



Ohio Teen Connections

Your Newsletter Connection

The publication of this issue of Ohio 4-H Teen Connections is exciting for several reasons. The articles explore an important topic- **how teens can make their leadership skills count**, whether as members, counselors or on youth-led groups. In this issue, we're pleased to introduce Dr. Josh Kirby, the recently hired Ohio 4-H Specialist of Older Youth and Camping, who shares some of his experience in working with teens. We also welcome Sarah, Mikayla and Heather, three youth from the Ohio 4-H Teen Advisory Council to our editorial team. They bring a wealth of experience and alternative perspectives to the "older folk" who initiated this newsletter. A special thank you is given to the Ohio 4-H Foundation for supporting the promotion of the Teen Connections. We're fortunate to be able to provide printed copies to the attendees of the Ohio 4-H Volunteer and Teen Conferences. And as always, we look forward to any suggestions and contributions you are willing to share. Check out relevant info for teens, read past newsletter issues, and subscribe for free online delivery of future issues at www.ohio4h.org/teenconnections/.



Group photo of the 2011 National 4-H Congress Delegation. Read more about the trip on Page 2.

Teens and Service: Taking it to the Next Level

By Tiffany Walker
4-H Program Assistant Youth Advisory Committee
of Cuyahoga County

Service to the community will continue to be an integral element of 4-H positive youth development. The 4-H Tufts Study of Positive Youth Development in 2011 noted that 4-H youth are three times more likely to actively contribute to their communities when compared with youth who do not participate in 4-H. Benefits of volunteering according to teens include having the ability to do something for a cause in which they support and belief that their efforts can have a positive impact on the communities they serve.

Direct service is also a way for adults to facilitate the development of youth by connecting them to opportunities that build skills and foster supportive relationships. While it is hard to deny that continued efforts to encourage youth to "give back" are important, a larger question looms: how can a stronger connection be devel-

oped between youth and the people and communities that they serve? There is a saying, "Fixing and helping create a distance between people, but we cannot serve at a distance. We can only serve that to which we are profoundly connected."

Is there a way to transition from distributing hot meals to veterans at the local shelter to learning about some of the challenges they face? Or researching reasons why some veterans live in shelters?

Civic reflection, which is reading and discussing short pieces of literature or non-fiction related to giving and serving, is a way of digging deeper to prepare for direct service opportunities.

Service learning is also an excellent strategy that links curriculum based instruction to service experiences.

Time spent reflecting and learning fused with direct service allows youth to begin building an elevated awareness of the people and communities that they serve.

2011 National 4-H Congress: Become a Catalyst for Change

By Rebekah Abel, Licking County Teen

I have heard that the National 4-H Congress is the highlight of a 4-Her's career but I never knew how great of an experience it could be until I attended the Congress last fall.

The National 4-H Congress is an annual event held in Atlanta, Georgia every November. As a delegate at the 2011 National 4-H Congress, I was able to meet hundreds of 4-Hers from all over the country, as well as Puerto Rico. It was a wonderful opportunity to learn about other 4-H programs across the country and meet other people with similar interests.

One of the traditions of Congress is a pin exchange the first night. Everyone brought pins or other tokens to represent their state and trade with the other delegates.

Throughout the week, we also heard many wonderful and encouraging speakers, including a World War II Holocaust survivor, who shared his experiences of his childhood in a concentration camp during the war. His stories were heart-breaking but very moving and taught us to care for other people.

We also participated in several educational workshops about leadership, community service, or other opportunities in 4-H.

Some other highlights of Congress were the International Dinner and dance, and the Night of Culture at the Atlanta History Center. We also had the opportunity to tour a part of Atlanta, including the Georgia Aquarium.

During our time in Atlanta everyone participated in a service project to benefit the community. The event wrapped up with the Congress Gala the last evening, which included several speakers and a dance.

Attending the National 4-H Congress was truly an awesome experience, and I know that my memories and friendships will last a lifetime.

4-H Ambassadors Assist with Many State Activities, Events

By Hannah Peterson
4-H Ambassador, Fayette County

Ohio 4-H Ambassadors are the youth spokespersons of Ohio 4-H. This past year I got the opportunity to serve as a state ambassador and it has been one of the best experiences of my life.

