



# RI 4-H Club Foundation Newsletter

## Welcome to our Newsletter

Welcome to the RI 4-H Club Foundation's first newsletter. It's our attempt to inform our generous donors about some of the ways their contributions have been utilized. We hope you will enjoy these stories and informative articles.

## RI 4-H Sends 3 Delegates to the National 4-H Conference in DC



*Our 3 delegates, Nadya Sasa, Abby and Hannah Foster, pictured here with Mike Montecalvo of WPRI. Below, Nadya shares her thoughts about attending the conference in April.*

My name is Nadya Sasa, I am 16 years old and am part of the Savvy Showmen 4-H Club. I was selected as one of three Rhode Island 4-H members to represent our Ocean State as delegates to the National 4-H Conference in Washington D.C. I was first drawn to apply because I was excited to meet members from around the country and to hear about what other states are doing. I also wanted to meet our representatives and do something for our R.I. community. Finally, I had never been to Washington D.C. and it was an opportunity to visit our nation's capital.

Our trip was special from the start, because we were on R.I.'s first ALL women veteran's Honor Victory Flight to D.C. It was truly an honor to witness first hand this historic event filled with bagpipes and cheers and stories of incredible women who served our country. When we landed we even got to have our own interview and picture with Mr. Montecalvo from Channel 12 news, who was covering the story.

Once at the conference, the work started immediately. The schedule was demanding, but the pre-conference online assignments and chats helped prepare me for sessions. My session dealt with several important issues including young people's lack of work opportunities, how to open up opportunities within school and countering the notion that college is the only way. We also talked about the lack of life skill preparation offered to students. Many of us felt that there was such focus on academics and extra-curricular activities but no attention to teaching actual real life skills. Challenges such as family economics and teen stereotypes held by employers and the increased problem with "perfectionism" increasing stress and emotional imbalances in teens were part of each of these issues. My leadership and technical skills came in handy as I helped organize the speakers and notes for our final presentation. I worked and met great members from Wisconsin, Nebraska, California, Texas, Canada and even Puerto Rico with whom I have formed friendships.

Getting the chance to meet our representatives was very inspiring. I felt positive about how much they support 4-H and how much more they want to do for our organization. Although they had limited time, I was able to tell my 4-H story and share what I have gained since joining 4-H six years ago. They were excited to hear about our projects and clubs, and about our ideas for the RI 4-H community. When we mentioned how we would like to have a leadership conference similar to larger states, they were both very eager to be a part of it and to support us in any way they could to make it happen.

In between all of the work we all got the chance to go sightseeing and visit monuments and memorials. The Washington Monument, the Lincoln Memorial, the Korean War Veterans Memorial, and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and of course the White House, were among historical and significant sites we were able to see amidst the blooming cherry blossom trees. Our chaperone was amazing and full of energy and she made the time we spent even more memorable.

In reality the conference exceeded any expectation I had imagined. I made new friends that I remain in constant touch with. Washington D.C was an incredible city I plan to return to again. Most of all the work we did in our sessions felt really meaningful and necessary and I hope that when we do have our own "Leadership Conference" I can bring those issues to our local teens for discussion. I returned feeling prouder than ever to be part of 4-H and inspired to be more politically involved and aware to ensure our programs continue to grow so that one day my youngest sister, still a Clover Bud now, will have the same skill building opportunities I have had. I am thankful to all the leaders, volunteers and the Foundation for caring and investing in us youth and for having given me the chance to represent R.I. 4-H!

*Jan Cornell, the group's chaperone and RI 4-H Club Foundation board member comments on the trip:*

As the trip Delegation Chaperone for the 2019 National Leadership Conference in Washington DC, our trip was nothing short of spectacular. I had the honor of escorting three of Rhode Island's finest teen 4-H state delegates down the National 4-H Conference Center. I must include the fact that I found out at the last second that two of my teens were identical twins Abby and Hannah Foster, along with fellow teen Nadya Sasa! I was thrown into a real life episode of 'The Parent Trap', which was so much fun! Our trip started out with an all female Honor Flight out of TF Green, and coincidentally our delegation was all female including myself, the chaperone. The honor flight included local press and dozens of fine notable Rhode Island Veterans including two World War Veterans. Our plane was escorted under a bridge of water on the TF Green tarmac sprayed by the fine folks at the Warwick Fire Department. When we landed there was a big party and celebration when we stepped off the plane! Our flight was a trip in and of itself and something that I don't think any of us will ever forget!

