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Photo by Shawn Jarrard

U.S. Navy Veteran Haley Ray Myers Sr. of Blairsville, center, and family accepting a U.S. flag in recognition of his grandson, U.S. Marine Pvt. Caleb Miles.

Miles, 1st Battalion, Delta Company, Patrol 1008, for his completion of the Crucible at Parris Island, South Carolina, and graduating as a Marine on Feb. 23, 2018.

Pvt. Miles could not be present that evening, as he was in military combat training at Camp Geiger, though his family was very proud to be there in his stead to accept the flag.

"When my son graduated, it was Feb. 23, which was actually the anniversary of the raising of the Iwo Jima flag," said Mrs. Miles. "So, it was actually a pretty significant

thing to have this flag flown over the capital for him as he graduates and starts his career. It was a big thing for him, and I know it was a big thing for us."

Miles also told everyone present about Operation R.E.D., which stands for Remember Everyone Deployed, and she thanked local company Two Crafty Sisters for making shirts to highlight the cause.

Also in the meeting, Paris welcomed resident Michael O'Brien to talk about the growing trash and litter problem around the county.

"Since we got here in

1991, we've been very proud of living in this county," said O'Brien. "It's been a county that's been good to us for many reasons, and I think it's appropriate to recognize that what's been missing in some of these places that have a lot of trash is pride in this community."

More than a dozen residents with trash complaints attended the March county meeting, and Paris did his best to assure them that he was working on the problem.

"We've got about 24 or 25 complaints right now that we're addressing," said Paris.

"So, we are working on it. We're trying to do it in a slow and steady and deliberate way."

Paris said he was committed to maintaining his strong stance on individual property rights, but that the county will do what is necessary to address the most grievous trash offenders.

"If we do continue to have problems with the few that I'm anticipating, we will draft some more ordinances and we will make it stronger," said Paris. "Right now, we think we've got enough in place to handle the vast majority of it and maybe all of it."

"So, if you guys will be patient with the county, it's

something we're going to be working on over time. If you see a new place, that's fine to let us know, but it's going to be a process."

The commissioner also signed a pair of proclamations in the meeting, one in recognition of the U.S. Navy Seabee's birthday on March 5, 2018, and the other for Arbor Day on Feb. 16, 2018.

In other business, Paris approved an agreement between Union County and Baker Interactive Services, doing business as Baker Audio, for round the clock support for the county's 911 dispatch communications systems, which will cost \$15,706.60 for one year beginning on Feb. 1, 2018.



The Leadership Union class of the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce attended the meeting and hung around afterward to hear a presentation on Commissioner Paris' job duties.

## Union County FFA hosts dance to end hunger

By Jarrett Whitener  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

Students of the Union County Future Farmers of America hosted a St. Patrick's Day Dance on Friday, March 16, to help raise awareness about members of the community suffering from hunger.

The goal of the Union County FFA is to make a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education.

Union County Young Farmer teacher Ryan Talton works with the students to make their ideas become a reality for the organization.

"They wanted to come out and have a dance, to have fun, and they figured that tonight would be the best night to do it," said Talton.

Rather than a monetary price of admission for the dance, the members of the FFA decided to be more creative and charitable by making the price of admission two cans of food.

The canned food admission led to the dance being a type of food drive, which attracted younger members and students to participate in the donations.

The overall goal of the organization was to raise enough food to help make a difference in the community and provide food for those who cannot afford it.

"They are trying to help our local food bank," said Talton. "We hope to turn out plen-



The Union County FFA held a canned food drive and dance on Friday, March 16.

ty of cans for them."

Although Talton helps the FFA students, it's mostly the kids who conduct the work and development of ideas and projects.

This leads to an environment for the students to learn leadership roles and develop skills associated with teamwork, while helping to strive for a better community.

Also, the senior members of the Future Farmers of America wanted to use the event as an outlet that would help the younger members learn what it means to develop and come together as a community.

Another goal of the event was to bring the students that are not a part of the organization into the environment, in hopes that those students would find value in the way

that the FFA conducts and operates its projects.

The FFA looks toward the younger members as being the future leaders of the organization, and they want to help expand their ideas and humbleness to have lasting effects on the continuation of the club.

One of the ways students have come up with to benefit the community and those who cannot afford food is donating to the Georgia Mountain Food Bank, which has a goal of increasing the amount of food supplies in the surrounding areas.

The food bank obtains most of its donations locally from retailers, manufacturers, distributors, and food drives such as the dance, and it helps to service 67 agencies and cover multiple counties in the North Georgia area.

For more information on how to help the food bank provide for community members of Union County, visit [gamountainfoodbank.org/union-county](http://gamountainfoodbank.org/union-county).

The FFA is a nationwide organization in which students can join after enrolling in an agricultural class.

Qualifying members of the FFA are eligible for support by the organization through post-secondary studies, as the organization offers more than \$2 million worth of scholarships.