

10 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT WISCONSIN 4-H STATE TEAMS



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

A woman with blonde hair, wearing a dark floral dress, is speaking into a microphone. She is looking to the left. The background is blurred, showing other people.

Hello!

My name is Allison Olson, and I have been a 4-Her for 12 years now. I have been on the Wisconsin 4-H State Drama Company for three summers. Being a part of a state team is my favorite part of 4-H, and I continue to share about it in my county and club. If you are interested in joining a state team, please contact me at allisonolson2018@gmail.com and I will gladly get you set up to join. Please sit back, relax, and I hope you enjoy my project.



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1. What are the **WISCONSIN 4-H** **STATE TEAMS?**



Teams include:

Art Team

Communications Team

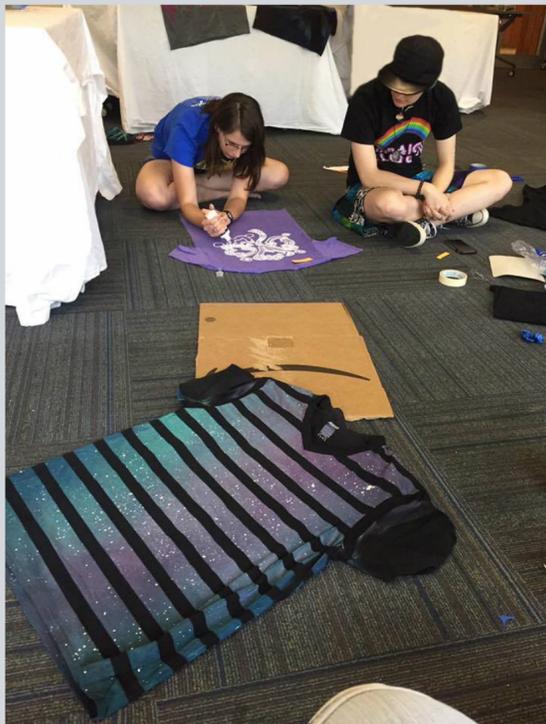
Drama Company

Wisconsin Leadership Council



ART TEAM

The Wisconsin 4-H Art Team is responsible for creating and displaying art around Wisconsin 4-H. They create pieces around the theme of state youth conference, as well as organize and lead an art show at state youth conference to display selected art pieces from county festivals. Art Team also travels to the Wisconsin State Fair to set up the Youth Expo Hall. The team is led by a professional artist who facilitates the creating process through multiple mediums.



COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

The Wisconsin 4-H Communications Team works to share the impact of Wisconsin 4-H around the state. They begin at state youth conference and document the happenings of the conference through video and photo. They also work to reach out to youth delegates through social media outreach, nightly assembly news casts, and overall interaction to display what the 4-H youth are doing in Madison. Communications Team also travels to the Wisconsin State Fair to capture the action that occurs in the Youth Expo Hall and at other 4-H related events.



DRAMA COMPANY

The Wisconsin State 4-H Drama Company is comprised of about 30 youth across the state who come together to make an original, hour long show for Tuesday night of the Wisconsin 4-H and Youth Conference. This show revolves around the conference theme, and is a collaborative effort between youth and adult leaders. The show isn't just drama, it includes all performing art platforms such as dance, singing, instrumental, and poetry. The company alters the show made at conference and brings it to the Wisconsin State Fair, where they perform four times a day for four days.



WISCONSIN LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

The Wisconsin 4-H Leadership Council is the group of leaders that help run many statewide 4-H events throughout the year, as well as represent Wisconsin 4-H through collaborative opportunities. A main goal of 'WLC' is to enhance 4-H within the UW-Extension system, as well as work to create opportunities for 4-Hers to grow in welcoming environments. Members are elected in November at the Wisconsin 4-H Fall Forum and stay on the council for a one or two year term. They participate in teleconferences and multiple, seasonal meetings to plan and grow as leaders. WLC also leads most of the planning and the running of the Wisconsin 4-H and Youth Conference.



