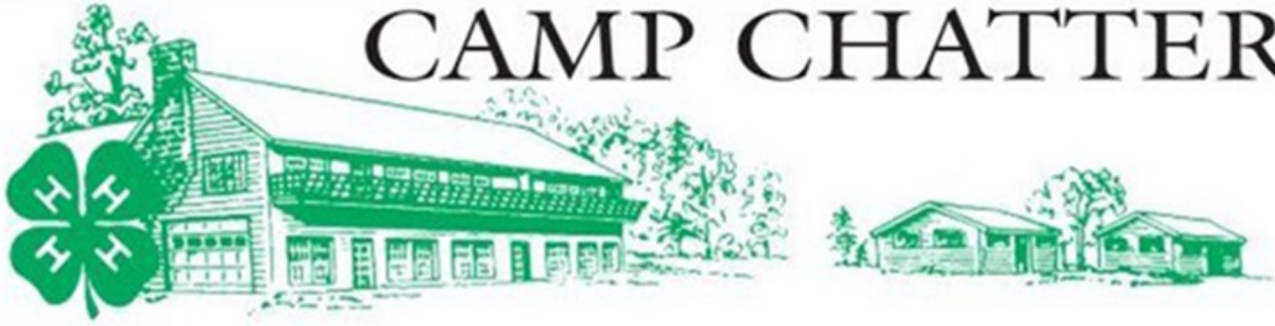


CAMP CHATTER



ISSUE XXI

Spring Summer 2026

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June Zoppa named to National 4-H Hall of Fame

By Patty Miele



June Riordan Zoppa has been selected as a prestigious member of the 2026 National 4-H Hall of Fame. She joins two other notable Hartford County 4-H Inductees: Elsie Woolam (2017) and the late Myron Baldwin (2008).

June has been a Trustee for the Hartford County 4-H Camp (Camp) for over 40 years, serving in many capacities, most recently as Chair of the board's Maintenance Committee.

Her involvement at Camp began at age 9 as a young camper – one of the first when Camp opened in 1966. She continued as a counselor and now as a Trustee helping keep Camp affordable, safe and enjoyable for the many children who attend the extremely popular summer program.

June participated in numerous 4-H activities as a youth and teen and for over 50 years, as a volunteer, leader, and mentor. June is the only 4-H volunteer who has simultaneously served on Hartford County's three governing bodies: Hartford County 4-H Camp, Hartford County 4-H Advisory and Hartford County 4-H Fair Association. *Continued on page 2*

Welcome Horse Week Camp Director Julia Giaquinto

By Emily Bengtson



Julia's journey with 4-H Camp started over 20 years ago. She moved up through the ranks of camper, to counselor and joined as part of our full summer horse staff in 2010. She fondly reminisces on camp memories including taking Agnes on the hike, dress up meals, the iconic Lower Baldwin Foam Party, and the last vespers of the summer. After spending some years away from camp, we are thrilled to welcome Julia back as the Bring Your Own Horse Week Director. *Continued on page 3*



"THE ONE WHO
PLANTS TREES,
KNOWING THAT HE OR SHE WILL
NEVER SIT IN THEIR SHADE,
HAS AT LEAST STARTED
TO UNDERSTAND THE
MEANING OF LIFE."

Rabindranath Tagore

June Zoppa



Postcard circa 1966 – June is in the center walking to lunch in Baldwin Hall!

June taught countless children life skills, leadership and citizenship as a Club leader, Advisor and Trustee. As a Fair Advisor, June is often the 'go-to' person, assisting Fair officers with the various tasks needed to put on a successful county fair. As a Camp Trustee, June participates in fundraising and newsletter campaigns and often guides teens and other volunteers to ensure Camp is ready for the summer season.

June has a tireless work ethic and has been a mentor to thousands of 4-H members. Most of her club members have attended 4-H Camp as campers, counselors and volunteer staff. It has rounded out their experience to become 4-H leaders, parents and second-

generation Camp Board Trustees. Fun fact: June's Hall of Fame nomination form that included all her contributions to the 4-H program is five pages long! It's amazing (but not surprising) that one person could accomplish so much while maintaining boundless energy and enthusiasm.

June will be inducted into the National 4-H Hall of Fame during a ceremony in October 2026 in Kansas City, MO. Congratulations June!

An Interview with Maeve Cooper

By Maeve Collins

When I was given the assignment to interview a camper my mind went immediately to one person: Maeve Cooper. Since her first week at camp in 2021, Maeve has embodied the camp spirit and is never afraid to express just how much her time at camp means to her. All the staff celebrate when we see her name on the cabin list because of her infectious positivity, unbridled enthusiasm, and deep appreciation for all that camp has to offer. That is why, with 50 days left on her countdown to camp, I called Maeve for an interview about camp from the camper perspective.



