



National 4-H Conference participants.

HEROES AMONG US

BY: JALISA BARNETT

4-H Specialist - Leadership and Resource Development



Premier's Award recipient, Amanda Hughes, pays tribute to leaders and mentors

This January, 4-H Alberta proudly hosted 17 leaders from across the country for the National Leaders' Conference. This event was held in conjunction with the 4-H Alberta Leaders' Conference, which saw over 300 volunteer leaders from across the province congregate for a weekend of learning, laughter and recognition. For the 69th annual conference, hosted by the Northwest Region, a dedicated committee welcomed leaders to a "Heroes" themed weekend at a new location in Edmonton.

"The committee chose the Heroes theme for the 2012 Leaders' Conference to recognize and honor the contributions that leaders make to the 4-H program. With the conference, I feel

that we have also achieved our goal of supporting our 4-H heroes and equipping them with the tools they need," reported Jocelyn McKinnon, 4-H Specialist for the Northwest Region and member of the organizing committee. The weekend was interspersed with a variety of sessions and speakers that ranged in scope from inspirational to informative to developmental, offering something for every leader. There were also plenty of opportunities for networking, swapping ideas and even a few surprisingly competitive games of spoons.

While National Leaders' Conference participants arrived earlier in the week for discussion and thought provoking speakers, they particularly enjoyed being a part of Alberta's premier leader event. Janet-lee Ferris, Program Coordinator with 4-H Canada, believes that observing how other provinces do things will in turn benefit 4-H throughout the county.

4-H Alberta leaders were recognized throughout the weekend for the lengths they go to for 4-H members, their fellow leaders and the program as a whole. At Saturday's luncheon, Premier's Award Recipient, Amanda Hughes gave her speech as



Regional Specialist in the Northwest, Jocelyn McKinnon(m) visits with Hall of Fame inductees George and Judy Andrews.

a tribute to the heroes of the 4-H program – leaders and mentors. Amanda shared lessons she had learned throughout her time with 4-H, and thanked those leaders and mentors who guided her through them. Like many 4-H members, she recognized these experiences as lifelong lessons that she will carry with her well into the future.

Two humble and very well known leaders from the Northwest Region were recognized on Saturday evening as they were inducted into the 4-H Hall of Fame and personally congratulated by the Honorable Evan Berger, Minister of Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development. Committee chair, Colleen Prefontaine stated that “George and Judy Andrews have offered so much to 4-H in the past 50 years. They have spent countless hours developing our youth because they enjoy helping them grow... George and Judy Andrews are true heroes.”

Also recognized at Leaders’ Conference was the Alberta Recycling Management Authority, recipient of the Golden Clover Award – look below for more details! Of course, this caliber of conference wouldn’t be possible without the hard work of the committee and the support of sponsors who recognize the importance of supporting volunteers who work tirelessly in their communities.

It was a jam-packed weekend with leaders parting with increased knowledge, original ideas to take back to their clubs, districts and regions as well as new and rekindled friendships. 2012 Leaders’ Conference will definitely be remembered as the year that heroes were among us.

4-H Alberta Leaders’ Conference is generously sponsored by Presenting Partner Rocky Mountain Dealerships, along with



4-H leader arrives at “Heroes” dinner in style!

Agriculture Financial Services Corporation, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, AMA Insurance, ATB Financial, Encana Corporation, FortisAlberta, Government of Alberta, Lammle’s Western Wear & Tack, Olds College and UFA Co-operative Ltd. as Partner Supporter Sponsors. Partner Friends of this program are Alberta Recycling Management Authority, Calgary Exhibition and Stampede Limited, Columbia Awards, Northlands and Talbot Marketing. Partner Host of Leaders’ Conference 2012 is Radisson Hotel Edmonton South. ❁