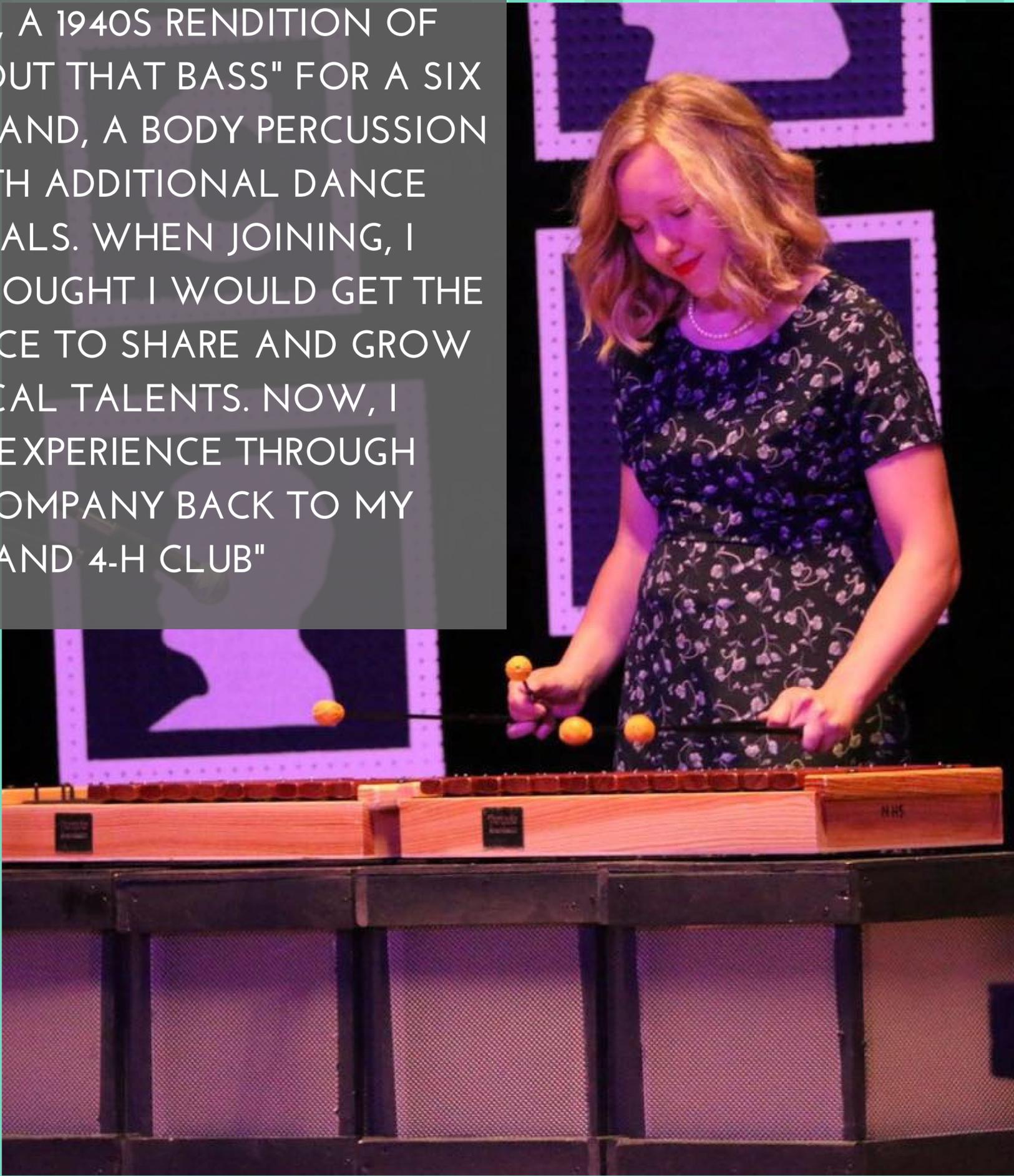
2. Bring your **TALENTS** to the **TABLE**



State team members have heard from 4-Hers time and time again, "I don't think I would be a good fit for state teams, as I don't have much experience." Although it may seem that qualified members need previous background in drama, leadership, picture editing, or creating art, they don't! State teams invite all 4-Hers that want to learn and grow to be a part of the teams. As long as members give an effort to work hard and grow on their level, state teams are happy to have you be a part of the team. In Drama Company, they have a strong philosophy of "bringing your talents to the table." Whether someone plays an instrument, has been taking dance classes since they were three, or is a part of an improvisation group in your community, they want your talents to shine in the show.

Allison Olson, a member of Drama Company, shares how she has brought her talents to the table.

