

2018

MSU Extension 4-H Youth Development



MISSISSIPPI STATE
UNIVERSITY™

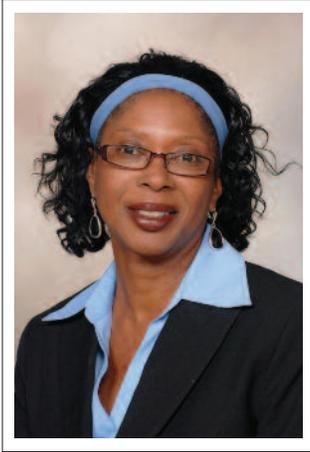
EXTENSION

STATUS REPORT



HEAD, HEART, HANDS, and HEALTH

The Mississippi 4-H Youth Development Program provides young people with a variety of positive experiences that emphasize citizenship, leadership, and community service.



Thousands of community volunteers, from all parts of the state, partner with agents from the Mississippi State University Extension Service to deliver the program to almost 50,000 5- to 18-year-olds.

4-H'ers of all genders, ethnicities, and socioeconomic standings in Mississippi are learning life skills by participating in a variety of 4-H programs, including agricultural and environmental projects, communication skills development, cooking and nutrition education, energy conservation, healthy living, and leadership and citizenship activities, just to name a few. Mississippi features a diverse range of 4-H groups, including 4-H clubs, camps, special interest groups, after-school programs, and other options.

4-H's three mission mandates—citizenship/leadership; healthy lifestyles; and science, engineering, and technology—are preparing Mississippi's young people to become the true leaders of tomorrow.

Sincerely,

Paula Threadgill

Associate Director

Mississippi State University Extension Service
4-H Youth Development Program



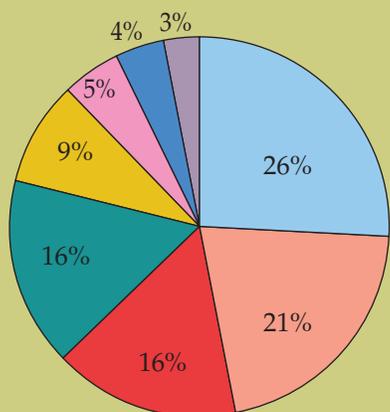
4-H Pledge

I pledge my head to clearer thinking,
my heart to greater loyalty,
my hands to larger service, and
my health to better living
for my club, my community, my country,
and my world.



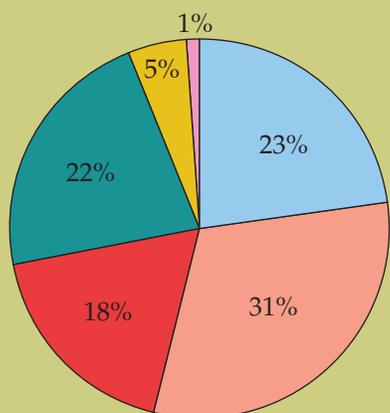
Mississippi State University Extension Service 4-H: A Reflection of Who We Are

4-H Project Enrollment: 88,486



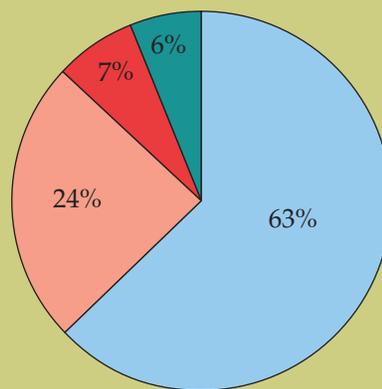
- Plants and Animals
- Environmental Education and Earth Sciences
- Personal Development and Leadership
- Healthy Lifestyle Education
- Science, Engineering, and Technology
- Citizenship/Civic Education
- Consumer and Family Sciences
- Communication and Expressive Arts

Grade in School



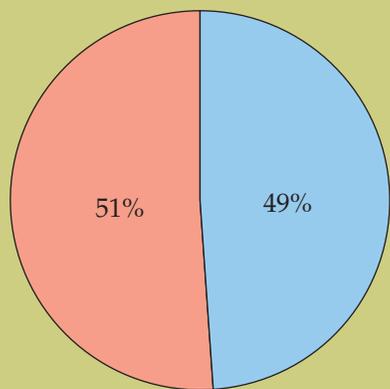
- K - 3rd
- 4th - 6th
- 7th - 9th
- 10th -12th
- Post High School
- Special

