

## HARTFORD COUNTY 4-H OUTDOOR CENTER

# CAMP CHATTER



ISSUE XIX

Spring/Early Summer 2025

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### 28<sup>th</sup> Annual CT 4-H All Camp Staff Training Weekend

By Marc Cournoyer UConn 4-H State Camp Liaison

The 28th annual Camp staff training weekend took place at the Windham-Tolland 4-H camp June 13-15, 2025. This annual event brings together approximately 120 summer camp staff for three days of training to equip them to handle all the responsibility of being a professional camp staff. Camps in attendance included the Windham-Tolland 4-H camp located in Pomfret Center, CT; the New London County 4-H Camp located in North Franklin, CT, and the Hartford County 4-H Camp located in Marlborough, CT. The respective volunteer camp foundations in partnership with UConn Extension, provide leadership and financial support for this critical training opportunity.

A planning team made up of camp administrators, foundation members and faculty from UConn 4-H gather each October, meeting monthly throughout the year, to assemble a program facilitated by top-notch presenters, providing camp staff members with the tools necessary to be well trained camp professionals. The planning team always strives to live up to the 4-H  
*Continued on page 4*

### And it all started with this Milk Box

By Pat Dillion, Jean Tomasko



Before Harry Potter's flu powder, Internet or social media, we had the Milk Box.

When Elsie Woolam put the milk box out next to her mailbox it was a sign that Camp Registration had begun. As soon as we saw it outside 1185 Main Street we would hurry home to look for our application. Applications were a quarter piece of paper where you needed to mark your week preferences, including

horse activity and cabin-mate choices. Getting applications swiftly back to the milk box would determine whether or not we would secure our desired week and other preferences.

*Continued on Page 3*



## Alumni Profile - 4-H camp lead to a career in Camping and International Travel

By Lauren Buckno Purcell



I went to several different camps as a child and was always homesick. But when I went to Hartford County 4-H camp at age 12, it changed my life and, in turn, directed my future career path. I spent 2 years as a camper, 4 years as a teen counselor, and 3 years on staff.

After graduating from Dickinson College, I spent my last summer on staff in 1997, then moved to Halle, Germany (1997-98) for my Fulbright year. In 1998, I moved to Dublin, Ireland. I was working at a hotel there when Mats Kall reached out to Elsie Woolam to ask her to let me know about a position available in Ireland with the company he was working for, Camp Counselors USA (CCUSA). And the rest, as they say, is history. I applied and got the job with CCUSA, an international staffing agency that HC4H has worked with

for many years. After two years running the Dublin office for CCUSA, I moved to the HQ office in Sausalito, CA, where I worked for six years as a Placement Coordinator, finding great international staff for camps all around the country, including Hartford County 4-H Camp. In 2007, I moved to Liverpool, England, to work on the recruitment side of international staffing again and ran offices in England, Scotland, and Ireland.

## I Remember - Sal Presto by Edmund Smith



Sal Presto was a beloved chef who loved cooking and people. Most college chefs took their summer vacation, but Sal came to our camp to spend his summers before heading back to Smith. Sal's initiatives to improve our camp menu were badly needed and greatly appreciated. He proposed an herb garden, and soon nasturtium flowers garnished some of his preparations, as did other fresh herbs. Sal expounded on the 'Holy Trinity' - and whether it was onions, carrots, and celery, or tomato, garlic, and basil. He loved baking special sweet breads for our Saturday staff meetings before we greeted a new load of campers. He proposed a salad bar, and the campers, counselors, and summer staff were soon given far more options and healthier choices. Many days we

played a chess match in the dining hall, and shared stories. I regret not staying in touch with Sal. He was a kind soul with deep thoughts and a true summer friend.



**I Remember - Megan Montgomery Fleckenstein** by Lis Diemer



In 2022, I dropped off my mini camper for his first time at camp. It was at registration I realized my son would be in the same cabin as **Megan Montgomery Fleckenstein's** son. A full circle moment!! Meg and I squealed at the possibility that our boys could become "camp friends" just like us.

Meg was a 2 weeker camper and counselor in the late 90s. Her enthusiasm could be appreciated at all of the activities, tribe meetings and, of course, all camp programs. Her dress ups at the themed meals were next level. When I think of Meg, I picture her on the girls' side. Meg would be leading the shenanigans. Whether it be silly cabin competitions or post vespers parties, we all wanted to be included in the fun she created effortlessly. She earned the honor of being named Counselor of the Week because of her willingness to help, genuine care for others, and infectious laugh. She spent time as a memorable staff member and taught an ever popular dance class. Campers raced to sign up to be with the hilarious, talented, and energetic Meg.

