

Narragansett High School Students Impress at the R.I. Home Show.

The 2018 Rhode Island Home Show came with the unique opportunity for our Narragansett High School FFA Students to be involved in the designing, preparation, and event logistics in an effort to make this large event a successful one.

As a part of its CTE Pathway, the Narragansett High School offers students in and out of district the chance to dive into Agriculture Science, where opportunities like this allow students to gain real-world experience in the field, helping fuel the fire for pursuing a passion for their trade. This is the third year that the NHS Agriculture Science program has participated in the home show, with this being the largest landscape display in many years. This was also the first year that the large display was all put together with just high school students (both from Narragansett and surrounding areas.)

Students were responsible for landscape design implementation, including a living wall and a Zen garden. During the first day, students were able to learn how to lay down a stone patio and fire pit from area professionals, furthering their skill set. They also helped construct a greenhouse on-site and display booths, putting their Landscape Design and Agriculture Mechanics training to work. Partnership for these projects were organized by Louis Cotoia, head of R.I. Builders Association and Distributor for Arnold Lumber. They also were responsible for flowering shrubbery and worked in the NHS greenhouse at the request of the nurseries to ensure all were bloomed perfectly before transporting them to the show.

Over the course of the three-days before the show, NHS had more than 50 students present to participate in the construction of the exhibits. The convention center gave the students two spots to set up in the show including an entrance location which greeted everyone who walked in. The entrance display showcased what the students experience here at NHS such as working in the greenhouse or bottling homemade, local syrup. The larger display represented Rhode Island FFA through the forced greenery, floral installments and landscaping design.

Student Highlights:

- Floriculture students had the chance to work in the 'floral fusion' area with professional designer, Blakley Szosz. (*Head of the R.I. Garden Club, R.I. Federation of Floral Designers, and Head Gardener of R.I. Country Club.*) Our students observed the professional competition and interacted with professional florists before being sent off to do their own competition later judged by these professionals. They designed 6 beautiful urns that welcomed guests to the flower and garden section of the home show. They did so well with the project that the head of the floral show asked our students to join them on stage during the official demonstration. Several students were also requested by Szosz to act as assistants for an upcoming flower presentation due to their creativity and passion at the show.
- Students who worked at the show all weekend helped staff our department's booth where they talked about and sold the hand-bottled Maple Syrup and plants that they tended to. In doing this, students raised more than \$1,000 that will directly benefit NHS Agri-Science programs.

This event was a great kick-off to the lively spring season at NHS and the numerous contests students will soon be participating in at the state's convention during the end of April. We will also be hosting the Rhode Island FFA State Banquet on April 28 where our students will receive awards for the many competitions they have completed this school year. We are proud of our students and the pride they put into their work through Agriculture Science. They demonstrated the utmost professionalism, took charge of their projects, and collectively helped make the 2018 Home Show a beautiful and impressive one. We are confident that this recent collaboration will help further shed light on the leadership and competency of the FFA program here and how our talented students accomplished many difficult and advanced tasks with detail and most of all, enthusiasm.