Geographic Location



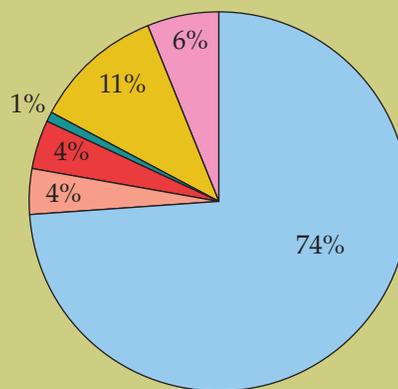
- live in towns under 10,000 & rural
- live in towns and cities of 10,000 to 50,000
- live in suburbs/central cities over 50,000
- live on farms

Gender



- Girls
- Boys

Mississippi 4-H Community Clubs and Programs: 1,304*



- 4-H community clubs with 20,262 4-H'ers
- 4-H in-school clubs with 1,018 4-H'ers
- 4-H after-school clubs with 960 4-H'ers
- 4-H military clubs with 17 4-H'ers
- special interest and short-term 4-H programs with 14,218 4-H'ers
- school enrichment programs with 12,841 4-H'ers

*duplicates not eliminated

Mississippi 4-H Volunteer Leaders

5,550 Mississippi 4-H Volunteers

Dedicated, caring role models are making the best better for Mississippi young people!



220 hours

average hours served in 1 year by a Mississippi 4-H volunteer.

1.2 million hours – total hours contributed, on average, by Mississippi 4-H volunteers in 2017.

\$19.35

average hourly dollar value of Mississippi 4-H volunteer service.*



\$23,626,350 – dollar value of the service Mississippi 4-H volunteers provided in 2017.

*based on national research

2017 4-H Volunteer Leader Awards



The Rising Star award is presented to volunteer leaders with 1 to 3 years of service who have exhibited great accomplishments in the 4-H program. Joel Hoxie of Jefferson Davis County received the 2017 award.



The Outstanding Volunteer of the Year award is presented to volunteers with outstanding accomplishments in the 4-H program and who have completed 3 to 10 years of service. Natalie Gilmore of Alcorn County and Jeff Williamson of Rankin County were recognized as the 2017 Outstanding Volunteers of the Year.

National 4-H Conference

National 4-H Conference is the pinnacle experience in 4-H Citizenship programs and focuses students on leadership and the future. The conference, administered by 4-H National Headquarters in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture, began in 1927 as the National 4-H Club Camp and is known today as the Secretary's Conference. Each 4-H'er is assigned to a

group tasked with solving an issue or challenge facing the nation. Then, the young people present their solutions to the corresponding federal office. Mississippi's 2017 National 4-H Conference delegates were **James (Eli) Magness of Tate County**, **Hunter Garret of Lee County**, and **Mallory Lewis of Walthall County**.



James (Eli)
Magness
of Tate County

I was chosen to be a part of the activity styles round table. None of us knew each other or really knew what to expect, but we had to give a presentation to the Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (ODPHP), and these were the challenge questions presented to us:

1. What are the most common physical activity styles among teens?
2. What can the ODPHP do to better communicate physical activity guidelines to members of the aforementioned styles?

The groups worked on defining the styles of teens' activity and how they are motivated to be active. We took the first day to research, and we made an in-depth flow chart that we felt effectively broke down the levels of fitness and the ways that teens participate in physical activity.

Once we finished breaking down the styles, we decided that dividing the group into three smaller groups would help us get the presentation done more quickly and, more importantly, efficiently. We figured out how the ODPHP could change the format of its website to better advertise fitness to teens. By the end of the 3 days, we had made a 22-slide presentation with about 30 minutes of content to present. We presented this to the ODPHP at its home office and held a 30-minute Q&A after we had presented our content.

The last I heard, the ODPHP was making a blog post about our work and individually crediting us for our parts of the presentation. It sticks out in my mind how well our group did in the 3 short days we had to make this presentation, and I think it just goes to show how much a group working together can get done in a short amount of time.

In closing, I just want to say how awesome it was to meet 4-H'ers from all over the country. Almost every state in the U.S. was represented, as well as Canada and Puerto Rico. Meeting and becoming friends with those 4-H'ers, working with them, and just talking about 4-H together were experiences that will last a lifetime.

Once again, thank you to everyone who helped me get to this point, and thank you for giving me some of your time to read about how truly amazing this trip was.



Hunter
Garrett
of Lee County

I would like to take this opportunity to thank 4-H for allowing me to represent Mississippi at the 2017 National 4-H Conference.

