Cornell Cooperative Extension
Ontario County

2026 ANNUAL REPORT

Putting Knowledge to Work



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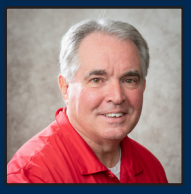
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***Multi-County**



A Message from the Board President

Dear Friends of Extension,

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ontario County is excited to once again highlight some of our programs and accomplishments in our annual report. We continue to grow, improve and develop new programs to meet the interests of our community. Our Master Gardeners program welcomed 11 new Master Gardeners who have completed their training and are teaching workshops to the community. One of our graduates will present at the annual spring symposium in February. If you are interested in attending, please contact Nancy. Our parenting workshops are being updated with anticipation of increased interest and attendance. The agricultural program is working with local farmers to increase community awareness with events such as "Meet the Farmer" and other programs. Our horticulture programs have seen an increased request for information concerning plant diseases and invasive insects. Agriculture In the Classroom, which increases awareness of the importance of agriculture and nutrition to the children who will be our future farmers, continues to grow in scope and the number of school districts that are interested in the program. Mo was successful in obtaining a grant which, along with an incredible gift, will enable us to build a new pool and pool house for 4-H Camp Bristol Hills. While overall the number of campers attending continues to be lower than pre-pandemic levels, with the board's help we are working on ways to increase awareness through marketing and highlighting what a great opportunity camp is for the attendees. Interest in our 4-H clubs continues to remain strong, with existing clubs growing and new interest in food and textile clubs. Our 4-H staff is often limited only by the lack of volunteers, so please consider volunteering if possible.

We are fortunate that our county government strongly supports our work with the community. Our Executive Director Mo Tidball continues to be successful in obtaining grant monies to support many of our programs. We added five new board members this year, which has created an incredibly strong and highly functioning Board of Directors. While this is my last year as president, I look forward to one of the other board members leadership to ensure CCE of Ontario will continue to meet these diverse challenges effectively and efficiently this upcoming year.

Please read the pages of the Annual Report to fully understand and appreciate the work of our staff and volunteers.

Sandra Ebberts

Sandy Ebberts
President, Board of Directors
Cornell Cooperative Extension
of Ontario County



A Message from the Executive Director

2026 has been a year of growth, innovation, and exciting opportunities for Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ontario County. As our community continues to evolve, CCE remains committed to providing research-based education and practical solutions that strengthen families, youth, agriculture, natural resources, and local communities.

Through a collaborative partnership with Ontario County, Finger Lakes Community College, and NY Kitchen, and with generous support from the Sands Family Foundation, building has begun for a new culinary center on Lakeshore Drive in Canandaigua. CCE will have a dedicated, single office space within the new center and access to shared teaching kitchens that will allow us to expand food preservation classes, nutrition education, local food programming, 4-H Harvest NY demonstrations, and agricultural outreach. We look forward to creating innovative educational opportunities alongside FLCC and NY Kitchen and serving even more residents in this exciting new space!

.

This year we also successfully navigated New York State's bid purchasing process to acquire a new seven-passenger minivan. The vehicle arrived just in time to transport youth safely to and from 4-H Camp Bristol Hills, reducing transportation costs and increasing flexibility for our programs. In addition to safely and reliably transporting people, it has a large cargo space perfect for transporting program materials and equipment.

At 4-H Camp Bristol Hills, work continues on the highly anticipated pool replacement project. Important milestones have been reached, including securing NYSWIMS grant funding, selecting a pool design and construction partner, and completing initial engineering and site planning work. This project represents a major investment in the future of camp and will enhance the experience of thousands of youth who visit 4-H Camp Bristol Hills for years to come.

While these accomplishments are exciting, they are only possible because of the people who make our work successful. Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ontario County is fortunate to have an outstanding team of educators and staff, dedicated volunteers, an engaged Board of Directors, and strong community partners. It is a privilege to serve as Executive Director and to support the talented individuals who advance our mission. Thank you for your continued partnership, advocacy, and support. I invite you to read more about the accomplishments highlighted throughout this report and to celebrate another successful year of serving Ontario County together.

Moira (Mo) Tidball
Executive Director
Cornell Cooperative Extension
of Ontario County



Photo credit: Nina Piccini

THE MISSION OF CORNELL COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

is to enable people to improve their lives and communities through partnerships that put experience and research knowledge to work.



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Cover: *The Cornell Vegetable Program conducts research and field work with farmers who are working against herbicide resistant waterhemp. Photo by Mohammad Fahad, Cornell undergraduate student*

Facing page: *Groundbreaking for the new Culinary Center in Canandaigua, with representatives from Ontario County, Finger Lakes Community College, and NY Kitchen, and the Sands Family Foundation*

Above, from left: *Participants in the African Violet workshop; CCE Educator Adam Bacher brings baby chicks into the classroom for Geneva students; Holger Stave teaches CPR skills to campers in the First Aid certification class at 4-H Camp Bristol Hills.*

Cornell Cooperative Extension is an employer and educator recognized for providing equal program and employment opportunities in accordance with applicable laws.

Local Staff:

Russell Welser
Senior Resource Educator
Homes and Grounds

Jacob Maslyn
Agriculture Economic Development Educator

Emma Moore
Agriculture Literacy, Dairy in the Classroom Educator

Nancy Anderson
Operations Coordinator/ Senior Administrative Assistant

BY THE NUMBERS

Total Public Outreach
335 Programs

Total Instructional Hours
373 Hours

Volunteer Hours
985 Hours

People Reached:
7,578

As of the 2022 Census of Agriculture:

Number of farms: 815
Land in acres: 174,577

Milk produced:
91 farms have 27,459 cows
Total milk sales: $167,270,000

Total Value of Agricultural products sold: $293,630,000 (43% increase since 2017)

AGRICULTURE
Extension's Agricultural Impact

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ontario County Agriculture Team, in partnership with campus-based faculty and regional Cornell Cooperative Extension specialists, creates a useful and inclusive educational program which focuses on the current agricultural education needs of the community. Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ontario addresses issues that are relative to our local farmers. There are workshops on various topics for residents including gardening, school programs, and small farmers.

1,240 individuals received consultations through telephone, email, and in-person discussions. Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ontario County conducted 285 programs and reached 6,350 residents.

Other contacts:

- Rural Farm and Land Notes (monthly electronic newsletter): 812 individuals (an increase of 6) with an average open rate of 48%. This is up again this year by 1% from last year.
- Inside Dirt (gardening newsletter published monthly February to October): A total of 167 households receive each issue which includes 75 receive hard copies that are mailed and 92 receive their issue electronically. This includes Master Gardeners; Town and Village Halls; CCE Board of Directors; 1 Town supervisor that requested it; and Inside Dirt subscribers. The mailed issues include the 13 Ontario County Libraries that receive complimentary issues.
- Household Hazardous Waste: April 25, 2026, received 650 telephone contacts and September 19, 2026, received 700 telephone contacts. We usually get several people that call asking about other recycling events and we assist them with the information.
- Well Water Testing: consultations by phone and in person before and after testing. 117 completed the testing of their wells. 2% of the wells tested showed coliform bacteria was present.
- Agriculture in the Classroom/Dairy in the Classroom: reached 1,183 youth with 119 programs.

Well Water Testing Program

Most rural landowners rely on private wells for their water supply. It is recommended that these private water sources be tested yearly for potability (Coliform bacteria and E.coli). Testing your drinking water is the only way to make sure that your water remains suitable for household use. Also, consider testing if you notice changes in how your water looks, smells or tastes; you have made repairs to your well, pipes, or home structure or have changed your drinking water system; changes in your household/family, such as pregnancy, new babies, or changes in someone's overall health; or the well runs dry or the amount of water flowing from your fixtures changes.

To assist Ontario County residents with well water testing, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ontario County has the information on their website at cceontario.org. When residents google well water testing, our Cornell Cooperative Extension website is the first one listed.

Ontario County does not have a local NYS Certified Lab for getting well water tested. This makes it difficult for residents to have their well water tested. This service is important for many people, including checking their water at their home; selling or buying a house; testing a new well; small businesses that are processing food products, be it in a kitchen with a home exemption or a commercial 20C

license. This test for food processing is required by NYS Agriculture and Markets and New York State Health Department.

Cornell Cooperative Extension works with Lozier Environmental Consulting Inc. in Rochester. When people are looking for a well water test, we can assist them with the bottle (s), instruction sheet, and lab sheet. People can pick up the information Monday through Friday during office hours. Then they return their water sample and lab sheet along with payment on a Wednesday morning before 9:00 am. Lozier Labs picks up the samples. Lozier Labs also offers other tests for well water such as hardness, lead, and nitrate/nitrites, and more.

Reporting results between October 1, 2025 and September 30, 2026.
There were 117 well water tests completed during that period. Most were absent for Coliform Bacteria and negative for E.coli. The few that tested present for Coliform Bacteria did a retest after taking remedial action such as shock chlorination of the well and the results were negative. On January 1, 2026. Lozier Labs started paying a donation to Cornell Cooperative Extension Ontario County based on the number of samples. A check arrives quarterly.

Conservation Field Days



Victoria Barnsbee and Cheryl Avery, Ontario County Master Gardeners presenting "Leave No Trace".

Conservation Field Days is a collaborative program between Ontario County Soil and Water Conservation District and Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ontario County, with a target audience of Ontario County sixth graders. The educational goal is to provide an outdoor experience to expose and increase awareness and understanding among the students of their natural surroundings and environmental issues. This year the event was held on September 23 and 24 at 4-H Camp Bristol Hills.

There continues to be increasing environmental concerns and issues that affect our daily lives. Such things as climate change, food safety, waste disposal, invasive species, and





Top:Russell Welser, Sr. Resource Educator presenting "Managing New York Fur Bearing Animals". Bottom: Students examining a fox fur.

management of natural resources to name a few. Youth and the public in general have become increasingly more distant regarding the knowledge and understanding of their personal and community environment and how they impact that environment.

All schools within Ontario County are invited and receive direct mailings with follow-up calls. 14 environmental topics were offered on Wednesday and on Thursday there were 12 topics. 34 presenters were involved providing outdoor classroom instruction. The students moved from station to station every 20 minutes for a total of 6 stations each day.

Seven schools participated with a total of 482 students. The program provides a different learning atmosphere and experience. Students were exposed to topics that

they would otherwise likely not be exposed to with a clear increase in awareness and understanding of their actual and environmental surroundings. Topics presented were Ticks; Wildlife Tracking and ID; Tree Growth and Tree ID; Invasives; Recycling and Waste Reduction; Exploring the Pond; Wild About Birds; Your Neighborhood Birds; Managing NY Fur Bearing Animals; Leave No Trace; Beaver Ecology; and Tree Seeds and Wildlife.

Wegmans sponsored the volunteers' lunches on the days of the event.

Cornell Cooperative Extension Cut Flower Program Work Team

The Cornell Cooperative Extension State Cut Flower Work Team held its Third Cut Flower Conference in July in the Mohawk Valley Region. The goal is to move the conference around to different regions each year. The team continued a monthly one hour long Cut Flower webinar series. The range of participation is 40-60 individuals for each live webinar. Folks can later see these presentations on the Cut Flower YouTube Channel. Horticultural Educators from Ontario and Yates Counties offered two regional programs. Topics covered in the December 2, 2025 class were on pricing cut flowers and the production of ranunculus with 10 in attendance. The second program was a twilight meeting with an emphasis on pest management that was held on August 12, 2026 with 37 people in attendance. Additional programs are in the planning.



Participants learning how to divide and grow African Violets with instruction from Master Gardener Susie Nettleon.

Recycling Education in Ontario County

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ontario County coordinated and marketed two educational collection events with the Ontario County Department of Sustainability and Solid Waste Management throughout the year. Residents of Ontario County have a need to dispose of household hazardous waste in an environmentally responsible way to recycle vs. putting it in the landfill. This goal was achieved by holding two Household Hazardous Waste Collection Events.

Clean Harbors Company was the collector of hazardous waste materials. Hazardous Waste Collection Events collected all types of paints, stains, pesticides, old gasoline, oil, automotive products, and household cleaning supplies. With the PaintCare Program, all paints are separated out from the other hazardous waste materials and separate numbers are recorded.

When people call to register for Household Hazardous Waste Events, we answer questions about where to dispose of items such as propane tanks, dehumidifiers, fire extinguishers, and other miscellaneous items that are not accepted at the event.

The Household Hazardous Waste Events were April 25, 2026, and September 19, 2026:

- At the April 25, 2026, there were 563 households participating with 25,377 pounds (12.69 Tons) of household hazardous waste This event was held at the Ontario County Landfill. Residents per townships: Bristol- 15; Canadice-6; Canandaigua-67; East Bloomfield-37; Farmington-39; Geneva-37; Gorham-18, Hopewell-23; Manchester-41, Naples-14; Phelps-47;



Household Hazardous Waste Collection Event on September 19 at Town of Farmington Highway Facility.

Richmond-19; Seneca-18; South Bristol-14; Victor-58; West Bloomfield-9; City of Canandaigua-44 and City of Geneva-57.

- At the September 19, 2026, event there were 600 households participating with 31,784 pounds (15.89 Tons) of household hazardous waste. The event was held at the Town of Farmington Highway Facility. Residents per townships: Bristol- 8; Canadice-8; Canandaigua-90; East Bloomfield-32; Farmington-90; Geneva-20; Gorham-21, Hopewell-13; Manchester-48, Naples-8; Phelps-32; Richmond-19; Seneca-5; South Bristol-16; Victor-111; West Bloomfield-13; City of Canandaigua-33 and City of Geneva-30.
- These events were a partnership with Ontario County Department of Sustainability and Solid Waste Management and Casella Waste Management Services.

