



Massachusetts
4-H Foundation

FOSTERING YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

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“4-Hers learn to help others and understand that the world
is bigger than themselves.” -Lisa Besse, Club Leader, page 7

COMPASS

FALL 2022

Executive Director's Letter

Dear 4-H Family & Friends,

The start of my tenure at the Foundation as Executive Director has been met with warm welcomes and enthusiasm for the 4-H program in Massachusetts. During my first 10 months, I have had the opportunity to see many programs in action, whether it be attending the variety of fairs across the Commonwealth, participating in a goat milking contest, observing a teen agriculture summer program, or visiting summer camps. Our youth have an enriching array of experiences to choose from when they participate in 4-H.



Now that I have had some time to observe the program across the state, I know that we need to invest our time and efforts to increase our visibility, cultivate and nurture broader relationships, and focus on increasing our financial resources so that more youth can participate in this incredible program. We will continue to count on our longstanding contributors now more than ever. I hope you will consider increasing your stake in the 4-H program and give generously this year.

I can share with certainty that the robust program design and experiential opportunities that you invest in for 4-H youth are unparalleled. The diversity in curriculum capitalizes on out-of-school learning time, adult mentoring, and leadership development in a unique and interesting way that captures their attention. Our youth need 4-H and that is what drives the Foundation to elevate our efforts and grow. Together we can prepare and inspire the next generation!

With Gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Carrie Myers".

Carrie Myers
Executive Director
Massachusetts 4-H Foundation



Five Questions for

1 *What do you like best about Massachusetts?*

We moved to Massachusetts for some adventure and a change of pace. We like that everything is more accessible, including both the city and the country. You can go to Boston for an afternoon, see the ocean in Maine, or spend a weekend in Vermont. We like experiencing new places as a family.

2 *What is your biggest priority for the Foundation?*

I want to elevate the 4-H brand and grow the Foundation's audience. We can share 4-H stories and raise the level of awareness of 4-H in Massachusetts communities. This larger awareness of 4-H will lead to increased fundraising opportunities and strategic partnerships for 4-H programs. My hope is that this focused work will result in program expansion and accessibility for youth across the state.



Carrie Myers

FOUNDATION
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

3 *Which 4-H learning area intrigues you the most?*

I am intrigued by the agricultural aspects of 4-H, and that definitely contributed to my initial interest in the job. Farming is important for the future, and it's also important for kids to understand where their food comes from. 4-H has a long history of connecting youth with the ever-evolving agricultural and food systems landscape. I think we play an important role in connecting youth to these topics.

4 *What are your hobbies?*

Outside of my kids' activities? Ha Ha. I love the outdoors, I like to go camping, hiking, and birding. I enjoy woodworking and building things, and I am the fix-it person at our home. We also like to go on adventures as a family.

5 *Tell us about your family and your pets!*

My wife also works at a nonprofit, and we have two middle-school-aged children. We have four dogs and two cats, who traveled with us to our new home from North Carolina. The dogs include two small Russell terriers, a big hound dog, and a Shepherd mix. We also have two fat and loving cats. They are definitely members of our family!

A photograph of two teenagers working outdoors. The teen on the left is wearing a camouflage t-shirt and is focused on a large black pot. The teen on the right is wearing a black t-shirt with a graphic and a black baseball cap with a blue brim. They are standing in front of a wooden building with shingles. The image is partially covered by a green banner at the top right and a green banner at the bottom.

Teens Introduce Agriculture to Teens in Lots to Plots

Do you really know where your food comes from? You may know something about the subject, but most likely not nearly as much as Hope Healy and Owen Weigel, 4-Hers who initiated the Lots to Plots project. Because of their efforts, the teens were recognized by the National 4-H Council earlier this year and awarded a \$2,000 grant to combat food deserts in Massachusetts and provide an “on-ramp to agriculture” for teens.

“Their hard work paid off,” said Meghan Riley, a 4-H Educator in Plymouth County who has mentored the teens. “As far as keeping teens as active and engaged as possible, this project hit the nail on the head.”

During the pandemic and the 2020-21 school year, Hope and Owen, along with Sofia Black, Faith Motta, and Hope Motta, decided to address Massachusetts’ growing problem of food insecurity, which impacts 40% of the state’s population. They believed that gardening could not only be a valuable way to address this issue but also become a bridge between urban and rural settings. In other words, they could engage teens in agriculture — even those in urban settings — through their project, Lots to Plots.

