

Get Involved, Show Your Passion

Angus juniors can learn and grow through participation in NJAA activities and find further support in Angus Foundation scholarships.

by *Katie Allen, Angus Foundation*

Kathryn Coon loves the beauty of rural life and Angus cattle. In fact, the National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) member from Bethel, Mo., says her favorite contest at the National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) is the photography contest because she enjoys how the photos capture this rural beauty from all areas of the country.

“People say a picture is worth a thousand words, and I agree,” she says. “It is hard to carry a camera when working with cattle, but equally important is capturing our love

for the Angus cattle and the NJAA. These pictures represent the beautiful moments we experience, and it is important to share these testimonies with people who do not understand animal agriculture.”

Coon says these photos can be used for the photo contest and to document juniors’ activities throughout their NJAA careers. Participating in contests such as photography also helps junior members build up their Angus

résumés and make them competitive for Angus Foundation scholarships.

Coon knows how important Angus Foundation scholarships are to assist with college education expenses. In the past she has won a \$3,000 general scholarship from

the Angus Foundation and was one of two \$5,000 Richard “Dick” Spader scholarship winners in 2012. Dick Spader was an executive vice president for the American Angus Association and friend of the Angus breed. Brooke Harward, Richfield, N.C., was the other 2012 Spader scholarship winner. Harward was featured in the April 2013 *Angus Journal*.



Finding your niche

A sophomore at the University of Missouri–Columbia majoring in agricultural education, Coon hopes to one day become an ag teacher. She says scholarship support from the Angus Foundation has been a major help in her educational career.

“I place extreme importance on education for myself and for others I hope to teach in the future,” Coon says. “I hope experiences in educational classes and in organizational experiences similar to the NJAA will build my knowledge, and I will pass the knowledge on to my students.”

Coon says her Angus Foundation scholarships are helping her pay for a variety of classes, including genetics, ethics and marketing. The scholarships have also helped her in purchasing books and studying abroad. Coon encourages Angus juniors to take the time to complete the Angus Foundation scholarship application, which is available at www.angusfoundation.org and due May 1 each year.

To continue to add more Angus involvement on the scholarship application, Coon says it is important for juniors to participate in NJAA activities that fit their interests, just as she has done in finding her photography niche.

“Regardless if you show cattle, participate in the contests, or both, the NJAA is a great way for juniors to show talent and passion for Angus cattle,” Coon says. “I remember

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► Kathryn Coon won a \$3,000 general scholarship from the Angus Foundation, and she was one of two winners of the \$5,000 Richard “Dick” Spader Scholarship in 2012.



► Coon says the LEAD is one of her favorite activities. Team-building, communication and leadership skills are taught through fun activities.



► Coon is involved with the Missouri Junior Angus Association, which will host the 2013 NJAS in Kansas City. Coon serves as junior co-chair for the show.

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when I was 9 or 10, one of the older junior members gave the Missouri juniors a little advice. He said 'get involved.' It does not matter what you do, because there are so many activities you can take part in. Find a few areas that fit your interests and focus on doing your best in those areas."

Absorb it all

Outside of contest participation at the NJAS each year, Coon says another one of her favorite events is the annual Leaders Engaged in Angus Development (LEAD) conference. The 2013 LEAD will be hosted in New Orleans, La.



►The NJAA/*Angus Journal* photo contest is Coon's favorite contest because it captures rural beauty from all over the country. Her picture "The Gate Keeper" (right) placed third in the people category of the Junior division in the 2003 contest.

"Every year is a new leadership experience, new friends, and another chance to see Angus operations and members at work," Coon says. "Attend these activities with the attitude you are going to learn everything you can from the experts in the field. From a new idea in communication to a team-building exercise to better organization skills, LEAD provides great lessons and fun experiences every year."

In addition to contests and LEAD, Coon says another way to get involved in the NJAA and gain more experience to put on scholarship applications is by volunteering. Every year at the NJAS, there are community service projects in which juniors can become involved.



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"In 2008, at the NJAS in Des Moines, we collected pop tabs for the Ronald McDonald House," Coon says. "Through the combined efforts of 47 states, our donation was the largest that collection office had ever received. Our efforts lightened the load of people with suffering loved ones. Contributing to volunteer efforts is important for scholarship applications,

and it is a blessing in our lives and the lives of those in need."

Taking advantage of opportunities in the NJAA is worth it to individuals like Coon, who know they are receiving benefits now to help them later in life. Those benefits come in gaining knowledge about Angus cattle and agriculture, networking with other youth from across the country, helping others in need and receiving scholarship support to give them a jump start on a great career.

"It is an honor to receive scholarships, and I want to thank the Angus Foundation, the Spader family and the donors for the financial support they provide to help myself and other juniors achieve our career goals," Coon says.



Editor's Note: *Katie Allen is director of communications and public relations for the Angus Foundation.*