These events provide a much needed, way of environmentally disposing of household hazardous waste

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Jane Sheetz Clark

What motivated you to become a Master Gardener for CCE Ontario?
I have always been an avid perennial flower gardener. After retirement I was looking to broaden my knowledge.



What makes this a meaningful use of my time?
I have been concerned that today's children are not eating enough fruits and vegetables. I made it my mission to introduce fruits and vegetables from the Farmer's Market for children at a young age. I have a little herb spinner. We would take turns washing the berries, etc. and spinning them out. I have had success with all kinds of fruit, berries, apples, peaches, nectarines, and melons.

Then come the veggies-which can be a hard sell. Peas-shell peas, sugar peas, edible pea pods. A story of the Princess and the Peas by Hans Christian Andersen-sleeping on a pile of 20 mattresses, which came with a question from a 4 year old What if she falls out of bed? We tasted broccoli with "dippies" (Ranch dressing). 12 out of 16 loved it going back for more. Read Monsters Don't Eat Broccoli. Everyone decided they weren't monsters.

I always brought a bouquet of flowers from my garden to pass around. We smelled, compared the types of leaves-color variegated, succulent, etc.

Sprouted paperwhites planted in glass marbles by the children. Some plants come from bulbs others from seeds. Brought in seeds from a variety of plants to take apart and check out. The children were very engaged-all wanted seeds to take home. Watching the paperwhites grow was fascinating! We also read books by wildlife photographer Stranger in the Woods and listened to bird songs from Backyard Birding Guide. Fed the birds with pinecones rolled in lard and peanut butter and coated with bird seed.

What is the biggest personal benefit you receive as a volunteer for CCE Ontario?
It brings joy to work with children to see them respond to previously unfamiliar foods, plants and birds. We have so much fun!

What is the most memorable accomplishment of your volunteer experience?
The parents always loved when I came in. Miss Cheryl would keep them informed sending photos of what we were doing! Photos of using 2 cherry pitters and eating tart cherries was quite humorous. The kids helped each other to make certain the pits came out before tasting.

Brought in big hosta leaves to talk about plants more famous for leaves than flowers. Of course when being photographed-lets hid behind the leaves!

And thanks so much to Russ and Nancy for all their support!

that otherwise would end up in the landfill, down the sink, or dumped on the land.

A message from one of the participants at the spring Household Hazardous Waste Collection Event: I want to thank the many volunteers who worked in the rain last Saturday (April 25, 2026) to collect our hazardous waste products. What a wonderful service-From my initial contact with Nancy Anderson to the couple (Russ Welser and Nancy) who greeted us at the recycling facility, to the people (Clean Harbor employees) who removed contents from vehicles .. a sincere thank you to all. This was our first time at the event and it was amazing to see such teamwork, friendliness and cooperation. With sincere appreciation.

Summary: Total Household Hazardous Waste (including PaintCare) was 28.58 Tons diverted from the landfill.

Sustainable Landscapes-Horticulture Program: Master Gardeners

Master Gardener Volunteers are a critical component to this program in extending knowledge about ecological and environmentally sound gardening practices. Practices that impact food safety and nutrition, improve protection of water quality and conservation practices, and increase implementation of integrated pest management practices.

There are currently 41 Master Gardener Volunteers in Ontario County. They volunteered for 985 hours, provided 142 consultations, offered 38 educational programs that reached1,100 adults and 1755 youth and provided 55 hours of instruction. Many Master Gardeners continued their horticultural training and knowledge through in-service opportunities with an accumulation of 190 hours. The Master Gardener plant sales generated $3,101. $716 of that went to 4-H Camp Bristol Hills to provide financial assistance for youth to attend camp. Master Gardeners



Master Gardener Plant Sale, May 9, 2026.

donated $2,000 for the 4-H camp pool project. This left the Master Gardeners with $1,101 to support their ongoing programs.

Key programs for the Master Gardeners this year were the Spring Garden Symposium, Winter Webinar Series, Conservation Field Days, Fun on the Farm, Library Programs, workshops, tableting events, Spring and Fall Plant Sales.

In addition, the Home and Community Horticulture Educator did 13 programs for various libraries, schools, and clubs. These programs reached 203 adults and 397 youth. Provided 603 consultations (phone, email, and in-person).

The gardening newsletter *Inside Dirt* reached 167 households which includes the 13 libraries in Ontario County that receive a complimentary issue each month. Inside Dirt is a subscription that is for nine issues, February to October with gardening information. It is offered as an electronic issue that is emailed or a hard copy that is mailed.

In total the Sustainable Landscape-Horticulture Program reached 1,336 adults and 2,139 youth with 68 hours of instruction.

Residents of Ontario County need to understand and support horticultural management practices which improve the ecological soundness of the environment at home, in the community, and in the marketplace. Collectively the practices of home gardeners have a potentially significant impact on their environment and that of their community. Home gardens are centers for fresh fruits and vegetables to supplement market produce, as well as a source of produce to be preserved for later consumption.

Pesticide Applicators Training

Educational efforts in core pesticide training resulted in 15 agricultural producers from Ontario County receiving New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Private Pesticide Certification and recertification training in February 2026.

Statewide agricultural producers face a multitude of pest pressures (weeds, insects, and diseases) in growing crops. Chemical pesticides are a vital tool in the management of such pests and may require the use of a restricted pesticide. Crop losses can be significant without the use of these products. To purchase and apply restricted pesticides the agricultural producer must be a New York Certified Private Pesticide Applicator. Such individuals must recertify every five years after receiving their license. Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ontario County agricultural educator provided a series of four classes each 2.5 hours of instruction over 4 weeks for Ontario County. Training included pesticide laws and regulations; mixing and calibration of pesticides; environmental considerations; how to read and understand a pesticide label, first aid, how to use and maintain personal protective equipment; spray drift prevention, pesticide disposal and storage; pesticide formulations and toxicity; pesticide exposure and risk along with much more. 5 agricultural producers received recertification credits and 10 took the DEC pesticide exams (Core exam and category exam).

During the year Cornell Cooperative Extension resource educator responded to 30 inquiries related to pesticide certification and recertification.

Agriculture Tour for Supervisors

Farming and agricultural businesses are vital to our local economy and to the rural character of Ontario County. Every few years we try to highlight these enterprises and showcase the important work they do. This year Jacob Maslyn organized a tour of agriculture for our new county supervisors and any partnering agencies we work with were invited to attend. We were able to connect with farmers across different industries and backgrounds. Our first stop was the Ontario Produce Auction to understand the way farmers utilize the produce auction and how important it is to many other businesses throughout the county. We also visited dairy farmer Donny Jensen at Lawnhurst farm to talk about cows and manure repurposing with their anaerobic digester. After a quick lunch at Agri-Tech with Sage Gerling, our final stop took us to the Canandaigua Stockyard to see the auction barn. We chatted with Randall Weaver and the Ontario County Soil and Water Conservation District to discuss the importance of having the auction barn in our county, and some partnerships they have had with the Ontario County Soil and Water Conservation District. Overall, the tour was a success and the supervisors that made time to be there were very thankful for the opportunity. Many even attended the auction barns later in the week when there were some auctions in progress.

Adult Tractor and Chainsaw workshop

Accidents with tractors and chainsaws represent maybe some of the most common emergency room visits for the DIY homeowner. These tools are very accessible for many homeowners, but education to safe operating techniques and courses to increase homeowners' confidence with these tools are not always as readily available. Over many conversations and listening to the needs of the community we decided it was a good opportunity to host a tractor and chainsaw safety day specifically for adults. American Equipment was a great partner and agreed to hosting the workshop in their showroom on a Saturday morning in June. Instructors from New York Center for Agriculture Medicine & Health came out to educate on safe operating techniques with tractors and chainsaws. Some demonstrations of safe cutting methods with chainsaws and proper safety gear was shown to participants. Overall, many came out to listen and learn and we hope to collaborate more in the future on safety trainings like this for adults and farmers in the region.





Top: County supervisors and partner agencies joined Jacob Maslyn for a tour of some of the unique agricultural enterprises in Ontario County.

Bottom: American Equipment leads a workshop on chainsaw safety, operation, and maintenance.

AG IN THE CLASSROOM

Ag in the Classroom programming in Ontario County is growing! Over the course of the 2025-2026 school year, educators reached nearly 2,000 students with curriculum designed to highlight local agriculture delivered with seasonality. Through participation in the Rooted in Learning Farm to School Grant, Ag Literacy Week, and our third year working through the Dairy in the Classroom grant, we were able to share engaging and educational lessons, activities, and taste tests with youth in all 9 Ontario County school districts! (Bloomfield, Canandaigua, Honeoye, Geneva, Marcus Whitman, Midlakes, Naples, Red Jacket, and Victor). Districts participated in ways that worked with their schedules and existing curriculum, and that looked different for almost every school.

STEAM TAKEOVERS

For Naples and Marcus Whitman, partnering with the STEAM classes made the most sense. At Marcus Whitman's Valley Campus, students Pre-K through 2nd Grade participated in 2 lessons, one in the fall and one in the spring. Students learned about the lifecycle of pumpkins, a bit about the local dairy industry, and enjoyed Pumpkin Pie in a Bag in the fall. In the spring we supplied the classes with numerous apples of different colors and varieties for them to explore with all 5 senses, this sensory activity was accompanied by a virtual field trip to an apple orchard where youth learned more about the hard work farmers put in to get fresh apples handpicked and available for eating.

New York Agriculture in the Classroom

In Naples, Pre-K students learned about machines on the farm and built model tractors. Kindergarten children learned how to care for plants and started sunflower seeds. First graders explored sustainable practices on dairy farms and created "litter bugs" from recycled materials. Second graders learned about plant life cycles and built model sunflowers. Third graders heard the story of Dr. Temple Grandin and tried their hands at building cattle chutes inspired by her discoveries. Fourth graders learned about the many corn crops grown and harvested in New York State, how they are used, and made mini corn cob keychains to take home. Fifth graders played "The Bean Game," rolling dice to see whether their bean farms would succeed, while sixth graders tried their hands at cheese mongering by sampling six different varieties of cheese. Through hands-on lessons, activities, games, and snacks, 270 Naples students became better acquainted with agriculture and the important role it plays in their community.

Left: Marcus Whitman students loved trying pumpkin pie from a bag! Middle: Canandaigua Kindergarten students practicing shopping at the Farmer's Market. Right: Ag inthe Classroom brings new flavors to Marcus Whitman STEAM students.









Students get creative with naming the chicks they worked so hard to hatch.

GRADE LEVEL PARTNERSHIPS
For most schools, the best way to access Ag in the Classroom programming was through grade level partnerships, where in a day or two an educator would visit all the classes in the grade with the same lesson. At Midlakes, 1st graders participated in the Harvest of the Month lessons, where every month we learned about the local foods that were being served in their cafeteria such as butternut squash, sweet corn, and spring greens. In Canandaigua grades Pre-K though 2nd received a few lessons each throughout the seasons, spanning topics such as buying local by shopping at the Farmer's Market, farm animal lifecycles, Christmas trees, cranberry bogs, dairy farm sustainability practices, and more!

INCUBATION AND EMBRYOLOGY
For the 3rd year, classes have had the ability to try their hand at farming in the classroom by incubating chicken eggs. Through a month-long unit, students share the responsibility of maintaining an incubator, setting up a brooder, and caring for a clutch of freshly hatched chicks in their classroom. Various grade levels participate, and the accompanying lessons are tailored to the classroom they are delivered in. Canandaigua Pre-K participated for the first time this year as did Geneva's Ag students, and repeat participants included classrooms in Midlakes 1st Grade, Marcus Whitman, and Victor 3rd Grade. This unit is always memorable for youth, and they often remember educator Emma as "The Chicken Lady."

Food Preservation Programming

Over the past year, CCE Ontario's food preservation program has held various programs for the public and added two new certified Master Food Preserver Volunteers, Alyssa Hooper and Sandy Ebberts. Programs were delivered in house, at New York Kitchen, Wood Library, Naples Library, and popular topics included quick pickles and general canning strategies for both hot water bath and pressure canning. We house a pressure canner tester in the office, and Ontario County residents are always welcome to come in to have their dial gauge pressure canners tested. It is recommended to test your dial gauge annually to ensure accurate readings!

One unique partnership was with the Naples Teacher Wellness program, where a series of food preservation topics were held on school grounds throughout the year. After school, aspiring food preservers met in the high school Family and Consumer Science room to get hands on practice. Topics included making fresh mozzarella cheese, pressure canning soups, making kombucha, and fermenting sauerkraut. Each class in the series provided participants with a sample to enjoy or a jar to take home.



School teachers in Naples show the cheese they made during their Wellness Program.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Log Grown Mushrooms

On May 2, 2026 seventeen individuals (5 males and 12 females) attended the mushroom workshop. They learned about three different log grown mushrooms (Shiitake, Oyster, and Lion's Mane). Instruction provided information on which tree species were best for the different mushrooms, when to harvest logs, steps and procedures with inoculating logs, production practices, and harvesting considerations. Participants inoculated 2 logs (1 Shiitake and 1 oyster) to take home with them. 47% of the attendees stated the workshop exceeded their expectations, 40% stating that it met expectations, and 13% stated that it somewhat met expectations. Their interest in growing mushrooms was 72% for hobby/personal use and 28% was for small scale production/sales less than 100 logs. When it comes to knowledge gained 505 state great amount, 43% moderate amount and 7% stated slight. As a result of this workshop 88% gained a new skill.