After camp, she pursued a degree in special education and Autism Specialist certificate with a Masters of Education degree. She volunteered her time and expertise for many summers at the All Camp Staff Training. Being an advocate for people with disabilities, she presented how to show patience, care and empathy for campers with differences. She used the opportunity to impress upon the summer staff members the importance of people first language which emphasizes the individual first, rather than their disability.

The Hartford County 4-H Camp community were deeply saddened to hear of Meg's passing this past November. Many generous donations were made in her honor. Her amazing spirit will live on at our camp as the donations will go to the endowment and campership funds Thank you Meg for all the laughter, memories and what you have taught me.



*Continued from page 1* **Elsie's Milk Box**



Camp filled up very quickly, so all your hopes and dreams rested on how fast your application reached 1185 Main Street, South Windsor.

We had waited all year to see the friends that we shared our camp experience with each year, some of these friendships have lasted decades.

We couldn't afford to trust the US Postal Service with something so important, so we would run home, fill out our application and make our parents deliver it right away to the milk box.

There were two milk boxes; one for Horse Camp and one for Regular Camp. Each application was numbered as it arrived and although we were often told South Windsor 4-H'ers had an unfair advantage, we have confirmed with the source that parents from all over Connecticut and beyond drove applications to the Milk Box on Main Street.

Recently the Milk Box was regifted to a former 4-H Camp Registrar and she posted it on Facebook. The comments were filled with fond memories of something that use to be on our back porch for Milk Delivery and turned into a receptacle that held the hopes and dreams of thousands of would be-campers, counselors and staff.

Word of mouth spread fast to out of state relatives of 4-H'ers and eventually even internationally to youth from other countries who came to be on staff for the summer. International staff were welcomed into 1185 Main Street South Windsor before camp began, after the season ended, and grew to consider it their second home.

*Continued from page 2 Alumni Profile - Lauren Buckno Purcell*



After many years of moving around the world and exploring all it has to offer, I decided in 2013 it was time to return to the U.S., CCUSA was happy for me to work from home, and so I laid down roots in Nashville, TN, where I have been ever since. I presently wear many hats at CCUSA, from program development, project management, staff placement, and customer relations with amazing camps all across the U.S.

CCUSA has many programs all over the world, including some that Americans can participate in ([www.ccusa.com](http://www.ccusa.com)). I'm so fortunate to have a career that combines my love of camp with my love for international exchange. Understanding

other cultures is so vital, and at CCUSA, we believe we help make the world a better place!



*Continued from page 1. 2025 All Camp Staff Training*

4-H motto "To Make the Best Better." The presenters for 2025 consisted of nationally recognized professionals **Emily Golinsky, Kim Aycock, Jim Cain, and Rahel Bayar**. Participants also have opportunities to learn from local leaders, including **Deanna Davis, Marc Cournoyer**, and others, throughout the weekend.

The theme for 2025 was "**Ignite, Engage, Empower**". The goal of the weekend is that staff will grow in **empathy, character, accountability** and **leadership**. The training strives to provide participants with the skills necessary to have a lasting positive impact on the youth they serve, while also supporting each other. It is the hope that participants will take up the skills they learned as they apply and master them throughout the summer.

Connecticut 4-H camps have a reputation of providing exceptional camper experiences. This would not be possible without well-trained camp staff members who work directly with youth campers, day in and day out. The goal of the All-Camp weekend is to empower each staff member to achieve extraordinary results with each camper while enhancing their leadership and decision-making skills. Proper preparation and training can lead to a rewarding summer of making a positive difference in the lives of the children in their care.



## The 2024-2025 DONOR HONOR ROLL

### Camp Spirit \$2000 and above

Bank of America Charitable Gift Fund  
Town of Marlborough/Hartford Foundation  
for Public Giving

### HEALTH \$1999 - \$1000

Highland Park Families Foundation  
Mike & Vicky Pelletier

### HANDS \$999 - \$500

Abunasra Family  
Beth Andresen  
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Al & Laura Penda  
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### HEART \$499 - \$250

Michael & Anne Brzezicki  
Peter & Elizabeth Brzezicki  
Paul Cordilico  
John & Marie Garaventa  
Eugene & Dorothy Koss  
Patricia Leshane

