

LOVE LETTERS TO MANITOBA INVITES YOU TO SHARE YOUR LOVE FOR OUR AMAZING PROVINCE. - LEARN MORE.

## 4-H names three Westman students as recipients

By: Chelsea Kemp Local Journalism Initiative

Posted: 11:07 PM CDT Wednesday, Oct. 13, 2021



### SUBMITTED

Marika Dewar-Norosky, 22, is an alumna of the Newdale 4H Club and current member of the Future Leaders 4-H Club in Winnipeg. She was awarded a \$12,500 Leaders of Tomorrow Scholarship in honour of Fleurette Geirnaert, of the Mariapolis-Baldur 4-H Club.

Three Westman post-secondary students have been awarded more than \$30,000 through the 4-H 2021 Leaders of Tomorrow Scholarships.

The inaugural recipients of the scholarship include Marika Dewar-Norosky of Newdale, Cameron Giannotti of Neepawa, Rayna Topham of Minnedosa and Sarah Johnson of Dugald.



The scholarships were made possible with a \$1-million endowment fund from the Brandon Community Foundation established by the Manitoba Government.

The fund provided \$42,500 for scholarships in 2021 to four current and former Manitoba 4-H members.

The new scholarships were awarded in honour and recognition of four long-serving leaders.

#### SUBMITTED

Rayna Topham, 20, of the Minnedosa Multi-Purpose 4-H Club and Minnedosa 4-H for Teens Club received a \$10,000 scholarship in honour of Margaret Buydens of the Bruxelles 4-H Crew. Topham is currently attending Brandon University.

---

"We congratulate the 2021 scholarship recipients and wish them all the best in their education and future careers. 4-H members of today are tomorrow's future leaders," said Candace Tolton, president of 4-H Manitoba.

"The calibre of scholarship applicants was outstanding. We are proud to support our members to enable them to take a future leadership role in agriculture, environmental sustainability and their community as a whole."

#### **Marika Dewar-Norosky**

Marika Dewar-Norosky, 22, is an alumna of the Newdale 4-H Club and current member of the Future Leaders 4-H Club in Winnipeg. She joined the Future Leaders Club after moving to the provincial capital to attend the University of Manitoba.

Dewar-Norosky was awarded a \$12,500 Leaders of Tomorrow Scholarship in honour of Fleurette Geirnaert of the Mariapolis-Baldur 4-H Club.

"I'm still processing it," Dewar-Norosky said with a laugh. "This is covering the rest of my tuition and gives me a lot of freedom in the rest of my degree."

She said she was honoured and humbled to receive the scholarship because it means she is viewed as a leader in the community.

Dewar-Norosky learned she would be receiving the scholarship while she was on her military training in Cold Lake, Alta. She joined the reserves to be a part of the Cadet Instructor Cadre, specifically to work with youth.

Dewar-Norosky is currently studying biosystems engineering with a specialization in the environment at the University of Manitoba. She described her education as an engineering degree focusing on sustainable development and land use.

She was drawn to the subject because she grew up in a rural community and saw firsthand the impacts of agriculture and the effects of the climate crisis on her family farm.

"I wanted to go into ag, but I knew I couldn't farm the way my dad does, so I decided to pursue an environmental engineering degree," Dewar-Norosky said.

She has two years left in her course, and her final year will include a thesis, for which she plans to explore using animals for organic land management.

While she may have grown up on a grain farm surrounded by agriculture, Dewar-Norosky said for her, 4-H was always separate from the industry.

During her time with the Newdale multi-purpose club, Dewar-Norosky tackled a wide selection of projects from cake decorating to small and large engines work.

"I never touched an animal when I was in 4-H. It's only the last two years actually, with COVID, I started to dabble with animal agriculture and realized how hard it really is," Dewar-Norosky said.



**SUBMITTED**

Cameron Giannotti received a \$10,000 scholarship in honour of Rona Kamfoly or the Ethelbert 4-H Club.

She added during her time with 4-H one of the greatest experiences she had was the opportunity to engage with an international community of 4-H members. Dewar-Norosky attended a conference in Washington, D.C., had a Careers on the Grow internship with 4-H in Tucson, Ariz., and participated in exchanges in Argentina and Japan. Her family also hosted Japanese students.

Along with 4-H, Dewar-Norosky was also active with the Air Cadets in her community.

Being a member of the Winnipeg Future Leaders 4-H Club at the University of Manitoba has been exciting because it is an urban club with youth between the ages of 18 and 25, she said, adding it has been thrilling to see the growth of urban-based 4-H clubs and seeing urbanites appreciate the value the non-profit offers to youth.

Dewar-Norosky said her time in 4-H continues to impact her life, especially when it comes to the communication skills she learned during public speaking events. She also served a term on the Provincial 4-H Council and in high school was the local area president for three years.

It was an amazing experience, Dewar-Norosky said, and she appreciates the learning opportunities she was able to engage in. She added sitting on the provincial 4-H council allowed her to work with people older than she was for the first time. During that time, she learned how to be active and participate in the conversations taking place at the table.

She currently works as a project manager with Manitoba Agricultural Services Corporation, and every day she has to talk to people, living out the communications skills she learned with 4-H.

"It has given me so much of my life," Dewar-Norosky said. "4-H has shaped my life in more ways than I can count."

### **Rayna Topham**

Rayna Topham, 20, of the Minnedosa Multi-Purpose 4-H Club and Minnedosa 4-H for Teens Club received a \$10,000 scholarship in honour of Margaret Buydens of the Bruxelles 4-H Crew.

