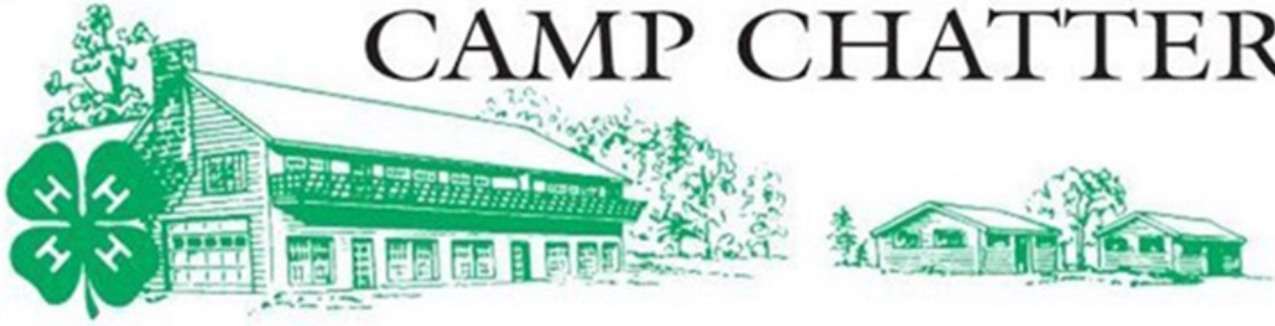


# CAMP CHATTER



ISSUE XVIII

Summer Fall 2024

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History of 4-H,  
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**SAVE THE DATE**

60th/95th  
Birthday  
At Hartford  
County 4-H  
Camp  
Aug 29, 30 & 31,  
2025



## A Summer to Remember: Campers Learn, Laugh, and Grow at Hartford County 4-H Camp

As the summer days draw to a close, Hartford County 4-H Camp bids farewell to another unforgettable season. Over 1,200 campers from around the region spent a week engaging in activities designed to build confidence, nurture friendships, and create lifelong memories. From hiking through the scenic trails to mastering archery, campers were exposed to a wide range of activities that challenged both body and mind taught by talented staff from around the world.

The camp's directors, Jenn, Lis and associate director, Maeve, highlighted the importance of connection and personal growth this season. This year's group was truly remarkable. We saw so many kids step out of their comfort zones—whether it was conquering the ropes course or performing in front of the entire camp during our talent show. The spirit of togetherness was palpable.

In addition to physical activities, campers also had the chance to explore their creativity through arts and crafts, bracelets, and rap writing sessions. One of the most memorable moments was the talent show, where campers showcased their diverse talents—from singing and dancing to

Continued on page 5

## Alumni Profile - When I was Delirious Dan the Bicycle Man

By Dan Lombardo



Dan Lombardo and Julie Harris at the opening of the Julie Harris Stage, June 2007. (Photo by Rick Grossman)

We can look back on our lives and pick out one or two turning points after which we were never the same. For me, 4-H Camp was one of those times and it changed me forever. For lots of us, Camp was a place that inspired us to be the best humans we could be. It was – and still is – a place where we learned about clear thinking, loyalty, service, and “dedicate our health to better living, for me, my club, my community, my country, and my world.” 4-H is where I pretty much learned all I would need to know to build a meaningful, generous life that could just possibly make a difference in the world. I keep trying.

In 1974 my dear friend Rick Butterfield introduced me to Hartford County 4-H Camp. I was lucky enough to join the staff at the Marlborough camp where I taught Theater Skits and Games. I also took on the persona of Delirious Dan the Bicycle Man. As such I taught campers who brought their bikes how to tune them

up, care for them, fix flats, etc. After which we’d all take off for a bike ride that was deliriously fun – and safe.

For my theater classes, we’d start with warm-up games like Circle Sitting, Group Juggle, Human Knot, Boppity Bop Bop Bop, Catch and Clap, and Zip Zap Zop. Then we’d rehearse a short play that we’d present to the camp at the end of the week. Plays like “Dragon Trouble,” in which Susie Sally Sassafras and her wacky friends decide to create problems in the peaceful kingdom of Chalupa. The camp’s collection of costumes and props made for colorful productions, to say the least!