### HEAD \$249 - \$100

Katherine Al-Khabbaz  
Susan & Michael Balon  
Caren Barry  
Bob & Laura Bengtson  
The Britton Family  
Michael & Anne Brzezicki  
Tom Chmielewski & Jo Britton  
Leila Manning Connolly  
Cathleen Cormier  
Lis Diemer  
Susan & John England  
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William & Ingrid Fraize  
Melanie Rutz Flynn  
Lorraine Ferguson  
Rodney Gilbert  
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Maureen Hickey  
John Hoffman  
Katz Family  
Sue Langman Pitler-Vanguard  
Raymond Marra  
Julie Martin  
Edward Merritt  
Patricia Miele  
Joe Post  
Christine Sallstrom  
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Jane Smith  
Joseph W. Staniunas  
Scott & Sharon Tripp  
Jim & Nancy Watt  
Katrina Weaver  
Elsie P Woolam

### CLOVER \$99 - 1.

Joel & Sandra Baranowski  
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Janice Bell  
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Eleanor Button & Marilyn Henry  
Ashley Carey  
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Dona Corsini & Susan Marcucci  
Louise Concodello  
Donna A Crompton  
The Curran Family  
Jen & Wes Cushman  
Carol Dansereau  
Andrew & Michele Dubois  
Frederick & Gladys Fetzer  
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Mark Gilrain  
Janet Glitzenstein  
Margaret Griffin  
David Higgins  
Frank T. Jodaitis  
David & Karen Kasheta  
H. Katzman  
Ken & Janna Lombardo  
Cindy Maheu  
Elaine Matulis  
Larissa Morgenthau  
Marc Nemeth & Jean Nemeth  
Pat & Brenda McAfee  
Lorraine Neff  
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David & Lydna Sprafke  
Sean Sullivan  
Kathy Temple  
Laurie Tomaszek  
Kathleen & Jeffrey Visinski  
Cheri Williams  
Rick & Corinne Wandy



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

### In Memory of Betty & Stan Brzezicki

Michael & Anne Brzezicki  
Ingrid & Bill Fraize

### In Memory of Joe Concodello, SR

Louise Concodello

### In Memory of Gertrude Crompton

Janet Glitzenstein

### In Memory of Megan M. Fleckenstein

Anonymous  
Katherine Al-Khabbaz  
Lis Diemer  
Monica Ferrero  
David Higgins  
Eugene & Dorothy Koss  
Julie Martin  
Jane Robinson  
Francelia Sevin  
Katrina Weaver  
Cheri Williams

### In Memory of Chuck Mather

Rodney Gilbert

### In Memory of Sal Presto

Katrina Weaver

### In Memory of Janice M. Sirote

Eliot & Gale Swartz

### In Honor of Elaine Zagorski 90th Birthday

Elsie P. Woolam

### IN-KIND DONATION

**We would like to thank the following  
businesses and Families for contributing  
a portion of or all services to the success  
of the 2025 4-H Camping season.**

Anonymous  
The Peter Brzezicki Family, Wethersfield, CT  
The Balko Group, East Berlin, CT.  
Bradley and Sons Plumbing, Marlborough, CT  
Bluebird Meadows Farm LLC.  
J. Matulis Attorney at Law, New Britain, CT.  
Pelweld Industries, Glastonbury, CT.  
Saddle View Farm, Bethany, CT.  
The Sise Family  
Vallid Labs, Agawam, MA  
Zoppa Studio LLC, South Windsor, CT

**The Hartford County 4-H Camp  
Board of Trustees wishes to extend  
our sincere THANKS to this years  
Donors, and Volunteers.  
As of June 1st 2025**



## New for Summer of 2025 By Peter Brzezicki



The Wednesday Morning Group is a collection of mainly retired, second shift and self employed folks who meet at camp once a week to take on building and maintenance projects. The Group worked in the fall of 2024 until Thanksgiving and started up again at the end of February 2025.

This year's project included:

### Cabins

Replaced approximately 24 mattress covers. To cool cabins, installed gable end vents, repaired cabin screens.

### Grounds

Set up four Tents 20x20 & 20x30, Shimmed Dock Legs. Repaired Basketball hoops, repaired and replaced PingPong Nets. Created a Sun Dial using the Flagpole.

### Archery Range

Built new archery shed, installed 3 telephone poles *donated by IBEW local 42*, Set up two nets, Set up tent, Secured two donated picnic tables, installed fence posts for CautionTape, Moved Archery sign, & installed rope gate

### Staff House

Secured donated Air Conditioning unit for lower E. Grant House, Renovated the Thomas Fritzer Nature Center.