Topham is currently attending Brandon University.

Topham said she is grateful for the scholarship and the benefit it will have on her post-secondary career.

When she found out she had been awarded the scholarship, Topham said, it was exciting because she was just sitting down for a family supper.

"It was nice to be with my family to share that special moment," Topham said.

Topham is majoring in English and minoring in history in pursuit of a three-year bachelor of arts degree. She will graduate in 2022 and join the faculty of education to become a high school teacher.

Topham said her time with 4-H influenced her decision to pursue a career in education.

"I felt a much larger responsibility completing my post-secondary education because I know that I'm not only responsible for myself, but I'm responsible for what I'm going to be teaching in the future," Topham said. "That whole 'learn to do by doing' concept is totally applicable here, it's really put a lot of positive pressure on me to stay engaged in my classes and keep up with all my readings because I know that the knowledge that I'm gaining is going to be helping the students that I'm teaching in the future.

During her time as a 4-H member, Topham participated in a vast selection of projects.

"Being a multi-purpose club ... we focus more on skills like cooking, sewing. There's a money management project; we have an outdoor survival project that's very popular," Topham said. "My interests were geared towards the cooking and cleaning. I did a project one year on tie-dye, which was really fun."

Topham was involved in 4-H since she was eight years old and remained involved in the organization until she graduated high school.

For her, the program was a family affair: her older sister Linnae and younger brother Cole also participated in the club, while her mom, Corinne, served as a leader. Seeing her family involved with the club inspired her to remain active in the program and fuel her eagerness to take on new projects.

Topham added the communications skills she learned while serving as a 4-H member also enhanced her experience with the program.

She can still see how the public speaking skills she learned have benefited her in school. She added she draws on what she learned to this day.

Topham also served as club president for three years and also gained experience as vice-president and secretary.

She added she has also been able to participate in a variety of rich experiences through 4-H including travelling to Ottawa, Washington, D.C., Nova Scotia and throughout the province. As a young adult accessing those unique experiences opened her eyes to different opportunities and transformed how she engages with the world.

Topham's mom encouraged her to apply for the scholarship because of the experience and impact she made in the community during her time with 4-H. She was unsure what to expect as she knew there would be a lot of competition because of the plethora of great youth leaders 4-H produces.

"4-H really gave me a sense of community growing up. I always knew that I could rely on the members of my club and the parents who volunteered in the club— That really kept me engaged," Topham said. "Everyone who was involved in 4-H, really, really, was passionate about what they were doing and they wanted to add to our community of Minnedosa."

### **Cameron Giannotti**

Cameron Giannotti received a \$10,000 scholarship in honour of Rona Kamfoly or the Ethelbert 4-H Club.

Giannotti was a proud member of the ~~Bells, Bows~~ <sup>BELLES, BEAUX</sup> and Builders 4-H Club out of Neepawa for nine years.

He is appreciative of the scholarship and is honoured to be a member of the first cohort of recipients.

Giannotti was enjoying lunch with friends when he found out he would be receiving the scholarship, he said, and it was exciting being able to share the good news with them.

"It means being able to pursue a further degree without that additional pressure of needing to know where I might be able to get those funds to fund my studies," Giannotti said. "That frees up room to be able to partake in different experiential learning

opportunities like exchanges or a co-op term, feeding back into that 'learning to do by doing' motto that 4-H has."

He hopes the scholarship will give him the opportunity to get out into the community and fully immerse himself in what he is learning in a practical setting.

Giannotti is in the midst of applying to various Canadian law schools and hopes to attend the University of Manitoba, the University of Victoria or the University of British Columbia (UBC).

He completed his undergrad degree in Geography from the UBC and obtained a graduate degree in Communications and Technology from the University of Alberta.

He plans to take what he learns and combine it with his existing education and career background to act as an environmental lawyer.

"I was looking at environmental sustainability and environmental management primarily. With my graduate degree my research looked at the environmental impacts of social media hot spots, which is the tie into the technology side of things," Giannotti said. His work centred on how people can become increasingly aware of different destinations through social media which then increases the number of visitors at a location which can lead to damage at a site.

Giannotti enjoyed his time with his 4-H club because he was able to tackle a diversity of projects including woodworking, money management, cooking, robotics and other activities.

The variety of available activities made his membership a fun and engaging experience because he could try different things each year while building friendships and supporting the community.

Giannotti said he still uses the skills he gained in the club, including leadership, meeting management and communication skills. Giannotti held various executive positions in the club ranging from president to treasurer.

When he reflects back on his time with the Neepawa Club, he is grateful for the strong foundation of skills he was able to build.

He added his time in 4-H imparted the importance of community service and giving back to others through events like highway cleanups and volunteering.

"Those really drove home the need to remain involved with your community and look for ways to better it for everyone," Giannotti said.

» [ckemp@brandonsun.com](mailto:ckemp@brandonsun.com)

» Twitter: [@The\\_ChelseaKemp](https://twitter.com/The_ChelseaKemp)

---

## We need your support! Local journalism needs your support!

As we navigate through unprecedented times, our journalists are working harder than ever to bring you the latest local updates to keep you safe and informed.

Now, more than ever, we need your support.

Starting at \$12.42/month you can access your Brandon Sun online and full access to all content as it appears on our website.

or call circulation directly at (204) 727-0527.

Your pledge helps to ensure we provide the news that matters most to your community!