

Paige LaPolt-Peloso



BY PATRICIO
ROBAYO

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Paige
LaPolt – Peloso

Paige LaPolt – Peloso has always loved the outdoors and horses, and is fortunate enough to have a career that encompasses both her passions.

LaPolt – Peloso is the Barn Manager for New Hope Community. She

was born and raised in Sullivan County and recently married her husband, Chris.

LaPolt – Peloso helps maintain New Hope Community's Stables at McCoy Meadow, which offers an array of Therapeutic Horseback

Riding/In House Program (THRIP) that provides equine and other animal therapies that enhance the lives of those with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

"Just seeing the impact that it has on the people that I work with is just really special," said LaPolt – Peloso.

She recalls one individual who had minimal capability with their speech, but when they saw LaPolt – Peloso's dog Bear, they yelled out, "Dog!"

"It was just like one of those things that were just like, so monumental, I'll never forget that," said LaPolt – Peloso.

Growing up in Bethel, she went to Liberty High School, followed her passion for horses, attended SUNY Morrisville, and majored in Equine Science and Management, concentrating on breaking and training.

What made LaPolt – Peloso want to go into this field? She said she always had pets growing up, and one day her sister wanted to take horseback riding lessons.

And after she saw what it was like at the horse farm and watching folks ride,

she said she knew she wanted to do this.

When she was 13, she started working on the horse farm, taking care of the horses, and doing various chores.

When it came down to picking where she wanted to go to college and what to study, she went with her passion for animals and attended SUNY Morrisville.

She had the choice between racing cars or horses, and she went with horses.

She was an active race car driver at the Bethel Motor Speedway at one time, and that race track has seen three generations of her family race along with her husband.

Nowadays, LaPolt – Peloso can be seen in the pit crew helping to maintain her husband's race car.

When she earned her Associate's Degree from SUNY Morrisville, she came home for the summer and was told that New Hope Community was looking for a riding instructor.

She soon applied and was happy to accept and start her career in New Hope.

Nine years later, LaPolt – Peloso is now the Barn Manager at New Hope Community and helps oversee the stables and animals.

Since her time at New Hope, she has

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Paige LaPolt-Peloso

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take a step back and reprioritize, so he left the company, but speaks highly of his experience at FSH.

“What I love most about Foster Supply is that whatever you want, you can go for it,” he said. “They allowed me to really develop whatever skills I felt I needed ... whatever programs I wanted to run ... It was very free.”

Through the height of the pandemic he worked as a consultant for Spruce Home Goods in Callicoon, and when things began to improve, the itch to get back in the kitchen returned.

JP saw an opening for the position of executive chef at Callicoon Hills, and during the interview, said he had a beautiful and organic conversation with them. They felt he was the perfect fit for the job, and he's been there since their opening in 2021.

JP states that at Callicoon Hills he has the same freedoms he did at the North Branch Inn, with the added bonus of being able to teach and lead future professionals from SUNY Sullivan and the Culinary Institute of America.

Impact

Through his love of cooking, JP also has a passion to create, as well as teach.

“I have that opportunity, a responsibility even, to extend who I am and what I do to people who are deciding if this is a passion for them,” JP explained.

Sarah adds that for both of them working in the hospitality industry,



PHOTO BY LAWRENCE BRAUN
Sarah Banks

the impact they have on a daily basis is another thing they enjoy.

“The hospitality industry is full of unsung heroes,” said Sarah, “because of the impact that every single person you might meet in a hotel or restaurant has. They truly have the ability to shape someone’s day.”

Advice to Young Pros

Sarah implores other young professionals to not be afraid to take risks and go after what they want.

“You also have to grind a bit,” she explained. “You’re not gonna show up and have the opportunity hand-

ed to you on a silver platter. You’ve got to really put in the work if you want another opportunity to come your way ... And don’t be afraid to be passionate, because I think passion is what fuels and drives every single successful business in this area and county and I can argue it’s the one trait that most businesses often overlook.”

JP adds that it is important to be driven, focused, to work hard, but also have a willingness to learn.

“There’s growth and opportunity coming your way at all times,” he said, “so be humble, be dedicated ... enjoy it and grow with it.”

PAIGE:
Barn manager

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expanded the animals to include Guinea Pigs, chickens, and Bear the dog.

When she is not working with the individuals at New Hope Community, LaPolt – Peloso likes to spend her summers at the race track in the pit crew or hiking, fishing and hunting.

And in the winter, she likes to hit the snow trails with her snowmobile, trekking 1,500 miles last year.

She loves to garden, spend time at the lake, and play first base for the Sullivan County Women’s Softball League and their co-ed league and loves her three dogs, Bear, Mr. Mush, and Hank.

LaPolt – Peloso wanted to make Sullivan County her home and said her family being here has made it even more special.

“I really had a great childhood. I was able to explore and go hunting and fishing with my uncle, grandpa, and dad. I have a lot of family members that serve the community,” said LaPolt – Peloso.

She further explained, “My grandfather was a town constable; my other grandfather worked with the highway department. My uncle works in the highway department, and I have several volunteer firemen [in my family] including my dad.”

She said one of the keys to her success at New Hope Community has been, “Surrounding myself with great people; I have a great team here that works so well together.”

Furthermore, she said, “I think that the biggest thing is being creative and constantly changing, and I think that applies to life, too. You have to be willing to make yourself vulnerable and take chances and stick to your core beliefs.”

She said she would love to see the program at New Hope expand and grow with more animals in the future.

She added, “Fostering those relationships [at New Hope] is my favorite part of the day. I feel very fortunate that I’m able to impact people’s day. It’s not something that I take lightly. I try to make every interaction and every experience that they have here a positive one.”

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