I have gotten the opportunity to serve as speaker, emcee, program facilitator, hostess, committee member, and in many other youth leadership roles for 4-H and Extension programs and events throughout the state.

Serving as an ambassador has helped me meet new friends and even meet political officials at different events. Through ambassadors, I have established better leadership skills, communication skills, and public speaking skills. I was given the opportunity to help with skillathons and judgments at the state fair, serve meals at banquets and set up for the



Hannah Peterson

state fair.

My favorite part of serving as an ambassador was participating in all of the different activities.

I would recommend being an ambassador. I have absolutely loved serving as an Ohio 4-H Ambassador.

4-H encourages growth and career path for teen

By Kayla Schneider, Auglaize County Teen
"To make the best better" - that is what 4-H has done for me as well as many other 4-Her's across the United States. My adventures in 4-H began when my mother got a job as secretary at the county extension office. At first, I didn't want to join 4-H. I remember saying to mom, "4-H is for weirdo's." But after attending 4-H camp and completing my first projects, I realized 4-H is pretty cool. My camp counselors inspired me to become just like them. I followed in their footsteps in serving as a junior leader and on junior fair board. I have always enjoyed working with kids; in fact, my childhood dream was to become a teacher. 4-H kindled my interest in working with youth and helped me learn to work with others of ALL ages, which led me to decide on my major - Speech and Hearing Science. In this field, I hope to be able to work with children who have speech impediments. I can take skills that I learned with each individual project along with me on my journey through life. For example, a few years ago I found my dad's old, rusted tandem bike in my grandmother's barn, and I decided to restore it



Kayla Schneider

as my 4-H project. Luckily, my dad knew a lot about bicycles. That entire summer we worked together on that bike. The time I spent with him and working on that bike is a time I will cherish forever. The people I met along the way have nurtured my learning. 4-H has given me the opportunity to grow through interaction with people I normally wouldn't interact with. Without those experiences, I wouldn't be the person I am today and I certainly wouldn't be ready to move to college or begin my career.

Teens: A Rich Resource for Leadership

By James Jordan, PhD, Extension Educator,
Butler County

4-H has touted for years that the 4-H youth development programs develop strong leadership skills. Ohio has unique 4-H youth development programs that demonstrate this philosophy accurately. Teens have a positive impact on other teens when they promote knowledge, positive attitudes, and demonstrate sound behaviors. Ohio counties with 4-H CARTEENS programs benefit greatly from the teens that volunteer as teachers.

4-H CARTEENS is a unique way for teens to demonstrate teaching skills. Based on research conducted by Lee & Murdock (2001), the success of teens as teachers is when a dedicated adult supports their skills, talents and leadership. 4-H CARTEENS is successful with no limitations on volunteering and a strong curriculum on teen driving issues. Successful 4-H CARTEENS programs set teens up for success, encourage team building and strong recognition ideals. 4-H CARTEENS teen teachers are advocates for evaluation feedback about teaching performance.

Research shows there are several barriers that hinder teens from serving as effective teachers (Felix, 2003). Teens, if not taken seriously, will not be effective teachers no matter what the subject matter. Teens are less likely to be successful if there are turf issues among youth and serving organizations. Most importantly, teens will not be available to teach if there is a lack of awareness of opportunities; they need to be asked!

Counties with extremely strong 4-H CARTEENS programs are those that value the rich resources that teens offer, such as unique teaching skills. Making sure the learner comprehends the information and encouraging each teen to develop their personal leadership skills are also critical for success.

References:

Felix, A., (2003). Making Youth Voice a Community Principal. Youth Service Journal.

Lee, F.C.H. & Murdock, S. (2001). Teenagers as Teachers Programs: Ten essential elements. Journal of Extension. 39(1).

4-H CARTEENS: Developing Leadership Skills

By Cathy Hunt, 4-H CARTEENS member

It's a normal spring day in April. I'm driving down the road and all of the sudden I hear a police car siren behind me. I look in my review mirror and see a police car behind me. I pull over and hope I didn't do anything bad. After talking with the police officer it turns out I did do something bad: I ran a stop sign.