*With sincere thanks to this season's Wednesday Morning Group and all other volunteers.*

Bob Bengtson, Peter & **Tucker I** Brzezicki, Liz Brzezicki, Pete Brzezicki, Julia Brzezicki, Patty Dillon, Patrick Dowland *IBEW local 42*, Dave Forman, Peggy Forman, Steve Costello, John & **Bailey** Garaventa, Whitney Golanski, RHAM Lacross Teams, John Mahoney, Cindy McGuire-Maheu, Vicky Pelletier, Michael Pelletier, Bob Pelton, Al Penda, Laura Penda, Walter Squire, Scott Tripp, Sharon & **Tucker too** Tripp

## What's the Buzz update from past issue

**MIT National Invention Convention.** Nolan Kosciukiewicz was awarded top 8th grader in the country and 1st place in the Household Organization and Appliance category!!! 202,000 entries from students from around the country, from grades K-12 and Kosciukiewicz took the top spot in two areas.

Nolan is attending the first week of regular Camp 2025 is his third year attending camp he and plans to apply to be a counselor next year.



### **Sponsor A Camp Horse for the 2025 Summer**

Help keep horses at HC4H camp, and help children have a hands on Horse Activity experience!

Contact : Amy Balko 860-305-8230

(Call or Text Friendly) Amymatulis@gmail.com



## Marlborough Volunteer Fire Department *Responds to first heatwave of the season.*



As the first major heat wave swept over the county, the Marlborough Volunteer Fire Department answered the call. Caretaker Bill Bradley put camp Director Jenn Paragone in touch with the town fire marshal and his son, whose child is a camper. They are both Marlborough Volunteer Fire Fighters. They brought a fire-truck and a tanker and sprayed the camp to cool everyone off.. Marlborough resident Officer Kehoe, also came in his patrol car.

## Horse Camp





## What's the Buzz

Friends of Hartford County 4-H Camp By Patty Miele



The concept of a 'Friends of Hartford County 4-H Camp' an ad hoc or special committee of Hartford County 4-H Camp, Inc. came up in conversations during and around various events at Camp.

Often, former campers, counselors, staff and parents express a need to stay connected with the camp that many call 'their happy place', but are often restricted by time, distance and availability to commit.

While still in its infancy, the idea is to compile a list of 'friends' that can be called upon to help 'Make the best better'. Some ways for folks to volunteer at camp clean-

ups, tax and bookkeeping services, grant writing, pro-bono legal assistance, fund raising, and special events (e.g. Birthday Party!). You don't have to live locally, either!

The goal is to keep our Camp alumni engaged and involved with 4-H Camp while supplementing Trustee membership by drawing from an enthusiastic, committed pool of people who have a deep affection for Hartford County 4-H Camp.

A loosely based example of such a committee/organization is 'Friends of Northwest Park' in Windsor, CT.

Please let us know if you are interested in being part of this fledgling group. Send an e-mail with '**Friends of HC4H Camp**' in the subject line.

Include in the body of the e-mail: your first and last name, your e-mail, a phone number and a short message telling us how you'd like to help. Send your e-mail to: [prmiele@comcast.net](mailto:prmiele@comcast.net)

## I Remember - Dick Quimby by Erica Prior Fearn



I am sorry to share the sad news that Dick Quimby passed on Jan 20th. Dick was dad to Beth and Richard, and husband to Barbara of 60 years. A 4-H camp and fair dad. Growing up, he was the guy with the cartoon dairy bull painted on the side of his van. He was always willing to share advice, advice that Bill and I ALWAYS took, and was instrumental in starting my career with Farm Bureau. He was a Vernon/Rockville volunteer fire-fighter. Dick served as treasurer of Hartford County 4-H Camp. If I remember correctly, he and Barbara were a Hartford County 4-H Fair romance. He was a great man and will be missed.







4-H Camp Wishing Ceremony.

## Help make camp's wishes come true. It is not too late to support this year's Annual Fund Drive

**Hartford County 4-H Camp's Endowment Fund** provides an opportunity for gifts to be placed in an Endowment with only the interest earnings to be used for pressing projects outside of the operating budget, while the principal provides a financial base for the 4-H Camp.

**Hartford County 4-H Camp's Working Capital Fund** provides an avenue for gifts to be utilized to establish a working capital fund to meet cash flow needs for various projects. This fund is not used by the annual operating budgets. The establishment of a firm financial base is essential for the long term development of 4-H Camp.

### Experience UConn 4-H Year Round

Positive Youth Development Programs for Ages 5-18



STEM  
Agriculture  
Leadership  
Healthy Living  
Civic Engagement

**UConn**  
EXTENSION

UConn complies with all applicable federal and state laws regarding non-discrimination, equal opportunity, affirmative action, and providing reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities. Contact: Office of Institutional Equity (IAE) 860-398-8943, equity@uconn.edu, <http://www.iae.uconn.edu>

**VOLUNTEER WITH 4-H**



**BECOME A MEMBER**



Questions? Email  
[Hartford@uconn.edu](mailto:Hartford@uconn.edu)  
860-409-9050

