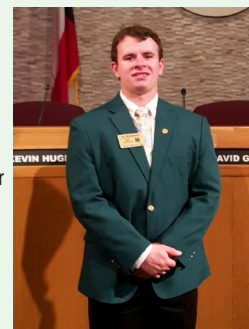
"Being a 4-H youth leadership development volunteer, I have had the opportunity to watch D.J. in action. He is constantly thinking about how to make an impact by utilizing every opportunity put in front of him as a life lesson. The first time I remember him springing into action was during a snow storm. We were all snowed in, but D.J. took the time to issue a challenge for other 4-H members to make snow ice cream. He brought a little happiness to more than 100 members and parents with his actions.

"While attending school in Weatherford, OK, he saw the need for exercise and a play area. At the age of 14, D.J. made an appointment with the superintendent and other school officials to discuss clearing away fence to make room for a fun area for all to enjoy. He organized and managed to turn the area into a place for exercise and a new basketball court.

"Mr. Kurtenbach has organized the "Cleats for Kids" project every year since 2008. What started as D.J. seeing his friend needing a pair of shoes to play sports — and giving him his — has turned into a worldwide donation effort to provide children of all ages the equipment needed to play their favorite sport. This past year, he placed more than 45 collection boxes around his school campus and was able to collect more than 1,002 new and gently used athletic sports items to be sent to Zambia, Guatemala and Grand Prairie. These are only a few examples of the many attributes that D.J. Kurtenbach has. He has a true servant's heart in which he is constantly working to make his community, country and world a better place. It is my pleasure to recommend Mr. Daniel J. Kurtenbach III for this prestigious honor!"

*From D.J.:*

"I am a fourth generation 4-H member who is truly humbled to receive the GROW recipient recognition for May. Many people don't realize the importance of agriculture and sports and how they impact our society. For eight years, I have collected gently used equipment and shoes to give to kids all over the world so they can have the same opportunities to get out and play like I do. I make sure to donate footballs, soccer balls, basketballs and cleats that use cowhide leather to promote my family farm heritage and help our farmers. Without agriculture, we simply couldn't play sports, and I am grateful to our farm families each and every day. I have donated over 30,000 items and reached over 3 million people while helping over 20 charities."



## CAITLIN EDSALL

*From Jake Mullican, ag teacher and FFA advisor at Red Oak High School:*

"I've known Ms. Caitlin Edsall for almost three years now. I have known her in the role as an accomplished student. I have known her in the role as an organizational leader. And, I have known her in the role as an amazing, confident and apt young lady. I highly recommend Ms. Edsall for the Texas Department of Agriculture's GROW Award.

"As a student at Red Oak High School, I have seen Ms. Edsall accomplish many feats through the course of a school year. To say that she is great at showing impeccable time management skills would not be doing this letter or her any justice. When you take into account all of the involvement in extracurricular activities and her ability to, all the while, maintain her high GPA and top ten of her graduating class status, it must be considered. These extra-curricular activities include FFA, Student Council and the National Honor Society, just to name a few. Now please trust me when I say that Caitlin is not a student that just signs up for a club, pays her dues and may show up to a couple of meetings. No, Ms. Edsall is a highly motivated young lady who wants to get involved, get her hands dirty and leads by example. She has excelled in all of the aforementioned organizations because of her innate ability to build rapport and establish partnerships and relationships with those around her.

"Caitlin is an accomplished and dependable leader. She has served as a leader for our Red Oak FFA Chapter in many capacities, including as chapter president for the last 2 years. She has also served above the local level as president for our Corsicana FFA District, where she was a representative for more than 20 schools in our district.

"Lastly, Caitlin Edsall is an amazing, compassionate and confident young lady. She is definitely not a stranger to obstacles. But even with everything that life has thrown at her, she has maintained a wonderful disposition and handles situations with tact and great poise. She has never let life get the best of her and still to this day has continued to be more active and successful as any other student I have had come through my classroom or chapter program. She is actively involved in church and her church's youth group, and served many community service hours.