Biochar 101 Workshop

You may have heard of biochar and its many benefits when added to your soil, but just what is it and what are the benefits to using it. Biochar isn't something new it was developed by pre-Columbian indigenous populations in the Amazon Basin (mainly modern-day Brazil) over 2,500 years ago. Did you know you can make your own biochar at home from different types of biomasses such as woody plant material and even grasses. Sonnenberg Gardens and Cornell Cooperative Extension hosted a free workshop on Saturday April 18, 2026 from 10:00 am-Noon. The workshop was held at Sonnenberg Gardens, 250 Gibson St. Canandaigua NY. The instructor was Kathleen Draper who has been involved in the biochar industry for the past 15 years as an educator, researcher, and consultant. Kathleen did a live demonstration on how to make biochar that you can do the same at home and explained just what it is, its many uses and how biochar improves your soil and impacts climate change. 17 individuals attended.

Backyard Maple Production

Thirteen adults and five youth attended the Backyard Maple Workshop on Saturday, February 28, 2026 at Cornell Cooperative Extension Ontario County. Participants learned all aspects of producing maple syrup by watching a series of short videos that were produced by the Maple Department at Cornell University. This was followed by a short question and answer session. Various pieces of equipment were discussed and passed around for all to see. Folks got to taste maple sap that comes directly from the tree and the finished product maple syrup. The group moved outside for a demonstration on how to tap a tree. Handouts were provided with additional information on selecting/identifying maple trees, when to tap your trees, boiling down the sap and uses of maple syrup for more than just pancakes.

Foraging Wild Edibles

Foraging for wild edibles used to be a common practice. Fresh greens in the spring were a welcome change from pickled, dried and canned vegetables. Foraging supplemented the family meals throughout the growing season, and some were even stored/preserved for winter use. With advances in refrigeration and the development of the freezer, the practice of foraging became less of a necessity. Folks began to rely on the local store more and more for their food supply. Today there is a growing interest in foraging for wild edibles. For some it is the learning experience of being able to identify plants and having the knowledge to know which ones are edible. For others it is the culinary experience creating and tasting



Preparing logs for mushroom spawn.



Participants in the Foraging Workshop sampling wild edible plant dishes.



Pumpkin Smash event at the County Fairgrounds.

dishes from wild edibles. While others it is to experience a living history. On the evening of April 9, 2026, twenty-one individuals attended the Forging Wild Edibles Workshop taught by Cornell Cooperative Extension educator, Russ Welser. This was a power point presentation on various wild edible plants, how to identify them, when best to harvest, what parts of the plant are edible, where you might find them and how to prepare them. Russ reminded everyone that with any new food there is the possibility of an allergic reaction and eating only a small amount until you know how your body will react. There was a short discussion on harvesting sustainability. Following the presentation, participants had the opportunity to taste ten different cooked wild edibles.

Wild Harvest Table

Executive Director, Mo Tidball, is part of a Multistate Conservation Grant research project in partnership with the National Deer Association and USDA's Division of Human Nutrition. This research is examining the nutritional composition of white-tailed deer meat, providing scientific data about a food source that is important to many Ontario County residents. The findings will contribute to a better understanding of venison's nutritional value and support education around sustainable, locally sourced foods. Venison also plays an important role in helping address food insecurity through donations to local food pantries. She has worked for over 17 years in this program area with CCE and Cornell University, relating the nutrition of wild game and fish meat to wildlife conservation efforts and food security across NYS. To learn more about wild game and fish nutrition, recipes, and the research visit www.wildharvesttable.com.

Pumpkin Smash, Compost Bash

According to an analysis of the Ontario County landfill, 32% of the waste entering the landfill is compostable organic material. This presents an opportunity for education centered around waste reduction. Seeing an opportunity and wasting no creative energy, Jacob got to work.
The idea was to create an educational event centered around composting and include some fun for the whole family. In partnership with Ontario County Department of Sustainability & Solid Waste Management, we connected the event with their Annual Pumpkin Collection Days. Smashing implements were created and safety plans executed to conceive the first ever Pumpkin Smash, Compost Bash in Ontario County. An additional bit of fun was added by inviting our local robotics clubs to create robots to throw, or smash pumpkins.
Overall, we had about 100 people turn out to smash their pumpkins and see the robotic clubs' creations. Partnering organizations and other staff members joined to do education like Ontario Soil and Water, Master Gardeners, and Ag in the Classroom educator Emma Moore. This event would not have been possible without the help of volunteers and donations from local businesses, thank you to all those who made it possible.

Venison Meatballs

(Serves 4)

- 1 lb. ground venison
- 2 eggs, stirred
- 6 T. grated parmesan cheese
- ½ cup breadcrumbs or quick oats
- 1 or 2 T. olive oil
- ¼ cup chopped fresh parsley
- 1 T. Italian seasonings (thyme, oregano, basil)
- 1 clove minced garlic
- ¼ cup minced onion (optional)
- ½ tsp. salt
- ½ tsp. black pepper

1. In a large bowl mix all ingredients. Form into 1½ -inch meatballs.
2. Lightly oil a large, heavy skillet or use a non-stick sauté pan and cook the meatballs over medium heat until evenly browned and cooked through, turning frequently. About 15 minutes. If you prefer a different cooking method, the meatballs can be baked in a preheated oven set at 375°F for 25-30 minutes or until cooked through.
3. Serve with your favorite sauce, such as marinara or BBQ.

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 3 oz.
Servings Per Container 4

Amount Per Serving	
Calories 290	Calories from Fat 110
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 12g	**18%**
Saturated Fat 4g	**20%**
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 195mg	**65%**
Sodium 390mg	**16%**
Total Carbohydrate 9g	**3%**
Dietary Fiber 1g	**4%**
Sugars 1g	
Protein 34g	

Vitamin A 10% • Vitamin C 10%
Calcium 15% • Iron 30%

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:

	Calories:	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g
Saturated Fat	Less than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g

Calories per gram:
Fat 9 • Carbohydrate 4 • Protein 4

Wild Harvest Table provides recipes with nutrition information, using meats harvested from the wild.

CORNELL VEGETABLE PROGRAM

Cornell Vegetable Program

Julie Kikkert
Vegetable Specialist, Team Leader

Elizabeth Buck
Vegetable Specialist
Fresh market vegetables, weed science, soil health

Robert Hadad
Vegetable Specialist
Farm food safety, organic, marketing, fresh market vegetables

Christy Hoepting
Vegetable Specialist
Onions, cabbage, broccoli, garlic, pesticide management

Margie Lund
Vegetable Specialist
Potatoes, dry beans, post-harvest handling

Judson Reid
Vegetable Specialist
Greenhouse & tunnel production, produce auctions, fresh market vegetables

Lori Koenick
Extension Support Specialist

Camila Ichazo
Field Technician

Angela Ochterski
Administrative Assistant
Enrollment, sponsorships, VegEdge production

Summer Technicians
Joanie Gabalski
Brenna Fitzpatrick

In 2026, the CCE Cornell Vegetable Program regional agriculture team provided the expertise of 7 vegetable specialists to commercial vegetable farms in Ontario County and beyond. The team covers crops from asparagus to zucchini and conducts research and education in the areas of variety evaluation, pest management, farm food safety, cultural practices and market development.

In March, dry bean growers gathered for the annual NYS Dry Bean Meeting and Cutting Event held in Geneva, NY. In the morning, attendees were encouraged to attend this year's cutting event, where canned samples of the 50 varieties grown in the 2025 dry bean variety trial were opened and rated, allowing growers and industry members the opportunity to see how different dry bean varieties look after processing and canning. Growers mingled over lunch, and in the afternoon the annual dry bean meeting was held and growers heard industry updates as well as research updates from Cornell and CCE on on-going dry bean research funded by the Dry Bean Endowment. This year's presentations covered topics including a growing season overview and market update, the effect of tillage and nitrogen on root rot, western bean cutworm management, breeding and evaluation, dry bean variety trial updates, and incorporating beans into NYS schools. Around 30 people attended this year's meeting and cutting event.

The Cornell Vegetable Program continued to work closely with the Ontario Produce Auction and its farmer-based education committee. The Cornell Vegetable Program conducted a winter educational meeting at the auction where agriculture industry experts discussed pest management topics, greenhouse phytosanitary inspections, the benefits of cover crops and two grower panels focused on pest management. Around 70 growers attended the winter meeting.

Auction growers gained further skills in fresh market vegetable production at the Vegetable Pest and Cultural Management Field Meeting held July 28th at Lavern Weaver's farm in Canandaigua, NY which featured a field walk to identify weeds, insects and diseases and a discussion of management options.





Left: Kidney bean varieties on display. Center: Beets for sale at the auction. Right: Asparagus at the auction.

FINGER LAKES GRAPE PROGRAM

The Finger Lakes Grape Program (FLGP) serves the grape growers of Ontario County by providing sound, scientifically based information to help them to improve productivity and solve problems in their vineyards.

One of the most challenging disease issues for many growers is the development of late-season rots that infect grape clusters just before harvest. In some years, these rots can cost growers more than $1000/acre and happen after most of the costs of growing have already been incurred by the grower. The rots are promoted by injuries to grape berries as they start to ripen and can be rapidly spread between clusters by fruit flies. Unfortunately, the standard treatment of antimicrobial and insecticide materials has become less effective due to the development of insecticide resistance in fruit fly populations.

The FLGP has been testing several potential treatment options that would improve control of bunch rots while reducing growers' reliance on insecticides. These have included alternative techniques such as removing leaves from the fruit zone prior to bloom, applying calcium products to see if they strengthen berry skins to reduce splitting, or even the use of UV-C light applications. We have also been participating in a trial with scientists at Cornell AgriTech to test a new weather-based model for bunch rot development which would give growers better guidance on when to spray materials to maximize their efficacy and minimize their use. If any of these treatments are successful and we can reduce bunch rot damage by 30-50%, Ontario County grape growers could save approximately $300-700/acre in highly susceptible varieties such as Riesling, Pinot noir, Marquette and Vignoles.



Bunch rots can cause significant crop and revenue losses for growers. The FLGP is testing different techniques to reduce those losses. Photo by Hans Walter-Peterson.

Finger Lakes Grape Program

Hans Walter-Peterson
Viticulture Specialist/Team Leader

Brittany Griffin
Team Coordinator

Ellen Coyne
Project Field Technician

NORTHWEST NEW YORK
DAIRY, LIVESTOCK AND FIELD CROPS PROGRAM

Poultry Processing Workshop



Caption Participants learn with hands on experience of how to process chickens.

The Poultry Processing Workshop brought together current and aspiring poultry producers for a hands-on learning experience focused on poultry processing, food safety, and regulatory requirements. This event was made possible with funding from USDA/NIFA, Northeast Extension Risk Management Education, Southwest and Northwest NY Dairy, Livestock and Field Crops Teams and CCE Sullivan and CCE Ontario. Participants had the opportunity to learn from industry professionals and Cornell Cooperative Extension educators. The workshop was designed to provide practical knowledge and hands-on experience that can help producers improve efficiency, product quality, and consumer confidence.

Throughout the workshop, attendees explored the step-by-step poultry processing process, including bird handling, processing techniques, sanitation procedures, and proper packaging methods. Interactive demonstrations allowed participants to observe equipment, ask questions, and gain a better understanding of the skills needed for successful on-farm or small-scale poultry processing operations.

In addition to technical training, the workshop provided valuable networking opportunities for producers to connect with fellow farmers, extension staff, and industry partners. By combining education, hands-on experience, and peer-to-peer learning, the CCE Ontario Poultry Processing Workshop equipped participants with resources and confidence to strengthen their poultry enterprises and meet the needs of today's consumers.

NWNY Dairy, Livestock and Field Crops Team

John Hanchar
Farm Business

Ashley Knapp
Administrative Assistant

Jodi Letham
Field Crops and Soils

Amy Pyra
Small Farms, Livestock

Margaret Quaassdorff
Dairy Management

Mike Stanyard
Field Crops & Team Leader



Drone picture over waterhemp research plot.
Photo credit: Mohammad Fahad, Cornell undergraduate student

The Continuous War Against Herbicide Resistant Waterhemp

Since its first discovery in 2014 just south of the town of Lyons in Wayne County, Common Waterhemp populations have been identified in all ten counties in NWNY and in 26 counties across the state. Local waterhemp populations are currently resistant to glyphosate and three other herbicide modes of action. This puts more selection pressure on herbicides that are still effective which could lead to the loss of these tools quickly.

This summer we were able to collaborate with Cornell University weed scientist, Vipan Kumar, on two herbicide research trials in our region to look at herbicide efficacy on waterhemp in soybean. A major focus was on how to best utilize our most effective herbicides to maximize their efficacy long term. These trials looked at different combinations of herbicides, multiple applications and effective timings and even identifying the most efficient rates.

