

2025 GOALS RECAP

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National Junior Santa Gertrudis Association (NJSGA) members attended the 2025 Gerts Ongoing Advanced Leadership Summit (GOALS) in the Montgomery, Ala., area this summer. This leadership conference, themed “Developing Leaders in the Heart of Dixie,” was an exciting adventure held at the Kick Back Ranch and Retreat Center. Twenty-five youth from across several southern states, and five coordinators and chaperones shared in leadership development by Development Coach Caroline Dotts of Strengths on Site and several full days of exciting events and experiences!

It was truly a memorable time spent with youth who share a common passion of raising and showing Santa Gertrudis. The conference enabled them to step out of the barn and show ring and into the “classroom” at the beautiful ranch to learn about leadership skills, team building, personal development and character traits, all while having fun, enriching their love for agriculture, meeting new people, developing self-esteem and social skills, and making memories. Besides our time at the ranch, there was great fun and social bonding, and recreational and camping experiences. The youth and chaperones also got to experience a tour and program with the Alabama Cattleman’s Association, see the history of downtown Montgomery, tour the Alabama Capital building and take on whitewater rafting, which was such a fun team-building experience!

The following day, our group spent the entire day at Auburn University to take in “all-things Auburn” with unforgettable tours of the Auburn basketball arena, football locker room and stadium, veterinary school, equestrian facility, baseball stadium and softball stadium. The group also got to experience Toomer’s Corner lemonade, lunch in the stadium club, seeing the war ea-

gle fly, a highly competitive kickball game at the softball field, live demonstrations at the vet school, horse encounters at the stables, athlete spottings in the gym and dinner at the Hall of Fame Club. Pretty special treatment by one of our very own McRae Clay!

All of these events provided opportunities for young people to hang out with new people each time, which was such a joy to see. These kids really used this trip for positive self-development, which was shared by parents, mentors and chaperones.



The National Junior board of 15 youth also met to plan the new year over breakfast on the final morning of the GOALS experience. We also spent time talking about how this trip was made possible and sharing our thanks through a thank you note writing session to understand the importance of sharing gratitude with others.

This trip brought together a diverse cross-section of youth to make awesome connections, experiences, friendships and memories. All of this was made possible because of their common bond – membership in the NJSGA, showing red cattle and being involved in youth in agriculture.

Thank you to the many sponsors and donors who helped make GOALS 2025 possible through financial donations, silent auction donations and purchases. Thanks also to those who gave of their time and talents to make this trip possible. Thank you to all for your support of this program and all junior endeavors now and in the future! It was a special joy to spend this week with the team that coordinated and chaperoned this trip – Casey Jones, Christy Moran, Heather Strait, Callie Loden and Vice President of Youth Activities Trai Stegall. As a GOALS coordinator and chaperone, I could not be prouder of our juniors and this program, and what it does for them and our breed’s future! 🐄