"It has been an honor and a pleasure to have met and known Ms. Caitlin Edsall. I know that she will be just as successful in every endeavor and opportunity that comes her way and she sets her sights on. She is truly a one-in-a-million student, leader and wonderful human being. For these reasons, I again highly recommend Ms. Caitlin Edsall for the Texas Department of Agriculture's GROW Award."

*From Caitlin:*

"I am so honored to have been selected as the April GROW award winner. I want to thank my two amazing ag teachers and my incredibly supportive family for always believing in me no matter what and always pushing me to do my best. I owe my passion for agriculture to these amazing mentors in my life, and it is because of them that I am the person I am today. I feel very blessed to have had the opportunity to be involved in the agriculture industry through my FFA chapter the past four years, and I am very excited to continue advocating for the industry as I start this new chapter in my life at A&M and later through my future career. Thank you again for this amazing award and opportunity!"





## WHITNEY MAHAN

*From Mandy Jones, counselor at Honey Grove High School :*

"Whitney loves the ag and cattle industry and is a great asset to her family, school and community. She was the salutatorian of her 8th grade class, and is now currently ranked second in her class of 42. Whitney is a member of the Honey Grove High School Marching Band and plays the flute. Whitney is a member of FCA.

"She is also involved with 4-H and FFA, holding officer positions in both clubs as an underclassman. Last year, Whitney was president of the FFA Greenhand Officer Team. Whitney and the other officers started a Stop N Shop Pantry at our high school. They collect toiletries such as soap, toothpaste, feminine hygiene products, etc. These items can be used by any student in need. Whitney has continued to collect items for this project by getting donations from local businesses, individuals and hotels.

"She has been involved in livestock judging for four years. Whitney was the highest placing individual in the sheep/goat division at the Texas 4-H Roundup in June 2016. Additionally, she was a member of the Courtesy Corps at the Texas FFA Convention in July 2016.

"Whitney has been showing livestock for eight years. She has exhibited goats, market rabbits and pigs before falling in love with commercial heifers and market steers. There is where Whitney really shines. She absolutely loves her cattle. She currently has three show steers, a commercial heifer, and a pen of three commercial heifers and market steers on feed. She loves exhibiting at jackpot live shows, the county fair and Texas majors.

"Whitney never hesitates to help other exhibitors show their cattle when they have more than one head in a class. At the Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo in March 2016, Whitney stood in the classification line for approximately two hours for a student that was participating in a baseball game. This speaks volumes for her leadership."

*From Whitney:*

"I am honored to receive this award because agriculture is truly my passion. I hope to continue to pursue my leadership skills through this industry."



## CADE INGRAM

*From Julie Birkner, club manager for the Montgomery County 4-H Shotgun Team*

"Cade is an exceptional young man and is dedicated to both his education and extracurricular activities. He loves a challenge and embraces success and defeat openly. His leadership skills are evidenced in his many roles as he currently serves as Third Vice President and teen leader for Trail's End 4-H, while also serving as Second Vice President and New Shooter Mentor for Montgomery County 4-H Shotgun Team.

"Cade has also been in the Air Force JORTC for the past four years, holding positions such as element leader, physical training squad leader, varsity orienteering, activities coordinator and second lieutenant, community service. He is also a member of the Science National Honor Society, National Art Honor Society, National English Honor Society and National FFA Organization.

"In 2016, Cade was recognized by Montgomery County 4-H as a 4-H Member who excelled in development of self, character, and leadership when he received the Danforth "I Dare You" Award. This is the second highest honor a 4-H member can receive. He was also bestowed the Unsung Hero Award, which recognized him as a 4-H member who worked hard without receiving other recognition for his efforts.

"His dedication to the community is shown in the more than 100 hours of community service he has completed since his freshman year of high school. Cade has been an asset to our club, and there is not a more deserving person for this award."

*From Cade:*

"I am honored to receive the February 2017 GROW award from the Texas Department of Agriculture. I want to thank the adult leaders who have supported and cultivated in me a sense of service, responsibility and leadership. My parents, 4-H managers and project leaders, Air Force Junior Reserve Officer Training (AFJROTC) instructors and teachers have provided me with the opportunities and experiences to develop the skills that resulted in the person I am today. I look forward to paying my successes forward and helping others become leaders."