The teens started brainstorming project ideas while meeting virtually. They noted that lower-income households have less access to healthy food than affluent families, and that they could adapt agricultural practices on a small scale for teens. Lots to Plots was born. “We’re going to put plants in their hands... You live in New York City? You can still have plants,” explained Hope.

Youth grow sugar snap peas in hanging baskets during one of the workshops provided by the Lots to Plots grant.



Hope, Educator Meg Riley, and Owen (from L to R) attended the National Ag Summit in March 2022.

An important step along the way: Hope and Owen attended the National 4-H Youth Summit for Agriscience (or “Ag Summit”) in Bethesda, Maryland in March 2022, assisted by the Massachusetts 4-H Foundation. Owen, from Rochester, and Hope, from Plymouth, both now juniors in high school, met youth and experts from all over the country at the conference. They took workshops led by industry leaders and managed to squeeze in a bit of sightseeing, touring Washington D.C. monuments at night.

Owen, who lives on a farm where his family raises beef and poultry, had never visited an urban area before. He met teens from New Jersey who wanted to garden but didn’t have enough land or money, reinforcing the importance of Lots to Plots. Owen found learning about other teens’ experiences and building a network to be the most valuable parts of the Summit.

Hope shared Owen’s enthusiasm. “The Ag Summit was incredible... Learning about the ag career exploration was most valuable to me. Hearing from experts, especially the female speakers, and where they’ve gone in their ag careers was really cool to me.”

The teens then submitted a two-page project proposal to the National 4-H Council for their solution to an agricultural issue, and following its approval delivered a presentation via Zoom to industry leaders in late April. Their efforts resulted in a \$2,000 grant, one of 12 grants awarded by the National 4-H Council for projects from across the country.

To kickoff Lots to Plots, the 4-Hers held a series of three workshops this past summer for teens at the Plymouth County Center for Agriculture. They focused on youth from urban areas. The 4-Hers guided the teens in planting, harvesting, and achieving soil health, and used window boxes and other techniques so the attendees encountered few barriers to entry in exploring agriculture. “I think it’s great for people in urban areas, because they don’t get as much exposure to agriculture,” said Owen. “It’s so important for society and our planet.”

It also put the 4-Hers firmly in the role of educators; they shared the knowledge they have gained through their years in 4-H. “The biggest value of this project is the teens’ confidence and understanding that they know so much about this subject... They are already leaders in this field. They are at the point where they can share this knowledge with kids who haven’t had their experiences,” explained Meghan.

Most of the funds from the grant were put toward consumables such as seeds, soil, and compost, and the participants kept seedlings to take home, explained Meghan. The 4-Hers will survey the attendees for feedback following the three workshops. They hope that Lots to Plots continues beyond the summer and that its attendees eventually join 4-H.

Hope, Owen, and the other teens are still astounded at how far their idea has gone. “If you can get involved in something, do it,” advised Hope. “You don’t know how big it will get.”



AmeriCorps engaged youth in “Love Your Local Water” activities at the Barnstable Fair.

Creating Urgency around Climate Change

Throughout 2022, the Massachusetts 4-H program, Community Service Learning Initiative, introduced youth to ways they can make an impact on a current issue, beginning with youth mental health and followed by food insecurity. From May to August, 4-Hers explored the theme of climate change, with the goal for youth to learn and become motivated to make changes locally. The participants listened to the experts, evaluated resources, and implemented improvements in their own backyards. “The youth are taking it more seriously than a lot of adults,” said Angelica Diaz-Heyman, a 4-H Educator.

At the kickoff Zoom meeting to the Climate Change Community Service Learning Initiative, Dr. Justin Gay, an ecologist and post-doctoral researcher at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, gave 4-Hers a talk entitled “Global Climate Change: The Science and Emerging Solutions.” Dr. Gay opened the talk with a short NASA video of the progression of Earth’s surface temperatures over the last 150 years through a presentation of satellite data.

“This is just one of the multiple lines of evidence that unequivocally supports the fact that humans have drastically altered the chemistry of the atmosphere, and this has led to global climate change,” says Dr. Gay.

