



NH Delegation Attends the 4-H National Conference

Three 4-H members from New Hampshire recently attended the 4-H National Conference in Washington DC. National 4-H Conference is a youth leadership conference where 4-H youth from around the nation gather to develop their leadership and citizenship skills. Peter Attisano from Lee, Brandie Rice from Fremont and Lillian Zimmermann from Hancock were selected among several applicants to represent the New Hampshire 4-H program. Claes Thelemarck, 4-H Youth Development Educator for Carroll County accompanied the group. During the conference they attended numerous workshops, heard from various speakers and worked in focus groups on topics of importance for teens around the nation.

The workshop topics were issues important to youth nationwide and the roundtable work sessions prepared the participants in leadership skills and communication skills to present the results of their focus group topics to different government agencies in Washington DC. The focus group topics that the NH delegation participated in included: distracted driving, environmental conservation, and keeping youth involved in the 4-H program through high school and college. Together with youth from around the nation they worked to research the issues and come up with proposals as to how address these concerns. “ I enjoyed getting to know new 4-H members from around the country and working to research, plan and prepare a presentation on distracted driving for the Department of Transportation.” commented Peter Attisano after the conference.

The NH youth delegation also spent an afternoon on Capitol Hill and met with Congressman Frank Guinta and Senator Kelly Ayotte as well as aids from the offices of Congressman Charlie Bass and Senator Jeanne Shaheen to discuss 4-H. The time spent in these meetings helped the delegates convey the importance of the 4-H program throughout the state. They explained the stereotype of 4-H, that it is nothing more than “cows and cookies” was not the case. In fact this conference was focused on leadership and citizenship. Of the three NH youth delegates only one participates in agriculturally based 4-H projects. “It was a truly amazing experience to be able to walk with Congressman Guinta and tell him about my experience in 4-H while he was on his way over to the Capitol to cast a vote.” remarked Lillian Zimmermann of her afternoon on Capitol Hill.

There were various motivational speakers who challenged the youth to “make the best better.” One speaker focused on how success in life can be found through simplicity and hard work. The youth attending the conference were also privileged to hear from Secretary of Agriculture, Tom Vilsack and Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan who shared their goals for the future and how the youth of today are key in achieving these goals. 4-H youth can lead that movement with all that they have gained through the 4-H program. Their message focused on youth helping America once again become world leaders in developing an educated workforce. After hearing the President’s cabinet members speak, Brandie Rice, who plans to major in

elementary education in college, said “I liked Secretary Duncan’s message of the importance of teachers and the President’s goal to bring 100,000 new teachers into the workforce.”

With the opportunity of a lifetime these teens were able to spend a week in the nation’s capital with other youth from around the nation while furthering the skills they have already developed through 4-H.

4-H is the youth program of the UNH Cooperative Extension and has the mission to help youth acquire knowledge, develop life skills and form attitudes to enable them to become self-directing, productive and contributing members of society. The role of Cooperative Extensions 4-H Youth Development Program is to help communities create positive youth experiences through community clubs, afterschool programs and special programs. Through experiential learning youth can explore a number of subject areas based on interest. 4-H has a rich history and tradition working with youth in agriculture, family and consumer sciences, science, engineering and technology, shooting sports, health and nutrition, the arts, citizenship, leadership and much more.

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