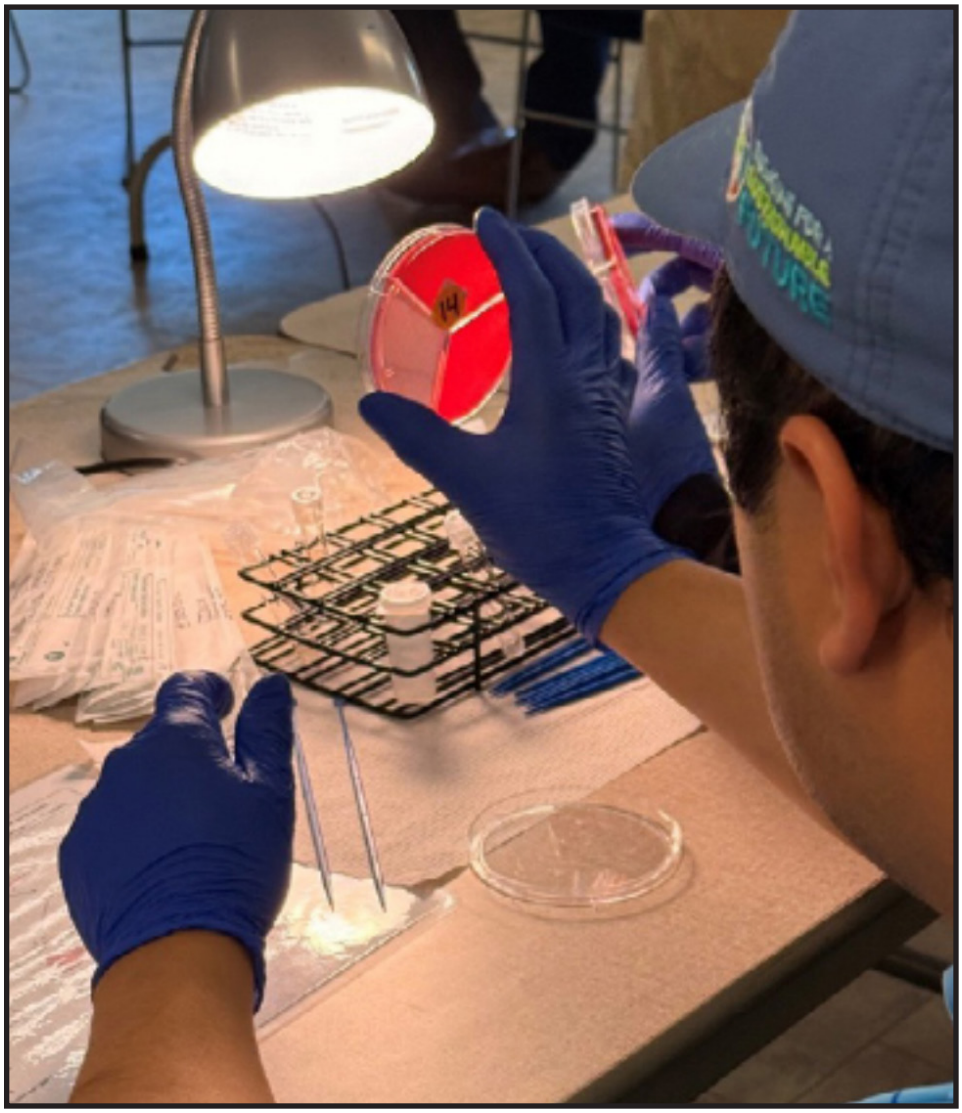
A field day was held at the plot in the town of Geneva on August 27 with a walking tour of soybean herbicide treatments to demonstrate which spray programs and timings were the most effective in managing waterhemp. Twenty growers, consultants and industry reps joined us for the tour. This walking tour was a very effective method of showcasing the value of a two-pass system by utilizing residual products early and following up with effective post products. The tour provided invaluable hands-on training for selecting effective herbicide programs on soybean acres to prevent economic losses.

On-Farm Milk Culture Workshop

On-farm milk culture is a diagnostic test performed on a dairy farm to identify the type of bacteria causing mastitis in an individual cow's milk. This technique is a herd management tool that helps producers and veterinarians make informed treatment decisions. The ability to correctly identify a mastitis-causing organism is key to selecting the correct antibiotic or therapy to use, helping a sick cow recover quicker, and using resources efficiently and effectively on-farm.

In June, in collaboration with Quality Milk Production Services (QMPS), the NWNY hosted a workshop for farm employees to do a deep dive into their on-farm culture program. Eighteen participants from 7 farms met at the CCE Ontario County office and learned about common organisms that may result from a cultured milk sample. They were given plates with colony growth as examples to view the differences in pathogen colony appearance and went over techniques to properly plate their own samples for the clearest results.

They learned how to hypothesize which organism they may be dealing with, ways to confirm, and protocols and considerations to discuss with their farm vet and QMPS consultants. Participants also received a laminated copy of a decision tree to easily identify cultured species, as well as tri-plate test procedures, and documents to record results. Participants formed direct connections with QMPS staff, and some farms are planning to expand and improve their on-farm milk quality with continued support of QMPS services.



Participants learn through this workshop about their own on-farm milk culture practices.

BY THE NUMBERS

Total 4-H Clubs: *20*

Total Members in 4-H After School Clubs: *61*

Total 4-H Membership: *234*

Number of Volunteers: *56*

Number of 4-H Volunteer Hours: *9,050*

Number of Camp Volunteer Hours: *2,265*

4-H Camper Weeks *680*

In 2026, 4-H youth projects involved horticulture, food and nutrition, science, textile, robotics, rocketry, woodworking and animal science. Hallmark educational events of the 4-H Club Program include Harvest Food Fest, Public Presentations, Tractor Safety, and the Ontario County Fair.

Local Staffing:

Sarah Wilhelm
4-H Club Resource Educator

Jim Hooper
Camp Resource Educator

Amy Pyra
Program Educator

Taryn Ressue
Program Educator

Michele Albrecht
Administrative Assistant, 4-H Camp

Amelia Devolder
Administrative Assistant, 4-H Parenting Coordinator

Adam Bacher
North Street School 4-H Facilitator

Jessica Middleton
Camp Director

4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
Impact of Positive Youth Development

The mission of the 4-H Youth Development Program is to create a supportive learning environment to provide positive youth development for youth and families from diverse backgrounds to help them achieve their fullest potential and become capable, competent, and caring citizens. The 4-H program accepts youth ages 5-19 and provides a variety of project areas to explore including STEM, Animal Science, Communications, Healthy Living, Visual and Expressive Arts, and Workforce Development. Delivery modes include 4-H clubs, 4-H camp, and a 4-H afterschool program in Geneva Elementary School.

A "New Beginning" for 4-H Textile Program



4-H youth at the 2026 Textile Review.

The 4-H Textile Program in Ontario County is experiencing a vibrant resurgence, marked by a successful event held on May 2 at Clark Meadows Assisted Living. This year's 4-H Textile Evaluation and Fashion Revue brought together youth participants, families, and community members for a celebration of creativity, skill-building, and connection across generations.

The 4-H Fashion Revue is a long-standing educational component of the 4-H clothing and textiles program, designed to help youth develop skills in constructing, selecting, and presenting textile projects while building confidence, poise, and personal expression. Often considered a culminating experience, the revue allows participants to model or present their work and receive feedback on craftsmanship, fit, and overall presentation.

This year's showcase highlighted the diversity of textile learning in 4-H. In addition to clothing items, youth exhibited a wide range of projects including pillows, blankets, table runners, and latch hook creations—demonstrating that the textile program extends far beyond garment construction. Each of the nine participants presented their textile projects, demonstrating dedication, craftsmanship, and personal growth through the 4-H program.

In preparation for the event, participants had opportunities to built their skills

through a beginner crochet series and an apron sewing workshop. The 4-H program hopes to expand these hands-on learning opportunities in the future by offering additional sewing workshops and establishing the Textile Showcase as an annual tradition in Ontario County.

Residents of Clark Meadows Assisted Living played an integral role in the event, offering encouragement, feedback, and enthusiasm as they interacted with the youth. The intergenerational connections created a warm and welcoming atmosphere, making the event more than just an evaluation—it became a shared community experience.

"This truly felt like a new beginning for our textile program," notes 4-H Educator, Sarah Wilhelm. "The energy, participation, and community support highlight the importance of programs like 4-H in fostering life skills, creativity, and meaningful relationships."

The success of this year's event signals renewed momentum for the 4-H Textile Program in Ontario County, with hopes of continued growth and expanded opportunities for youth in the years ahead.

Ontario County 4-H Youth Explore State Government Through Capital Days





Four Ontario County 4-H members had the opportunity to experience New York State government firsthand through the New York State 4-H Capital Days program in May. Fernando, Elena, Mason, and Mackenzie traveled to Albany, where they joined youth from across the state for an immersive civic engagement experience.

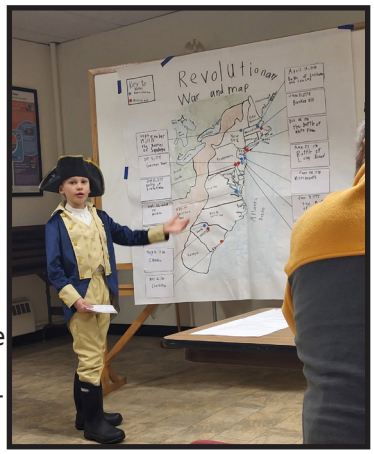
Capital Days is a statewide leadership and citizenship program designed to help young people better understand how government works and how citizens can make a difference in their communities. During their visit, participants toured the State Capital, learned about the legislative process, met with elected officials, and explored the many ways individuals can engage in public service and civic leadership.

The trip was made possible through generous support from the Tractor Supply Paper Clover Campaign, which raises funds to support local 4-H youth development opportunities. These contributions help provide young people with enriching experiences that foster leadership, citizenship, and personal growth.

A special thank you goes to volunteer chaperone Lisa Grefrath for accompanying the delegation and helping make this educational experience possible. Her support ensured that Ontario County youth were able to fully participate in this unique opportunity.

Fifty Youth Participate in Public Presentations

Many people say public speaking is one of their top fears. However, the 4-H program is using Public Presentations to develop the next generation of confident communicators and build self-esteem in youth across Ontario County. The first week in February, Ontario County 4-H held public speaking events with a total of 50 youth participating and 12 volunteer evaluators providing encouragement and feedback.



4-H Public Presentations allow youth ages 5-19 the chance to present on any topic that is of interest to them. Speeches range from 1 minute for young, inexperienced presenters, to 15 minutes for more advanced presenters. While most youth participate in the illustrated speech category (a basic speech with a poster or PowerPoint), there is the opportunity to participate

Left: Fernando Soberon, Mason Michaelsen, Elena Soberon, Mackenzie Michaelsen and chaperone Lisa Grefrath meet with NYS Assemblyman Jeff Gallahan at Capitol Days.
Right: Luke Pritchard presenting on the Revolutionary War.

in demonstration, motivational, impromptu, and recitation speech categories. The flexibility of the program allows youth to present on something that they are passionate about and gives them additional options to pursue as they become more experienced. Once youth had given their speech, they conference one-on-one with an evaluator who then provided encouragement and feedback about the presentation. After conferencing, youth received a certificate.

These events are also a great opportunity for older 4-H teens to develop leadership skills. Teen leaders served as room hosts during their presentation times, which consisted of announcing each youth speaker and making sure the room ran smoothly.

Three Ontario County 4-H'ers Advancing to National Animal Science Contests

When you think of the 4-H Animal Science Program, you may be just thinking about youth showing animals at county fair. However, there are many more learning opportunities that take place to get youth ready for those special county fair moments. One way that 4-H helps youth become excellent caretakers of animals is through Animal Science educational contests. Throughout the fall and winter months, youth attend workshops and practices learning more about their project animals and how to better care for them. These learning sessions culminate in contests that start at the regional level and advance up to the national level.

Ontario County is proud that our 4-H are excelling in these events and three of our youth are advancing to national competitions this year. Emmett Smithling already attended the Dairy Challenge contest in Harrisburg, PA where he placed first – a very prestigious accomplishment. Elena Soberon and Mackenzie Michaelsen will be traveling to Louisville, KY this November to participate in Horse Bowl and Avian Bowl contests, respectively.

These national contests are not just a testament to how much these youth have learned through their years in the 4-H program. They are also formative educational experiences where youth learn more about the animal science industry, meet new people, and grow in confidence. Some youth who participate in national contests gain direct contacts that lead them to a career in that field. Even if a career in animal science is not their aspiration, the trip itself opens their eyes to new ideas and experiences and proves to themselves that they can do great things.







Top: Elena Soberon places 6th in Horse Bowl
Middle and Bottom: Auction youth visit Cornell Agritech in Geneva.

Ontario 4-H Youth Explore Agricultural Careers

On Monday March 30th, Ontario County 4-H provided 21 local 4-H'ers with a unique opportunity to explore careers in agriculture through an engaging, day-long Ag Career Tour. The experience was made possible through proceeds from the 2025 4-H Livestock Auction Program.
The tour began with an educational presentation by Alaina Robarge of Ontario County Soil and Water Conservation District, who introduced participants to natural resource conservation and career pathways in environmental science. The group then traveled to the Cornell AgriTech in Geneva, where youth toured the pilot plant and learned about food innovation, processing, and research.

The day concluded with a visit to Wegmans in Canandaigua. There, participants enjoyed lunch while learning about the company's farm operations and a wide range of career opportunities available both on the farm and within retail store settings. Youth also participated in a fun, hands-on experiment, testing their ability to distinguish between organic and conventionally grown strawberries. "This tour provided an excellent opportunity for youth to connect classroom learning with real-world applications and explore the wide variety of careers available within agriculture," said Amy Pyra, 4-H Educator.

This was just one of a menu of educational opportunities that youth participated in to earn educational credit so that they could participate in the 2026 4-H Livestock Auction at the Ontario County Fair. This year's auction was another huge success with 28 youth participating and a total sales of $97,720.

Bringing the County Fair Experience to More Youth

For many children, a trip to the county fair is a summer tradition. But for some youth in Ontario County, attending the fair is an opportunity they have never had. This summer, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ontario County helped change that by providing 344 youth from nine local organizations with an educational and fun-filled experience at the Ontario County Fair.

Through grant funding from NYS Ag & Markets, CCE coordinated field trips for youth ages 5–17, many of whom might not otherwise have the opportunity to attend the fair. Participating organizations included local recreation programs, community centers, and Boys & Girls Clubs throughout the county. More than 150 of the participants came from the City of Geneva, with many experiencing the county fair for the first time.

