



2017 Fall Forum Through My Eyes



This being my first year attending the Wisconsin 4-H Fall Forum, I truly didn't know what to expect. As soon as I arrived at the Green Lake Conference Center, my nerves melted away. The passionate young people and active adults created a positive, cohesive environment that allowed for impactful and thought-provoking discussions, intermixed with many fun and educational activities.

The Wisconsin 4-H Fall Forum provides Wisconsin 4-H individuals with a platform to share what that they are passionate about. For example, I was able to speak with one of the project leaders during the Friday evening activities. He spoke on why youth development education is important to him, and our conversation inspired me to seek out ways in which I can give back to the 4-H organization in the time following Fall Forum. Later that day, many seminars were held to strengthen our critical thinking skills, inspire healthy living, increase thoughtful communication, promote advocacy through leadership, and initiate artistic expression. The many seminars gave each person many different tools to add to their 4-H tool-kit. As the weekend continued, we were all granted the privilege to hear multiple UW-Extension faculty speak on belonging and its importance in 4-H. This activity led to many great talking points and activities such as "Four-at-The-Door" and how we can inspire and include other communities in our 4-H activities.

The Wisconsin 4-H Hall of Fame induction ceremony was one of the highlights of this experience. Celebrating the many years of dedicated service and support that those recognized have given to the 4-H organization was truly an honor. Hearing their 4-H stories reminded me why I love the 4-H organization so much, and why it has been able to evolve and shape into what it looks like today.

Before we departed Sunday morning, I had the honor of sitting next to Julie Keown-Bomar, one of the Interim Co-Program Directors for Wisconsin 4-H. Speaking with her gave me an insight to her passion for inclusivity within 4-H, and she was truly a joy to speak with. I discovered that she used to be very active in my home county, and this led to a discussion about the future of volunteerism, how to initiate inclusive change, and many other great topics. Speaking with her was a privilege that definitely inspired me to make difference.

Another activity I was able to partake in was electing the Wisconsin Leadership Council Representatives for my region. This was a great way to view the future of the Wisconsin 4-H program and discover what changes they are passionate about introducing. We also heard a talk from John de Montmollin, the other Interim Co-Program Director. He led us through the different facets of 4-H, and we created action plans to initiate change in our local communities.

Similar to most 4-H experiences, Fall Forum gave us all the tools we needed to initiate change in our clubs, communities, and the world. I would definitely recommend this experience to anyone who wishes to learn how to get the most out of their 4-H experience, and who wants to share their 4-H experiences with others. Together we are 4-H!