

The 4-H Young Alumni Spotlight

The Maryland 4-H Volunteers' Association has started a new initiative,
"The 4-H Young Alumni Spotlight."

We will spotlight a 4-H young alumnus bi-monthly to highlight what they are currently doing and how 4-H has helped cultivate their interest, as well as assist in getting them to where they are today.

Anyone is welcome to nominate outstanding young alumni by filling out the link below:

<https://goo.gl/forms/FwKnJfOYmOu7Xnpp2>

All information will be shared on the Maryland 4-H Young Alumni Facebook page and in the Maryland 4-H Volunteer Voice.

Congratulations to our first outstanding 4-H young alumni nominee,

Laurie Anne (Lambertson) Benko!

Laurie Anne Benko took her first sewing class when she was just 5 years old as a 4-H Clover member and entered her clothing creation in the Carroll County 4-H-FFA Fair. When she was 9, Laurie Anne participated in her first Carroll County 4-H Fashion Revue and immediately fell in love with the art of sewing! She admired the talent of the older 4-Hers whom she looked up to! Laurie Anne went on to participate in every 4-H fashion show both at the county and the state level until she was 18 years old. She even won the honor of Carroll County's Top 13 year old and participated in state Fashion Revue an extra year! Laurie Anne may have identified her passion to be sewing, but she was also a very well-rounded 4-Her and participated in many other 4-H events. Laurie Anne was a member of the State Teen Council, a Carroll County 4-H Junior and Senior Ambassador, a youth leader for multiple weeks of 4-H Camp and a member of the Shipley 4-H Club. In addition to exhibiting many home arts projects, she also showed market steers, sheep, and pigs. Laurie Anne enjoyed starting her summers at 4-H camp and ending them with the county fair, as she loved being surrounded by friends that shared interests and encouraged each other. She says, "The amount of friendship and hard work that fills 4-Hers is really special."

Sewing became Laurie Anne's favorite hobby and talent because of her experience in 4-H. She knew that because of her passion, she wanted to make her career focused on sewing and fashion. Laurie Anne is a 2012 graduate of Drexel University in Philadelphia where she earned her Bachelor of Science in Fashion Design. She currently works for Lilly Pulitzer as an Associate Technical Designer for ladies woven pants, shorts, skirts, ropers, and two piece sets, but has also previously designed children's clothing for Abercrombie and Fitch. In addition to designing clothing all day, Laurie Anne even took on the challenge this past year of designing and making her own wedding dress, as well as her mom's! Laurie Anne remains active in the 4-H community as a volunteer and assists her younger sisters and family friends with their sewing projects. Laurie Anne credits her experiences through the 4-H program with helping her find the perfect career!