

2014 Leg Up Award Winner

Gretchen Ashauer – Hanover County

This year's Leg Up Award winner was described by her club leaders as "an angel who has gracefully suffered every bit of bad luck a horseman can." Yet, her story represents the true resilience and spirit of 4-H.

Just before her very first district show, her project pony suffered a bout of laminitis and was diagnosed with Cushing's disease. Though unable to ride, she was still able to compete at the state show in showmanship. Undaunted, she began again the following year with a new project pony who was diagnosed with a strangulating lymphoma and underwent colic surgery in June. Again, with the goal of returning to states, she sunk her efforts into showmanship, returning with her surviving pony to win reserve champion in the division. The next year, her third project pony suffered an injury and was unable to compete, but she came to all of her club events anyway, helped to clean horses and riders, coached showmanship, and faithfully cheered her club mates on from the sidelines. Sadly, amidst these unfortunate circumstances, her mother, Robin, passed away from Hodgkin's disease. Her mother was her motivation and inspiration in all of her horse endeavors. Despite these losses, this young lady continued to support her club mates and find family in 4-H. Her final attempt to find a project horse ended this year when she realized that her high school schedule and after school job would not allow her the time to properly condition a horse for the rigors of the dressage discipline. With her family and horse in mind, she gracefully bowed out again from competing, but is still here at the state show to enthusiastically support her friends.

She told her club last night that she would be so sad if she was not able to have horses in her future. Gretchen, your club wants to tell you that you will *always* have horses and your 4-H family to support you, whatever comes your way. This year's Leg Up Award winner is Gretchen Ashauer of Hanover County.

2014 Connie Collier Scholarship Winners

Arielle Ampeh - Fairfax County - \$1200

Taylor Reed - Henrico County - \$1200

This scholarship is made possible through contributions given in memory of Constance "Connie" Collier (1946-2010). Connie spent countless hours over her lifetime to improve and promote the equine industry in Virginia, but her biggest passion was supporting youth involved in the 4-H Horse Program. Among her good works, Connie served as a 4-H Horse Club leader in Henrico County, Treasurer of the Virginia State 4-H Championship Horse and Pony Show and also played a key role in the drill team division's growth and improvement. Connie was also a Virginia 4-H alumnus and was an exhibitor in the early years of the Virginia State 4-H Championship Horse and Pony Show. Through this scholarship, we hope that Connie's lifetime commitment to the 4-H Horse Program will live on and inspire current and past exhibitors to give back to the Virginia 4-H Horse Program.