I was able to experience many aspects of our nation's capital: I was chosen to serve on the Farming—It's for Everyone committee. Our purpose was to encourage more youth to be involved with FSA (Farm Service Agency) youth loans and agricultural careers. As a committee of 15, we broke into three groups and discussed and researched ways to get more youth involved.

The three ideas we came up with were Education, Participation, and Promotion. I served in the Participation group to develop ways to encourage youth to participate in some type of agricultural activity. One of our ideas was to imitate Clarkston Family Farm, where a 5-acre block of land was cleared and greenhouses were built, so the area youth with agricultural interests could plant flowers and vegetables. Another idea was, if youth participate in the FSA youth loan program and attend a 2-year vocational program or 4-year college for an ag degree, they could receive grants to promote the ag industry after graduation.

The three groups in my committee put together a presentation for the U.S. Department of Agriculture FSA in Washington. I enjoyed serving on this committee since I plan to continue my education in the agricultural field after high school.

One of my most memorable experiences in Washington, D.C., was going to Arlington National Cemetery and seeing the changing of the guard. I now have a greater appreciation for all men and women who serve our country. I also enjoyed touring the Capitol and meeting Mississippi's elected officials. The friendships and ideas I created, including meeting and learning from other 4-H'ers from across the U.S. and Canada, will last a lifetime.

As a 2017 delegate to National 4-H Conference, I want to encourage all Mississippi 4-H'ers to set a goal of attending National 4-H Conference during their time in 4-H. This, by far, has been one of my best experiences in 4-H.

2017 State 4-H Congress

Mississippi's 2017 State 4-H Congress was held in June on the campus of Mississippi State University. 4-H Congress is held each year to give senior 4-H'ers, ages 14-17, an opportunity to participate in educational workshops, campus tours, social activities, and competitive events.

More than 700 4-H'ers and adult volunteers, hosted by the Mississippi State University Extension Service, which delivers 4-H programming, attended the event. The 2017 theme was "4-H: Rising to the Challenge." 4-H members competed and were recognized for outstanding performances in various events. The competition aspect of 4-H Congress gives young people the opportunity to measure what they learned from their 4-H project work in their individual county clubs.

4-H'ers also got firsthand experience learning about the democratic process. They voted for the leadership team officers who will represent them in the coming year. 4-H'ers wrote, delivered, and listened to campaign speeches, and they participated in the electronic voting process.

The keynote speaker was Extension Director Dr. Gary Jackson. Having the director of Extension speak to and connect with young people from across the state was truly an honor for participants attending the 2017 Congress event.



"This was a first-time opportunity for me, as Extension director, to be the keynote speaker at State 4-H Congress, and I am honored," Jackson explained.



2017 Project Achievement Day Events

PAD participants experienced **BELONGING, INDEPENDENCE, GENEROSITY, and MASTERY**, the four essential elements of 4-H youth development.

Each year, thousands of Junior Mississippi 4-H'ers, ages 8-13, participate in one of Mississippi 4-H's positive youth development activities. These

activities focus on young people's developing characteristics that lead to positive behaviors and outcomes. Positive youth development activities

are a cornerstone of Mississippi 4-H, and young people look forward to Project Achievement Days (PAD) for this opportunity.

4-H's positive role in youth development is based upon scientific research that demonstrates, when young people engage in activities like PAD, they get a jumpstart on developing as productive and caring citizens. Mississippi has four regional PAD events, and, in 2017, each region averaged about 200 4-H'ers. The events were held in the Northeast Region at Itawamba Community College, in the Northwest at Mississippi Delta Community College, in the Southwest at Hinds Community College, and in the Southeast at Laurel Middle School.

Citizenship and Leadership

Mississippi 4-H is available in all 82 Mississippi counties and emphasizes the importance of young people being engaged, well-informed citizens. The program provides opportunities for youth leaders to improve their cognitive abilities and enhance their skills as leaders, presenters, and team members. Mississippi 4-H connects young people to their communities and leaders, and this connection expands 4-H'ers' understanding of the significance of civic engagement.

Mississippi 4-H Council Officers and State 4-H Ambassadors advocate statewide for Mississippi 4-H. These outstanding youth leaders pursue 4-H Citizenship and Leadership projects, and they proudly wear distinctive green blazers that show their commitment to 4-H when they participate in county, regional, and statewide 4-H activities, events, and programs. These 4-H officers and ambassadors assist with planning and implementing

state 4-H events and activities. The skills they are developing will prepare them to meet the civic-leadership challenges they will face as adults.



