

Good morning!

My name is Sara Newsome and I am a second year member of the Ohio State Fair Junior Fair Board representing 4-H. I am serving as the president of the 2023 board, which has already been an incredible adventure. As a board, we have had the opportunity to learn, grow, and laugh alongside one another as we have made memories that will truly last a lifetime.

I invite you over the coming days to get to know the Junior Fair Board in a capacity different from what you have before. I serve alongside 20 of the most incredible teens and young adults that you will have the opportunity to meet. I know this and I believe this because I have heard their stories and know what it took for them to get here. I don't mean it lightly when I say that each of them is more accomplished than the next, and I know that they will continue to do great things.

Our board is composed of youth organizations from across the state including 4-H, FFA, Farm Bureau, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, Technology Education, and our at-large members. This means that we all come from different backgrounds. From those of you that have spoken with us thus far, you know that some of us were raised in cities, and others of us on farms. While we all come from different walks of life, we each ended up in the same place and I believe that is truly representative of what the Ohio state Fair is.

Over the course of the fair people will come through the gates with every level of knowledge about agriculture, the state of Ohio, and how they work together. We are working together to educate people on how they can be involved in the beautiful story of agriculture in Ohio and breaking stereotypes every day. You will see our blue polos across the State Fairgrounds, and I encourage you to approach us at any time. Ask about our experiences, favorite parts of the fair, and how we ended up where we are now, and I promise you'll be in for a good conversation.

We are the next generation of people passionate about the Ohio State Fair, agriculture, and the great place it holds in Ohio's history. I invite you to share your passions with us so we can continue carrying them forward. Allow us to work together in a way that best serves our shared goals and encourages future growth and collaboration.

We have first and second year members with varying levels of experience, and each of us will come to acknowledge and appreciate the role of the fair in our lives and those of our community during the fair. We thank you first and foremost for the part that you play in ensuring the State Fair runs smoothly and serves the people to the best of its ability.

As you go about the fair and see Junior Fair Board members, know how hard we worked to be here and how grateful we are for the experience. This is something each of us has a unique passion for and are taking as an opportunity to learn and grow. We complete many tasks across the fairgrounds, some that we are familiar with and others that provide a challenge. What that means is that each of us has the opportunity to expand our horizons and try something new.

Something I learned in my first year as a Junior Fair Board member is that there is no bad part of the state fair.

I invite you to step into our shoes over the next few days of the State Fair, to see the fair through the eyes of someone excited about their jobs and joyful for what their role in the fair allows others to experience. You hold great responsibility, but that doesn't mean you lack the capacity for great fun. Choose activities out of your comfort zone and out of your job description and see how exciting the State Fair can be. Enjoy the fair like a true fairgoer, and see the attractions, exhibits, and grounds like they would. We look forward to learning and growing alongside many of you through the remainder of the fair.

On behalf of the 2023 Ohio State fair Junior Fair Board, I thank you for the work that you do and wish you a wonderful rest of the fair! Thank you!