

Character • Compassion • Curiosity

Confidence • Teamwork • Courage



Virginia 4-H Foundation

Newsletter

www.4-h.ext.vt.edu/give

Summer 2016

volume 4 issue 2

National 4-H Congress: Excite, Spark, Ignite

Twenty Virginia 4-H'ers were selected at State 4-H Congress to represent Virginia as delegates to the 2015 National 4-H Congress, held Nov. 27 through Dec. 1 in Atlanta. The theme for the event was "Excite, spark, ignite."

Attending National 4-H Congress is a life-changing experience for Virginia 4-Hers.

"National 4-H Congress, a 4-H leadership event that brings together over 900 youths from across 45 U.S. states and territories, is one of the highest recognition opportunities for senior 4-H'ers," said Tonya Price, a 4-H Extension specialist with Virginia Tech. "These youths were selected because they have demonstrated exceptional skills in leadership, citizenship, and overall achievement."

The selection process includes an application, a project portfolio, and an interview.

National 4-H Congress is often seen as the pinnacle of a long 4-H career. The five-day conference recognizes the delegates' outstanding leadership and community work, and provides an opportunity for leaders within 4-H to meet and learn from each other. Highlights of the event included keynote speakers, tours of Atlanta, service work around the city, educational workshops, an international banquet, and a formal gala.

Even outside of the formal sessions and activities, the delegates benefit from experiences such as navigating public transportation, reading maps, and exploring the city's landmarks and cultural attractions. Four adult chaperons accompanied the youth delegates from Virginia.

In a reflection activity following the event, youths wrote about the importance of embracing the characteristics that make them unique, building their self-confidence, and realizing they have special gifts to offer the world. One participant wrote, "The most important thing I gained from National 4-H Congress is to be confident in myself. Without a doubt, National 4-H Congress is a premier event for 4-H'ers."

Partial funding was provided through the Evangeline Swain Endowment Fund, which has supported Virginia National 4-H Congress participants since 1993.



Celebrating the Impact

Dear Friends,

Like many of you, I am confident that our contributions to Virginia 4-H are wise investments in the future. We know that investing in leadership development pays big dividends. Regardless of the curriculum, our programs teach leadership and responsibility in a very effective manner. I know our programs have a lasting impact for the good of individuals, communities, and the world. I don't require proof that our programs make a difference; I know they do.



So, imagine my delight when I recently received a number of handwritten notes from participants in the Teen Excellence in Leadership Institute, TELI. TELI, as many of you know, is a leadership program offered to senior teens as they prepare to participate in their communities as adults. Over a number of months, the program helps teens understand their strengths and the power of networking. Teens learn how to become effective leaders in their communities, by participating in hands-on projects that focus on issues and advocacy. I am proud to say that the program has just completed its second year, with outstanding results.

Several participants shared their appreciation through personal notes. One wrote, "We discovered our strengths, learning styles, conversation styles, and etiquette." Another wrote, "I have learned many things about myself and how I can improve my leadership skills. I will use these skills for the rest of my life." A third note summed up the sentiment expressed by many: "I intend to teach my peers and take on leadership roles for the betterment of my community."

Bravo, TELI, bravo!

As chair of the Virginia 4-H Foundation, I thank you for joining with me in investing in our youth. While there is always more to do, sometimes it is appropriate to pause and celebrate that our contributions have a lasting impact. I hope TELI's participants' words speak to you as strongly as they spoke to me. Our success is a collective effort.

One participant closed his note by saying, "Thank you for investing in me."

I'll close mine by saying thank you for investing in 4-H. Your contributions make a difference each and every day.

All the best,

Mary Guy Miller

Chair, Virginia 4-H Foundation Board

mmiller@iddnet.com

21st Century Learning Through Growing 4-H Science

By Sarah Morton, Project Director, and Kathleen Jamison, Principal Investigator, Growing 4-H Science

There is a need to address soaring dropout rates, truancy, and unhealthy habits that disproportionately affect youths in urban areas. With this in mind, Growing 4-H Science (G4HS) developed an innovative, sustainable, urban agriculture program to engage, educate, and empower marginalized youths in Richmond.