Maeve Cooper & Maeve Collins

What was your first camp experience?

I've been coming to camp since 2021, and the first year I went, it wasn't even regular camp because of the pandemic, and I had so much fun. When I went back the next year I thought it would be exactly like that, but it was completely different and it was even better. Every year I count down the days until I can go back.

What was your earliest camp memory?

Probably when, at meals, when everyone started counting down from 10 and I had absolutely no idea what was going on *[laughs]*.

So that is your earliest camp memory, but do you have a favorite camp memory?

Maybe when me and a girl from my cabin went down to say bye to Ryan Reibeling (2023-2025 staff member). I was standing outside Lower Baldwin and we walked down to the pond. We were probably down there for at least an hour just talking to him. I started crying when I gave him a hug and I was like, "Oh my goodness," because that was when he had convinced me he was leaving. It was just very wholesome. It's crazy how close you can get to people in just one week, and it was just very bittersweet.

Continued on page 4

Julia Giaquinto
Continued from page 1

Julia earned a Bachelor's degree in Equine Business Management & Riding from Johnson & Wales University. While there, she had the opportunity to train at the prestigious Westphalian Riding School in Germany where she earned her small bronze medal, as well as studying adventure-based tourism in Costa Rica. More recently, Julia braved the rugged backcountry of the Absaroka Mountains on a horsepacking expedition with NOLS. During the school year, she channels her passion by teaching Equine Science at an agricultural high school in Massachusetts. I personally remember Julia being on staff back when I was a camper and was excited for the full circle moment to ask her a few questions about her return to the camp barn:

Emily: What is your favorite barn chore?

Julia: My favorite barn chore has to be cleaning stalls. It might not sound glamorous, but I find it both therapeutic and satisfying. Plus, there's nothing better than stepping back and seeing a freshly cleaned stall... until your horse decides to redecorate five minutes later

Emily: If you could ask a camp horse one question and get an answer, what would you ask them?

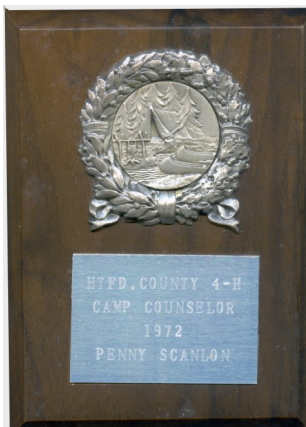
Julia: "What are you really thinking when we're riding you?" I have a feeling the answer would be something like, "Snacks first, questions later," but I'd love to know what's actually going on in their heads!

Emily: What do you hope that campers gain from their experience at camp this summer?

Julia: I'm really excited to help campers grow not just as riders, but as individuals. Beyond learning how to ride, I hope campers take away important life skills like responsibility, patience, and confidence. Working with horses teaches you how to communicate without words, stay calm under pressure, and build trust.

From Elsie's Basement
Past Summer Plaques Counselor and Camp Spirits

Christopher Brown	1994	Camp Spirit
Kristen Butler	1994	Camp Counselor
Maria Catabiano	1994	Camp Spirit
Carrie Dwees	1994	Camp Spirit
Corey Guzman	1994	Camp Spirit
Stephanie Dieter	1994	Camp Counselor
Christa Haboian	1994	Camp Counselor
Becky Hammond	1994	Camp Counselor
Kevin Kokoszka	1994	Camp Counselor
Nikki Krajewski	1994	Camp Spirit
Craig Mahoney	1994	Camp Counselor
Bryony Munzi-Dube	1994	Camp Spirit
Marydith Newman	1994	Camp Counselor
Adam Satriano	1994	Camp Spirit
Jen Shaw	1994	Camp Counselor
James Steinberg	1994	Camp Spirit
Katrina VonHollen	1994	Camp Counselor



Do you know any of these People on the left? Please help us send these plaques to their rightful home. Contact Peggy at peggyf682@gmail.com or text (860) 682-7177.



Denise DuBaldo Dickstein, Spirit Award, 1985, Daryl DuBaldo Spirit Award, 1984

Two lost spirits found and delivered. Peg Forman & Elsie Woolam delivered Camp spirit awards to the DuBaldo sisters this past spring.

