

## Growing True Leaders

### A gift to 4-H helps a New Hampshire teen step outside her comfort zone

SERIES:

IMPACT SPRING 2018

Tuesday, May 1, 2018



PHOTOS BY DAVE KELLAM



KELSIE PITTMAN WITH OTHER MEMBERS OF THE 4-H YOUTH

When Kelsie Pittman joined [4-H](#) at age 8, she did so for her love of animals.

“Animals have been my entire life. I’ve always felt most comfortable working with and showing animals,” says Pittman. Animals were

SUBSCRIBE TO THE UNH TODAY NEWSLETTER

SUBSCRIBE TO UNH TODAY RSS

## LEADERSHIP TEAM AT CANDIA SPRINGS

a safe, friendly audience.  
They wouldn't criticize her if  
she made a mistake while  
speaking or didn't communicate something clearly.

But Pittman, now 17, found that her perspective transformed when she joined the 4-H Youth Leadership Team (YLT) program last year. And all it took was jumping out of a tree. "Taking part in the Youth Leadership Team has pushed me out of that comfort zone. I've changed a lot," she says.

A national youth development organization, 4-H empowers young people through experiential learning programs that promote valuable leadership skills. In New Hampshire, 4-H is organized through [UNH Cooperative Extension](#). More than 20,000 youth across the state participate in 4-H clubs and programs, which offer hands-on experiences in areas ranging from citizenship and healthy living to agriculture and STEM fields.

Leadership development is one of 4-H's primary aims, and a recent \$15,000 gift to New Hampshire 4-H from an anonymous donor has provided new learning opportunities for YLT participants, including a team-building activity day at Candia Springs Adventure Park in Candia and a leadership retreat at Camp Calumet in Freedom.

At Candia Springs, Pittman and her peers walked across treetop suspension bridges and rappelled 40 feet down to the forest floor, all while learning how to conquer fear, trust each other and become leaders. "It was very educational," Pittman says. "When you're jumping out of a tree, it's about learning how to get over fear. It's something I've been able to use in helping with my public speaking skills."

Pittman has come a long  
way in a short time. Where

Your Philanthropy

once she might have avoided speaking in public or passed on leading a learning session in her Rockingham County 4-H club, she now rises to those challenges. She's taking on more responsibilities in her club, such as finding opportunities for youth to work with animals and reaching out to parents and other 4-H'ers. "YLT has taught me how to work with everyone, from younger kids to seasoned 4-H'ers, to teach them how to work together and to make the best better," she says.

In short, YLT and 4-H have prepared her for a lifetime of leadership.

"I might not have had the chance to learn these things if I was just with my livestock or in school," she says. And, budding leader that she is, Pittman hopes other New Hampshire youth will follow her example. "I think youth should take the jump. It really opens a lot of doors."

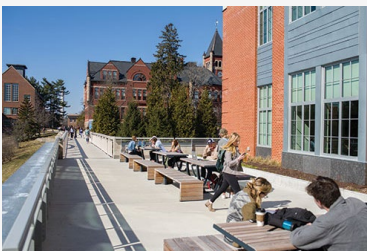
Originally published in **IMPACT Spring 2018**

WRITTEN **Larry Clow '12G** | UNH Cooperative Extension

BY:

## Creates Possibilities

To make a gift to endow a fund or support a program, or if you're considering a bequest, contact **Troy Finn** at (603) 862-4940 or [troy.finn@unh.edu](mailto:troy.finn@unh.edu).



## RELATED ARTICLES

---



August 16, 2021 | UNH COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

## No Small Connection

---



December 15, 2021 | THE COLLEGE LETTER

## Going Local

---



January 27, 2022 | FACULTY EXCELLENCE

## Outstanding Woman

---



**University of New Hampshire**

UNH Today is produced for the UNH community and for friends of UNH.

The stories are written by the staff of **UNH Communications and Public Affairs**.

Email us: [unhtoday.editor@unh.edu](mailto:unhtoday.editor@unh.edu).

**MANAGE YOUR SUBSCRIPTION**  **CONTACT US**



UNH Today • UNH Main Directory: 603-862-1234  
Copyright © 2022 • TTY Users: 7-1-1 or 800-735-2964 (Relay NH)

[USNH Privacy Policies](#) • [USNH Terms of Use](#) • [ADA Acknowledgement](#)