"PERSONALLY, I AM A MUSIC PERSON, AND SO THE PAST THREE YEARS ON THE TEAM I HAVE LED AND PERFORMED MANY MUSIC PROJECTS. THESE INCLUDE A "PEN TAPPING NUMBER", AN ORIGINAL SONG WRITTEN IN THREE HOURS, AN ORIGINAL COMPOSITION ON MARIMBA, A 1940S RENDITION OF "ALL ABOUT THAT BASS" FOR A SIX PERSON BAND, A BODY PERCUSSION PIECE WITH ADDITIONAL DANCE AND VOCALS. WHEN JOINING, I NEVER THOUGHT I WOULD GET THE EXPERIENCE TO SHARE AND GROW MY MUSICAL TALENTS. NOW, I TAKE MY EXPERIENCE THROUGH DRAMA COMPANY BACK TO MY SCHOOL AND 4-H CLUB"



3. "Oh, the Places You'll Go!"

Literally and figuratively!



Literally, state team members get to travel the state and stay in places they wouldn't get the chance to stay in through anywhere else. The first stop is at Upham Woods Outdoor Learning Center in the Wisconsin Dells. Here members spend a weekend in April preparing for the summer season. Next is UW-Madison! Members stay in a university residence hall for give or take one week (depending what team they are on). Members get the chance to adventure into downtown Madison and see the Capitol, State Street, Union Terrace, and more. Last stop is in West Allis, WI for the Wisconsin State Fair. Members stay in the



Tommy Thompson Youth Center right on the fairgrounds for multiple days (once again, depending on the team they are on). and get to adventure around the fairgrounds during their free time.



Figuratively, a quote from Dr. Seuss's book can explain:

**"You won't lag behind, because you'll have the speed
You'll pass the whole gang and you'll soon take the lead.
Wherever you fly, you'll be the best of the best.
Wherever you go, you will top all the rest."**

With all the skills members gain, the connections they create, and the confidence they build, nothing can stop them! Beyond their years of state teams, team members will have all the tools they need to succeed. Anna Schaber, a five-year member of Drama Company, shares about her confidence in her future because of her growth in state teams.



"I FEEL LIKE I CAN ACCOMPLISH ANYTHING THE WORLD THROWS AT ME! DRAMA COMPANY HAS PUSHED MY LIMITS, PUSHED ME TO NEW CHALLENGES, PUSHED ME OUT OF MY COMFORT ZONE, AND HAS LED TO ME ACCOMPLISHMENTS I DIDN'T EVEN REALIZE WERE POSSIBLE. I HAVE SO MUCH MORE CONFIDENCE AND AMBITION FROM DRAMA COMPANY. FIVE YEARS AGO, I WAS SCARED TO EVEN SHARE MY IDEAS WITH A SMALL GROUP OF PEOPLE. NOW, I BRING MY IDEAS TO LIFE AND SHOWCASE THEM IN FRONT OF HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE. DRAMA COMPANY HAS SHOWN ME THAT I HAVE SO MUCH POTENTIAL TO SHARE WITH THE WORLD AND THAT THE SKY IS TRULY THE LIMIT. I BELIEVE IN MYSELF SO MUCH NOW AND THAT CONFIDENCE IS A DIRECT RESULT OF MY CAREER ON DRAMA COMPANY."

4. Friendships across the

STATE



State teams are comprised of youth from all over the state, whether that be from the northwest, east metro, or central. Members are able to make connections and friendships that they wouldn't be able to make in their county or club 4-H. State 4-Hers also have a shared goal and motivation to represent their state with hard work and pride, and so it is easy to make friendships and to gain skills along the way. Because of the inclusive environment, it is easier to let go and be yourself around state team members. Allison Olson explains, "Before I joined state teams I did not feel completely comfortable to be myself, and I didn't know what 'being myself' really looked like."