Shealyn Malone, a PhD student at the University of Wisconsin, highlighted one of the many ways climate change impacts global ecosystems by presenting a case study about forests. Healthy and functioning forests remove large quantities of carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas, from the atmosphere through the process of photosynthesis and store it in their biomass. However, high temperatures, more frequent drought, and increased pressure from herbivores, like bark beetles, may hinder the ability of trees to store carbon and contribute to climate change. The two scientists also shared with 4-Hers resources from the Massachusetts Audubon Society, the United Nations, and Youth Climate Action Now (YCAN) on how to reduce their own carbon footprints.



Good Shepherd Sheep 4-H Club Members Joshua, Katie, Sofia, and Justin pose with the sheep they raise and use for sustainable projects.

4-H youth have started to take action in a variety of ways. Madelyn, 16, a member of the Horse Feathers 4-H Club in Norfolk, initiated a project that addressed climate change as well as youth mental health. She collected old sneakers to keep them out of landfills and sent them to GotSneakers, a sneaker recycling company. She then donated the proceeds to an organization that helps people who suffer from eating disorders. Madelyn has also made small changes in her daily life to help climate change. She turns the lights off before exiting a room and tries to walk or take public transportation instead of driving. "Climate change is important...I do things to make a difference," she explained.

The Good Shepherd Sheep 4-H Club in Littleton has also taken steps to reduce its carbon footprint. In addition to caring for sheep they own, club members raise chickens and grow vegetables, according to Lisa Besse, the club's leader. During the pandemic years of 2020-21, the youth donated vegetables — 85 pounds in 2021 —and eggs to low-income residents in

their town, enabling those residents to access local, healthy food. Good Shepherd members have also brought sheep fertilizer to be used at Littleton Community Farm. Most notably, club members have submitted a proposal to a local corporation to have the sheep "mow" around and below its solar fields, to avoid sending harmful gasoline mower emissions into the air. These sustainability practices center around helping others. "4-Hers learn to help others and understand that the world is bigger than themselves," said Lisa.

This past summer, 4-H participated in the Barnstable County Fair and engaged youth in activities that illustrated the importance of water, such as using a coffee filter with markers to show how water travels. 4-H invited AmeriCorps to run fair activities about the water resources on Cape Cod.

4-H Educators have also encouraged more gardening and composting in 4-H clubs, with the goal of these activities "informing the youths' projects over the course of the year," said Angelica. Small changes add up!

Kent Lage Award Winners

1st Place, Hannah Denison



Hannah Denison is the recipient of the 1st place, \$1,000 Kent Lage Scholarship for 2022. Hannah is attending the Commonwealth Honors College at the University of Massachusetts – Amherst this fall.

A 4-H member of the Stoneybrook Saddle Club for the past 12 years, Hannah served as her club president and as a 4-H Ambassador. She attended the 4-H leadership retreat and currently serves as the President of the Middlesex County 4-H Advisory Council. Hannah was awarded the 4-H Key Award in 2022.

Hannah has participated extensively in many 4-H activities, especially in community service and in the horse program. She volunteered at food pantries and soup kitchens, as well as her town's Strawberry & Arts Festival. Her interest in horses led her to participate in horse bowl, hippology, and horse judging at the state level for several years.

Hannah has excelled in showing horses and crafts, as well as horse knowledge. She rode in the New England Regional Horse Show in 2020-21, winning several awards. In 2019-20, she was awarded 1st place in the National Visual Presentations for the overall Massachusetts Communications Team. In 2020-21, she achieved 1st place in State Hippology and in Visual Presentations for Extemporaneous Speech. At the Middlesex County Fair, Hannah earned the honor of top senior in crafts in 2018-19 and 2020-21. In 2022, she qualified for the State Visual Presentations.

2nd Place, Andrew Zang



Andrew Zeng is the recipient of the 2nd place, \$500 Kent Lage scholarship. Andrew is attending Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute this fall, where he will major in Games and Simulation Arts and Sciences.

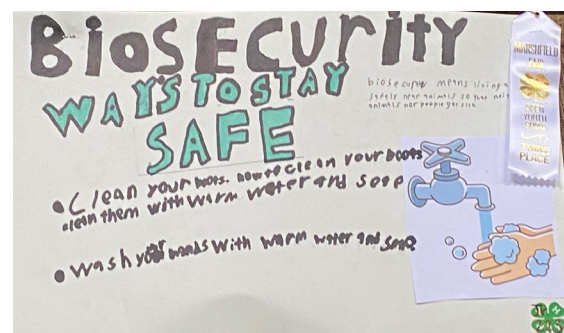
As an involved member of the Acton C.R.A.F.T. Club for nine years, Andrew focused not only on crafts but also on community service and public speaking. Andrew achieved great success with Visual Presentations, winning the State VPs for six years. He also earned a "Wow" award for his work on 4-H records. Andrew believes that 4-H gave him both confidence in public speaking and in working on a team.