There were many points during each week when magic seemed to happen. Vespers, the Wishing Ceremony and the Fire Bringer Ceremony come to mind, as well as the informal sing-a-longs by the campfire. Unforgettable food, like Art Smith’s famous Turkey Soup and Homemade Raisin Bread, kept us going. The gathering for the raising of the flag every morning was a special moment for reflection, followed by camp announcements. The latter would be for special events, for safety and health matters, or for my favorite, the Theme of the Day. It might be Inside-Out Day, for which campers were to show up for breakfast with their clothes on inside-out, or Backwards Day, when lunch would be served backwards, desert to soup.

Fast forward to the year 2013. My fun 4-H days of Theater Skits and Games had somehow, but not so surprisingly, led to a career in professional theater. In the summer of 2013, I was Artistic Director at Wellfleet Harbor Actors Theater on Cape Cod. Instead of working with the wonderful, creative, fearless campers at 4-H, I was choosing seasons of full-length plays, auditioning Equity actors from Boston and New York, hiring lighting, sound, stage set designers and, when I wasn’t directing, hiring directors.

That summer, I had invited the famous comedian and actor Lewis Black to bring his play, *One Slight Hitch*, to my theater in Wellfleet. It starred Broadway, TV, and film stars Mark Linn-Baker and Lizbeth MacKay. One night who should be in the audience? 4-H’s own Peter Brzezicki and Liz Baldwin! I was astonished. Life had somehow come full circle.

At show time I went on stage to do the curtain speech. I said some words about the play we were about to see then I surprised Peter and Liz by asking them to stand. I told the audience about Hartford 4-H Camp and how these two people, among many others, helped me on my way to a career I hardly dared to dream of. Then came a big round of applause for Peter, Liz, and 4-H, a place that opens up a world of possibilities for each of us.

When we remember our 4-H years, aren’t we all searching for a way back to that “garden”? To that ideal place where our best goals are made real? For me, when I gather a group of theater people to create something magical on stage, I think of what happens at 4-H Camp and how it inspires mutual respect, cooperation, compassion, hope, and more fun than most people have in a lifetime.

What's the Buzz

**Nolan Kosciukiewicz is a 3-year veteran of 4-H camp! He is a 4-H Spirit Award recipient and will be a lifer of the 4-H program!!!!**



Nolan was tasked with creating an invention for his Aerospace and Engineering Program at John Wallace Middle School in Newington CT. Nolan designed a spatula that flips 180 degrees with the simple push of a lever! His idea was inspired by his uncle who has cerebral palsy. The invention was created to show the world that even with a disability, everyone has a place in the kitchen. In March, Nolan was selected as a finalist for the Connecticut Invention Convention, which launched him on his journey. He also received a US Congressional recognition award from Rep. John Larson. Nolan is the first student from the Newington Aerospace and Engineering program to receive an award from the Connecticut Academy of Science and Engineering. In June, Nolan was selected as a state finalist to represent CT in the National Invention Convention competition in Michigan.

That same month, Nolan attended the prestigious Eureka Fest at MIT where he was able to showcase his invention to peers, MIT professors and other investors from around the world! Nolan's invention is Patent pending and he is currently working with industry professionals to finalize his design and get it ready for production!

Pictured is 98-year-old Elizabeth “Betty” Brzezicki, a longtime resident of Bristol. To the best of our



knowledge, Betty is the oldest living camper, counselor or staff member who attended Hartford County 4-H Camp. Betty was the Arts & Crafts staff member for a number of years in the mid-1960s starting when we were renting New London County 4-H Camp and ending the first year at our own “new” camp in Marlborough in the summer of 1966. As is often the case 4-H Camp has been a family affair for Betty and the Brzezicki’s. The family first got involved with 4-H Camp when Betty’s husband, Stanley or Butch as he was known at Camp, answered a want ad in the Hartford Courant looking for a lifeguard for HC4H Camp prior to World War II. 4-H Camp was held at Camp Aya-Po which at that time was owned by the Hartford YWCA – it is now a Town of Somers recreation area. Over the decades Butch served as the Waterfront Director, Camp Director, Camp Board Member and President. Betty’s sons have also been active at Camp – Michael as a camper, counselor and Waterfront Director, Peter as a camper, counselor, Waterfront director, and Camp Board

President, and Joseph as a camper, counselor, and Camp Board President. Betty’s daughter-in-law Anne Mather Brzezicki was instrumental in starting Horse Camp and served several years as Horse Camp staff and Elizabeth “Liz” Baldwin Brzezicki picked rocks as an 8-year-old (along with her siblings and several other youngsters) when the camp was being built, attended as a camper and was selected as Counselor of the Week. Betty’s grandchildren Peter and Julia were campers. Probably needless to say Mike met Anne and Peter met Liz while working at Hartford County 4-H Camp.

