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Virginia 4-H Foundation

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NEWSLETTER

Youth Livestock Programs Provide 4-H'ers a Wealth of Opportunities

State youth livestock events held across the commonwealth impact more than 3,000 youth annually. Educational programs provide a number of opportunities for youth to expand their knowledge of livestock, improve management and handling skills, and develop responsibility. Youth livestock project members also acquire leadership, communication, and critical-thinking skills through these competitions and events.

Last year was filled with great opportunities for our youth to learn more about their livestock industry of choice and to showcase their hard work. State-wide events, workshops, and contests held in 2013 included Youth Swine Education Day, livestock judging contests, stockmen's contests, Junior Beef Round-Up, youth cattle working, youth poultry convention, and the State Fair of Virginia youth livestock shows.

Virginia's 4-H livestock teams had great success this fall. Virginia's Skillathon Team was recognized as the National Champion Skillathon Team at the competition in Louisville, Ky. The All-Star 4-H Livestock Judging Team also had many successes, winning the Ak-Sar-Ben in Omaha, Neb., and the Southeastern Regional in Raleigh, N.C. The team placed fourth at the North American International Livestock Exposition in Louisville and has been asked to represent the United States in both Scotland and Ireland this summer.

This year will bring many new educational opportunities, including a statewide meat-quality-assurance program for youth. Virginia youth livestock programs are supported by the Youth Livestock Endowment through the Virginia 4-H Foundation. For more information on youth livestock programs or how you can support these programs, please contact Paige Pratt, youth livestock Extension specialist (540-231-4732 or pjpratt@vt.edu).



The 2013 Virginia 4-H Livestock Judging Team. Sitting, from left, Lindsey Fenster, Rockbridge County; John Clouse, Montgomery County; Cody Boden, Frederick County; and Jack Redifer, Montgomery County. Standing, from left, Paige Pratt, 4-H youth livestock Extension specialist and coach; and Todd Conway, a representative of Westway Feeds, one of the award sponsors.

Virginia 4-H: Making the Future

There has been a resurgence in the do-it-yourself (DIY) culture around the world, and it is finding a home in Virginia 4-H. The Maker Movement encompasses unique solutions to problems through tinkering, individual planning, and group collaboration. Examples include modifying homemade objects by repurposing, reusing, and upcycling; fabricating scientific equipment to participate in citizen science; self-publishing books and records; and employing shortcuts or novel methods to increase productivity. Since its beginnings in 1902, 4-H has engaged youth in "making" with a wide variety of projects, such as sewing, quilting, gardening, woodworking, and many others — all examples of DIY. Making is inherent to 4-H, both historically and culturally. It is deeply embedded in diverse and engaging projects in which 4-H youth participate each year. The Maker Education Initiative capitalizes on thinking with the hands through a hands-on, minds-on, design-based learning approach that integrates science, art, technology, math, and engineering. 4-H youth of all ages have become engaged in this revitalized movement.

In Virginia, 4-H has provided professional development training to 4-H agents in collaboration with the Institute of Creativity, Arts, and Technology on Virginia Tech's campus and provided a preservice training at the 2014 Professional Development Conference in February. Funding from Cognizant provided an opportunity to develop and pilot a co-curricular 4-H Maker program in Hanover County. At the end of this learning experience, participating youth were funded to attend and train others in the Youth Pavilion at the World Maker Faire in New York City.

Virginia 4-H Foundation, Hutcheson Hall (0419), 250 Drillfield Drive, Blacksburg, VA 24061

The Virginia 4-H Foundation is a division of the Virginia Tech Foundation, Inc., which has been granted 501(c)(3) nonprofit status by the Internal Revenue Service.

Chair's Update

Dear Friends,

Did you know that 4-H is the largest youth development organization in the country and reaches all corners of our state — rural and urban — with 1-in-6 Virginians



having been a member of 4-H at some point in their lives? In 2012, 4-H youth enrollment in Virginia increased roughly 11 percent to almost 194,000 members with the support of about 15,000 trained adult volunteers. Interestingly, 55 percent of Virginia 4-H enrollment is in areas with populations of more than 50,000.

