



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – June 18, 2024**  
***Colorado's 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Best of the Best Junior***  
***Hosted By Plum Creek Kennel Club***  
**Organized by the Colorado Junior Foundation (CJF)**  
**Awards Four (4) Junior Scholarships!**



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***Colorado's 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Best of the Best Junior Event, hosted by Plum Creek Kennel Club was a wonderful success, awarding four (4) junior scholarships!***

Fifteen juniors qualified and 13 competed, June 15, 2024, in 2 preliminary competitions of Colorado's 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Best of the Best Junior. Judges were Ms. Diana Wilson for Prelim one and Ms. Molly Gard-Waller for Prelim two. They had outstanding juniors to choose from and sent six (6) juniors to the finals – Isabelle Bokelman, Anja Cikara-Gocke, Taylor Johnson, Demery Livingston, Caleigh Novak and Owen Steffen.

The finals were then judged by Dr. Steven L. Keating and the line-up was stellar! It was filled with Colorado's top juniors, who are also some of the country's top juniors. The future of our sport, most likely will include these and other such talented kids!

Isabelle Bokelman was the Best Junior and received a \$1,000 scholarship from the Colorado Junior Foundation, sponsored by Rex of White Way.

Taylor Johnson was Reserve Best Junior and received a \$500 scholarship from the Colorado Junior Foundation sponsored by Dog Sports America.

Best Junior and Reserve Best Junior are traditional awards within the American Kennel Club (AKC) dog show structure; but the Colorado Junior Foundation went further and awarded two more nontraditional awards and scholarships! One the Junior Sportsman Award, and the other the Junior's Choice Award!

Isabelle Bokelman (who had already been awarded Best Junior) also received the Junior Sportsman Award, the highest honor, and a \$1,500 scholarship sponsored by the Colorado Junior Foundation. This award required juniors submit a CJF Junior Sportsman Application sharing more about them, beyond just dog showing. Things like what dog clubs they are a member of; how they participate in public education and volunteer work for purebred dogs; if they have breed dogs, finished champions, grand champions, or titled a dog in other dog sports; plus, their school and career plans. This is to reward a well-rounded junior!  
*Note: The CJF does not know of another such award in the AKC sport of dogs.*

Caleigh Novak received the Junior's Choice, a unique honor where the juniors voted who is their choice (winner)! This is an important step for juniors in the sport to be able to recognize another with truly remarkable skills and talent. *Note: The CJF is unaware of any other similar award in the sport of dogs!*

*"We loved hosting Colorado's 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Best of the Best Junior", says Plum Creek Kennel Club President,*

Barbara White; *“and in Colorado we have some of the highest junior talent in the sport of dogs.”*

Colorado Junior Foundation President Marlene Groves states, *“In a sport where many participants are aging, we recognize, juniors are the future. So, a group of leaders in the Colorado dog community decided to work together to create additional ways to honor and support them – which then created our nonprofit charity. We do hope we can be an example and model for other areas and states to do something similar!”*

Colorado’s 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Best of the Best Junior would not have been possible without the founding kennel clubs (Arapahoe KC, Buckhorn Valley KC, Colorado KC, Greeley KC, Plum Creek KC, Southern Colorado KC), or without the support and donations from so many in the local dog community. It had a great panel of junior judges along with a festive and fun environment to roll out this annual event. The CJF will be reviewing any changes or additions needed and is already busy planning the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> annual events!

#### PHOTOS PROVIDED AND APPROVED FOR USE:

1. Preliminary Group 1 – Judge Ms. Diana Wilson with juniors (L to R): Anja Cikara-Gocke, Landon Livingston, Dana Pelto, Casey Walker, Demery Livingston, Cameron Johnson and Taylor Johnson.
2. Preliminary Group 2 – Judge Ms. Molly Gard-Waller with juniors (L to R): Bryonna Thompson, Owen Steffen, Caleigh Novak, Isabelle Bokelman, Kaylee Wagoner and Sladen Capps.
3. Ms. Isabelle Bokelman with her Rat Terrier Skyla.
4. Ms. Taylor Johnson with her Old English Sheepdog Sven.
5. Ms. Caleigh Novak with Cheeto the Pomeranian.
6. AKC Judge Dr. Steven L. Keating awarding Ms. Isabelle Bokelman Best Junior of Colorado’s 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Best of the Best competition (also in the photo is Ms. Demery Livingston who came to offer congratulations).
7. AKC Judge Dr. Steven L Keating awarding Ms. Taylor Johnson Reserve Best Junior of Colorado’s 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Best of the Best competition (also included in this photo is Marlene Groves, President of the Colorado Junior Foundation).
8. Platteville Colorado’s Mayor Michael Cowper proudly came to present (to his town’s youth) the Junior Sportsman Award to Ms. Isabelle Bokelman (also in the photo Marlene Groves).
9. Castle Rock resident Caleigh Novak receiving the Junior’s Choice Award (also in the photo is Marlene Groves, left, and Plum Creek Kennel Club’s President Barbara White, right). Note: Castle Rock Mayor Jason Gray had planned to present this award.
10. The decorated ring entrance. (With Ms. Taylor Johnson stacking her dog).
11. The prizes and ribbons for the four (4) awards.

#### MORE INFORMATION AND LINKS BELOW

- **The Colorado Junior Foundation** is a formal 501c3 non-profit charity. We are a collaborative group of Colorado All Breed Kennel Clubs and top leaders in the AKC sport of dogs. We look forward to educating and encouraging juniors in the sport of purebred dogs. For more information, please visit [www.ColoradoJuniorFoundation.org](http://www.ColoradoJuniorFoundation.org)
- **Plum Creek Kennel Club** is a licensed AKC member club, welcoming purebred dog enthusiasts to join our club, attend our meetings, events; and of course, participate at our annual dog shows. This year, our 3-day shows are June 14, 15, 16; with Saturday, June 15<sup>th</sup> the largest entry of nearly 1,000 purebred dogs to compete for Best in Show. Website link is – [www.PlumCreekKennelClub.net](http://www.PlumCreekKennelClub.net).
- **The American Kennel Club** is the largest purebred dog registry in the US, and the oversight entity for the AKC sport of purebred dogs. It also is a leading source for canine health, canine education, common sense canine legislation and so much more. Please visit their website - [www.AKC.org](http://www.AKC.org).

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