Editor’s Note Sadly Betty Brzezicki passed away October 15th 2024

What's the Buzz Continued

**Friends, by Laurel Johnson**



Forty years ago, we would gather and sing “You’ve Got a Friend” around the Vesper’s campfire on South Rd in Marlborough. This year, we gathered once again to sing along with James Taylor himself at the Hollywood Bowl and in that moment, we were teenagers again. Traveling from Connecticut, Virginia, Minnesota, and Washington, these 4-H friends met up in California for a few days to relive old times and catch up with each other.



Simone Upsey, Kirsten Gometz, Hannah Papa, Mary Blouin, and Laurel Johnson spent several summers together at 4H camp as campers, counselors, and staff in the 80’s and 90’s. As most who attended Hartford County 4-H Camp know, the bonds formed during those summers are for life. Though we are now scattered across the county, this visit made us realize how important it is to sustain our friendships, and with tears and hugs, we said our goodbyes, much like that last day of camp.

Upper Crust Food Service  
by Valerie Tralongo



Emilio Moreno, Puebla Mexico, Xavier Spence, Lexington KY, Chef J.P Storrier, Syracuse, NY, Trent Burton, Lawrence KS



Cooking in a summer camp is hard. The folks doing the eating---campers, counselors, and staff--all have very different appetites and palettes. Keeping up with two hundred+ mouths for three meals and a snack a day, from Sunday to Saturday, isn't easy. And it's hot in a kitchen, especially a summer camp kitchen. To meet this need, Hartford County 4-H Camp began a working relationship with Upper Crust Food Service in the summer of 2024 to serve our campers, counselors, and staff a better bite to eat to meet their needs. And we struck happy eating gold! Your surveys and responses told us that Upper Crust Food Service kept Hartford County 4-H Camp campers, counselors, and staff happy, full, and coming back for more. Because of that positive feedback, we have begun working with Upper Crust Food Service to come back and help Hartford County 4-H Camp for summer 2025. We look forward to feeding the hearts, hands, and minds of our Hartford County 4-H Camp community in 2025 with songs, programs, and activities. With the partnership with Upper Crust Food Service being continued, we will fill their stomachs too!

2024 Camper, Counselor, Spirit of the Week

**Week 1**

Camper: George DeVarennes  
 Counselor: Bear Crawford  
 Head: Zachary Juliani            Tyler Andrade  
 Heart: Landon Rinaldo            Adeline Bak  
 Hands: Vincenzo Paragone        Reagan Newfang  
 Health: Miles Russell               Emma DePase

**Week 2**

Camper: Amaya Daniels  
 Counselor: Jonathan Pillsbury  
 Head: Ada Dombrowski            Georgia Wagner  
 Heart: Georgie Taylor              Robbie Daley  
 Hands: Lena Trojanowski         Eliza Vecchiarino  
 Health: Logan Pires                 Landon Alarcon

**Week 3**

Camper: Jameson Augstein  
 Counselor: Aiden Keegan  
 Head: James Slogesky              Graham Loranger  
 Heart: Adam Roche                 Madeline Lamb  
 Hands: Owen Krajewski            Avery Jankowski  
 Health: Maeve Cooper              Annie Adduci

**Week 4**

Camper: Lucas Butts  
 Counselor: Elise Leccese          Sam Fortin  
 Head: Owen Krajewski            Ashton Houghton  
 Heart: Arabella Martin              Julia Moore  
 Hands: Karim Abunasra            Brooke Carrano  
 Health: Ava Daugherty              Maeve Flynn

**Week 5**

Camper: Grant Hoffman  
 Counselor: Gavin Lloyd  
 Head: Mary Claire Twombly       Lily Meyer  
 Heart: Keelan Shepley-Mrazek    Henry Bouthiette  
 Hands: Vincent Leone              Maeve Cooper  
 Health: Thomas Hepburn          Sofia Guerrero

