



FARMHOUSE



ILLINOIS CHAPTER

SPRING 2022

A LETTER FROM THE CHAPTER PRESIDENT



Over the past semester, the men of FarmHouse Fraternity at the University of Illinois adjusted to the “new normal” since the start of the COVID pandemic. Members got back into the habit of hosting philanthropy events and participating in socials, professional development events, intramurals, recruitment events and several other activities that have been re-imagined to take COVID precautions into account while still allowing the chapter to be fun and successful.

FarmHouse Fraternity is well known on Illinois’ campus for multiple reasons. The most important reason is for our academic success and recognition at the Greek Oscars. FarmHouse earned the title of chapter of the year again last spring for the fourth year in a row. The University of Illinois has the largest Greek system in the world and FarmHouse is the top chapter of Division II fraternities within the Interfraternity Council. Along earning Chapter of the Year, the chapter also took home first place awards in the areas of member development and risk management. Many of the events talked about later in this letter are what has led us to be successful in these areas.

Supporting the local community through philanthropy events remains a focus for the men of FarmHouse. This past semester we continued our annual support of the Champaign County Toys for Tots drive. Our brotherhood along with the women of Sigma Alpha hosted an event called Tacos for Tots. Here we hosted a taco dinner with the cost of the event was either a payment of \$7 per person or a donation of a toy of equal or greater value. The event raised over \$900 and collected more than 100 toys! During the past semester, the men of FarmHouse also participated in other philanthropy events. We had two teams of FarmHouse men donate \$400 and participate in the Tri-Delta softball tournament. This tournament raised money for St. Jude’s Hospital and allows for further research into curing pediatric cancer.

A focus on professional development is one thing that sets apart the men of FarmHouse from other Greek organizations. This past year all members were highly encouraged to apply for a summer internship and at this point nearly everyone has received an offer. A large part of the internship success is due to help from local alumni through our annual career panel. During the fall semester we teamed up with 4-H House sorority to attend sessions with alumni in agriculture and other industries. We had a great question and answer session with the panelist. The event was planned before the college of ACES Career Fair which allowed members to make connections with several industry professionals before seeing them the next day at the career fair. Many FarmHouse alumni also volunteered their time to review our resumés before the career fair. They gave us advice on how to improve

our resumés and become better candidates at the career fair.

Since the start of the COVID pandemic, the recruitment process has completely changed. In order to attain a more COVID cautious environment, we have offered both large and small recruitment events. The potential new members interests and opinions on COVID-19 helped us decide what type of event worked best for them. Several potential new members still attended formal weekend long recruitment events where the whole house was present, and we attended some form of event like a hockey game. On the other hand, any new member that was slightly more cautious about COVID was offered a one-on-one house tour with a few members. This allowed for the recruitment event to be very personalized without being overwhelming. The new recruitment process worked quite well in my opinion. This fall we were happy to have a new member class of 12 students.

All in all, the Illinois chapter of FarmHouse has had a very successful past year. The events above are just a few of the major events that we have participated in over the past semester. While we made did our best to seek progress in ourselves we also ensured to have fun along the way with barn dance, socials, and tailgating. Fall semester was a whirlwind of events and we are all excited to continue and expand our plans for events in the spring semester. Other chapter accomplishments include:

- Chapter of the Year Four Consecutive Years
- 1st Place in Risk Management
- 1st Place in Member Development
- Advisor Pat Justice earning the Fred H. Turner Outstanding Alumna/Alumnus Award
- 3.23 Fall 2021 GPA, 3.58 Spring 2021
- \$900 and over 100 toys donated to Champaign County Toys for Tots
- Over \$1,000 raised for LLS
- \$650 raised for CU at Home homeless shelter
- New member class of 12
- 576 community services last year among all members

Fraternally,

Riley Bergmann
Illinois Chapter President



and leadership is about. The values he gained while living at 809 – ambition, honesty, and obedience – are all qualities he tries to install in his children. Whether it was attending basketball games with his brothers in Orange Krush or spending late nights in a small group cramming for a test at the Vet Med Building, Ryan feels fortunate for the choice he made years ago to be a part of the brotherhood.

Before graduation, Ryan quickly realized he was unable to return to the family farming operation. Instead, he sought out a position with ADM. He began his career in Peoria, IL, at an ethanol plant in operations. This led to opportunities to learn about logistics of the railroad, loading barges on the river, and working with a large staff of about 50 people. After working his way up to assistant manager in Peoria, he transferred to manage the Beardstown facility for a few years, then to Havana. His interest in project management blossomed at Havana as he had the opportunity to develop many projects at the elevator in those years. After helping with the creation of a train-loading facility in Taylorville, IL, he discovered he had a knack for project management, which led to him developing several multi-million-dollar projects across the Midwest. Because of his abilities, he also managed the building of feed mills in China for three years. Today, he is working as the regional CAPEX manager in charge of ADM's three major agricultural divisions of ag services and oil



seeds, carbohydrates, and nutrition.

Ryan now lives in Lake Zurich, IL, with his wife, Rachel, and two children, Jack and Gracie. He has adapted well from the change of rural Illinois to the suburban Chicago lifestyle partaking in concerts, craft beer festivals, and trying many other new things that living in an urban area allows him to do. He enjoys spending time with his children, especially anything outdoors like golf.



Ryan volunteers for a special needs summer baseball league and finds passion in disaster relief. After hurricanes struck Puerto Rico and Louisiana, Ryan and other volunteers at ADM gathered supplies and helped rebuild homes for staff members and others. Still today, Ryan remains connected to his FarmHouse brothers when possible seeing multiple pledge brothers and housemates throughout the year.