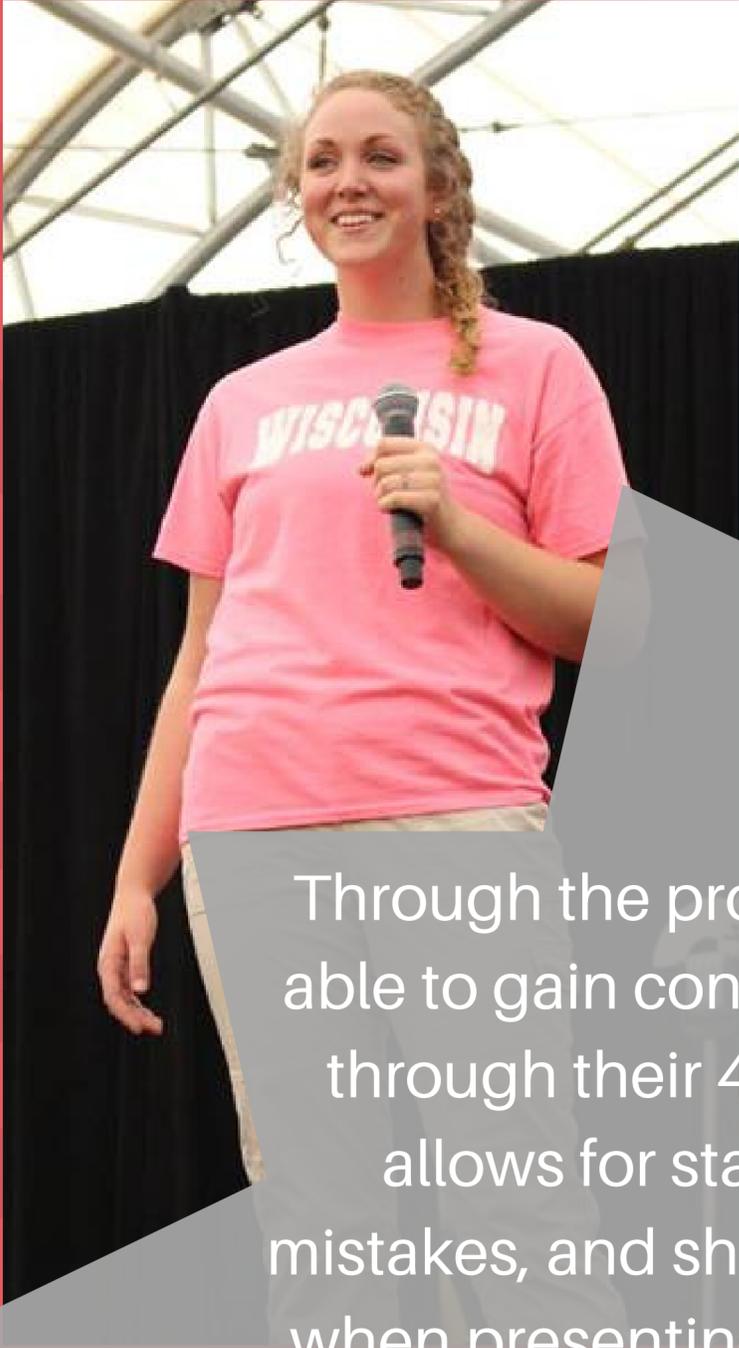
She further goes on to say, "When opening myself to a group of supportive, fun people, I found my comfort zone and was able to make real connections with people being who I wanted to be. For me and for many Drama Company members, Drama Company isn't completely about the work; it is about the relationships created and the social skills that are built. Now, whenever I travel the state, I feel happy knowing that I know people off of this exit, or from this town, or from this county. It has also allowed me to travel more so that I can visit members during the off-season."

"TODAY, CREATIVITY IS HINDERED IN SO MANY APPLICATIONS OF SOCIETY, HOWEVER, CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION ARE VITAL TO MOVING FORWARD. THESE PROGRAMS ALLOCATE FOR A CREATIVE AND HANDS ON LEARNING SPACE, WHERE YOUTH FROM DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS ARE ABLE TO COME TOGETHER AND WORK TOWARDS A COMMON GOAL. THE COLLABORATIONS AND NETWORK OF SUPPORT FROM NUMEROUS COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND COUNTLESS VOLUNTEERS IN THE STATE ART TEAMS ARE UNATTAINABLE ANYWHERE ELSE AND UNLIKE ANY OTHER ORGANIZATIONS THAT I HAVE SEEN. THE YOUTH TODAY MAKE TOMORROW'S DECISIONS. SOMETHING AS VALUABLE AS THESE PROGRAMS ARE WORTH THE INVESTMENT FOR THE YOUTH OF OUR FUTURE."

PAULINE SCHLAIS
WISCONSIN LEADERSHIP COUNCIL ALUMNA



5. CONFIDENCE BOOST



Through the projects members make in state teams, they are able to gain confidence in the skills that they have worked on through their 4-H years. The supportive work environment allows for state team members to try new things, make mistakes, and show off what they have created. There is a thrill when presenting the ending conference slideshow, opening the state art exhibit, beginning the Tuesday night Drama Company show, or leading an activity in front of an audience of 500 delegates. This thrill brings joy and acceptance, which in turn makes confidence. Although the excitement and adrenaline doesn't last for weeks after conference, the confidence will. That confidence can be brought home and used in your clubs to start a community service project, or in your county to try out a new project, or anywhere else. Gaining support and appreciation is one major reward of being on a state team, and it is a skill that you can take anywhere.