**Week 6**

Camper: Nadia Qureshi  
 Counselor: Alex Casella  
 Head: Samantha Rose              Bennett Zielinski  
 Heart: Lyla Piper                    Sebastian McIntyre  
 Hands: Cecily Fravel                Joalen Perez  
 Health: Claire Gould                 Teddy Fravel

**Week 7**

Camper: Chase Swanson  
 Counselor: Samantha Roux  
 Head: Camden Diehl                 Maggie Wilde  
 Heart: Julia Marvin                    Quinn Lloyd  
 Hands: Madison Jones              Griffin Bradshaw  
 Health: Valerie Starzef              Sofia Rotaru

Continued; A Summer to Remember:

magic tricks. Seeing how much they've grown in just a short week is truly inspiring. Many of these kids start off shy, and by the end of the week, they were leading activities and making new friends.

As campers packed their bags and said their goodbyes, many were already looking ahead to next summer. With new friends, fresh skills, and plenty of stories to share, the Hartford County 4-H campers leave with memories that will last a lifetime.

**\*\*Looking Ahead\*\***

Plans are already in the works for next summer's session, with promises of new activities, enhanced facilities, and even more exciting adventures. As this summer winds down, campers, staff, and families alike look forward to what's in store next summer at Hartford County 4-H Camp a place where fun, friendship, and personal growth always take center stage.

Yours in Camping,  
 Jenn, Lis, and Maeve



## Ferguson Pavilion Dedication By Peter Brzezicki



On Sunday June 2nd, 2024 our new pavilion was dedicated in the name of Charles and Lorraine Ferguson, at a ceremony attended by Ferguson family members, friends, and many 4-H Camp "Family Members." The Fergusons have been committed to the Hartford County 4-H program for more than 45 years. They have been active at the Auer Farm, 4-H Fair and especially as volunteer Board Members for Hartford County 4-H Camp. Charles was our Treasurer for more than 25 years and did many projects at Camp. When you sit on a bench to eat a meal or look at the woodwork in Baldwin Hall you witness some of Charles' handy work that will be in place for years.

The creation of this amazing new pavilion over one year marks a significant event in the history of HC4HC. It is the perfect spot to give our campers a place to enjoy the benefits of a gathering place in the shade for tribe meetings or a fun dry place for rainy day activities, outdoor meals or even Friday night dances under the stars! The usage of this infrastructure is limitless. The efforts of many made this a reality to honor the memory of Charles Ferguson and recognize his wife, Lorraine.

During the ceremony, the efforts of the Wednesday Warriors volunteer group, our Caretakers Bill and Kathy Bradley, and key contractors – Brian Hattan (Hattan Home Improvement) and Chris York (Affordable Solutions) - were recognized. After the formal ceremony (in our first real use of the pavilion) attendees enjoyed refreshments and had time to share their memories of Camp and Charles. In addition to Lorraine, another noteworthy attendee at the dedication was Ed Merritt longtime Hartford County 4-H Agent who was a key part of the organization when Camp was being built in 1966.

**This pavilion could not be built without the generous financial support of our 4-H Camp friends and family and we thank you.**

## October Teen Weekend By 4-H Camp Teen Board



Teen weekend was from September 20th to the 22nd and we had about 80 teens attend. Overall, everything went extremely well. We would like to thank everyone who volunteered because it wouldn't have been possible without the extra help. The Teen Board ran the store throughout the weekend and we sold merchandise, drinks, and snacks. Vespers were held at Outpost on Friday and the pond on Saturday. On Saturday, we did pumpkin carving, a Color Wars-style relay race, and a dance. The activities went extremely well and had a great response, we felt that they were a lot more suitable and entertaining for an older group as well. We fit a lot of activities into just a day and a half but there was also plenty of unstructured time where people could get pictures and just hang out with friends, which is always a big highlight of Teen Weekend. Again, we want to thank all of the chaperones and volunteers who made it possible.

The Teen Board  
(Ailey, Aiden, Kena, Brody, Christian, & Maisie)



**Donate to 4-H  
Camp's Annual  
Capital &  
Endowment  
Campaign**

4-H Camp Wishing Ceremony.

