



Sammie Nyre (center) watches the cows in the barnyard with her sisters Carlee and Kayla.

Family Traditions

President's scholarship winner follows in the footsteps of three generations of volunteers

I WANT TO WORK ON THE family dairy farm. It has been in my family for 100 years. I want to prove that small family farms can still make it in today's world."

This is probably not something you would expect to hear coming from the average college sophomore. Then again, there really isn't anything average about Samantha Nyre.

At the age of 19, Sammie has already been an active volunteer for a decade, not to mention her long list of other extra-curricular activities. "When someone needs help with something. I usually just raise my hand and say I'll do it," she states in a matter-of-fact way.

This help-when-needed attitude is deeply rooted in family tradition. All four of Sammie's grandparents have spent time volunteering, from mentoring elementary students to helping out at church. Her parents and sisters are also active volunteers. According to Sammie, "Volunteering is the one thing that really helps us [the family] get closer to one another."

Although Sammie's entire family has had a significant impact in shaping her life, there is one particular family member to whom she gives special credit for helping her become the person she is today. Grandpa (David) Nyre, who passed away about a year ago, was a major role model in her life. "He always pushed me to try new things and never

have regrets over not doing something," she remembers.

That is a lesson that Sammie has carried with her to college. In fact, one of her primary college goals is to make sure that she is very involved. She doesn't want to be there and miss out on experiences. She is currently involved in Track & Field, Crops & Soils Club, and the Association of Women in Agriculture. She also has hobbies like intramural basketball and volleyball, photography, bowling, and her favorite activity, hanging out with family and friends.

Although Sammie admits it will be more difficult to make time to volunteer with so many activities and a busy school schedule, she knows she will continue to be active through church—serving communion, reading, or singing when she goes home on weekends. She also volunteers through a track & field program in which the athletes work with kids to help generate interest in sports and staying active.

Sammie considers herself to be a good teacher and enjoys working with



The Nyre family, clockwise, left to right: Samantha, Dave, Jeanne, Kayla, and Carlee.

kids. She has even considered a major in agricultural education. When she entered an agronomy contest through FFA (Future Farmers of America), however, she realized a stronger interest. A summer internship with Countryside Cooperative helped confirm the passion. Although she loves agronomy and has chosen crops & soils as a major, Sammie decided to go with dairy science as a minor. This way, she can pursue both her agronomy interest and work on the family farm at some point in the future.

With her active interest in agriculture, Sammie chose to attend the University of Wisconsin–River Falls because of its reputation for having a good agricultural program. She spent her entire high school career actively involved in FFA. She held positions as secretary, president, and chairman for the Food for America program, and she eventually earned a state degree.

Food for America, an FFA project dedicated to teaching elementary students about agriculture, remains Sammie’s most memorable volunteer experience. As chairman of the Food for America program, Sammie encouraged every FFA member to get involved and



Sammie (left), as Miss Mondovi, volunteers at the 2006 Tourist Park Easter Egg Hunt with her attendants, Sara Nogle and Rachael Mizer.

eventually earned the support of 38 out of 48 members. She felt that good leadership was essential to the success of the project—making sure everyone has a role, knows what to do, and can express their ideas.

Through this program, high school FFA members work in elementary classrooms (kindergarten–5th grade) to teach the youngsters everything from how agriculture relates to them and their community, to how to treat a farm animal. Sammie was surprised to learn that many of the younger children didn’t know where milk comes from (even in a small town like Mondovi). Under Sammie’s leadership, the Food for America program ranked 8th in Wisconsin in 2006.

The Food for America program wasn’t the only leadership experience

Sammie’s had; it seems she’s been looked up to her whole life. Sammie has two younger sisters: Carlee, who is 16, and Kayla, who is 14. “Being the oldest means you have to be a role model every day because someone is always watching what you do,” she shares.

But Sammie’s sisters weren’t the only ones who looked up to her. She was also chosen as Miss Mondovi and as her high school’s Homecoming Queen. Being part of the Miss Mondovi Court was particularly exciting for Sammie, and not just because of all the fun things they got to do. Sammie remembers looking up to Miss Mondovi when she was a little girl and admits it’s a good feeling knowing that now you are that girl you once looked up to.

Overall, Sammie has learned a lot from her volunteer experiences. No matter how diverse the projects, she enjoys them because she genuinely loves helping other people.

Sammie is a hard worker. She is very unlikely to give up when times are tough because she believes that there is always another way to get something done. It is with these remarkable qualities that she will take on the responsibility of helping the family dairy farm continue to succeed.

The farm and everything it represents are part of what makes Sammie who she is. Although the family dairy farm only has about 50 cattle, Sammie is determined to stop big businesses from pushing small family farms around. She knows this will be difficult because smaller farms have significantly fewer resources than large corporate farms. However, with the help of a strong work ethic, good leadership skills, an encouraging attitude, and ample love and support from family and friends, Sammie should have no problem confronting the challenge. ♦



During the PeeWee show at the Buffalo County Fair, Sammie interviews Marin Jackson.