

December 2020



NOVA NEWS

Northern Virginia 4-H Educational and Conference Center Newsletter

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Director's Note:

4-H has always been rooted in the acquisition and development of life skills for youth. The specific, relevant skills sought have evolved over the last century, but the principle remains the same. Immersion into a week-long 4-H Junior Camp program fosters a unique environment conducive to this youth leadership development.

Indeed, much is still uncertain about 2021, but at the direction of Governor Northam, we are currently working on plans to host camp again next summer!

We will certainly have to implement some measures that will give camp a new and unique flavor, but what better environment for achievement?

I believe that learning begins at the far edge of comfort, so incorporating a few new systems into the camp experience should allow campers a new and enriching perspective. May it be so!

Family Camp and Fireworks

Over Labor Day Weekend, we hosted our 2nd Annual Labor Day Weekend Family Camp. We had 8 families join this year, which included overnight lodging, family-style meals, swimming, hiking, activities, and more. Save the date to join us in 2021!

Also, because our annual Independence Day Fireworks had been postponed, they were rescheduled to coincide with Family Camp. Though open to the public, Family Campers had the best seats in the house for what many described as "the best show EVER at 4-H!"

Attendees enjoyed treats from the C&C Ice Cream Trailer while listening to live music from The New Dominion Band.

THE NEW DOMINION BAND
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 5TH
@  **NORTHERN VIRGINIA 4-H**
EDUCATIONAL AND CONFERENCE CENTER
WITH BRIAN BARD
* CLASSIC ROCK
* NEW ROCK
* COUNTRY
* SOUTHERN ROCK
* BLUES
6.15 PM til **Fireworks** (approx 8.15 PM)
The Amphitheatre, 4H Center Drive, Front Royal, Virginia

Programs Report

Portable Teambuilding

Earlier this fall, we were invited to Alexandria Country Day School, where we led socially-distanced team-building activities for students in 3rd-8th grade.

They used the first two days of their school year to focus on getting to know each other better, while learning more about their own unique skills. Thank you ACDS! We look forward to our next visit!



Summer Staff 2021

Earlier this fall, applications went live for summer staff 2021. These staff are critical to the successful implementation of camp, but they gain valuable life skills too! We are excited for our many applicants, and the hiring process is set to begin over the next few weeks!

Montessori School Takes Up Residence at NOVA 4-H



John Paul the Great Montessori Academy is a new and growing school in Front Royal, and having quickly outgrown their initial meeting place, they were looking for space to spread out. That's when they reached out about using space in our Conference Center.

Colleen Hencken, Head of School, reflects on their experience thus far:

"John Paul the Great Montessori Academy is blessed to have the opportunity to operate out of the 4-H Center. What drew us initially was its most welcoming Staff. They are generous and always

willing to lend us a hand. We felt at home immediately. Our decorated indoor space and the large rooms and windows with spectacular views have allowed our children to work freely in a beautiful hands-on environment. Each day the children enjoy the fresh outdoors as they explore and enjoy the 229-acre facility. They play soccer on the fields, basketball on the courts, tennis, and explore the sprawling woods. Each day as our families come up that long drive, we all feel we are escaping the cares of the world. We drive up the mountain knowing our children are in a safe space and an oasis of peace."

Wonderful Wednesday Day Camp (WWDC)

When Rappahannock schools were set up with a hybrid schedule for the fall 2021 semester, with no in-school learning on Wednesdays, a group of community-minded people in Rappahannock County were determined to offer an outdoor experiential learning program so that students had an active, outdoor option on their off-day. Out of their efforts was borne the Wonderful Wednesday Day Camp, held here at the NOVA 4-H Educational Center.



With support from Rappahannock County Public Schools (RCPS) and CARES Act funding from the Rappahannock County Board of Supervisors, the WWDC program began in September with 50+ campers participating, 4 staff, and nearly 40 counselors.

RCPS busing brought campers and counselors to the WWDC each Wednesday morning. The entire camp met at the campfire circle, where everyone sat 6 feet apart, sang songs and discussed the day before starting their first workshop activity. Workshops included: Juggling, Outdoor Cooking, Line Dancing, Learning about camping and hiking the Appalachian Trail, Creative Writing, Origami, Making Corn Husk Dolls, Making stress balls, Learning about genes and camouflage, and many more. Workshops were offered outdoors whenever possible.