Camp Smarts

By: Matthew Lee Dolsky

This is a message to the future.
Coming your way is one fine group of boys and girls.
One fine group of men and women with a little bit of camp smarts.
With that genuine love for a friend, Old and New.
A butterfly feeling for Bambi and wide eyed from the warmth of a fire.
A welcoming teriyaki glaze and salty taste of tears on a Friday night.
Camp Smarts that give us extra comfort to act extra crazy because here,
It's only normal.
So we thank the Lord for giving us the things we need.
Temporary tats, the sun, the rain, and blistered feet.
Crab people, Milk by the pint, Bug spray with extra DEET.
We don't come out of our shell,
we unleash.
It is here my friends, in our familiar grassy seat.
That we receive a Harvard education in one week on how to be
the people that a perfect world needs.
The kids that make mom and dad proud.
The soon to be proud moms and dads of beautiful children.
Just like us, grass stained, sunburned heads, growing and perfectly ourselves.
I will call on you brother in the safety of a moon shadow.
500 miles deep in my imagination.
To compare scars,
These are camp smarts.

An Interview with Maeve Cooper

Continued from page 2

What lessons have you learned through your experiences at camp?

That being myself isn't a bad thing and that being the best version of myself is the most important thing, not changing myself for anyone.

What three pieces of advice would you give to a first year camper?

1. Don't be worried about getting homesick, because you will immediately feel at home and the most comfortable that you can be once you get there.
2. Embrace yourself, and everything and anything that is happening because the week goes by so fast that you will wish you had been more in the moment while you were there.
3. Be open-minded because when you're at camp, there are some things that, immediately when you hear them, you'll be like, "Oh? What is that? Oh that doesn't sound fun." But really, it is, it's so much fun that you won't even know how much fun you're having until it's over.

Why did you fall in love with camp?

The moment I got there, I immediately felt... I mean, my first year as a camper I was absolutely terrified.

Why were you terrified?

Because in previous years, I had gotten so homesick. Even when I would go for a sleepover down the street, I would get so scared. And the thought of me going in the middle of the woods, without any contact with my parents, freaked me out. But the moment I got there, I just immediately thought: "this is going to be amazing." All the people immediately made me feel so comfortable, I felt so safe and welcomed, and I knew that I could just ask anyone for anything and they would help me.

What are your plans with camp moving forward?

I really want to be a counselor and a staff member, but I know that I only have two years left as a camper, so I'm trying to soak it all in and be as in the moment as I can.

The First Day of Camp, the next generation

By The Dillon Family & The Jacobs Family



Thomas Dillon IV
2026



Thomas Dillon Jr (Grandfather)
1969



Caia Dillion
2026



Kathy Dillion (Great Aunt)
1969



Patrick Toomey
Grandson of Howie Jacobs

Volunteers, Making the Best Better



RHAM High School Lacrosse
Landscaping



Collins Aero Space
Erected Tents



Counselors Work Weekend
Assembled New Beds



Camp Alumni
Cataloged 50 years of Photos



Counselors Painting
cross walks

Volunteers. There are many saying that might come to mind, "Many hands make light work. Do you want a person who can volunteer for ten days or a volunteer who can organize ten people to work one day?" Volunteers are the backbone of our camp. We are all indebted to people who roll up their sleeves and give not just from their checkbooks but also of their most precious commodity time and skills.

To paraphrase a poem

*We warm ourselves by fires we did not light, We sit in the shade of trees we did not plant
We drink from wells we did not dig.*

The 2025-2026 DONOR HONOR ROLL

Thank you to the following donors, whose generous support ensures that the traditions of Hartford County 4-H Camp continue for future generations of campers.

Camp Spirit \$2000 and above

Anonymous
Erin Dutton
William Farone

Health \$1000 - \$1999

Mike & Vicky Pelletier

Hands \$500 - \$999

Mary Andresen
Michael Chmielewski
Bruce Gilbert
Tobacco Valley Investment Club
Patricia Leshane
Nicholas Loukellis
Brice Philip-Farrier

Heart \$250 - \$499

Thomas Chmielewski
John & Marie Garaventa
Eugene Koss
Allan Penda
Patricia Scanlon
Kevin Woolam

Head \$100 - \$249

Laura Bengtson
Lea Bowers
Lonny Bowers
Wallis Boyd
Michael & Anne Brzezicki
Peter Brzezicki
Jen Conran
Charlene Constable
Cathleen Cormier
Michelle Cristini
Lis Diemer
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Erica Fearn
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Connie Karkowski
Karen & Dave Kasheta
Sue Langman Pitler
Donna Lewis
Mike McCusker
Edward Merritt
Sheila Noone

