

Holland FCCLA wins Nationals

On July 3, recent Holland graduates Tatum Isbel, Seth Jayaprabhu and Jake Richards earned first place in the Repurpose and Redesign event at the Family Community and Career Leaders of America National Conference in San Diego, CA. This was not only a win for the Holland High School FCCLA chapter, but also for the entire Holland community as this is the first ever national title held by Holland High School. They gave a speech presenting their project which featured homemade stools they created from aluminum cans from the high school cafeteria and excess fabric swatches leftover from an interior design store. "While it is a simple design, we really researched the impact of aluminum and textile waste and made a sustainable business model out of these materials," Richards says.

According to the team, they wanted to turn consumer waste into something productive. "Our goal was to reduce the amount of waste that enters local landfills by creating vintage upholstered step stools out of cans from our school cafeteria and by using excess fabric swatches," says Isbel. "We set our sights on using all post-consumer waste." Other items they recycled included old bedspreads and scraps of plywood from the high school Ag shop's trash pile.

The team started collecting items during the school year in December and had their prototypes finished by February. Prior to the national-level competition, the team first competed in Regionals on March 4 in Waco before moving onto the State level in Dallas on April 7-9. Throughout their competitions, they have been accompanied by their advisor, Mrs. Cathy Cleveland and their FCCLA chapter president Penny Parmer.

Jayaprabhu says their project was inspired by a similar stool created by Cleveland's great grandmother during the time of the Great Depression. The project brings this vintage idea into the modern era as each member designed a stool with a specific function in mind. Isbel says hers would go perfectly in her college dorm, Jayaprabhu says he designed his with the idea of a beach house or a child's playroom in mind, and Richards says his is ideal for an office space as it also functions as a storage container.

While attending the conference, the team had the opportunity to meet FCCLA members from across the nation and explore San Diego. They also got to participate in some fun events such as a bus tour of San Diego, a beach party, a dinner cruise for all Texas attendees, and an after-party held after the closing ceremony.

"We've been working and practicing for a long time, and it really paid off," says Jayaprabhu. "Thank you so much to Mrs. Cleveland and Holland High School as a whole."