



Celebrating 4-H in New Hampshire - *Make the 4-H Connection*

My amazement grows as I make my way around the state, at the number of individuals with some connection to the 4-H Youth Development Program. Through the years, they may have been a member, volunteer, parent or donor. There has always been a great sense of service and thinking beyond the boundaries of New Hampshire.

Back in the 30's, World War I Veterans became part of the Civilian Conservation Corps, which built a youth camp in Bear Brook State Park for the YMCA, Manchester Girl Scouts and 4-H, opening its doors in 1936. Around 1947, the camp became more focused on 4-H, with support from county farm bureaus and the NH Farm Bureau, to become NH 4-H Camp Associates. The NH National Guard finished building a new bathhouse in 1996. Multi-generations of families have experienced 4-H camp. 4-H Camp will continue as a focus of fundraising efforts.

This past year, New Hampshire had an extremely high number of deployed National Guard Soldiers, qualifying the state 4-H Youth Development Program for an Operation Military Kids (OMK) grant. Through this grant, UNH Cooperative Extension connected with state Family Program Coordinator, Master Sergeant Peter Merritt. He immediately made "the 4-H Connection" through his fond memories of his childhood experience as a Sullivan County 4-H member who attended 4-H camp as a camper and later as a counselor.



When given the opportunity to reconnect with 4-H through OMK, Peter became an ambassador for UNH Cooperative Extension with the National Guard. The two organizations teamed up and applied for a grant to host Operation Purple Camp NH at the UNH 4-H Bear Hill Camp. Peter told others, "4-H camp will provide a place where kids of deployed soldiers will get to be kids again. They will swim, hike, sing silly songs and be with lots of other kids who are just like them. Let's go for it." As a result, 97 youth spent a week being ordinary campers.

My goal this coming year is that the 4-H Connection will be made with new donors, new members and new volunteers. To quote a Cheshire County volunteer, "Our 4-H group has created opportunities for kids and families to work as a team as well as experience personal growth. We see parents growing as much as the kids do."

The major 4-H Connection is between UNH Cooperative Extension and the University of New Hampshire. The UNH Foundation oversees the investment of the 4-H Foundation funds and helps identify donors and alumni connections to enhance the learning opportunities for New Hampshire youth. **Remember... 4-H is your first class at the University of New Hampshire.**

Wendy L. Brock

About this Report...

This 2005 annual report highlights some of the many programs and projects the 4-H Foundation of New Hampshire funds on a yearly basis. Enjoy learning more about them.

Just the figures....

An important component of the 4-H Youth Development Program in New Hampshire are the yearly activities and events.

Listed below are participation figures from this past year for events held at the national and state level supported by the 4-H Foundation of New Hampshire.

National

4-H Conference – 3 youth
4-H Congress – 5 youth
Dairy Conference – 2 youth
Dairy Quiz Bowl – 4 youth
Horse Roundup – 16 youth

NE Leader Forum – 22 volunteers

State

Activities Day – 200 youth
Dairy Judging – 40 youth
Dairy Show – 74 youth
Dairy Quiz Bowl – 33 youth
Hippology Contest – 37 youth
Horse Judging Contest – 29 youth
Horse Show – 125 youth
Horse Quiz Bowl – 67 youth
Shooting Sports - 23 Volunteers
Teen Conference – 150 youth
4-H Camps – 863 youth, 1058 weeks

An additional 30 volunteer chaperones for the above events.

Growing a 4-H Green Thumb Team

Since 1998, the 4-H Green Thumb Team has offered gardening to 300 inner city Manchester youth and their counselor mentors at 4-H Teaching Gardens located in Manchester and Goffstown.

The program, funded by local grants and gifts, was staffed in 2005 by a UNH intern, NH AmeriCorps VISTA and a High School Mentor in Training, under the leadership of Extension Educator Julia Steed Mawson.

As in years past, 4-H'ers planted and tended theme beds such as Sunflower Houses, Rainbow Gardens, Flower Mazes and Pizza Gardens while also planting their own yardstick beds.

