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Perhaps we've met in person. Maybe you've heard me speak or read an article I wrote. Or you might remember me as 'Alice'. Last year I traveled the state of Wisconsin as the 69<sup>th</sup> Alice in Dairyland and had the opportunity to meet so many wonderful people.

Each day as Alice, I told the story of Wisconsin agriculture in an effort to educate the public. I gave hundreds of speeches and interviews, and spoke to thousands of people.

**But what you probably didn't know is that I didn't always have the ability to communicate so easily.**

At the age of four, I was diagnosed with a severe speech impediment. My brother often served as my personal translator as I was unable to say 97% of the alphabet and the vast majority of my utterances were not understood.

I worked intensively with speech therapists who helped me overcome my speech impediment. But despite my words being clear, I still lacked confidence in my abilities.



Around the time of my graduation from speech therapy, I joined the 4-H club in my hometown of Evansville, in Rock County. **It was through 4-H that I finally found my voice.**

From the small task of standing in front of the club to lead the 4-H pledge at one of our monthly meetings to learning how to be an active member of a club committee, each opportunity 4-H presented allowed my confidence to grow. It was the 4-H community that provided the framework for a young, unsure girl to reach higher and grow stronger.

Soon I found myself involved in our club's music and drama group. I got involved in leadership activities at the club, county and state level. Ultimately, I served as the

President of the Wisconsin 4-H Youth Leadership Council and earned a trip to National 4-H Congress.

With each experience my ability to communicate improved, and **I discovered my voice.**

*Please return this form in the enclosed envelope. Thank You!*



**Yes! I want to help other 4-Hers find their voices.**



Not only did 4-H help me find my voice, it also helped me find my passions, my best friends and my best self. Through 4-H I grew into a confident, compassionate, outgoing and determined individual who strives to make a difference in the lives of those around me.

Each and every day we are surrounded by people with unique stories. They are the people passing us on the highway, the people we accidentally bump into in the hallway, and the people we politely smile at as we hustle through our busy days. Every person has been shaped by an experience in their life. **As for me, I was shaped by 4-H.**

4-H has shaped my past, my present and my future self.

I do not think my story is unique. I believe that 4-H changes young people every day. 4-H grows confidence. 4-H grows our youth to be successful adults. **4-H grows true leaders.**

Whether it is finding new hobbies or passions, building skills that help launch a successful career, or making decisions with confidence, 4-H provides a safe environment to learn, explore and thrive.

I will be forever thankful for the role 4-H played in my life, and for the adult mentors who make 4-H happen in communities across the state. And it is in that spirit of thankfulness that I am asking you to join me in support of 4-H. I ask you to remember the mentors that helped you find your voice, and to **make a contribution so 4-H can help the next generation of kids find theirs.**

Thank you for helping 4-H grow true leaders.

Forever a Clover,

*Ann O'Leary*



*Thank  
you!*

Ann O'Leary  
Proud 4-H Alumna

*This year the Wisconsin 4-H Foundation provided more than a quarter of a million dollars to support Wisconsin 4-H, mostly due to people like you, who made a commitment to sustain 4-H. Your gifts allowed youth from across the state to participate in development activities that strengthened their skills in areas like communication, teamwork, conflict resolution, decision-making and more ... skills that are increasingly important. But there is so much more we can do.*

*We ask you to **join Ann now in supporting our youth by making a contribution to the Wisconsin 4-H Foundation.** Your tax-deductible gift will allow Wisconsin 4-H develop our youth and **Grow True Leaders.***