When I look back on the day that I got my first traffic ticket, I realize that although I may not like that I got two points on my license and had to go to juvenile court, good did come out of me getting a ticket. In addition to having to go to court, I also had to go through the 4-H CARTEENS program and pass the exam at the end.

4-H CARTEENS has made significant changes in my life and my driving habits. I learned a lot about driving when I went through the program. Now, every time I catch myself pushing the speed limit, I remember the pictures I saw when I went through the program, and I slow down. Every time I am driving, I am more careful about paying attention to other drivers and to what I am doing.

At the end of the program, when I heard that they were always looking for more volunteers to help with the program, I made the decision to volunteer. I have learned just as much from volunteering as I did from going through the program itself.

I have improved my leadership and public speaking skills from volunteering for 4-H CARTEENS. My leadership skills now are better than they were before volunteering for 4-H CARTEENS. Now, I feel more confident in myself when talking in front of a large group of people.

In the end, getting pulled over was actually good for me. Not only am I a safer driver, but by volunteering I have gained a confidence in myself that has led to improved leadership skills and public speaking skills. 4-H CARTEENS has changed my life— changed it for the better.

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Welcome to New Specialist Dr. Joshua Kirby, PhD

Welcome to Joshua Kirby, Ohio 4-H State Specialist of Older Youth and Camping! Dr. Kirby will provide leadership and direction for Ohio 4-H teen programming and camping. We had a chance to talk with Dr. Kirby to find out a bit more about him. Here are some excerpts from our interview...

Dr. Kirby, please tell us a little about yourself.

First and foremost, hello to everyone—I'm happy to be in Ohio. I was born and raised on a fruit, grain, and vegetable farm in the Lake (Ontario) Plains region of western New York State (between Rochester and Buffalo). I still enjoy working outdoors, and my new role allows me to combine my interests in the outdoors, research, and supporting and advising youth programs.

Were you involved in 4-H as a youth, and if so, what projects were you involved in?

I was not involved in 4-H as a youth because at the time the 4-H programs in my home county were not well established. My outdoor interests grew from the adventures I had as a Boy Scout and as a summer camp staff member for 5 straight summers. My specialty was campcraft (think ropes, knots, lashing, woods tools, forestry, backpacking, etc.), and I still volunteer to train teens in those topic areas. Most recently I've been involved with camp staff training, and I am a Master Educator with the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics.

What were you doing before coming to Ohio 4-H?

The job that changed my career interests (ultimately bringing me to OSU) was my role at Penn State's Shaver's Creek Environmental Center as the Youth Leadership Development Coordinator. The programs that I developed and delivered while there felt like a natural fit for my academic, professional, and personal experiences, and I promptly changed my doctoral coursework and research to match my interests.

Follow this link to read more of the interview with Joshua Kirby at www.ohio4h.org/teenconnections/

Got Job Skills? Camp Counselors Do!

By Theresa Ferrari, PhD, Associate Professor and Extension Specialist, State 4-H Office and Nate Arnett, Extension Educator, Adventure Central

Anyone who's been a camp counselor or worked with them knows that going to camp is more than fun and games around the campfire. Ohio 4-H'ers are learning by doing as camp counselors. 4-H

camp counselors have challenging, meaningful roles and carry out real responsibilities. They work hard and they have fun doing it!

Over the past three years, 4-H professionals in 28 counties have piloted a work-based learning approach to camp counseling. This approach emphasizes job skills in addition to those specific to being a camp counselor. It's an approach that's easy to do and gets results.

By having camp counselors complete a self-assessment of workforce skills and having 4-H professionals assess the same skill set, we found that camp counselors significantly improve their job skills such as leadership, teamwork, problem solv-



Counselors at the 2011 MXC Training work on a task.

ing, time management, and good work habits. In the process, counselors also developed a better understanding of the world of work and gained insights about future career decisions.

Beyond the immediate use of these workforce skills in their roles as camp counselors, the skills they have developed are those that will transfer to a variety of work settings. That's because these skills have to do with one's approach to work, interactions with others, and the application of skills to a variety of work tasks and roles. These skills must be gained by experience – making camp counseling an ideal workforce preparation program.