## SARITA SHORT

*From Cindy Dockter, agriculture teacher at Panther Creek Consolidated Independent School District:*

"It has been an honor to haul Sarita Short to stock shows since she was in the third grade. I have had the privilege of watching this beautiful young lady grow, mature and prosper over the last 10 years. She envelops the definition of leader throughout her school, church and community.

"Throughout her high school years, Sarita has excelled and grown into a tremendous force. She is president of our FFA chapter and served as a district FFA officer last year. She has also qualified for the Area IV leadership contest every year that she has been in high school and been in the top five at the area horse judging contest the last three years.

"She is president of Student Council and is a leader on her basketball team. She also chose to be an aid to the coach to help mentor the junior high girls with basketball here at school. Sarita has qualified for the state track meet in the 100 and 200 meter dash. Because of her dedication to the sport, she has had the honor of standing on the medal stand twice at the state track meet. She also participates in One-Act play and was voted best actress and all-star cast at district and area.

"Sarita has also been very successful with her lamb projects that she has shown through FFA. She has won champion fine wool at the Sandhills Stock Show, and had reserve champion fine wool at Austin and San Angelo. She has had numerous top placings and placed many lambs in the sales at the major stock shows across the state. All of this success is due to her hard work and many hours of dedica-

tion to her projects throughout the years.

"Sarita has been a part of the Coleman County Cowgirls for the past five years. This is a drill team that performs during the Coleman PRCA Rodeo in June. She was also the Coleman County Rodeo Queen last year and attended many community events throughout the year representing that association. She volunteers at our community Dove Fest and Hunter's Barbeque, which encompasses the community and people from elsewhere who have come to Coleman to embark on one of our most valued assets — hunting.

"Sarita is also a member First United Methodist Church in Coleman. She volunteers for vacation bible school and is a member of the choir. Through all of the activities that Sarita is involved in, she still maintains an A average, is on the honor roll and a member of the National Honor Society. She is also taking twelve hours this semester through Cisco Junior College. Sarita Short is truly an exceptional student that encompasses premier leadership, personal growth and career success."

*From Sarita:*

"It is a true honor to be selected as the Texas Department of Agriculture's January 2017 GROW Award winner. I would like to thank the many people who have helped me develop not only as a person, but as an agriculturist. I love the agriculture industry, and hope to stay in it as I continue on to the next chapter of my life. I would like to send my most special thanks to the Texas Department of Agriculture for allowing me to represent them."



## EMILY REILEY

*From Deanna Roeder, agricultural science teacher and FFA advisor at Marion High School*

"When asked to describe a true student leader, Emily always comes to mind first. She has a focus and determination to not only be successful but help others along the way to become the best they can be.

"As a member of the Marion FFA, Emily has served her school, district and area as an officer. She works hard to be the kind of leader that influences other students to find their highest potential. Emily has also been on the state champion Wool Judging Team, state qualifying Chapter Conducting Team and area qualifying Agricultural Issues Team. To achieve at this level takes dedication most students are not willing to offer.

"Emily has shown livestock across the state of Texas and works with younger Marion FFA members to help them improve their showmanship and animal management.

"Even though Emily dedicates much of her time to serving the FFA, she also serves her school and community. Her academic success is no accident and has earned her one of the top spots in her graduating class. Emily is a member of various school clubs and committees where she works for the betterment of Marion High School.

"Somehow, she also finds time to volunteer at St. John Lutheran Church to teach bible school and work with younger church members.

Emily is definitely an example of the values that true leaders hold. It is rare to find a young lady of her caliber, making her much deserved of this recognition."

*From Emily:*

"I am honored to have been selected to receive the GROW award. Agriculture has always been an important part of my life, and it has helped to shape the person I am today. I hope that I can have an impact on other people in the same way that those involved in agriculture have impacted me. I am grateful to my family and my ag teachers for all their support."





