

"EVERYONE SEEMS SO FRIENDLY,

AND THE CAMPUS LOOKS LIKE A RESORT."

— RILYNN HANSEN

Rilynn Hansen, 18

Hometown: Grants Pass, Ore.

Major: Communications

Rilynn Hansen was a high school freshman in 2011 when she and her sister, Morgan, won first place in a national Future Business Leaders of America contest for their financial plan on a mock business. No other Oregon ninth grader had ever done that.

Hansen again wowed FBLA judges at the 2012 nationals, earning another blue ribbon for a real community service project. She and other students at Hidden Valley High launched the Josephine County Foundation in a region plagued by higher child poverty and unemployment rates and lower high school graduation and college achievement.

"We wanted to do something real. We saw our county struggling and we wanted to

make a difference," she said.

Hansen became proficient at grant writing and building relationships. The nonprofit began with community vision clinics, where 200 pairs of used glasses were handed out to low-income people.

Hansen's newest FBLA national project was Youth Education Success, a partnership with a local television station that made 11 grants to area teachers. They purchased heart-rate monitors for PE classes and ceramic kilns for student artists and established a life-skills garden and dental clinic, among other services.

The GCU factor: "Everyone seems so friendly, and the campus looks like a resort." 

