

Name: Sophie Trusty

Year of Graduation: 2011

Current School: University of New Hampshire

Major: Dual Major of Sustainable Agriculture and EcoGastronomy

When I was in eighth grade I heard about the agriscience program being offered at Westhill High School. I had loved animals and plants from a very young age and decided that I would apply for the program and see how it went. My freshman year of high school was a difficult period in my life, and I struggled with all my classes, including agriscience. By the end of the year I had started to regain some interest in school, and I applied for a leadership position within the FFA. I did not receive this position, due to my rough start within the program, but I did find some resolve and passion to be involved the next year. My sophomore year I worked hard in my classes, and proved myself to be a positive influence within the ag program. I started to take initiative in the program and I began attending the plant sales, dog washes, and scrapbook meetings. By the end of the year I had not only gained a position on the officer team of the FFA as Parliamentarian, I had been awarded the FFA Leadership Award at the spring banquet. I realized how much support I had within the program, from my fellow officers, my classmates, and my teachers. Everyone there wanted me to succeed, and opportunities for involvement were everywhere.

My junior year was where everything began to come together. I had found support and drive, and now I got to pick the classes that truly interested me within the program. That year I discovered my passion for plant science. Coupled with my intense drive to do well in the program and to keep excelling in school, I felt I had found my true purpose for the first time in my life. After seeing how much interest I had with working in the greenhouse, Dr. Lisy worked with me one on one, teaching me aspects of plant production and greenhouse maintenance. He appointed me Greenhouse Manager for my senior year, something that I was extremely proud of. I was also able to advance to being Secretary of the FFA and was awarded the FFA Leadership Award again. My senior year I worked hard individually within the greenhouse and as a team with the Vice President and the President. Together we were able to achieve a lot within the program and hopefully helped show other students that they can help make changes too.

I decided to apply to University of New Hampshire as my top school, with a major in Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems. Had I not been in the ag program I am certain that I would not have discovered what I wanted to do with my life, let alone been able to achieve it. My senior year I also took what I would describe as the most challenging and rewarding class of my high school career, Early College Experience Biology with Dr. Lisy. No other class that I took in high school prepared me more for college. This is one of the most beautiful things about the ag program, that there are classes which prepare you for real life, hands on work, and that

there are classes which test your time management and studying techniques like real college classes do.

So far in my first year of college I have been fortunate enough not to have had a class as difficult as that Biology class was, but I have utilized the same studying skills that I developed because of it. Because of the classes that I took in the ag program, I feel that I have had a head start compared to the other students within my major. I often find myself thinking about how I already learned this concept or term in a class with Dr. Lisy. Finally, the ag program helped me to get three different scholarships for college. Scholarships eased some of the financial burden of college as well as serving as a great addition to my already lengthy resume, also due exclusively to the ag program. Without the ag program and all its incredible teachers, faculty, and diverse array of students I am positive that I would not be in college right now, especially at a college I love, pursuing a major I feel passionate about, and holding a 3.8 GPA my freshman year.