When we arrived at the National 4-H Conference Center it was a week long shuffle of simply amazing moments! From the kids presenting various topics to federal agencies that impact today's youth, to dances, dozens of planned activities, teen networking, team building, moonlight charter bus tours to see our nation's National Monuments, trips on the metro, Capitol Hill Meet and Greets and photo ops with our finest state leaders including Sheldon Whitehouse, Jim Langevin, and David Cicilline, and so much more! The week in Washington DC for the 2019 National Leadership Conference was simply unforgettable. The 4-H National Conference Center campus was simply gorgeous and drenched in rich national 4-H history. The 4-H gift shop was a fun treat too! One of my favorite highlights at the Conference Center was a long hallway showcasing decades of fine art from all over the United States depicting what 4-H is all about! I wanted to bring all the paintings home with me!

We all cried when we had to leave, the chaperones included. This trip is a very rare 'Once in a Lifetime' opportunity for all involved and I simply hope and pray that my children, who are very proud Rhode Island 4-H'rs will be able to attend someday! P.S. No one warned me that the cafeteria at the Conference Center has an 'all you can eat' soft serve ice cream machine which I am still mad about!

## Save these Dates!



The Annual Mishnock Barn Blast  
Sunday, November 17th 3-7 pm

The Annual 4-H Golf Tournament  
Saturday, June 6th, 2020  
Fenner Hill Golf Course



## Public Speaking Contest



*Emma Frisbie surfs her way to a blue ribbon in the regional public speaking contest at Coventry High School, and the opportunity to compete in the statewide Public Speaking Contest in March*

The 2019 State Public Presentation competition was held March 9th. It was held in Swan Hall at the University of Rhode Island Kingston campus. We had 39 presenters from clubs all across Rhode Island, including Blueberry Patchers, Anchors Away, and No Debate About It. To compete at the State Contest 4-Hers had to receive a score of 90 or above on the district level to be eligible to compete at the state level. 4-Hers were assigned to one of four rooms with three judges and one room moderator in each room, depending on their age and category. The categories were Demonstrations, Illustrated Talks, Public Speaking and Creative Communications. It is truly amazing to see the professionalism and skills of these young presenters. The 4-H Club Foundation was pleased to supply cash awards and ribbons to the winners.

## Our Board of Directors

This is a listing of our Board of Directors, the folks that freely give their time, talent and treasure to further the mission of the RI 4-H Club Foundation, which is to support the youth programs of the URI/College of the Environment and Life Sciences. 4-H programs focus on learning opportunities for youth aged 5 to 18 years old, in school and in afterschool settings and community clubs.

*Educational programs focus on science, technology, healthy lifestyles and citizenship. The 4-H Foundation funds these programs, purchases supplies and educational materials, grants scholarships, and provides awards, recognition and travel opportunities.*

### RI 4-H Club Foundation - Board of Directors

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## Want to Donate?

Visit our website  
[ri4hclubfoundation.org](http://ri4hclubfoundation.org)  
and go to the "How to Donate" tab

or send a check payable to the  
RI 4-H Club Foundation  
PO Box 1925, Kingston, RI 02881

Help us "Make the Best Better"  
*Deborah Imondi, Executive Director*



*There's always something good cooking in RI 4-H!*

# Board Member Highlights

## Irene Nebiker

*Each newsletter we plan to highlight one of the fantastic members of our Board of Directors and also tell you a bit about their 4-H experience and what a difference it has made in their life. One of our most cherished directors, Irene Nebiker is interviewed by fellow director, Lisa Dallas.*



My research prior to my meeting with Irene Nebiker revealed some very interesting facts, so I was confident we would have a great conversation that would hopefully lead to a remarkable article. My assumption was correct... We spoke about how co-authoring a coloring book of historical North Smithfield translated to a love for historical houses with sagging roofed barns (full of sheep). And chatting about her involvement in Rhody Warm Wool Blankets and the RI Sheep Coop lead to a discussion about the 12 sheep she now maintains, still a remnant of love for the woolly creatures from when her daughter Kari went off to college, almost 40 years ago.

Irene's career began as a geographer/teacher in New York, 55 miles outside of NYC. She taught many subjects including geography, history, local history and psychology to students from elementary through high school. Her passion for teaching extended beyond the school and into her growing family, and eventually lead her to her own 4-H club. Irene went on to have three children. Kris and David were born in NY and the young family moved to RI in 1967. They added to their family by raising rabbits here in North Smithfield through 4-H and having a third child, a daughter Kari.

In 1974, Kari began her sheep career that went on to become Irene's passion until this day. Kari adopted a Horned Dorset ewe and lamb from the Sheep Co-Op and the flock and love for them grew from there. And in 1981 when Irene's daughter Kari went off to college, she signed her ewes over to Irene. In Irene's words, 'I've been playing with sheep ever since!'