Each week youth and staff explored their gardens through the lens of weekly environmental themes. As a result, youth were able to help donate over 700 pounds of produce to the NH Food Bank as well as share the bounty from their yardstick beds with their families. The 4-H Foundation of New Hampshire provided a grant to purchase seeds, plants and other supplies.

This summer, "Elders on the Grow" expanded the 4-H Green Thumb Team focus by taking the framework of the "Sprouts" effort for youth, broadening it to include elders and residents of the Hillsborough County Nursing Home and Villa Crest Nursing and Retirement Center. This project partnered 4-H families and youth with over 30 elders.

The project's intent was to build on the gardening programs and projects initiated at each facility by Master Gardeners. As in the "Sprouts" component, all participants planted flowers and herbs, engaged in learning games and activities and exercised their friendship building skills.

As Katie Leduc, Director of Restorative Services at the Hillsborough County Nursing Home, said, "This was such a success - so much more than what we had ever hoped for. We saw residents who normally are quite quiet and withdrawn, become talkative and engaged - all sharing in the stimulus of the activities of learning and growing together. We cannot say enough to thank the 4-H youth (4-H babies too!) and their parents for providing such caring engagement and leadership."



4-H "Sprout"

4-H Shooting Sports Trains Volunteers

Generous support from the 4-H Foundation of NH has been a major factor in the success of the NH 4-H Shooting Sports Project. Volunteers must attend an 18-hour certification training to teach in this project area and the Foundation support covers their registration fee. In 2005, Foundation funding helped a core of seven dedicated volunteer trainers conduct a successful weekend training at the Barry Conservation Camp, certifying 16 new volunteers in several disciplines. It's amazing to realize that this weekend totals over 400 hours of training!

4-H projects emphasize both subject matter knowledge as well as life skill development. NH 4-H Shooting Sports Clubs highlighted both areas after receiving gun locks/safety kits from Project Childsafe. Over the past year and a half, 1,500 4-H members distributed over 10,000 gun safety kits at public events such as fairs, schools and hunter safety classes. 4-H members gained tremendous experience in all aspects of these public events. For example, they have learned the planning and logistics of setting up a display at a public event, how to explain to others the importance of firearms safety, the value of service to others and to feel good about a job well done. As one 4-H'er stated when asked how his shift went, "Well, I am tired but I feel good because I may have just saved someone's life." He's right!

Safe Places and Positive Activities - Keys to Teen Success

"Depression is at a great high in teens today, but I feel that with more places for teens to go and be around others just like them, we can build a greater community..." - Ryan Bourassa, Hillsboro teen

A small white building on Hillsboro's Main Street is a second home for many teens. It is the Project Genesis Teen Center, a drop-in center operated by the Hillsboro Office of Youth Services. Project Genesis offers teens a safe haven to hang out, learn leadership skills, take part in group counseling, and work as members of the C.A.S.T. crew.

C.A.S.T. (Community Arts as a Stage for Teens) is a rapidly growing community-based drama program where local teens discover they can write, act, edit, and produce quality videos with their own powerful messages. The program got its start as a way to raise awareness about media literacy. The issue of media literacy had caught the attention of Deborah Whitaker-Duncklee, Youth Counselor at Project Genesis, following a UNH Cooperative Extension workshop led by Extension Educator Karen Blass.

The issue was discussed with the teens, inspiring the production of the documentary, *"Rated PG: A Parody of Sex and Violence in Contemporary Media."* Spoofing sexually explicit music videos and violent media games, the documentary was a hit with local parents, community leaders, and high school peers. With support from the 4-H Foundation of New Hampshire, three teens co-presented a media literacy workshop with their documentary at the 2005 National CYFARI Conference held in Boston.



Teen C.A.S.T. member Tom Ellsworth believes "the experience I had making the video was just as eye opening as the presentation at the conference. Overall the conference has changed the way I think of little projects like *'Rated PG'* because no matter how small the idea, you can never expect what will come out of it." Samantha Gildea, another C.A.S.T. member, explains "we wanted to show other teens and adults across the country what the youth can really do for themselves to keep out of trouble." During the conference, youth visited teen-run community programs in Boston. For Samantha, it was "incredible to see how different the city life as a teen is compared to a small town life."