The G4HS training team established a collaborative program that fosters strengths of young leaders and interested partners to help K-12 youths to learn, change, and take action in their communities. The program, based on 4-H Positive Youth Development, emphasized hands-on experiences in areas including textiles, animal science, woodworking, maker education, environmental science, food science, and digital media. Through these content areas, youths were inspired to link key concepts, prior knowledge,

continued on back

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

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21st Century Learning Through Growing 4-H Science continued from front

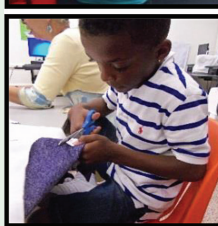
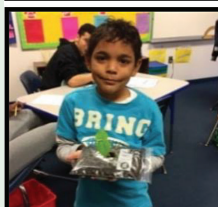
and real-life experiences while keeping an eye toward career exploration.

Additionally, the G4HS education team provided professional development training to educators from both public and private schools as well as volunteers and community partners. This training integrated formal and nonformal teaching strategies and helped develop cross-discipline connections that are expected to lead to new ideas in areas such as out-of-school-time learning initiatives or career and technical education.

G4HS served as a state and national model for urban 4-H programming with an emphasis on urban agriculture. The model focused on building community capacity in order to ensure program replication and sustainability.

The initial program was implemented in 2012 at the Solar House at the Science Museum of Virginia. Core instruction reached 300 youth, each receiving 50 programming hours. The program was delivered in a nontraditional learning environment where hands-on, experiential learning took place in an outdoor environmental learning lab.

Over the last two years, the summer G4HS Integrative STEM Institute was launched, STEM programming during and outside of school hours in fall and spring was provided, and a weeklong agricultural commodities tour was established. 6400 youth benefitted across 20 hours of programming for each youth.



Research Shows 4-H Youths Excel Beyond Their Peers

A longitudinal study by Tufts University discovered that the structured, out-of-school-time learning, leadership experiences, and adult mentoring that youths receive through their participation in 4-H play a vital role in helping them achieve success.

According to this study, 4-H'ers are

4x

Nearly **four times more** likely to make contributions to their communities.

About **two times more** likely to be civically active.

2x

2x

Nearly **two times more** likely to participate in science programs during out-of-school time.

Two times more likely (grade 10 females) and nearly **three times more** likely (grade 12 females) to take part in science programs, compared to females in other out-of-school-time activities.

2x

3x

2x

Nearly **two times more** likely to make healthier choices.

Allen Endowment for Craig County 4-H



George Allen

When George Allen was 14, he came to Blacksburg for the first time for a 4-H Short Course (now called 4-H Congress) and was immediately struck by his surroundings.

While walking across the Drillfield, the boy from Bland County gazed up at newly constructed Burruss Hall, with its Hokie Stone reaching to the sky.

"I thought it was a great big building," said Allen, 92. "There weren't many buildings when I first started coming to Blacksburg. It's hard to believe it has grown so much."

When he came back for the Short Course three times during high school, he saw horse barns, a riding ring, and a cattle barn on the edge of campus — facilities that were eventually relocated to accommodate Cassell Coliseum and Lane Stadium.

A few years later, when it was time to go to college, there was only one choice for Allen.

"Virginia Tech was the best school in the state," he said.

But two years into his education, Allen, who was in the Corps of Cadets, was called away to serve in World War II. He returned to Virginia Tech after his stint in the Army Air Corps and realized that he had found a home.

After graduating in 1945 with a bachelor's degree in animal sciences, he took a job with Virginia Cooperative Extension as an agent in Bland and Grayson counties. A few years later Allen was on a bus to Washington County to help out with a 4-H camp when he met Nadine Cox, who was working for 4-H. The two immediately hit it off and three years later, they married.

George Allen stayed with Virginia Cooperative Extension as a sheep specialist for more than 30 years, during which time he was an integral part of helping the farmers he served. In recognition of his outstanding service to the industry, he was inducted into the Virginia Livestock Hall of Fame in 2010.

In 2013 when Allen had two parcels of land he wanted to donate, two recipients immediately came to mind: his church and Virginia Tech.

"They are two organizations I feel very close to and wanted to make a contribution to," he said.

Allen's gift to his alma mater will fund two endowments — one is in memory of his late wife, Nadine Allen, in recognition of her lifelong love of 4-H. The fund benefits the 4-H program in Craig County.

Adapted from Innovations, <http://news.cals.vt.edu/innovations/2016/04/alumnus-gives-back-to-the-university-that-is-like-a-second-family/>.

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To invest in Virginia 4-H, visit www.4-h.ext.vt.edu/give or send your gift to:

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540-231-3360**



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