6. Growth in Adult Partnerships

Along with youth members, state teams also have adult chaperones to help facilitate projects and growth.

Through working with adults, members are able to gain more skills of how to ask questions, understand, and compromise. From generation to generation, understandings of new technology or ways of getting jobs complete have changed, so through working with adults, youth are able to get a different perspective on what they are working on. State teams are also a great opportunity for adults! Tuition is a reduced price for adult chaperones.





Alexis Luedtke, the 2016-2017 President of the Wisconsin Leadership Council, explains her perspective of the adults on her team. "Using their individual expertise and experience, WLC adults are able to support and assist the youth and the rest of the team in their success. I personally have a very strong both personal and professional relationship with the adults on the council."

Claire Olson, a four-year member of the Communications Team, also states the impact of the positive mentors. "[The adults] did a wonderful job guiding us in the right direction along with making us think outside of the box to make something unique or our own."



"IT'S BEEN A TRUE BLESSING TO HAVE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO BE ON A STATE TEAM AND I HOPE THAT EVERY CHILD WHO JOINS ANY OF THESE WONDERFUL TEAM GETS A SIMILAR EXPERIENCE THAT I DID! I WOULDN'T TRADE THIS EXPERIENCE FOR THE WORLD!"



CLAIRE OLSON
COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

"BEING A MEMBER OF WLC HAS PREPARED ME FOR A PLACE IN THE PROFESSIONAL WORLD. I HAVE BEEN ABLE TO DEVELOP IMPORTANT SKILLS WHILE GAINING INCREDIBLE FRIENDSHIPS WITH SOME OF THE GREATEST LEADERS IN THE STATE."



ALEXIS LUEDTKE
WISCONSIN LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

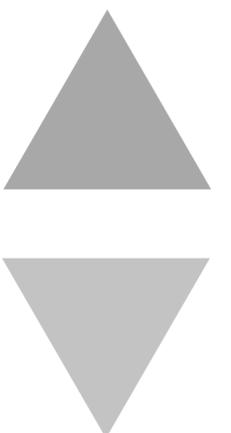
"STATE TEAMS MAKE EVERYONE FEEL THAT THEY TRULY HAVE A PLACE HERE, INSTEAD OF THEM NEEDING TO PROVE THEY BELONG."



ANNA SCHABER
DRAMA COMPANY

7. Inclusion is a Large Priority

Wisconsin 4-H State Teams make it their priority to be accepting and inclusive of all people. Learning about diversity and inclusion is on the agenda and in the plan across the board. "One of our norms, or guidelines, is to 'be inclusive and accepting.' Each one of us promises daily to include everyone and accept their differences/ideas." Anna Schaber, a member of the Wisconsin 4-H Drama Company, explains. At planning weekend, teams start planning the projects they are going to complete, but they also go through workshops to enhance their knowledge on inclusion and diversity from the help of organizations, such as Urban Underground. Alexis Luedtke, the 2016-2017 President of the Wisconsin Leadership Council says "We have had multiple trainings on [inclusion and diversity], and I know that I personally have begun thinking about things such as how I can be inclusive in everyday situations both inside and outside of 4-H."



New members are important for growth of the state team, so state teams try to work on being inviting, explaining the process, and developing relationships right away. Dakota Roettger, a first year Communications Team member, shares about his time and the inclusion he felt.



“EVER SINCE EXPERIENCING A STATE TEAM FOR THE FIRST TIME, I WISH I HAD JOINED MUCH SOONER! I HAVE LEARNED SO MUCH ABOUT TEAMWORK, LEADERSHIP, PROBLEM SOLVING, AND COMPROMISE...STATE TEAMS WILL VERY QUICKLY CREATE AN EXTENDED FAMILY IN YOUR LIFE...STATE TEAMS CREATE AN ACCEPTING AND INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT THAT ALLOWS ALL TYPES OF PEOPLE TO THRIVE. WHEN YOU HAVE AN IDEA, IT IS CERTAIN TO BE LISTENED TO BY YOUR TEAM MEMBERS...ALL OF THE INDIVIDUALS WHO PARTICIPATE IN THE WORK THAT STATE TEAMS DO IMPACTED ME IN SOME WAY, SO TRULY ALL OF THE ACTIONS OF THOSE THAT SURROUNDED ME ON THIS JOURNEY TRULY MADE ME FEEL INCLUDED.”