Since producing *"Rated PG,"* C.A.S.T. teens have written and produced another video, *"Shades of Gray."* According to teen Ryan Bourassa, who worked as lead writer, assistant director, and lead actor, the film was created "to deter substance abuse and to show what teens could be doing given that they have no place to turn." Ryan describes himself as "much like most C.A.S.T. teens. I have never really had a home. By that, I mean that I was a latchkey kid. My mom worked most days from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. including a one hour drive." He believes that in joining C.A.S.T., "I found my second home with my second family. The people in it have treated me very well and have accepted me as a writer, actor, and person."

¹ *CYFAR stands for Children, Youth and Families At Risk and is a project of the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension System (CSREES) of the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture. - Teen C.A.S.T. Members are shown in the photo above.*



Ian Gove, Foundation Board member, speaking about his experiences as a 4-H'er.

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UNH 4-H Camps - Where the Learning Lasts a Life Time

“The UNH 4-H camp is the best camp ever for my son. He loves every minute of it and hates to see the summer end. By winter time he is already asking how many more days there are until camp starts again.” – A Day Camp mom.



Fun at Camp

Just like plants, youth need certain ingredients and environmental conditions to grow. New Hampshire youth enrich their lives while learning and practicing the skills and attitudes needed to navigate within an ever-changing world. Camp staff, who are young adults, are an important catalyst in this interplay of ingredients and helpful conditions for the positive youth development that happens at 4-H camp. To quote one parent, “My daughter flourished at camp with the wonderful counselors. They were dynamic people who honestly loved kids.”

For older teens and young adults, working at camp is often the first job where they have the opportunity to practice the life skills 4-H seeks to nurture in all young people. The summer experience helps teens learn tangible skills of managing time and money, arranging transportation and balancing commitments to family and friends.

On a daily basis they are role models showing compassion, demonstrating leadership, understanding differences, and practicing healthy life choices. A parent notes, “The counselor was really great, very friendly and made her feel safe.” Support from the 4-H Foundation of NH helps fund this cadre of talented young adults. Several parents noted getting to meet staff from another country and learning about their cultures is an important feature of camp.

Through the support of the 4-H Foundation of NH, staff and campers receive ongoing support from UNH’s Northeast Passage and the Institute on Disabilities to

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ensure a safe environment is available to all youth. One parent noted, “Every day at 4-H camp is something new. Yet the basic structure is in firm place to provide stability for the campers. The daily routine and planned activities are so well thought out and implemented by the camp staff. He feels comfortable knowing what to expect when he arrives.”

A staff member reflects on her “first” summer back at camp after being away for several years. She “grew up” at camp from the ages of 8 to 16 and participated in the camp’s leadership programs, becoming a counselor for a few years before moving on. Through reflection on her own camp experience, she decided to return this year. She had internalized the culture and ideals of 4-H and knew the importance of transferring to others her knowledge and understanding of the impact 4-H camp makes on the life of a child. This summer she could support counselors while providing the “4-H camp opportunity” to a new generation of campers.



*Board chair
Tom Frangione, left,
is shown presenting
the “Broken Club”
award to
Robbie Robertson.*

4-H Foundation’s Successful Fundraising

For many years the 4-H Foundation of New Hampshire served ice cream at the annual Farm and Forest Expo held in Manchester. Board members, joined by volunteer youth and adults, scooped favorite flavors to attendees. A special thank you goes to Abbott’s Premium Ice Cream owners Sut and Margaret Marshall for supplying the Ben and Jerry’s Ice Cream for the event.

The second annual Friends of 4-H golf tournament held at Canterbury Woods Country Club doubled its number of golfers, sponsors and profit. Meeting the \$12,000 goal set by the Board was achieved by hard work and golfers spreading the word to their friends. A unique feature was the “Pudding Break” sponsored by Echo Farm Puddings.

This year a new award was established, and presented to a Silver Sponsor – The Robertson Agency. This was the “Broken Club Award” presented for having some of the most fun but not a high score. They promise to come back this coming May so they can pass this rotating award on to a new team with the lowest score.