An added bonus: Camp counselors are developing job skills that employers say are lacking in many new entrants to the job market. Camp counseling gives 4-H'ers job skills they can add to their resume, and equips them for success now and in the future.

"It has taught me the skills that are important in life no matter what kind of job you get."

"It showed me that everything in the future is going to take more responsibility, and camp counseling was the first step in showing me how to be more responsible."

"Being a counselor made me a stronger team member and communicator, two skills that will be valuable in the future."

"I have learned work ethic and have been put into a work-type environment. This has helped me to communicate, lead, organize, manage time, and to be a responsible and hardworking person."

"Being a camp counselor has helped me to learn that I have patience with younger children. This will help me when I decide my career path."



Dr. Joshua Kirby, PhD

Teen Leadership **ACTIVITY TO GO:**

Give Your Self A Hand!

Note to Teen Leader – to be a leader, you have to practice leadership. This activity is easy and gives you experience in organizing, speaking skills, processing skills, and people skills.

Objectives: Get to know others in your 4-H Club or other group
Practice listening skills
Practice self-reflection

Time: 20-30 minutes

Supplies: Blank paper (printer or notebook paper – construction paper is fun)
Crayons (markers or pencils will do)
Poster of the directions (see below)



Activity:

1. Give each person a sheet of paper and crayon.
2. Have each person trace their hand on the paper – doesn't matter which hand.
3. Give directions one task at a time. This is where that poster can come in handy.

DIRECTIONS:

On the **palm** – write your name

Thumb – favorite thing about being in 4-H

Index finger – one thing that you are really good at

Middle finger – one kind thing that you did for someone today

Ring finger – name of someone that you look up to

Pinky – the best gift that you've ever received (doesn't have to be a thing)

4. When everyone is finished with their "hand," ask for one volunteer to hold up their paper and share their answers with everyone. NOTE: If you have more than 10-12 people, divide into two smaller groups.

5. **DEBRIEF:** After each person has shared their "hand," ask the following questions:

- ✦ Which person did you learn the most about?
- ✦ What did you learn about yourself?
- ✦ Which person surprised you?
- ✦ Which person do you think is most like you?

Which person do you think you might have something in common with?

6. **CLOSING:** Give yourself a hand! (you lead applause). Let's remember to use our "hands for larger service" and to reach out to each other this year in 4-H.

This activity was adapted from a workshop at an ACA Mid-States Camping Conference by Betty Wingerter, Extension Educator, 4-H Youth Development, January, 2012.

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Upcoming Events & Opportunities for Ohio 4-H Teens

The Ohio 4-H Teen Advisory Council is a statewide group of 4-H teens and young 4-H alumni selected to provide youth input into the planning, implementation, and evaluation of Ohio 4-H programming.

This input supports the continued growth, and helps to strengthen and expand the 4-H program. Involvement on Teen Council also provides opportunities for teens to gain valuable skills that will benefit them within real-life experiences.

Teens will have opportunities to communicate with both 4-H youth and adults and participate in shared decision making to recommend new 4-H policies and programs.

The Teen Council will also learn valuable team building skills as they identify, organize, and implement at least one project per year. This life skill development provides a hands on approach to connecting work and learning experiences.

For more information on applying for the Ohio 4-H Teen Council, go to www.ohio4h.org/staff/documents/2012_TeenCouncilApplication_000.doc

Other leadership opportunities for Ohio 4-H Youth...

The Shelton Leadership Challenge at Urbana University is a one week residential summer experience for rising high school freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors with a GPA of 3.0 or higher.

The core curriculum focuses on Leadership Roles and Accountability, Team Building, Leadership Styles and Situations, Social Responsibility, Integrity as a Leader, Public Speaking, Changing Behaviors, and Goal Setting. This year's challenge will take place from July 1-6th.

For more information on this opportunity go to www.urbana.edu and search "Shelton".



Contact us ...

Ideas for photos, stories, columns are welcome! Please contact Teen Connections Editors with any story ideas or suggestions.

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