8. STATE TEAMS ARE AFFORDABLE!

Most state teams tuition ranges from \$500-\$600. In many counties, scholarships are available through an Adult Leaders organization, a county council or ambassadors group, or through your club. Members can also ask for sponsorships through local businesses or family and friends.

Allison Olson explains, "I have asked for sponsorships from three different 4-H organizations around my county and I have reduced the tuition price to be \$200-\$300."



\$

\$



Wisconsin 4-H has been very generous in reducing the price so that more youth can get this experience. Through this tuition, members get to experience three different places for a very reasonable price. Slightly depending on the state team, members are away from home for about two weeks from April to August. Members get to stay a full weekend at Upham Woods, a full week or so on UW-Madison campus, and about half a week at the Wisconsin State Fair. All meals are included in that price as well as anything else you need for the team. Members get all of these experiences for \$500-\$600 and possibly less if they reach out to local 4-H organizations. For the amount of experiences you have, the people you meet, and the skills you obtain, that price is a smart investment.



9. A 4-H EXPERIENCE

LIKE NO OTHER

Wisconsin 4-H State Teams are different than any other 4-H experience. There is a different atmosphere within state 4-H that is absent within most club and county 4-H organizations. A deep sense of community builds between teams because of the inclusive environment, support amongst members, and the growth that occurs. Being a part of a state team isn't a free ride to success; finding growth and success takes dedication, trust, and hard work. If you give effort on a project, you will find some sort of success, and that is what builds this sense of community.



“THE ATMOSPHERE CREATED ON A STATE TEAM IS UNLIKE ANYTHING EXPERIENCED IN A CLUB OR COUNTY LEVEL 4-H EXPERIENCE. IT IS HARD TO PINPOINT AND DESCRIBE HOW THIS ATMOSPHERE IS DIFFERENT, BUT IT IS SUCH A CREATIVE AND FREEING ENVIRONMENT TO BE A PART OF.”

DAKOTA ROETTGER
COMMUNICATIONS TEAM



“STATE TEAMS PUT EFFORT INTO KNOWING AND UNDERSTANDING ONE ANOTHER INSTEAD OF COMPETING AGAINST EACH OTHER FOR WHO IS THE BEST. THEY WORK TOGETHER TOWARDS ONE COMMON GOAL. WE ROOT FOR EVERYONE TO SUCCEED AND REACH OUT WHEN WE ARE IN NEED.”

ANNA SCHABER
DRAMA COMPANY

10. IMPACT ON ALL WISCONSIN 4-H



State teams don't just impact the members on the team, but all 4-Hers and youth in Wisconsin. Through state conference, state team members act as ambassadors and role models to younger 4-Hers who may not have strong, older 4-H members in their county or club. They provide enthusiasm, fun, and inspiration to delegates through their main projects, the nightly assemblies and activities, and even in the residence hall elevators and hallways. Ashlynn Numrich, an experienced state team member, shared about her experience as a delegate at State 4-H & Youth Conference. "I attended Wisconsin 4-H Youth Conference as a delegate in 2013. This was my first big 4-H trip and I was ready to meet new people, learn about various topics, and enjoy the various speakers and performances throughout the week. The nights that Showcase Singers and Drama Company performed forever changed my life. I immediately set goals to apply and hopefully be a part of such a close 4-H family. Their enthusiasm and the impact of their performances truly changed my conference experience."



State team members also have a strong goal of bringing the skills they gain in state teams back to their counties. Matthias Hensler, a member of Drama Company, shared how he took back the growth he obtained from state teams to his county.

“This year I have had the opportunity to join public school, which has exposed me to a significantly larger amount of people than in my previous school year... I've used my improved skills of communication from working in small groups to better improve my one on one working with youth, especially in the Rocketry project. I have also helped prepare for my county's “Arts and Communication Festival” by helping design judging sheets for poetry and drama.”



Another member of Drama Company, Natalie Rodgers, shares how she took material used in her state team to her community.



“As the Assistant Vocal Director of a summer children's production, I loved bringing DCo's warm ups into rehearsals and sharing information regarding the Drama Company with young actors. I also shared warm ups and information at the Penguin Project where I help mentor special needs artists.”

CREDITS

INTERVIEWEES

Matthias Hensler (Drama Company)

Alexis Luedtke (Wisconsin Leadership Council)

Ashlynn Numrich (Drama Company)

Claire Olson (Communications Team)

Natalie Rodgers (Drama Company)

Dakota Roettger (Communications Team)

Anna Schaber (Drama Company)

Pauline Schlais (Wisconsin Leadership Council)

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