Sheep is not Irene's only passion. It is evident in her smile that the value she places in 4-H and its impact on the youth of our communities is unmatched by any other organization.

As the story goes... Irene began as a 4-H parent in NY with the Warwick Warriors 4-H Club, then progressed to a subgroup leader teaching sewing. Upon moving to RI in 1967, Irene started a 4-H club with her family and many of her 5th grade students. The North Smithfield Naturalists 4-H Club had a long list of interests... hiking, photography, cleaning cemeteries, cooking, sewing and carpentry. They were active for 15 years, enough time to impact the lives of many, many youth in the area! One of their goals, which is still an objective of 4-H today, is to get the community involved. Irene says people are typically willing to support a program if they see what the kids are doing and see the impact of their work.

Today, Irene supports 4-H through her membership on the RI 4-H Club Foundation Board, being partial to the scholarship committee and assisting with the annual Golf Tournament. Her sheep are still a rich resource that enhance the lives and experience of young 4-Hers. With a big smile, Irene explains the animal management agreement Kara Harvey has with Irene's ewe Leaping Lily. Irene and Kara share their passion for sheep and for 4-H. I venture to say Irene is unknowingly a wonderful role model for Kara. That's an element Irene suggested was a critical success factor for 4-H. Beyond Kara with Leaping Lily, Irene shares her knowledge and experience by teaching trimming and animal care to many youth. If you attended the Northern RI 4-H Fair in July, known to locals as the Foster Old Home Days, you may have seen Irene who was the lead line judge. Her connection to youth is far reaching.

I often find it difficult to describe the benefits of 4-H to other families. Irene did it very well here...

4-H motivates the youth to try something new; be encouraged by a supportive system and group of adult leaders; then succeed because of their own efforts! She explained, many years ago, Ken Coombs (the State 4-H Leader at the time) needed someone to participate on a Poultry Judging Team. Irene's young son David, who had never handled chickens ever before, stepped in, did what he needed to do to learn, and with a few other kids, travelled to PA as a team. When David was a very young sibling of his sister, Kris, Irene's recollection is that Kris often spoke for her younger brother at that time. That changed with 4-H! David's first 4-H demonstration was about the parts of a hammer. He stumbled through the beginning of the presentation, and before she knew it, David was in full swing, engaging both the audience and the judges. His red ribbon was more than an acknowledgement of his accomplishments. It was a symbol of his ability to be 'as good as his sister' whom he admired and was always outstanding in his eyes! This simple experience, Irene explained, seem to motivate him to try new things, work hard at it, and eventually succeed. This young shy David went on to become a ToastMasters member!

In 4-H, adults are able to have confidence in the kids' willingness and ability to learn. Working to a standard, not working to beat someone else. Irene explains this is about how well you can meet the standard. It raises the awareness of their own abilities. Moving up from a white to a red ribbon builds confidence within themselves. If you are lucky, you develop a passion for something in that process. The underlying message is to do what you do, and do it well! Don't settle for the passive feeling of just having completed it. And this is not about perfectionism. It is about the youth learning to express themselves, letting us know what is at the heart of what they do.

4-H is an environment where you learn to be yourself. This doesn't just happen. It is cultivated by good role models for the youth, which is just who Irene continues to be!

Irene explains that in 4-H, youth learn the foundational value of respecting land, animals, and particularly people. They learn to be in the moment. Feeling the texture of the fabric while sewing or the wool while spinning. This awareness certainly contributes to them learning about respect for others and for things, but this then translates into self-respect.

When Irene was asked what she would say to 4-H supporters, she carefully replied the following, '4-H is an investment in young people in helping them to discover within themselves the philosophy and skills that they can bring to the world. That they need to have a mindset, a reason, and need to develop positive attitudes which need to be taught on how to learn and succeed in satisfying your aims, your goals.'

To 4-H youth, she would encourage them to be willing to dare. Have the confidence to know you can try because there is somebody willing to help you.

Be sure to say hello to Irene at any 4-H Club Foundation event, and take a moment to share your love for 4-H. You will walk away as inspired as I did.

## Annual Awards Banquet

In January the RI 4-H Club Foundation sponsored the Annual Awards and Recognition Banquet. The Foundation subsidizes the cost of the banquet, which allows all 4-Hers who submit record books to attend for free. Additionally volunteers can attend for half price. This year's Banquet was held at the Quiddnessett Country Club on January 5th and the 4-Hers chose a Masquerade theme!