**Help make camps' wishes come true.  
Please support this year's  
Annual Fund Drive**

All Donations are tax deductible in care of.  
**Hartford County 4-H Camp Inc.**  
c/o Ally Pequita Office Manager  
29 Monroe Road  
Enfield, CT 06082

**SAVE THE DATE - COLLECT YOUR OLD PHOTO ALBUMS**  
**The 60th/95th Birthday Party & Reunion**  
at Hartford County 4-H Camp.  
August 29, 30 & 31, 2025

**Another way to support Hartford County 4-H Camp**

*There's an old saying, 4-H is more than cows and Cookin'*

Do You have a special Skill, Interest or Hobby you could share with youth?

Please consider volunteering with a 4-H Club near you, **OR** start your own. Try it for just several months, on your schedule.

Contact Jenn Cushman

[jennifer.cushman@uconn.edu](mailto:jennifer.cushman@uconn.edu)

Hartford County 4-H Extension Educator

VOLUNTEER WITH 4-H



BECOME A MEMBER



QUESTIONS? EMAIL  
[HARTFORD@UCONN.EDU](mailto:HARTFORD@UCONN.EDU)

## Keeping Track of you!

Marrages, Births, Job changes,  
Moving, other News

Help us keep in touch with camp Alumni.  
Who do you know, how do we get back in touch?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Camp Date(s) Attended \_\_\_\_\_  
 News for Camp Chatter: \_\_\_\_\_

What is the most effective way to stay in touch with You. USPost  Email  Other

Would you be interested in serving on our Camp Board? \_\_\_\_\_

Would you be interested in running a 4-H Club? \_\_\_\_\_

Contact:  
 Peggy Forman peggyf682@gmail.com  
 PO Box 1094  
 Manchester Ct 06040

## The History of 4-H

### Gertrude Warren

The mother of 4-H

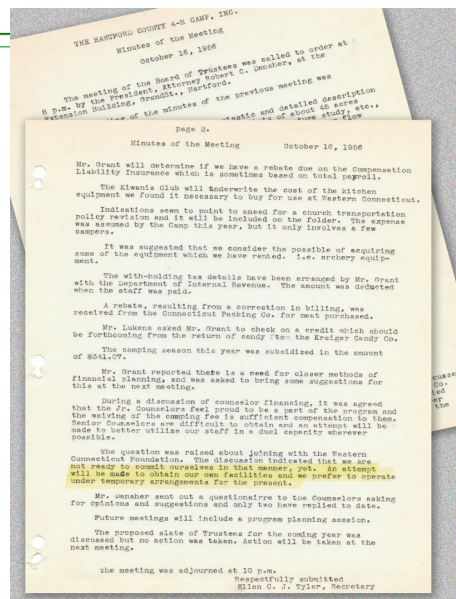


1884 - 1979

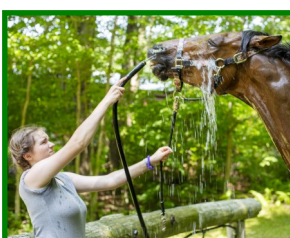
Gertrude Warren pioneered the 4-H movement for rural youth programs to educate boys and girls in agriculture & home economics.

She was the first to use the term 4-H Clubs for Extension youth clubs in a 1918 federal document, "Organization and Results of Boys' and Girls' Club Work."

## History of Hartford County 4-H Camp,



Hartford County 4-H Camp Minutes Oct 16, 1956. The first recorded recommendation to purchase land for a permanent camp site. "An attempt will be made to obtain our own facilities." 1959 72 Acres of Rankl Property purchased in Marlborough. Oct 3, 1965 Groundbreaking.



### SAVE THE DATE - BOOK YOUR FLIGHTS

The 60th/95th Birthday Party & Reunion

at Hartford County 4-H Camp.

August 29, 30 & 31, 2025

More information <https://forms.gle/NPs8ehqKfqVUWURv8>

## Looking for Contributors to Camp Chatter

Do you have a good story, a cherished memory, News of Camp Alumni, Someone we should Profile?

Let us know, or better yet write an article for Chatter yourself.

Send Submissions to John@GaraventaPhotography.com



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