The field trips were designed to introduce youth to agriculture, encourage interaction with 4-H members, and provide hands-on learning opportunities. Through an educational scavenger hunt, participants explored the animal barns, met 4-H exhibitors, and learned about livestock care and local agriculture. For many, it was their first opportunity to interact closely with farm animals and discover the work involved in raising them.

Beyond the educational activities, youth enjoyed ice cream, midway activities, and the fair's fun zone. Each participant also received a drawstring bag filled with educational materials and information about future 4-H opportunities.

The program exceeded its original goal of reaching 250 youth from six organizations, ultimately serving 344 youth from nine organizations. Feedback from participants and group leaders was overwhelmingly positive.

This initiative demonstrated the value of making agricultural education accessible to youth from diverse communities. By removing barriers to attending the fair, CCE helped hundreds of young people build connections with agriculture, discover new interests, and experience the excitement of 4-H. For some, this first visit may be the beginning of a lifelong connection to agriculture and the 4-H program.



Geneva Boys and Girls Club attends the Ontario County Fair through the NYS Ag and Markets Grant.



Elena and Sara Soberon share about their 4-H Horse Project with Geneva Boys and Girls Club.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Rosie Smith



Rosie Smith's 4-H journey began when her family became involved through the Cloverbud program. What started with rabbits and a desire to support youth soon grew into decades of service. More than 25 years ago, she became involved with the first club she helped lead, the Funny Bunny Club, laying the foundation for a lifetime of volunteerism.

While many volunteers step away after their children age out of the program, her dedication never wavered. What kept her involved was simple: the kids. She found joy in helping young people learn and succeed. Her commitment to youth extended beyond club meetings, from supporting project work to attending auctions and encouraging youth every step of the way.

Over the years, her impact has reached countless members through a variety of clubs, including the Funny Bunny Club, Country Bumpkins, Hens, Hares and Hooves, Beau's Bandits, and the Mighty Mini Club. Along the way, she collaborated with many dedicated volunteers and leaders who shared her passion for helping youth discover new interests, develop skills, and build confidence. When asked what she enjoys most about volunteering, she said "seeing the excitement on young people's faces." Whether watching a child proudly show a rabbit, helping with fundraising efforts, enjoying time at Fun on the Farm, or cheering youth on in friendly competition, she finds fulfillment in the experiences that help young people thrive. Her own background, which included barrel racing as a youth, gave her an appreciation for the lessons learned through livestock projects and healthy competition.

Rosie's contributions extend far beyond organizing activities and caring for animals. As a longtime "Barn Boss", she helped guide and support generations of 4-H members. She has traveled with youth, shared in their successes, encouraged them through challenges, and built relationships that have lasted for years. Above all else, her enduring love for the 4-H youth she serves is what defines her legacy.

Today, we celebrate not only her years of service, but also the compassion, dedication, and generosity that have made her such an extraordinary role model. The Ontario County 4-H program is stronger because of volunteers like Rosie, and generations of youth have benefited from the opportunities she helped create.

Geneva 4-H and AITC Programming Expansion



Thanks to Wyckoff Family Foundation Grant and 21st Century Grant Program, we have continued to expand our 4-H and Agriculture in the Classroom (AITC) offers in the City of Geneva. 4-H Educator, Adam Bacher, reached an average of 30 students, 4 days per week through the 2025-2026 North Street School 4-H Afterschool Program. He reached an average of 6 students once per week through the Middle School Afterschool Program. He also continued his work in the West Street School reaching 390 K-2nd graders every 6 days with AITC lessons connecting their core learning standards to practical agriculture concepts.

Over the summer, Adam did summer enrichment at the Geneva North Street School, teaching 10 lessons spread across 7 classes that were seen twice a week for 5 weeks. An average of 60 students participated in each class.

The summer program focused on asking more questions about our food beyond "does this taste good?". Things like "what is in this?" and "where does this come from?". Adam started by defining the basics of what fruits, vegetables, meat, and dairy are actually defined as and samples some foods from each category. He then



Adam teaching embryology at Geneva's West Street School.

progressed to tying agriculture to science through talking about topics such as seed origins, types of corn, and how capsaicin causes the spice in peppers. The progress of lessons culminated in taking one of the most notoriously processed snack foods, Takis, and creating our own Taki seasoning using foods that don't have artificial additives.

Our youth development programming in Geneva has grown tremendously over the last few years and the Geneva Central School District is very appreciative of all the work that Adam is doing. Kathryn Roberts, the math/science instructional coach at West Street school states

> *Our Agriculture class has quickly become a cornerstone of our K–2 building, providing authentic, hands-on learning experiences that deeply engage both students and staff. It is consistently named the favorite class of the week, and the enthusiasm is evident the moment students walk through the door.*

In Memory of MacKenzi McClung

It is with a heavy heart we share the tragic passing of beloved Ontario County 4-H'er MacKenzi McClung. MacKenzi was always a bright presence at county fair and other 4-H events, and she will be very missed. MacKenzi had just started her freshman year of nursing school at Keuka College, fulfilling her dream of dedicating her life to helping others. Our hearts go out to her family.



MacKenzi McClung at the Ontario County Fair. Photo by Crazypaint Photography

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Melyssa Roberts



From showing chickens and goats at the county fair to presenting cutting-edge cancer research to oncologists, Ontario County 4-H alumna Melyssa Roberts credits many of the skills she uses in her career today to her experiences in 4-H.

Melyssa began her 4-H journey at age eight in Ohio before joining Ontario County 4-H at age eleven. During her seven years in the program, she participated in the Glory Goats, Sunshine Kids, and Western Wranglers clubs, holding various leadership positions. Her projects focused primarily on poultry and goats, and she participated in Livestock Judging, Poultry Science competitions, and Livestock Skillathon at the New York State Fair. She also served as an assistant to the poultry superintendent and helped manage the 4-H Dairy Bar.

Some of her fondest memories include showing animals, playing cards with friends between Dairy Bar customers, and helping younger members learn poultry showmanship. Beyond these memories, 4-H provided opportunities to develop skills that would have a lasting impact on her future.

One particularly influential experience was participating in 4-H Public Presentations. These early public speaking opportunities helped build her confidence and prepared her for graduate school, where she earned a PhD in Pharmacology with research focused on breast oncology.
Today, Melyssa works as a Senior Medical Science Liaison in Malignant Hematology, collaborating with oncologists to discuss clinical trial results, scientific research, cancer medications, and patient safety. Her passion for improving the lives of people navigating cancer drives her work.
"A big part of my job today is presenting data to oncologists, and the skills I learned through 4-H have been invaluable throughout my education and career," she shared.

Now a mother of two, Melyssa is excited to pass the 4-H experience along to her children. Her five-year-old son, Austin, is already a third-generation 4-H member! She also continues giving back to the program, having returned as a poultry judge and Skillathon goat showmanship judge.
Her advice to current members is simple: "Don't be afraid to try new things and push yourself outside your comfort zone. 4-H is a wonderful place to learn, make mistakes, and build confidence with the support of your community. You never know what skills or experiences will shape your future!"

4-H CAMP BRISTOL HILLS

4-H Camp Bristol Hills offers an outdoor camping experience integrated with top rated educational programming and highly trained staff. Summer camp extends several choices for camper participation that include: day, overnight and specialty camps. Educational classes include programs in outdoor adventure, nature and science, sports and creative arts as well as a continued focus on STEM (science, technology, engineering and math).

Investing in Young People: Building Skills, Leaders, and the Future

At 4-H Camp Bristol Hills, the summer experience is about more than trying new activities, making friends, and enjoying the outdoors. It is also an opportunity for young people to discover their strengths, develop practical skills, and begin preparing for future leadership roles and employment. During the 2026 program year, the camp strengthened that commitment through expanded workforce development opportunities, new educational programming, and increased financial support for youth seeking to take the next step in their development.

Through a $9,000 grant for workforce development scholarships and professional training from the Ontario County Youth Bureau, 4-H Camp Bristol Hills helped young people access leadership programs, earn valuable certifications, and build skills that can serve them both at camp and throughout their lives.

Learning Skills That Make a Difference

One of the highlights of the 2026 season was the introduction of First Aid Camp, a new opportunity for youth interested in learning how to respond to emergencies and help others in challenging situations.

Participants developed practical first aid knowledge while working toward Wilderness First Aid certification through the Emergency Care and Safety Institute (ECSI). Youth who successfully completed the program earned the same level of certification that many Bristol Hills staff members have while working at camp.



CIT's have the opportunity to meet one on one with Camp staff, as well as working directly with campers during their program.

The program offered participants more than an introduction to emergency care. It provided an opportunity to demonstrate competence, meet a meaningful educational goal, and gain a credential that may prove valuable in future outdoor recreation, camp employment, and many other settings where emergency preparedness matters.

Experiences like First Aid Camp reflect an important part of the 4-H approach to education: giving young people opportunities to learn by doing. Rather than simply hearing about emergency response, participants gained knowledge and practiced skills that could help them respond more confidently when someone needs assistance.

The new program also creates another potential pathway into future camp employment. Young people who discover an interest in safety, outdoor leadership, or helping others can continue developing those interests through additional training and responsibilities.

Opening Doors Through Scholarships

Financial barriers can prevent young people from participating in valuable educational experiences, even when they have the interest and ability to succeed. Workforce development scholarships helped address that challenge by making leadership programs and specialized training more accessible to youth at 4-H Camp.

During the year, Youth Bureau scholarship support helped two youth participate in the Leader in Training (LIT) program and four participate in the Counselor in Training (CIT) program. These experiences give young people opportunities to develop leadership skills, practice responsibility, and prepare for increasingly active roles in the camp community.

For participants, these programs represent a progression from being a camper to becoming someone who helps shape the experience for others. They offer opportunities to build communication skills, work with peers, learn from experienced staff, and better understand the responsibilities involved in supporting younger campers.

Scholarship assistance also supported six participants in First Aid Camp, helping make specialized training and certification opportunities available to more young people. Together, these investments demonstrate how financial assistance can do more than make a camp experience



Campers participating in the First Aid Camp get critical skills and leave camp with a certification in Wilderness First Aid.

affordable. It can open the door to new skills, greater confidence, and opportunities that may influence a young person's educational and employment goals.

Investing in the People Who Make Camp Possible
Developing the next generation of camp leaders also means investing in the training and qualifications of young people already working on the staff.

Camp employment provides valuable opportunities for young adults to practice leadership, teamwork, communication, problem-solving, and responsibility. At the same time, camp positions often require specialized training and certifications that can be expensive for younger employees to obtain.

Workforce development funding helped cover those expenses for staff members under the age of 21, supporting four first aid and CPR certifications, two lifeguarding certifications, and two archery instructor certifications.

These qualifications serve two important purposes. They help young employees develop marketable skills and credentials, while also strengthening the camp's ability to provide safe, well-supervised, high-quality programs.

Lifeguarding, emergency response, and archery instruction all require specific knowledge and preparation. Helping young employees access this training supports their professional development while ensuring they are better prepared to carry out their responsibilities at camp.
The benefits extend beyond a single summer. Certifications and practical experience can strengthen future employment applications, support career exploration, and give young adults greater confidence in their abilities. For those who continue working in youth development, outdoor recreation, aquatics, or related fields, these experiences can provide a valuable foundation.

Building a Stronger Future for Bristol Hills
The 2026 workforce development initiative illustrates how investing in young people can benefit individuals, the camp, and the broader community at the same time.

A young person who earns a Wilderness First Aid certification gains practical skills and a recognized credential. A participant in LIT or CIT gains experience in leadership and responsibility, and gives themselves a jump start for applying for a staff position next year. A young staff member who completes lifeguarding or archery instructor training becomes better equipped to serve campers while gaining qualifications that can support future employment.

Each opportunity represents a step toward greater independence and capability.
By directing $9,000 of grant funding toward these educational and professional development opportunities, 4-H Camp Bristol Hills continued to invest in the people who will shape its future. The initiative supports the broader 4-H mission of helping young people develop the skills, confidence, and commitment they need to thrive.

The ultimate measure of this investment is not simply the number of scholarships awarded or certifications earned. It is the opportunity created for young people to discover what they can accomplish, take on new challenges, and become leaders in their communities.

At 4-H Camp Bristol Hills, preparing for the future begins with giving young people the opportunity to learn, practice, and grow today.



Lifeguard David Browne keeps watch. Camp hires 8-10 lifeguards each summer. Scholarship support from the Youth Bureau has allowed us to offer Lifeguarding Certification course during Staff Training Week.

Growing Character Through Camp: 4-H Camp Bristol Hills Joins a Statewide Effort

Some of the most important lessons young people learn at camp don't come from a scheduled class. They happen when a camper encourages a teammate who is struggling, works through a disagreement with a friend, takes responsibility for a group task, or discovers the confidence to try something that once seemed impossible. These everyday moments are part of what makes camp such a powerful environment for youth development. Recognizing that potential, the American Camp Association (ACA) established its Character at Camp initiative to help camps across the country strengthen their role in developing strong moral character in young people.

In fall 2025, the New York State 4-H Camp system was awarded an ACA Character at Camp development grant. The grant provided resources for 4-H camps across New York to examine their approaches to character development, identify opportunities for improvement, and develop a proposal for a coordinated, statewide initiative. For 4-H Camp Bristol Hills, this work has created an opportunity to reflect on how character development already happens throughout the camp experience and how those opportunities can be made more intentional, meaningful, and measurable.

Character Development in Everyday Camp Life
Camp provides a unique setting for young people to practice the skills and behaviors that help them thrive. Away from many of their everyday routines, campers encounter new experiences, build relationships, and learn to navigate challenges alongside their peers. Whether working together on a group activity, encouraging a friend through a difficult challenge, or learning to take responsibility for their actions, campers have opportunities to put important character traits into practice.