Outside of 4-H, Andrew enjoys playing piano. He also has employed his interpersonal skills at his jobs as an Assistant Tutor at Kumon Math & Reading and an Assistant Camp Counselor at Meadowbrook Day Camp.

Take me to the Fair



The Marshfield Fair bustled with activity from August 19th-28th. Plymouth County 4-H showed their dairy cattle, beef cattle, and goats, offering activities for children and families each day of the fair. 4-Hers also participated in a poster contest that centered on the theme of safety (see picture below).



4-H also participated in *The Big E*, held from September 16-October 2. 4-Hers shined in visual presentations. Pictured above, Director of 4-H Linda Horn is joined by Zachary and Jena Rose of the Seek and Discover Club in Belchertown.



The Berkshire County 4-H Fun Day and Youth Fair celebrated its 80th anniversary this year! Activities included animal demonstrations, dance performances, a craft fair, STEM demonstrations, and a goat milking contest.

Meet our New Board Members

Phil is a retired healthcare executive and built the claims operations department at Multigroup Healthplan (later Harvard Community Health Plan). Phil also held leadership positions at Healthcare Administrative Partners and Dedham Medical Associates. He completed his professional career as the Director of Revenue Cycle at Massachusetts Eye & Ear. Phil has served on the Board of Trustees for the Walker School, Big Brother Big Sister, and Friends of the Council on Aging in Dover. He has a strong interest in advancing opportunities for children in underserved populations throughout Boston.



Phil Trotter
TRUSTEE



Lindsey K. Larson
TRUSTEE

Lindsey works as an Economist in the Agricultural and Food Global Practice of the World Bank. Her interest in a healthy planet and economy began in the Massachusetts 4-H Program, where she raised prizewinning dahlias as a member of the Flora, Fauna and Feathers Club. After graduating with her BA from Dartmouth College, Lindsey worked for the National Geographic Society and World Wildlife Fund. Lindsey earned both her Master's of Environmental Management and MBA from Yale University. She was employed as a consultant and advisor before joining the World Bank in 2019. Lindsey is a Social Entrepreneurship Fellow at the Jacobs Foundation.

Dr. Carey Leckie OT, OTD, OTR, CHT

Carey is an Occupational Therapist/Certified Hand Therapist currently employed as an associate academic fieldwork coordinator at Springfield College. As the leader of the K-9 Wizards 4-H Dog Club, she works with youth aged 5-19 to foster skills in leadership, public speaking, and emotional intelligence, while providing opportunities for members to improve dog knowledge and skills with their canine partners.



TRUSTEE

John Lindquist

CORPORATOR

John lives in Upton and is the owner of Lindquist Electric. He and his wife also run Town Line Farm, where they sell grass-fed beef, pasture-raised chicken, pork and lamb, seasonal vegetables, and local products such as milk, honey, and maple syrup. A longtime supporter of the Shirley Kane Memorial Golf Tournament, he loves 4-H and is happy to join as a Corporator.



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Shirley Kane Memorial 4-H Golf Tournament Hits A Hole in One



The Shirley Kane Memorial 4-H Golf Tournament raised over \$60,000! This year the tournament celebrated 20 years of raising funds to support 4-H programs across the Commonwealth. To commemorate the day, Steve Borgeson, President of the Board of Trustees, presented a plaque to honor the Kane family to Trustee Kathy Adams, daughter of Shirley Kane. Golfers enjoyed a challenging course at the Holden Hills Country Club, a raffle, silent auction, and post-tournament barbecue.



Pictured above from left to right: Kathy Adams, Board Trustee and daughter of Shirley Kane, accepted a plaque in honor of her family from Board of Trustees President Steve Borgeson, Corporator Allan Walker, and Foundation Executive Director Carrie Myers.

We've Moved!

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Massachusetts
4-H Foundation

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*The Massachusetts 4-H Foundation
is proud of our efforts to help grow
kids who are prepared to thrive in
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