Virginia 4-H is focusing its programming on three "Mission Mandate" programming emphases: STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics), healthy living, and citizenship. To that end, last year 42 percent of Virginia 4-H'ers completed a project in STEM, 49 percent completed a project in healthy living, and 49 percent completed a project in citizenship. The fact that these percentages add to 140 percent means our youth are completing multiple projects in programming areas we believe are extremely vital to the progress of our society and local communities. That's quite an impact!

Great businesses shower their productive units with capital and empower the leaders of those units to do more. The Virginia 4-H Foundation is working hard to establish a culture of philanthropy and a platform of financial resources to give our youth, volunteers, and staff members what they deserve — the opportunity to take their game to the next level of excellence. Few organizations can objectively claim to make the impact of 4-H.

I am proud of everything our organization is accomplishing and hope you will join me in doing all we can to make the best better!

Yours truly,

Tad Melton, Chair
Virginia 4-H Foundation



A New Endowment for an Old Friend

By Mary Miller, Ph.D.
Chair-Elect, Virginia 4-H Foundation Board

I don't remember the first time I met Kathy Miller. She was an Extension agent in Wythe County in the 1980s and '90s while our children were growing up. They all participated in 4-H, and while Kathy was not the 4-H agent, everyone helps everyone else in an Extension office. She helped with 4-H camp and the state fair, led the Make It With Wool Contest, and participated in many more activities that encouraged our children to develop into the strong leaders they are today. She was an important contributor to the well-being of the people in Wythe County, and I owe her my appreciation for her many years of service.

As a member of the state 4-H Foundation Board, I realized that Wythe County did not have a 4-H endowment. I thought it would be a wonderful idea to start an endowment in Kathy's name. As I reached out to her family, our friends, and other 4-H'ers who had benefitted from Kathy's skills, the most amazing thing happened. Every single person I called pledged to help me, and the Kathy Miller Endowment for Wythe County 4-H was established. The great news is that we were able to share this

information with Kathy prior to her death, and I received a very special card from her letting me know how overwhelmed she was by the honor and how very pleased she was that many others would benefit in the future.



There are many wonderful reasons to establish a 4-H endowment. Endowments have a lasting effect by providing unrestricted funds to support local needs. Agents who have an endowment to work with are quick to share the importance of the resources to their programming.

The 4-H Foundation Board is focused on helping every county establish and grow 4-H endowments. When you are ready to start or build an endowment, the 4-H Foundation Board will be there to help. We are all fortunate that Virginia 4-H is such a strong program, but there is no question that we can enable our agents to do even more.



4-H Creates a Healthier Generation

The evidence about the success of 4-H youth is in. An eight-year longitudinal study conducted by the Institute for Applied Research in Youth Development at Tufts University demonstrated that, when compared to their peers who don't participate in 4-H, 4-H participants:

-  Have lower rates of drug, alcohol, and cigarette use.
-  Are 2.3 times more likely to exercise and be physically active.
-  Are nearly four times more likely to make contributions to their communities.
-  Are nearly two times more likely to plan to go to college.

Camp:

What a powerful four-letter word

When you see it written or hear it spoken, especially if you have experienced it — and even if you haven't — memories and visions of campfires, swimming, and sleeping in bunk beds flood your mind. Research shows that camp improves the lives of youth, making positive impacts in more ways than one. 4-H camp is more than just a place and a program; it's what happens to campers during their experience.



Virginia is unique and fortunate to have six 4-H educational centers that, together, serve 107 cities or counties in the commonwealth. Each center is committed to making camp accessible to all. Affordability is a big part of accessibility. In the words of Mary Miller, chair-elect of the Virginia 4-H Foundation, "Every child *deserves* the opportunity to go to camp." With this in mind, the cost of attending 4-H camp is highly subsidized with scholarships, donations designated to support the camping program, and by the centers' operations. On average, 30-40 percent of the cost of camp is absorbed by the centers themselves. In trying to balance this subsidy, the centers work diligently to recruit and attract off-season business to the camp facilities. The commitment to ensure that a high-quality, safe, educational, and affordable camp experience is available to youth and families is a testament to the importance Virginia Cooperative Extension places on the camping program.

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