Leadership, teamwork, and ***resilience*** are particularly relevant to the camp environment. Campers regularly face opportunities to make decisions, contribute to a group, work through frustration, and persist when something is difficult. These experiences can help young people develop qualities that serve them well at school, at home, in future employment, and throughout their lives.

Working Together to Strengthen the Camp Experience
The development grant brought representatives from New York's 4-H camps together to explore their collective strengths, challenges, and opportunities related to character development. Through in-person meetings, virtual discussions, and ongoing collaboration, the network has been working to identify approaches that can be adapted across the state's diverse camp programs.

At Bristol Hills, Camp Director Jess Middleton and 4-H Resource Educator Jim Hooper have participated in these statewide discussions and brainstorming sessions. Their work has included identifying existing strengths in the camp's approach to character development and considering practical opportunities to build these experiences into both structured camp classes and everyday life at camp.

The team has also experimented with adapting sample lesson plans to make character development a more intentional part of program delivery. An activity that already encourages cooperation, for example, can become a more purposeful learning experience when staff help campers recognize the importance of listening to one another, sharing responsibility, and working toward a common goal. These efforts build on the understanding that character is developed not through a single lesson, but through repeated experiences, positive relationships, and opportunities to practice important skills in a supportive environment.



4-H Camp representatives from across New York State meet at 4-H Camp Shankitunk in Delaware County to discuss the implementation plans for the Character At Camp grant through the American Camp Association.

The statewide collaboration also has encouraged camps to think about how they evaluate programs. Demonstrating that camp has a positive impact on young people is important not only for improving educational practices, but also for communicating that impact to families, funders, and the communities that support camp programs.

Looking Ahead: From Planning to Practice
The development phase laid the groundwork for a larger, three-year implementation initiative. On October 1, 2026, the NYS 4-H Office submitted a proposal to the American Camp Association seeking up to $300,000 to support this next phase of work. If awarded, the funding would support curriculum development focused on leadership, teamwork, and resilience, helping New York's 4-H camps incorporate intentional character development opportunities into their programming.

For 4-H Camp Bristol Hills, this could mean building on existing activities and daily camp experiences while giving staff additional tools to help young people recognize, practice, and strengthen these qualities. It could also provide a framework for assessing the impact of those experiences and sharing the results with the broader community.

The implementation grant has not yet been awarded, but the development phase has already provided valuable opportunities for reflection, collaboration, and planning. It has helped participating camps consider not only what they teach, but also how the entire camp experience can contribute to the growth of young people.

At 4-H Camp Bristol Hills, the goal is not simply to give young people a memorable summer. It is to create experiences that help them grow into capable leaders, thoughtful teammates, and resilient individuals, carrying the lessons of camp with them long after they return home.

The NYS 4-H Camp network includes 32 camp operations statewide, including both day- and overnight camps operated by Cornell Cooperative Extension associations in counties across New York. 4-H Camp Bristol Hills is proud to be one of these camps, working alongside fellow 4-H camps to create meaningful experiences that help young people learn, grow, and develop. Our 4-H Camp Bristol Hills program offers both day and overnight opportunities, and has been serving the youth in our communities since 1925.

DONOR SPOTLIGHT
Mary Cockram Morse



For Mary Cockram Morse, 4-H Camp Bristol Hills is more than a place. It is part of her family's story.

Mary is the daughter of Ed Cockram, who served as the 4-H Agent overseeing camp from 1940 to 1972. Even after his years of service in that role, Ed continued volunteering at camp, helping with maintenance for several more years. Today, the camp's dining hall, affectionately known as Cockram Lodge, stands as a lasting tribute to his contributions and dedication.

Mary has carried that family connection in her own way. She spent a few years working in the camp kitchen before embarking on a 47 year career as a math teacher. Throughout the decades since, she has remained one of camp's most steadfast supporters.

Much of Mary's generosity has focused on summer camp scholarships, helping ensure that more young people have the opportunity to experience the friendships, adventures, and personal growth that make camp so special. She has also stepped forward to support important improvements to camp's facilities, including serving as a leading donor for the construction of the bath house in 2016. The Central Bath house is named for Mary and her late husband William (shown in the photograph). More recently, she contributed to efforts supporting the camp swimming pool in 2025.

Her gifts have made a difference in two essential ways: helping young people attend camp today and helping maintain the facilities that will welcome campers for years to come.

Mary's connection to camp is matched by a spirit of independence and adventure. Now retired, she divides her time between homes in Michigan and Florida, making the long drive between them each spring and fall. She travels with her trusty flip phone and a point-and-shoot film camera, ready to capture the places and experiences along the way.

And if you have the pleasure of speaking with Mary by phone, you quickly discover that she has a wonderful gift for conversation. Her warmth, enthusiasm, and willingness to share a story make every call a pleasure.

We are deeply grateful for Mary's enduring generosity and the personal connection she has maintained with 4-H Camp Bristol Hills. Her support honors her father's legacy while helping write the next chapters of camp's story, one camper, one summer, and one opportunity at a time.

4-H Camp Is A Generational Experience

Jessica Middleton
Camp Director, 4-H Camp Bristol Hills

"We'd like to thank you all for coming to our Simply Bristol Family Event," Jim Hooper, the Camp Manager, addressed the nine families who had just spent a weekend together at camp. "Our hope is that we will continue doing this event in the spring and fall moving forward as a way for camp families and alumni to enjoy camp together."

At this declaration, nine year old, Ellie Krueger made eye contact with her dad with such excitement and desperation, mouthing the words "we have to go." Ellie Krueger hasn't just been a camper with us for four years; she's also a fourth generation camper with us. Her great grandmother was a camper in the 1930s and a camp nurse with us back in the '60's when she brought my uncles and father to camp. Her dad, James, and Aunt Emily (aka Chakos and Seuss) worked at camp in the late 90's and early aughts. Camp bonded us cousins together back then and continues to as we all send our children to camp.

Being in our 101st year of existence as a camp you can imagine the amount of generational stories we hear each summer as people trace their connection back with parents, grandparents and great grandparents having experienced 4-H Camp in the Bristol Hills. Much has changed over the years, but much remains the same.

Ellie's reaction made me smile because I remember feeling that love of anything camp related when I was her age. In fact, I knew at the age of 7 that I would be a camp counselor at 4-H Camp Bristol Hills someday, which is a sentiment shared by many of our counselors. We often say that at 4-H Camp Bristol Hills, we grow our own – meaning a lot of our counselors started out as campers with us. Looking back at our staff from the past five years, we have hired 124 individuals to work at camp. Each summer, our staff consists of 40 – 50 young adults so many of those folks have returned to work with us for multiple summers. Of the 124 people we have hired, 85 folks (69%) were campers with us prior to working at camp. Looking at the 39 people (31%) that were not campers with us prior, 31 of those people (25%) were recruited to work at camp by someone who was on staff. Which means in the last 5 years, 8 people (6%) had no prior connection to coming to camp.

These numbers are similar to our new versus returning camper numbers. Summer of 2026 we were looking at 40% of our campers being new to camp and 60% of our campers being returners from previous years. Many of our new campers stated that they had heard about us through word of mouth from a friend or family member.

Personally, I think one of the many things that makes camp a unique opportunity is its ability to grow with a person. Growing our own staff means that our staff are able to





Left: Jimmy "Chakos" Krueger (along with his wife Emily "Seuss", not shown) were counselors in the late 1990s, and now their daughter Ellie has been a camper for four years. Right: Shane "Angus" Ammering was a staffer in the 2010s, now bringing Penolope, Milo, and Heather (not shown) to camp each summer.





Lauren "Azreal" Tamburro, counselor in the 2000's, drops the next generation off, with Bennet and Auggie attending camp this summer. Right: Dennis "Joker" Flynn from the late 90's on the left with CIT Seamus after two weeks of camp this summer.

be immersed in the culture and traditions of camp from a young age. When I sit down to interview folks to work at camp the reason I hear the most of why they want to work is "to give kids the same experience I had growing up." They talk about camp being a place they felt they belonged, they talk about the friends they've made over the years, the counselors they look up to, and they tell me how they want to do that for the next generation of campers.

Each summer I look around at our staff and am blown away by our young adult counselors who just a few years ago were living their best camper life and have now taken on the huge responsibility of helping our campers learn, grow and live their best camper lives. Sometimes their family roots run deep. This summer we hired three siblings from one family. Now as a camper of the early to mid 90s, I have a core memory of watching Tom Payne (aka Droopy) act out the part from Wayne's World where Bohemenian Rhapsody was playing in the car during one of the camp dances. Fast forward to a few years later when Droopy was a ropes course facilitator for me as I experienced the Adventure Program at camp for the first time – a program that helped mold me into the person I am today. This summer, Droopy's nieces and nephew worked at camp. Abby (Swego) completed what will likely be her final year as assistant director, Jerame (Charade) completed his fifth year on staff as our camp clerk, and Mallory (Croak) completed her first year as a kitchen assistant. Our program director was a third generation camper, our wellness director's mom was a counselor in the 80s – the list goes on and on.

While we take a lot of pride in campers that become staff, each year we welcome new staff who discover camp for the first time. This summer Joe (aka Burger) joined us. After camp ended Burger reached out to me and asked if we always do the "why are you here" conversation during staff week where we invite staff to share why they decided to work at camp. I said that we did and he went on to say, "I was too afraid to say anything until many people shared and then I didn't say everything I wanted to, but it helped show me the magic of camp since I never experienced it like the majority…and after an entire summer with those people I could have shared my piece." Burger started out the summer quiet, and attentive to campers. Each week we saw him grow in confidence and presence. The conversations I had with him throughout summer left me impressed with how thoughtful he was in his approach with kids. Burger may not have had camp as a kid, but he brought the spirit of camp to so many kids this summer.

Each of our staff can share stories about campers they impacted, friendships they've built, full belly laughs shared, and memories made. In general, our staff stick around for 2 or 3 summers before moving onto other jobs. They pave the way for the next generation to pick up the mantle as they move onto different things in their lives. Over my 37 years of growing up at camp, I've had the pleasure of seeing campers become staff, staff become alumni, alumni become parents who then become the parents that drop the next generation of campers off at camp - I even get to do the same with my kids. But there is nothing like seeing the spark ignite in kids' eyes like Ellie, who may someday be that awesome young adult creating magic for the next generation of campers.

Opening the Door to Camp for Geneva Youth

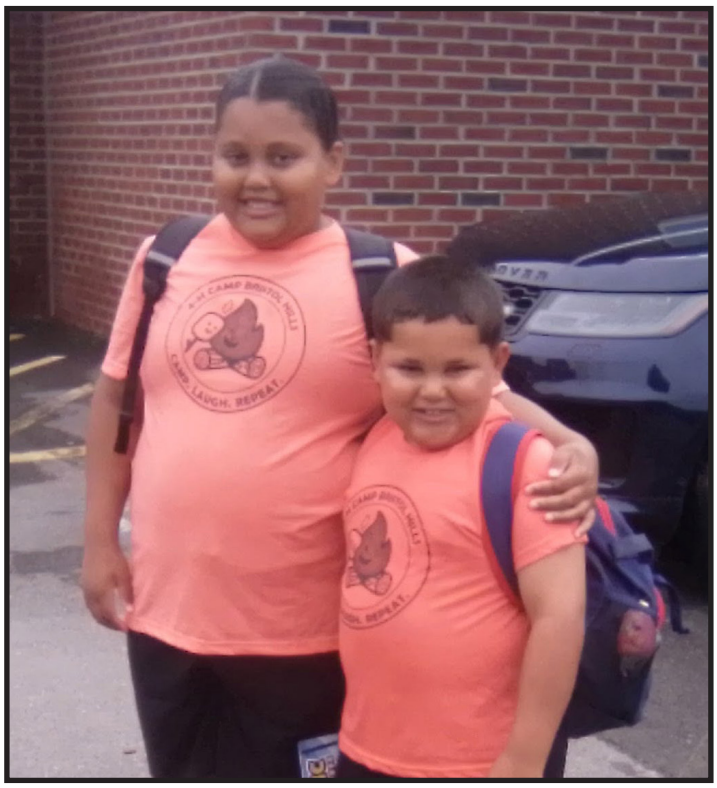
4-H Camp Bristol Hills received $10,000 in funding from the Wyckoff Family Foundation (WFF), allowing more youth from the City of Geneva to experience the fun, friendships, and personal growth of 4-H Camp Bristol Hills in 2026.

WFF funding helped make camp accessible by providing scholarships for Geneva youth throughout the summer, as well as transportation from North Street School for one week of camp. Eight youth took advantage of the bus transportation, removing a potential barrier for families and making it easier for children to participate. In total, 26 children attended camp this summer with direct support from Wyckoff funding. The Foundation has also been supporting our 4-H Afterschool program in Geneva schools for many years. 4-H Educator Adam Bacher has been working with Geneva students through the 4-H Afterschool program and encouraging them to consider 4-H Camp Bristol Hills. Adam was able to use Century 21 funding to bring a small group of students to Camp this Spring. This was a fantastic opportunity for youth who have never been to Camp to see the facilities and try some of the activities.

Geneva is a wonderfully diverse community, with families representing a wide range of cultural backgrounds and economic circumstances. For some families, the cost of summer camp, along with the challenge of arranging transportation, can make participation difficult. Scholarship assistance and transportation support help remove those barriers, ensuring that more children, regardless of their family's financial situation or background, have the opportunity to experience everything camp has to offer.

The impact of this support is reflected in our growing participation from Geneva. In 2025, when grant funding was not available, 23 youth from Geneva attended camp. With WFF support in 2026, that number more than doubled to 55 youth, an increase of nearly 140%. These numbers represent more than increased attendance. They reflect more young people gaining access to outdoor adventures, new friendships, opportunities to build confidence, and experiences that can shape their lives long after summer ends.