## COLTIN WALTON

*From Roxy Gilchrist, counselor at Magnolia High School*

"Coltin Walton is a leader both inside and outside of school. He is a 4-H club officer for Trails End 4-H, as well as the teen leader for poultry. He also is the second vice president for Montgomery 4-H County Council. Although he participates in several projects, community service has always been something he enjoys, and he feels strongly about giving back to his community and those in need.

"Coltin participates in the 4-H SET poster competition, consumer decision making and is very involved in the poultry project at local, county and state levels of competition. Coltin has been the recipient of the Bronze Star, Silver Star, Unsung Hero and Agricultural Record Book awards at the county level. Coltin also placed second in the Animal Science SET poster contest at the State 4-H Roundup this past summer.

"Coltin is an active member of the Magnolia High School JV football team. He also enjoys being an active member in the Magnolia FFA. He is a member on the Livestock Judging Team and is the Texas state winner of the Division 1 Animal Sciences category for the Agriscience competition, and he was selected as a finalist for the National Agriscience Fair. Coltin recently traveled to Indianapolis and competed at the National Agriscience Fair, where he placed fifth in his division and earned a gold medal for his project 'Comparative Effects of Protein Levels on Eggshells.'

"Coltin also excels in his academics at school. He is ranked No. 7 in a class of 509 students. Coltin currently maintains 5.39 GPA, while taking advanced placement courses. He has a love of history and government, and he was very excited to be one of two representatives selected to represent District 9 and Montgomery County at the Texas 4-H State Congress this past summer. He enjoyed presenting his bill and being on the Government, Finance and Appropriations Committee."

*From Coltin:*

"I am very honored to be receiving this award. I want to thank my parents and my teachers for affording me the opportunity to participate in all the events and activities I've gone to. I have been fortunate enough to grow up in a household that pushes community service and giving back to the community, as well as being involved in as many things as possible. This is evident in the 20-plus hours of community service that I do per year. I feel I am very well-rounded, and regardless of what I do, I give it my all. Most of all, I want to thank the Texas Department of Agriculture for bestowing this honor on me."



## BAILLIE McMANNERS

*From Melissa Grissom, FFA advisor and ag science teacher at Caney Creek High School:*

"Baillie McManners demonstrates excellence in and outside the classroom with her leadership roles and activities, community service and agriculture involvement. With a 3.5 GPA and enrollment in Dual Credit and Advanced Placement courses, this young lady finds the drive and energy to manage multiple Supervised Agricultural Experiences (SAEs), serve in leadership roles, and actively engages in our community with a genuine effort for improvement for others.

"Baillie's agriculture experiences are very diverse, much like the agriculture industry in Texas. She is heavily involved in beef production raising and showing Santa Gertrudis cattle with her family. She has also served as the Vice President of the Mid-Coast Santa Gertrudis Junior Association board, serving its members through the facilitation of many events and assisting in the directing of their association. In addition to cattle production, Baillie maintains and manages a small apiary producing honey. Her attraction to this area of agriculture began with the social interaction and structure of the bee colony and was built on the importance the bee population has on crop production.

"Miss McManners has been recognized at the Texas FFA State Convention for the last three years for her involvement and work in her Taxidermy SAE. Through this SAE, she has established a small business preserving and producing mounts of Texas wildlife. Baillie currently serves as president of our local FFA Chapter and first vice president of the Area III FFA association. Both of these honors come after numerous years of serving in various leadership positions. Currently, she is responsible for the organization of the National FFA 212 Degrees and 360 Degrees leadership conferences held in Texas. During these conferences, students from across the state participate in leadership development activities, as well as a community service project. At the conclusion of this year's conference, over 350 FFA members will have participated in these outstanding events. Miss McManners has served the Texas FFA Foundation for two years as an ambassador promoting agricultural education to business partners by sharing the benefits and opportunities available through the Texas FFA organization. Not only have I had the opportunity to watch Baillie grow, but have enjoyed watching her assist others students in their growth as well."

*From Baillie:*

"It is such an honor to be selected by the Texas Department of Agriculture as a GROW award recipient. It's been my goal to serve others while promoting the agriculture industry and through my FFA and SAE experiences, I have the opportunity to begin this journey."

