

For Immediate Release

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4-H PetPALS Brings Youth and Adults Together

What happens when a young person, his or her pet, and a senior adult interact?

Communication begins and a relationship forms. This is what the 4-H PetPALS project is all about.

4-H PetPALS (People and Animals Linking Successfully) is an intergenerational 4-H project connecting youth and their pets with senior adults in various types of healthcare facilities. The core curriculum relies on trained adult volunteers, called master 4-H PetPALS volunteer leaders, who teach youth skills needed to interact with residents of healthcare facilities, specifically assisted living and skilled nursing environments.

4-H members learn to select, socialize, and train appropriate pets to participate as youth-pet teams in animal-assisted activities. They learn how animals behave and communicate, and how to interpret their own pet's temperament and personality. Youth practice safe and humane animal handling techniques, involve their pets in animal wellness programs, and practice responsible pet ownership and care.

Young people learn about the physical changes associated with aging, as well as medical conditions they may encounter while visiting, by engaging in sensitivity simulation activities. 4-H'ers apply everything they learn to expand their capacities to develop leadership and citizenship skills in an intergenerational environment. Upon successfully completing the curriculum, 4-H

members and their pets, accompanied by adult volunteers, visit senior healthcare facilities, thus enhancing intergenerational relationships.

For more information about the 4-H program or the 4-H PetPALS project, please contact the **[County Name]** County Extension Office at **[Office Phone Number]**.

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