

Two Alton teachers earn top Family, Career, Community Leaders of America honors

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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ALTON - Two long-term **Alton** teachers received some prestigious recognition at the annual Illinois Family & Consumer Sciences Teachers Association Conference in July.

Sharon Ferree and Regina Birch were both awarded honors at the conference. The two teachers established the Alton High School Chapter of FCCLA (Family, Career,

Community Leaders of America) in 2012 with 20 members. Today, the chapter has 100 members, who participate in numerous activities, including leadership training and Star Projects competition. Two members also went to the FCCLA Conference this summer. One member is also now an Illinois state FCCLA officer.

Ferree was awarded the **IFACSTA Billye Griswold Professionalism Award**, which honors a classroom teacher who has made significant contributions in the classroom and is considered an outstanding leader in the field and has an active FCCLA Program. Birch was awarded the IFACSTA Outstanding Teacher in Community Service Award, which recognizes a teacher with significant accomplishments and outstanding leadership in programs and activities that promote community involvement.

Marie Kelting, past IFACSTA Region 5 Representative, said she was very proud of the two women for their accomplishments.

“When I told them they received the awards they were both shocked,” Kelting said. “Teachers don’t get recognition that often. I am going to the high school today to present them their awards. They do a lot of extra work for the kids.”



"They are both open to ideas and help the students get recognized both on the state and national level. The exposure helps the students get ready for jobs that are out there."

Ferree had her classes participate in two community projects before starting the FCCLA chapter; the FCCLA members took over the projects - Oxford America Hunger Banquet and food drives. She will assist FCCLA members with the monthly event of feeding the homeless this academic year. Many more activities and projects have happened and are ongoing.

As an advisor for the FCCLA Chapter, Ferree mentors, supervises and accompanies the FCCLA student members with all their activities. Ferree was a presenter at the 2016 Connection Conference for teachers from across the state and had articles included in state publications.

Birch mentors, supervises and accompanies the FCCLA student members with all their activities and projects including Make A Difference Day, fundraising for domestic violence victims, bell ringing for the Salvation Army, Alzheimer's Association, Susan G. Komen Foundation and much more.

In her personal life, Birch continues to volunteer by helping with 4H and her daughter's music programs, at church where she teaches vacation Bible school and taking mission trips in the Illinois, U.S. and overseas. Birch will be entered into the IACTE Outstanding Teacher in Community Service against the top Community Service Teachers in Career and Technical Education across the state.

"They are really the eyes and ears out there to help students," Kelting said.