We are deeply grateful to the Wyckoff Family Foundation for investing in Geneva's young people and helping make the camp experience accessible to more families. Their support is helping ensure that financial and transportation barriers do not stand between a child and a summer of discovery at 4-H Camp Bristol Hills.



Geneva resident Ceclila Torres shared a photo of her children on Facebook, saying:

> *Week 2 of summer vacation- Day 2 at 4-H Camp Bristol Hills Day Camp! My children absolutely love it there!!!! Thank You to the Wycoff Foundation for providing a grant to help families with tuition and transportation. I encourage all families to make a plan before summer break- apply for programs, call, email/fb them with questions, and request scholarships. There is money in the pot; we just need to ask for help!*



Stock photo by Maximilian Simpson, upsplash

New Ways to Connect with 4-H Camp Bristol Hills

4-H Camp Bristol Hills introduced two new off-season programs designed to welcome people to camp in different ways: Simply Bristol and the Bristol Hills Hammock Hang. Although the events attracted different audiences and offered very different experiences, both created opportunities for people to enjoy the property beyond the traditional summer camp season.



Families gathered around the campfire for an outdoor cooking lesson with camp staff at Simply Bristol, Fall 2026.

Simply Bristol was a three-day family camping experience that invited families to enjoy camp at a more relaxed pace. Families stayed in camp cabins, with meals provided and a modest schedule of organized activities. A variety of informal recreation options, including disc golf, pickleball, badminton, and geocaching, among others, were available throughout the weekend for families to enjoy whenever they wished. Camp staff also offered a few guided activities, giving families a mix of planned activities and plenty of freedom to make the weekend their own.

The Bristol Hills Hammock Hang was a casual camping gathering created for hammock enthusiasts and outdoor recreation fans, drawing participants from across the region and beyond. A small team of staff and volunteers led sessions on hammock camping basics, outdoor cooking, and general outdoor preparedness, along with a presentation on hiking the 46 Adirondack High Peaks. The weekend also featured group dinners, with breakfast and lunch available for purchase. Participants traveled from as far away as Iowa, Illinois, Tennessee, and New Jersey, introducing many first-time visitors to 4-H Camp Bristol Hills.

Simply Bristol and the Hammock Hang looked very different, but both highlighted an important opportunity for 4-H Camp Bristol Hills: the ability to serve as a place where people gather, learn, explore, and build relationships beyond the traditional summer camp season. For some visitors, that connection begins with childhood camp memories and a desire to share the experience with their own families. For others, it begins with a shared interest in outdoor recreation and the discovery of a new place to explore.

The experiences of 2026 are already helping shape what comes next. The positive response to Simply Bristol has inspired plans to explore additional spring and fall weekends, potentially including themed experiences such as a Women's Wellness Weekend or a Shooting Sports Weekend. The concept is intentionally simple: 4-H Camp Bristol Hills provides the facilities, meals, and a few planned activities, while families have the freedom to enjoy camp at their own pace. These events could create additional opportunities for families to reconnect with camp while making productive use of the property during periods when other groups have not booked it.

The Hammock Hang is also evolving in response to participant feedback. Following an exceptionally positive reception in 2026, attendees left asking about the 2027 dates. Planning for the next gathering includes an additional day to better accommodate visitors traveling long distances, a few more scheduled activities, and consideration of opportunities for regional organizations to share information with guests.

These plans reflect a broader approach to program development at 4-H Camp Bristol Hills: start with an idea, create an opportunity for people to experience camp, listen to their feedback, and use what is learned to make future experiences even better. Neither event replaces the camp's core youth development mission. Instead, both complement that mission by expanding opportunities for people to experience the outdoors, connect with others, and discover what Bristol Hills has to offer.

As the camp continues to explore new programming and partnerships, Simply Bristol and the Bristol Hills Hammock Hang demonstrate that there is no single way to connect with camp. Whether returning to a familiar place with family or traveling hundreds of miles to discover somewhere new, visitors can find their own reasons to make 4-H Camp Bristol Hills part of their story.



Hammock enthusiasts from far and wide gather for a Hammock Camping 101 course at the Hammock Hang, Spring 2026.

Making Waves: An Update on our New Pool

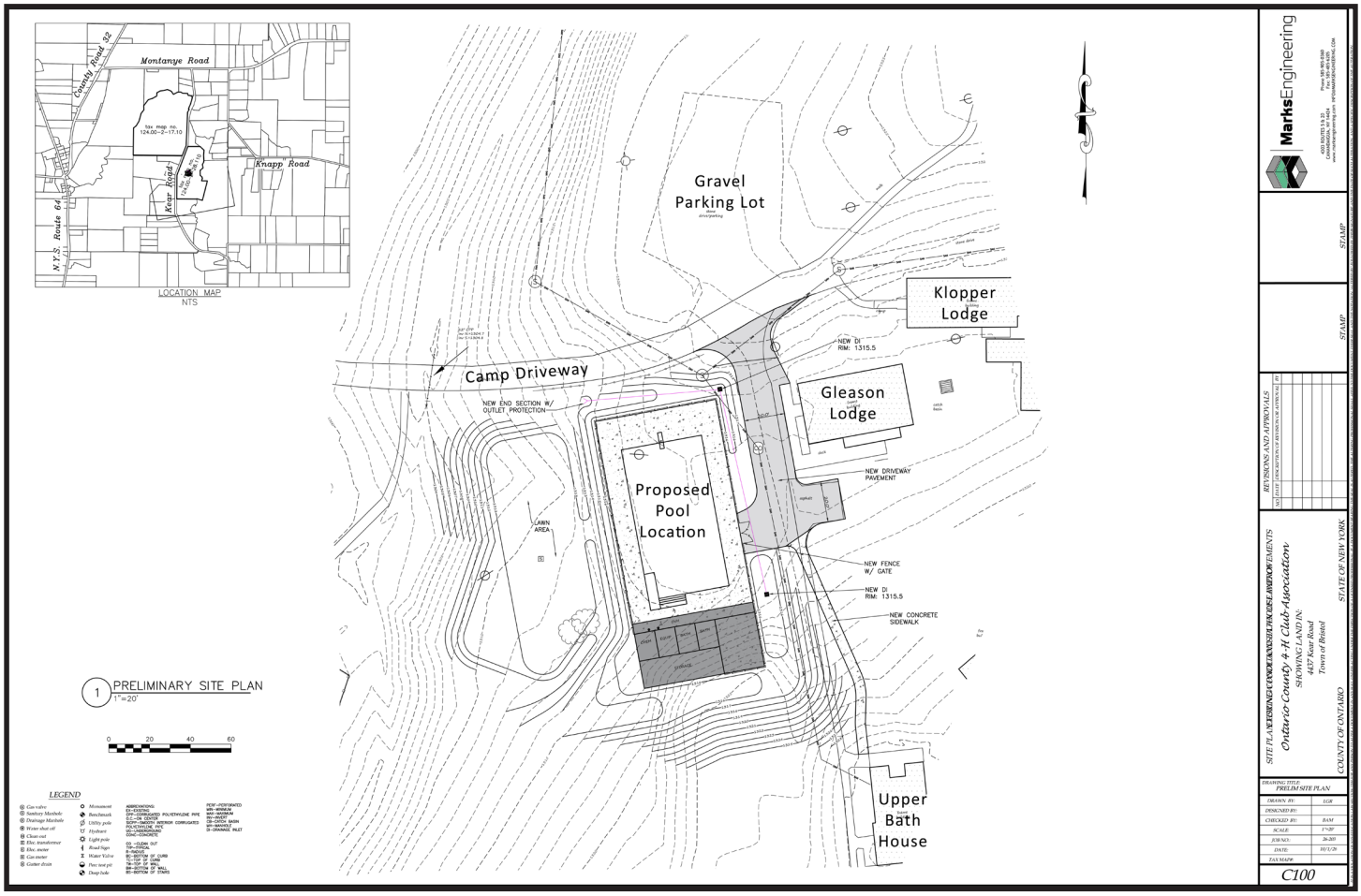
The future of swimming at 4-H Camp Bristol Hills is taking shape! We're excited to report that we have been awarded the funding needed to move forward with our new pool project and have successfully raised the required matching funds through the generosity of our supporters. We've selected an engineering firm and completed the initial site survey work, bringing us another step closer to making this long-awaited vision a reality.

The pool will be 40' x 75', large enough for lifeguard training and approximately 160 swimmers. There will be a shaded seating space outside the pool house building, along with bathrooms and two outdoor showers.

While there is still work ahead before construction can begin, these milestones represent meaningful progress toward creating a modern, accessible swimming facility that will serve generations of campers to come. The familiar splashes and laughter that have filled our pool since 1960 will have a new home, carrying forward a cherished camp tradition for decades to come!



Our current pool has been a source of joy as well as a site for swimming instruction since 1960.



This illustration shows the proposed location of the new swimming pool, at the top of the entry road, directly across from Gleason Lodge.

PARENTING SKILLS WORKSHOP SERIES
#114-#116 and Continuing Growth

The PSWS class has been a long-standing program dating all the way back to the 1990's in Ontario County. Over the last 5 years, we have seen a decline in our numbers due to more opportunities within the county from other agencies and various other factors. Earlier this year, the CCE Executive director, Moira Tidball, and Program Coordinator, Amelia DeVolder, set out to try and solve this issue. They set up a meeting with the Department of Social Services staff to find out what the need in the community was. They offered a list of what type of new classes can be introduced from the abundance of curricula Cornell has to offer. It was determined to start adding some new classes to our offerings besides the beloved Parenting Skills. This fall the class, "Discipline is Not a Dirty Word" was introduced.



Stock Photo from Cornell Digital Assets.

For the 2025-2026 year, the Parenting skills workshop series focused on teaching and practicing five essential parenting skills: encouragement, self-control, can-do attitudes, choices, and respecting feelings. The program utilizes a friendly coaching approach where facilitators and participants provide support for one another. The sessions are based on a judgement-free space where people are genuinely interested in helping one another and learning new ways of parenting. Our instructors make sure to provide additional support through by offering classes on ZOOM depending on the needs of the participants, recruiting guest speakers from local parenting resource organizations such as Aspire Hope, and working with each participant to help them with their specific situation.

Childcare is available for younger children and a Spanish interpreter is available for parents who need translation support.

Participant feedback this past year included:

- *"I am grateful for you and the time you have put into this (you can tell), it was an awesome class"*
- *"I love the class!"*
- *"I feel like I have way more control after this class"*
- *"Learning about online safety & how to supervise my children. How to express myself more with my children"*

This year we offered three sessions of the Parenting Skills Workshop Series (PSWS). Each series included two 7-hour evening workshops followed by a completion celebration dinner. Programs were held over ZOOM/hybrid and at the Finger Lakes Community College Childcare Center. These classes ran September 16-November 4, March 3-April 21 & April 28- June 16. The Ontario County Department of Social Services generously provides funding for our PSWS Program. Thank you to all our collaborators who make the Parenting Skills Workshop Series such a tremendous program for all parents.

BY THE NUMBERS

Parents Served: *10*

Youth Impacted: *20*

Instructional Hours: *48*

Parenting Skills Workshop Series

Local Staffing:

Amelia Devolder
Program Coordinator

Anne Lahr
Patricia Owens
Program Facilitators

Sarah Wilhelm
Resource Educator

Olivia Maslyn
Childcare

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Susan Nettleton
Erika Pfeiffer
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Sarah Sutton
Stacey Van Denburgh
Erin Vorhis
Peggy Wehs

Master Food Preservers
Cheryl Avery
Sandy Ebberts
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Emma Moore
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Master Forest Owners
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Julie Doyle
Dale Schaefer

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Christa Busby
Jessica Chandler
Michele Cheney
Karen Clark
Ellie Conklin
Edwina Czadzeck
Hannah Czadzeck
Deidre Day
Nicole Delpriore
Amanda Donovan
Eric Fiegl
Lisa Grefrath
Tom Grefrath
Melissa Henderson
Paige Henderson
Molly Hilderbrandt
Becky Hill
Shana Jo Hilton
Gracie Seeley Kuhner
Richard Langkamp
Richard Lawson
Ann Lill
Mackenzie Lill
Ally Mack
Amber Mack
Julie Maslyn
Olivia Maslyn
Pete Maslyn
Nina McCarthy
Shayla McClung
Beth McClung
Daniel Middleton
Jessica Middleton
Megan Miller
Jan Montrose
Sally Mueller
Gracie Nicol
Courtney Owens
Rebecca Parshall
Amy Pyra
Mike Pyra
Tiffany Reed
Jamison Reed
Keith Richardson
Karen Rugenstein
Cristi Schraetl
Lucy Schram
Michael Shaughnessy
Claire Sheppard
Andrew Silkiewkz
Kara Silkiewkz
Rosie Smith
Brooke Smithling
Becky Snyder
Jessica Spence
Alicia Thompson
Darlene Tytrek
Michelle Vangalio
Wyatt Wadams
Mary Ann Whipple
Tina Whipple

Community Partners
Alleghany Services
Amanda's Native Garden
Amberg's, Inc.
American Camp Association
Anson Rogers- Rogers Farm, LLC
Arbor Hill Winery
Billy Rockefeller, Rockefeller Farms
Bloomfield Central School District
Bloomfield Library
Boy's and Girl's Club, Geneva
Bristol's Garden Center
Bristol Library
Bristol Volunteer Fire Department
Bruce Reed, Reed's Farm
C&B Roasters
Camp Get A Way
Canandaigua, City of
Canandaigua National Bank
Canandaigua City School District
Canandaigua Farmers Market
Canandaigua Lake Watershed Association
Canandaigua Montessori School
Carter-Gray Agency, Inc.
Casella Farms
Castle Harvester Metal Fabricators
Casella Waste Services
Casey Kunes
Chesire Volunteer Fire Department