A LETTER FROM YOUR ASSOCIATION



Illinois FarmHouse Brothers,

I'd like to invite you to a new era for FarmHouse Fraternity at the University of Illinois. In December 2016, you likely received a letter saying that the active Chapter was experiencing dire times. At that time, drastic and uncomfortable changes had to be made to restore and honor the traditions and legacy that each of you built at Illinois FarmHouse and to ensure our FarmHouse Chapter will flourish

in years to come. Since that letter, the active Chapter and association has made a complete 180. Now, the active Chapter has been selected as Chapter of the Year for four consecutive years! They have consistently been in Top 3 in GPA for the last three years and continue to recruit high quality men that will restore and honor those traditions of the past as we move forward into a new era.

All these feats and accomplishments have been driven by the young men of the active Chapter and a small group of alumni. Now comes the point that we need the entire alumni base to support and engage if we want to see FarmHouse Fraternity at the University of Illinois to continue to grow and prosper. We have launched a Two-Phase strategy to bring the physical chapter house back to standards that our FarmHouse Moms would be proud of. We have completed phase one, which was a complete renovation of the front porch and surrounding areas of the Chapter house and property. Phase two is a Master House Plan to determine and develop plans for a house renovation at our 809 address. We need each of you to achieve our next objectives:

- Hit our recruitment goals. The men have been challenged to hit at least 40 in-house members to start construction on this project. The Chapter currently has 27 in-house and 8 out-of-house members. We need help from all alumni in reaching this goal.
- Launch Capital Campaign in the next 24 months
- Continue to focus on Alumni Engagement that brings our brotherhood closer together

Since December 2016, the chapter has made great progress and we are very proud of the men that represent FarmHouse today. We have taken that first step...Now, let's see what we as lifelong brothers can accomplish NEXT!

Fraternally,

Bruce Frank
President, Illinois FarmHouse Association

MAINTAINING RELATIONSHIPS



Brian King (IL '95) grew up in Buckley, IL. Brian had orange and blue ever since birth being born at the University Hospital. As he grew older the desire to attend Illinois only grew deeper as he developed a passion for aviation and with Illinois having a flying program it was an easy choice for him to attend. Brian joined FarmHouse after another member, Ryan Vance, from his hometown convinced him to look at the chapter before entering

college. Upon rushing, he knew it was the place for him to be surrounded by others with small town values like himself.

When asked about his start in FarmHouse he admitted that adjusting to life at 809 was challenging initially. Growing up around campus and being a "townie" provided him local insight to the area and putting in the effort to connect with his fellow brothers took some adjusting. Upon embracing all that FarmHouse had to offer, he finally understood the saying around the house when entering that "you still haven't met your best friend." It was at FarmHouse he made some of his best friends and memories. He spoke fondly of all the tailgates, barn dances, and formals along with the quiet moments just being with his fellow brothers. Although tough, he valued the bonds created with his pledge brothers during initiation week. To this day, the song "Living on a Prayer" by Bon Jovi holds a special place in Brian's heart as his class's theme song.

Today, Brian lives with his family in Castle Pines, Colorado just south of Denver. There he lives with his wife, Jessica, and two daughters, Isabella and Emerson. Currently, Brian works for United Airlines where he has flown all across the world. He is currently in the process of upgrading to a Captain for the airline flying Boeing 737s out of Denver. Outside of work he enjoys volunteering at



his daughter's school, helping out their softball team and being a "soccer" dad. He also serves his fellow pilots as a union volunteer on the local scheduling committee and instructs new incoming pilots how to properly bid for their monthly schedules.

When asked how FarmHouse has made a difference in his career, he explained that it has made a bigger impact in the stints in his career outside of flying planes. His flying career has had a few

starts and stops and Brian has found himself at times temporarily out of the flight deck and into different managing roles for a retail company and The Boeing Corporation. There he used his ability



to communicate, cooperate with others and negotiate that he gained from living with his fellow brothers. When asked his best piece of advice for our men at 809 today he explained how as you progress through life you should continue to actively maintain the relationships you made while in FarmHouse. This is advice he takes seriously himself as he continuously stays connected with brothers, especially by hosting a few each year in Colorado.

LIVING OUT THE VALUES OF A FARMHOUSE MAN



Ryan Potts (IL '95) grew up on a family-owned grain and Angus cow calf operation near Williamsfield, IL. His interest in the construction industry began in high school while working for a contractor, and ultimately, it's what led him to choose his major of Ag Mechanics (now Technical Systems Management) when earning his undergraduate degree at the University of Illinois. The choice to attend the school was an easy one

for him because of his strong family ties to the college. His sister, father and mother attended Illinois before he became an Illini. However, the choice on fraternities was not as easy. Having a father that was in Alpha Gamma Rho and a now brother-in-law from FarmHouse, he decided to rush both houses. In the end, the strong Knox County presence within FarmHouse, the values of the men there, and the connections he made with everyone led him to joining FarmHouse.

When looking back on his collegiate career, he admitted that college came difficult to him at first. Having independence for the first time impacted his academics for the first semester, but he was able to turn things around because of the help of his brothers and the desire to be a part of the brotherhood and university. Today, he credits FarmHouse for showing him what true friendship

UPCOMING EVENTS

February 26th

Bowling

March 26

ACES Admitted Students Day

April 9th

Trap Shoot/Alumni Event

*Williams Farms
27840 E. 975 North Rd
Ellsworth, IL*

April 26th

Scholarship Interviews

July 21st - 23rd

Conclave

*Oklahoma City, OK
bit.ly/OKCconclave22*

September 10th

Come Home Weekend
Illinois v.s. Virginia

SHARE YOUR NEWS

Have you recently married? Has your family recently had or adopted a child? Maybe you changed careers, received a promotion, received an award at work or were recognized in your community?

We want to know about it!

Submit your news or new contact information for our next issue of Pearls & Rubies and future Association Newsletters by going to this website:

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