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Mecklenburg County 4-H Program Update – Spring 2017

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In-School 4-H Programs

We currently have 19 **In-School 4-H Clubs** in 4th and 5th grade classes at Clarksville, Chase City, and LaCrosse Elementary Schools. In-school clubs elect officers and use parliamentary procedure to run their meetings. The program portion of each meeting focuses on science-enrichment. Clubs meet monthly and participate in hands-on activities designed to support their current science SOL.



We were very excited to offer the **Kids' Marketplace** program at all four elementary schools this year. In the Kids' Marketplace program, 5th grade students were assigned a job and a salary. They had to make a month's worth of financial decisions. Afterwards, students discussed wants versus needs and basic budgeting concepts.

Reality Store, a program for high school students similar to Kids' Marketplace, will be implemented with all 11th grade students at Bluestone and Park View High Schools in April.

After-School 4-H Programs

We offer after-school programming through the 21st Century Grant at Clarksville and Chase City Elementary Schools. In Clarksville, students and parents attend 4-H programs together. In Chase City, we reach nearly 50 students each week. Both schools participated in **Between the Pages**, a program focusing on character education through children's stories, and **Reading Makes Cents**, an introduction to basic financial principles.

Clubs

Mecklenburg 4-H is very fortunate to have active, volunteer-led 4-H Clubs including the **Mecklenburg 4-H Livestock Club**, the **Fur and Feathers 4-H Club**, the **Freeland 4-H Shooting Education Club**, and the **Mecklenburg 4-H Sewing Club**. Research has shown that youth get the greatest benefit from 4-H programming through long-term involvement. Volunteers who give of their time and talents make this involvement possible.



Food Challenge Teams

Mecklenburg 4-H offered the **Food Challenge** program for the first time this year. Food Challenge is a competition-based cooking program for youth ages 9 and older. 4-H'ers compete on teams of 3 – 5 members. Each team is given a set of ingredients but no recipe. Teams have 40 minutes to prepare a dish and a presentation that includes nutrition information, food safety considerations, and a cost analysis.



A junior team and a senior team from Mecklenburg competed in the Central District Contest. The senior team finished first and qualified for the state competition at VT during State 4-H Congress. The junior team also did well, finishing 3rd out of 6 teams.

Summer Programs

We have both overnight and day camp options for youth this summer. **Junior 4-H Camp**, an overnight camp for youth ages 9 – 13, will be held July 17 – 21. Mecklenburg, Brunswick, Amelia, and Nottoway youth camp together. We are currently recruiting Teen Counselors and Counselors-in-Training. Registration for campers will begin in late March.

Camp Loud and Clear is an overnight camp for youth who are deaf or hard-of-hearing. This statewide camp is a partnership between 4-H and Longwood University. Held at Holiday Lake 4-H Center, this camp is for youth and teens ages 9 and older. Graduate students in Longwood's Speech/Language Pathology program serve as camp counselors and are able to get clinical hours for their service.



All of the agents in the Mecklenburg Office are working together to plan a **summer gardening day camp** for youth based out of the community garden in Boydton. The purpose of this camp is to help youth ages 9 and older understand food production from seed to table. Participants will meet once a week throughout the summer to grow their own produce and will have the occasional booth at both the Chase City and South Hill Farmers Markets. They will also grow pumpkins that we hope to sell during Boydton Days in the fall. We are planning a similar program in partnership with **St. John Baptist Church** in Clarksville. We will be working with their summer program staff to plant a garden that will also include containers and raised beds. FCS Agent Amy Hawkins is exploring the possibility of planting fruit trees, as well. We will provide weekly programming for their youth participants that will include an embryology component.

4-H is partnering with the Community Library in Boydton this summer to offer **Cloverbud Super Science Club** this summer. This will be a series of four hands-on science workshops for youth ages 5 – 8 held at the library.

Current Needs

Our 4-H program can only grow with the support of local volunteers. We have many types of volunteer roles available, with varying degrees of time commitment. No 4-H experience is necessary and training is provided.

We need volunteers to man the stations at our upcoming high school **Reality Store** program. These programs will be held on April 3rd at Park View and April 4th at Bluestone. The time commitment would be from 1:30 until about 3:45 on one or both afternoons.



We are working to grow our 4-H leadership programs for teens. We recently offered a weekend leadership retreat for teens at Oconeechee State Park. Ten teens participated, several of which expressed interest in an ongoing **4-H Teen Club**. We would love to find a volunteer who is willing to take the lead with the Teen Club.

Virginia 4-H has embraced the **SPIN Club** movement. SPIN Clubs are short-term, usually 6 week-long, special interest clubs. We have a number of curricula for SPIN Clubs ready to go, but we are in need of volunteers with expertise in those areas to implement the programs. We currently have lesson plans for the following SPIN programs: Archeology, the Art of Math, 4-H Cloverbuds (ages 5 – 8), Coding, Craft Beading, Crime and Spy Science, Crochet, Dogs, Family History, Fitness, Geology, Healthy Snacks, Money Mentors, Paper Crafts, Photography, Robotics, and Theatre Arts. This is an excellent way for people to make a difference in the community without having to make a long-term commitment. The YMCA has generously offered us classroom space at either of their facilities for SPIN Club programming!

We have an ongoing need for **scholarship funds** to help youth from low-income families participate in 4-H programs. There is a particular need for 4-H Camp scholarships. If you are a member of an organization that may be willing to make a donation, please contact the Extension Office. I would be happy to come and speak to your group.





It's your turn! Become a 4-H SPIN Club volunteer

Have you ever thought about becoming a 4-H volunteer, but you are hesitant to make a long-term commitment? If so, we may have the perfect opportunity for you! Virginia 4-H is embracing the SPIN Club movement. A 4-H SPIN Club is a short-term, special interest club. Clubs are designed to complete a six-session curriculum. They are led by volunteers that have a talent or interest that they are willing to share with young people in their community. We are planning now for SPIN Clubs that will meet in 2017. We currently have a curriculum for each of the following areas:

- Archeology
- The Art of Math
- 4-H Cloverbuds (ages 5 – 8)
- Coding
- Craft Beading
- Crime and Spy Science
- Crochet
- Dogs
- Family History
- Fitness
- Geology
- Healthy Snacks
- Money Mentors
- Paper Crafts
- Photography
- Robotics
- Theatre Arts

Don't see a topic that interests you? You can design your own 4-H SPIN Club program! 4-H volunteers can have a positive impact on the next generation of young people in our community. **If you want to make a difference by becoming a 4-H Volunteer, please give us a call today! Contact Jennifer Bowen at the Mecklenburg County Extension Office at (434)738-6191 ext. 4371 or email jebowen1@vt.edu.**

We'd like to discuss opportunities for you to become a 4-H SPIN Club volunteer in your community. If you're interested, contact your local Virginia Cooperative Extension office.

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