Lunches were prepared by the RCPS cafeteria staff and funded by USDA, followed by outdoor exploration time. After lunch, all campers participated in homework/reading time followed by a community service or thankful activity. Camp ended every Wednesday at the campfire circle, where campers gave nature reports, sang more songs, affirmed each other's good deeds, and presented awards.

Strict COVID-19 safety protocols were followed at all times.

Program Director Jenny Kapsa commented, "The Wonderful Wednesday Day Camp provided laughter, learning, reflection, appreciation, and a sense of purpose and joy to all who participated. It was a source of much needed light, during a very dark time."

The program has been such a success that funding has been secured to offer this program again in the spring of 2021.

Board Development

This year we had 3 volunteers complete their service to the NOVA 4-H Center Board of Directors:

Ms. Jennifer Montgomery served 3 terms on the Board beginning in 2015. As a former summer staff member, and a current nonprofit Executive Director, Ms. Montgomery provided great insights into both programming and financial development.

Ms. Kaci Daniel served 2 terms on the Board beginning in 2017. As a tenured 4-H Agent serving Orange County, Ms. Daniel was always able to provide invaluable context to the systems and processes that drive the camping program, both past and present.

Mr. Stephen Jerome served 1 term on the Board beginning in 2019. As a local lawyer, Mr. Jerome graciously completed an interim term as the Board Corporate Secretary.

We are very grateful to these outgoing Board members. Thank you!

We are also excited to have welcomed 4 new volunteers to the Board:



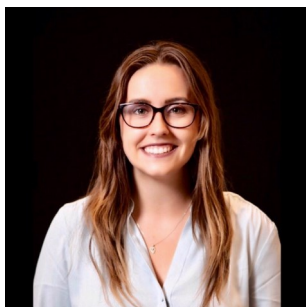
Ms. Kathy Truax is a Harmony Hollow neighbor who currently serves as a school psychologist for Fairfax County Public Schools. Ms. Truax will be serving on our Program and Development committees.



Mr. Andrew Hill is a local attorney serving Front Royal and Strasburg. Mr. Hill will be serving on the Governance Committee.



Mr. James Wolfe is also a Harmony Hollow neighbor who serves as the Entrepreneur in Residence and Associate Professor, School of Business at George Mason University. Mr. Wolfe will be serving on our Finance Committee.



Ms. Tara Westington is a Food, Agriculture & Natural Resources Associate at the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities in DC. Ms. Westington will be serving on our Programs and Governance committees, as well as lending expertise to our social media accounts.

Fundraising Initiatives

As we approach the end of 2020, I must admit that things could be much worse for the 4-H Center. Through procurement of CARES Act funds as well as great generosity of a few private foundations, we have thus far weathered the storm created by COVID-19 and having to cancel all of our 2020 4-H Camps. Now is not the time, however, to get complacent. With so much unknown as we head into 2021, we must continue to seek financial gifts to provide ballast as the tides of change ebb and flow.

Having three children of my own, I have seen first-hand how the pandemic has affected their social and emotional well-being. I know for certain that as soon as the pandemic fades, today's youth will need the 4-H Center more than ever before. Our current efforts are to continue caring for and maintaining our facilities and programs so that we can welcome campers as soon as it is safe and advisable to do so.

To that end, please consider supporting the NOVA 4-H Center with an end-of-year financial gift. You can make your contribution a number of ways:

- Give online at www.nova4h.com/donate/
- Designate your gift to NOVA 4-H through Virginia Tech by clicking [HERE](#)
- Mail your support check directly to NOVA 4-H at:

600 4-H Center Drive
Front Royal, VA 22630

Please also mark your calendar for February 24-25, 2021 as we will again take part in Virginia Tech's Annual Giving Day. Watch for email and Facebook page announcements as we draw closer to those dates. We will be competing against the other 4-H Educational Centers in Virginia to see who can secure the largest number of donations, with the winning Center receiving a bonus prize of \$2,500! Gifts as small as \$5 will count towards our total, so please plan to participate and help us win!

Thank you very much!

Jeremy Stanford

Jeremy Stanford, Executive Director



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