Gina Prine
Christine Sallstrom
Amanda Shumate
Joseph & Ann Staniunas
Reagon Stone
Heather Thomas
Katrina Weaver
Sarah Zanfardino

Clover \$1 - \$99

Wilbur & Rachel Anderson
Beth Arnold
James & Maureen Bourn
Wendy Brown
Gerard & Jacqueline Chaput
Joan Clapp
Joseph & Louise Concodello
Marlene Constable
Jennifer Cushman
Gerald & Linda Dalpe
Ellen Deutsch
Sharline Dowd
Frederick & Gladys Fetzer
Gene & Jolene Flenke
Peggy & Dave Forman
Amy Hansman
Frank Jodaitis
Charles Kehoe
Martin Klotz
Marcia Magee
Cynthia Maheu
Raymond Marra
Brian & Tracy Martin
Dennis & Debby Martin
Rosemary Pachesa
John & Jill Phillips
James & Donna Reardon
Terry Roach
Steven & Jane Robinson
Sally Sanborn
Kimberly Selig
Bill & Jennifer Syme
Kathleen Temple
Laurie Tomaszek
Jean Trotman
Barbara Trudeau
Robert Villecco

Kathleen Visinski

In-Kind Services

We would like to thank following businesses for contributing a portion of or all services to the success of the 2026 4-H Camping season.

Equinavia, LLC
Garaventa Photography
I.B.E.W. Local 42 O.S.H.E.
SLAM Collaborative
Vallid Labs
Zoppa Studios

Memorials

We greatly acknowledge the following families, who designated 4-H Camp for memorial tributes and donations.

Mr. William Farone
In memory of **Margaret C. Farone**
Mrs. Samantha Noone
In memory of **Richard A. Sirote**
Mr. Ken Picard
In memory of **JoAnne Picard**
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Starr
In memory of **Timothy Edwards Starr**

Auction Donations

We also extend our heartfelt gratitude to the generous businesses and individuals who donated auction items during Camp's 60th anniversary celebration

\$8,600 in Camperships

Small Change Makes a Big Impact in the Campership Program.

Ever wonder where those last few cents in a camper's store account go?



Upon departure, families and their camper can choose to donate the remaining balance of their store account to the campership program, a financial assistance program that supports families with the cost of sending their child to camp.

In the past year, these donations have added up to an incredible \$8,600 in camperships!

Donations as of June 30th 2026

Join Us!

Join our community of supporters and be a part of the reason a camper builds lifelong friendships, discovers new passions, and cherishes the traditions of Hartford County 4-H Camp. You're simply a click away from being an important member of our support team.



Donations can also be mailed to:
Allyson Pequita
Office Manager
Hartford County 4-H Camp, Inc.
29 Monroe Road
Enfield, CT 06082



4-H Camp Wishing Ceremony.
Leave a legacy, make wishes come true by supporting Hartford County 4-H Camp Inc.

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 budget. The establishment of a firm financial base is essential for the long term development of 4-H Camp.



"I have a conviction that a few weeks spent at a well organized summer camp may be of more value educationally than a whole year of formal school work."

Charles William Eliot 1834-1926
President of Harvard University

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

Hartford County 4-H Extension Educator

VOLUNTEER WITH 4-H



BECOME A MEMBER



QUESTIONS? EMAIL
HARTFORD@UCONN.EDU

Keeping Track of You!

Marriages, 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 Public Relations committee plans to print a physical newsletter twice a year followed up with an electronic version in between paper editions. Please send us your email address if you wish to receive email editions. peggyf682@gmail.com

The History of 4-H The history and evolution of the 4-H Pledge

The 4-H program began in the early 1900s as a youth development initiative in the United States.

The original pledge was created in 1918 to promote the values of head, heart, hands, and hustle later amended to health.

It was officially adopted and first worded by Otis Hall, state leader in Kansas.

In 1973 4-H members of the National 4-H Conference overwhelmingly voted to add AND OUR WORLD to the last line of the pledge which up until then read, 'for my club, my community and my country.'

History of Hartford County 4-H Camp, Marlborough CT

February 2010
Bill Bradley becomes
camp's third caretaker



Bill Bradley, Camper, Counselor, Staff member, Teen Board 1981-84 Board member 1988 - 1993. Bill and Kathy raised their three boys at camp. Hunter, Heath, Bill, Hayden, Kathy on top of the world KAY Peak VT.

SAVE THE DATE - BOOK YOUR FLIGHTS

The 100th Birthday Party & Reunion

at Hartford County 4-H Camp.
2030

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



Allyson Pequita
Office Manager
Hartford County 4-H Camp
29 Monroe Rd.
Enfield, CT 06082