Child Advocacy Center
Chipotle, Canandaigua
Clark Meadows at Ferris Hills
Clifton Springs Library
Club 86
Coldwater Pond Nursery
Community Bank NA
Cornell AgriTech
Cornell Agriculture, Food & Technology Park
Cornell Einhorn Center for Community Engagement
Cornell University Departments of:
- Animal Science
- Crop and Soil Science
- Entomology
- Food Science& Nutritional Sciences
- Horticulture Science & Natural Resource and the Environment
- Planning and Community Development
- Plant and Pathology

Cornell Vegetable Program
Country Max
Cumming Nature Center
Courtney Dolan
Dale & Glen Shaw, Wishing Well Vineyard
Darvin Weaver
Dennis Brewer
Dr. Ann Lill
Ed Joseph
El-Vi Farms, LLC.
Farm Credit East
FLCC Child Care Center
Finger Lakes Community College
Finger Lakes Culinary
Finger Lakes Grape Program
Finger Lakes Institute
Finger Lakes Radio Group
Finger Lakes Visitors Connection
FLACRA-Clifton Springs
Jeff Gallahan, Assemblyman
Gale-Wyn Catering
Geneva City School District
Geneva Farmers' Market
Geneva Girl Scouts
Geneva Library
George Mueller, Willow Bend Farms
Good Earth Greenhouse
Grant Fletcher
Hemdale Farms
HEP Sales and North Street Lumber
Honeoye Central School District
Horning's Greenhouse
J.D. Rugenstein & Sons, Inc.
Jeffrey North, JD North Farm
Jennie Erdle-Krampen
Jerome's U Pick
Jim Dooley Center For Early Learning
John Ingle Vineyard
John Kasper
John Sorbello, Sorbello Farms
Joseph's Wayside Market
Juliana Smith, US Army Corps of Engineers
Kenneth Trammel, Trammel Farms, Inc.
Kevin Phalen, Phalen Farms
LandPro Equipment
Lakeside Greenhouse
Lightland Farms, LLC
Lochland
Louis Bell, Bell Farms
Lowes of Canandaigua
Lozier Environmental Consulting Inc.
Lyons National Bank
Marcus Whitman Central School
Mark and Kim Stryker
Mary Cockram Morse
Mayflowers Nursery & Garden Center
Mental Health Assoc. of Rochester
Michael A Hannen
Midlakes Central School
Mike Goodman Farms
Monroe Tractor
Moodie's Children's Hour School
Morgan Samuels Inn Venue
Muller Field Station
Murmuration Malts
Naples Central School
Naples Library
New York Sea Grant
NWNY Dairy, Livestock & Field Crops Team
NYCAMH
NY Forest Owners Assoc.
NY Kitchen
NY Steam Engine Association
NYS DASNY (NYSWIMS)
NYS Dept. of Ag & Markets
NYS DEC, Wildlife, Pesticide & Forestry
NYS Fair
NYS 4-H Educators Assoc.
NYS 4-H Foundation
NYS 4-H Program
NYS IPM Program
Ontario Cares
Ontario Finger Lakes Bee Association
Ontario Co. Ag Enhancement Board
Ontario Co. Ag Society (Ontario Co. Fair)
Ontario Co. ARC
Ontario Co. Board of Supervisors
Ontario Co. Children's Fund
Ontario Co. Dept. of Planning & Research
Ontario Co. Dept. of Social Services
Ontario Co. Dept. of Sustainability & Solid Waste Management
Ontario Co. Family Court
Ontario Co. Farm Bureau
Ontario Co. Office of Economic Development/IDA
Ontario Co. Public Health
Ontario Co. Sheriff's Office
Ontario Co. Soil & Water Conservation District
Ontario Co. Water Resource Council
Ontario County Youth Bureau
Palmiter's Garden Nursery
Philip E White, Bob-Mar Farm
Pies by Heart
Red Jacket Central School
Robert Green, Greenco Farm LLC
Runnings
Senator Pam Helming
Seneca Foods, Inc.
Smithling Family
John Sorbello, Sorbello Farms
Sonnenberg
Spicebush Swallowtail Native Plants
Spring Hope Farm
Spring Valley Gardens, Inc.
St. Francis-St. Stephens School
St Mary's School
Storybook Farm Veterinary Hospital
Sue Bennet
SUNY Cortland
The Bird House Nature & Garden Store
Town of Canandaigua
Town of Bristol
Town of Farmington
Tractor Supply Canandaigua
Travis Brocklebank
USDA - FSA
USDA - NRCS
United Way
Upstate Niagara Cooperative
United States Coast Guard Auxiliary
Victor Central School
Victor Farmers Market
Victor Farmington Library
Walnut Hill Farm
Wayne Bank
Wayside Garden Center, Inc.
Wegmans Food Markets
White Oak Nursery
Wilderness First Aid NY
Willow Bend Farm
Willow Creek Greenhouse
Will-O-Crest Farms, LLC
Wood Library
Wyckoff Family Foundation
Young Chiropractic

4-H Camp Donors & Volunteers

We appreciate all those who have contributed to camp. This list acknowledges those donors who have contributed $10 or more.

Jessica Able
Erin Altman
Amberg's
American Legion, Phelps
Shane Ammering
Nancy Anderson
ARC of Ontario
Marina Barci
Molly Baker

Maureen Basil
Patricia Bertino
Duane and Linda Bombard
Molly Boyd
Megan Brady
Dennis Brewer
Bristol Fire Department
Bristol Hills Music Camp
Bristol, Town of, Highway Department
Bristol, Town of, Code Enforcement
Bristol, Town of, Zoning Board
Sandy Button
Russ Byer
Kristin Call
Canandaigua Lake Duck Hunters
Canandaigua National Bank
Canandaigua Schools
Canandaigua Stockyards Inc
Kim Carruth
Amy Chavez
Cheshire Fire Department
Pam Chiverton
Jacob Close
Ben Cochrane
Marcus Cochrane
Mary Cockram Morse
Kristy Coleman
Marie Coyle
Dandy Mart, Bristol
Timothy Davis
Nicole Defayette
Design Pool and Spa
Amanda Diamond
Esther Dickinson
Mike Doyle
Duvall Farms
Amy Edwards
Elmwood Farms
Jennie Erdle-Krampen
Starr and Noel Evans
Fa-Ba Farms
Ann Fallon
FELCO North America
Fisher Hill Farm
Fish's Farm Market
Grant Fletcher
Finger Lakes Community College
Finger Lakes Dental Care
Cat and Mark Francese
Gallo Group
Melanie Geiger
Genecco Produce, Inc.
Geneva CARES
Robert and Mary Gleason
Emily Giunta
Megan Gorman
Harmony Circle
Hemdale Farms
Dale Hemminger
Molly Herendeen
Hobart & William Smith Colleges
Hogle Enterprises
Honeoye CORAL Program
Honeoye Storage Corps
Rita Hooper
Jim and Alyssa Hooper
Scott Hudson
Dugald Hutchings
Andrea Jacobs
Betsy George Jones
Joseph's Wayside Market
Kiwanis Club of Canandaigua
Jeffery and Susan Koehn
David and Priscilla Krueger
James Krueger
Justin Kuczma
Dave and Stephanie LaBarge
Latina Boulevard
Leadership Ontario
Ann Lill, DVM
Lightland Farms, LLC
Chantal Loeb
Tellis Lott
Lyons National Bank
Sheryl Mahoney
Angela Manjgaladze
Brennan Marks, Marks Engineering
Kay Marshman
Jessica Middleton
Madison Monahan
Angela Moracco
Ontario County 4-H
Ontario ARC
Ontario County Master Gardeners
Ontario County Workforce Development
Ontario County Youth Bureau
Kailey Palmer-Turan
Phil and Catherine Pandori
Carrie Parks
David and Linda Patrick
Scott Petrino
Steve Pettinger
Phalen Farms
Photographic Services
Charlie Plyter
Kelly Potter
Samantha Privatera
Randall-Standish Vineyards
Sara Remington
Amanda Rockcastle
Rockefeller Farms
Rogers Farms LLC
Heather Ruffo
Erinn Rossi
Rugenstein Family Farm
Colleen Saar
Tom Sanders
Madison Schock
Jeff Seltzer
Heather Sens
Jamie Sheppard
Singh Group
Kristin Smarker
Jodi Snyder
Ryan Springett
Starbridge
Kelly Stein
SUNY Oswego
Alyson Thrash
Tractor Supply
Trammel Farms, Inc.
United Way of Rochester
Emma Voisey
Melanie Vold
Rebekah Wachob
Melissa Ward
Wayne Cooperative Insurance Company
Wegmans, Inc.
Kate White
White's Farm Market
Cynthia Whiting
Gregory Wichtowski
Mahina Williams

4-H Camp Pool Project

Anonymous
Nancy Anderson
Cara Arena
Dennis Brewer
Dandy MiniMarts
FaBa Farms
Sage Gerling
Robert and Mary Gleason
Rita Hooper
Krueger Revocable Trust
Margaret Lash
Tom Poplasky
Thomas Sanders
Trammel Farms
Cynthia Whiting

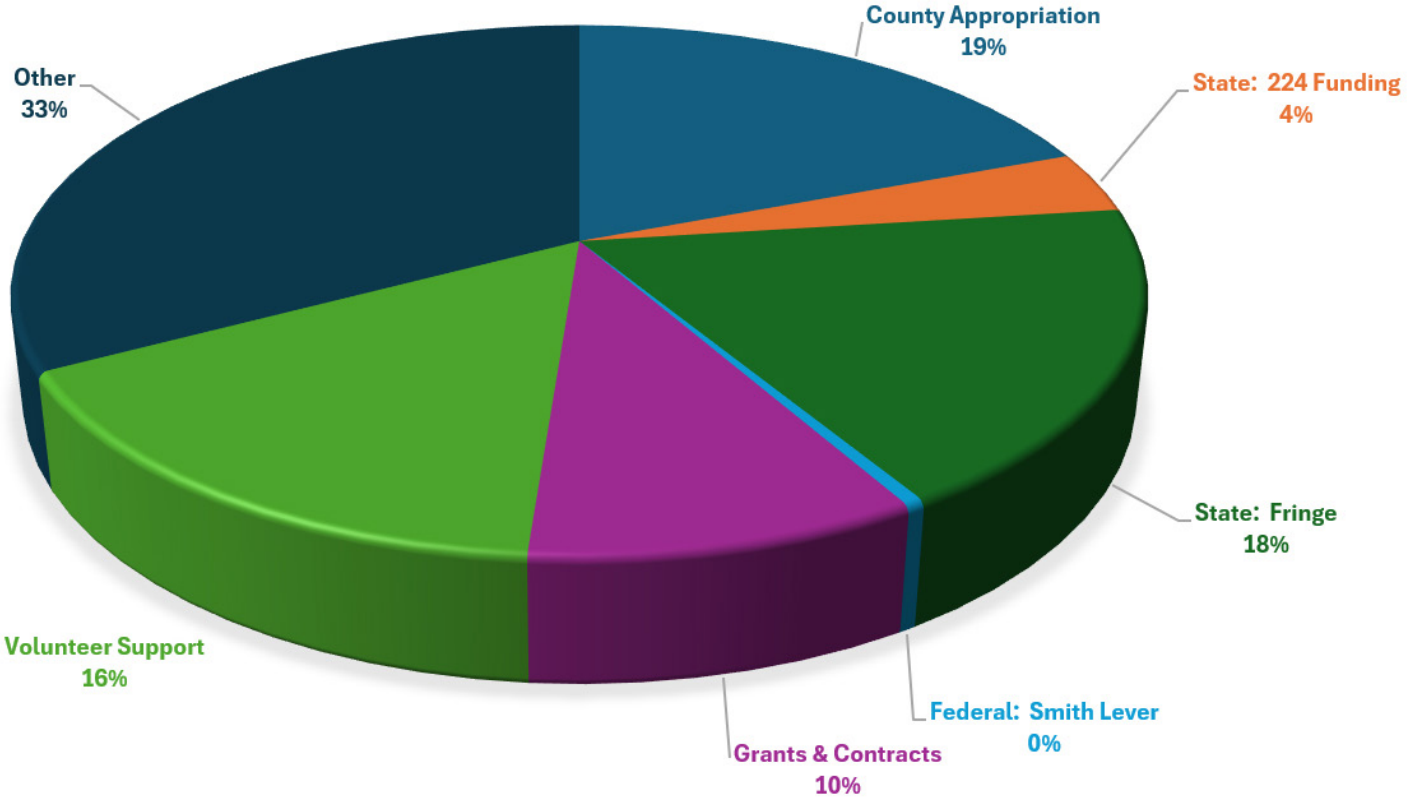
SUMMARY OF RESOURCES & SUPPORT

County Appropriation	$506,839
State	
224 Funds	$ 99,162
Fringe Benefits	$482,285
Federal	
Smith Lever	$ 11,844
Grants and Contracts	$ 249,724

Other (program fees, rent, fundraising, donations, etc) $863,140

Volunteer Support
(value of time/expertise for 12,328 hours of volunteer time at $36.14/hour per The Non-Profit Leadership Center) $ 445,534

TOTAL: **$2,658,528**



BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2026

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Danielle Hautaniemi, State Extension Specialist



A family effort! Scott Petrino, pictured with his two children, both former campers, built Camp Bristol Hills' new welcome sign. His daughter also helped with the project, making this a special contribution from a family with a personal connection to camp.