Legislative Day

4-H Legislative Day is a part of the Mississippi 4-H Citizenship/Leadership Program, which empowers young people to become well-informed citizens and to engage actively in their local residential areas. This program teaches 4-H'ers and adults about civic affairs and enhances their decision-making skills.

At the 2017 4-H Legislative Day, Mississippi 4-H Council Officers and Ambassadors were presented to the Mississippi House of Representatives and Senate. 4-H'ers met with Gov. Phil Bryant and Lt. Gov. Tate Reeves, and the young people learned about how Mississippi government works. During the 4-H Legislative Day luncheon, AT&T 4-H Banner Club awards were distributed to recognize outstanding Mississippi 4-H clubs.



2017 Mississippi 4-H AT&T Banner Clubs

4-H clubs—groups of five or more young people guided by one or more adult volunteer leaders—are the foundation of 4-H. The purpose of a 4-H club is to provide positive youth development opportunities to meet the needs of young people and experience belonging, mastery, independence, and generosity.

Each year, Mississippi 4-H clubs submit their club's record book to the state 4-H office to be judged. 4-H clubs named 4-H AT&T Banner Clubs are strong,

active, and effective. The top 10 outstanding 2017 4-H AT&T Banner Clubs received recognition at the annual 4-H Legislative Day celebration.

Each club received a monetary award for its outstanding work carried out during the preceding 4-H year. The awards are generously donated by AT&T and totaled approximately \$3,500 in 2017. AT&T also recognized the clubs by inviting Mississippi senators and representatives to a luncheon in the winning clubs' honor.



AT&T Technology Award—MegaBots of Pearl River



First Lady's Fitness Award—Lauderdale 4-H Club, Lauderdale County



Governor's Award—Dream Weavers, Lowndes County



Lt. Governor's Award—Controllers Generation II 4-H Club, Oktibbeha County



Mr. Speaker of the House Award—County Line 4-H Club, Lee County



Congressional Agriculture Award—Science 4-H Club, Lauderdale County



Congressional District 1—Consolidated 4-H Club of Lee



Congressional District 2—Young Riders 4-H Club of Yazoo



Congressional District 3—Clover Dawgs 4-H Club of Oktibeha



Congressional District 4 - Highlite 4-H Club of Greene

4-H Cooperative Leadership Conference

The 2017 4-H Cooperative Leadership Conference, with generous support from the Mississippi Council of Cooperatives, was hosted by the Mississippi State University Extension Service. Forty-six 4-H'ers representing 25 counties converged on the MSU campus for the 4-day event. Five chaperones joined the participants, who are all first-place winners from 4-H Congress, elected council officers, and 4-H ambassadors.

Participants enjoyed many events, including workshops on culture and creativity, the 4-H leadership Olympics, a service project, and site visits to Mississippi cooperatives. Conference attendees also served on various committees, including the hospitality committee, reflections committee, and photo and media corps. Most importantly, students successfully organized and operated their own supply cooperative with the guidance of some of Extension's most experienced chaperones. The 2017 conference theme was "Rising to the Challenge," and this outstanding group of 4-H'ers did just that.



Cooperative Leadership Scholarships of \$500 were awarded to two deserving 4-H'ers: **Gabby Simpson** of Lee County and **Tyler Packer** of Greene County .

As a 4-H'er, I take pride in who I am and the brand that I have established. 4-H has allowed me to grow and become the productive young adult I am today. I have been able to explore my talents, broaden my interests, and become more aware of the world

Precious
Thompson
of Pike County



around me. As a 4-H ambassador and Southwest District Vice President, I take great pride in encouraging younger generations to get involved in community activities.

I love 4-H and appreciate all of the skills this club has taught me, as well as the opportunities it has given me. I never realized the impact that I could make by becoming an ambassador. Younger 4-H'ers often approach me and tell me how I inspired them to keep going in 4-H; those simple words encourage me to keep pushing forward. 4-H is where I developed my love for speaking and interacting with other people. This club allowed me to express myself in many ways, so I will forever be grateful for my experience and time spent with 4-H.

Being able to inspire change among youth is the most inspiring thing I have ever been a part of. 4-H gives me the opportunity to advocate for and impact the generations after me. I believe that, if I do not put forth the effort to help educate and encourage the children after me, then they will fall short of their potential. 4-H gave me a platform to reach youth that I would typically not meet otherwise. I am able to reach out to youth that are not a part of my community.

My experience in 4-H has impacted my goals for the future simply because it allowed me to become aware of the impact I can make in someone's life even if I am not trying to. 4-H inspires me to become the best person I can be, not only for myself, but for those who look up to me.

4-H is a part of my life that I hold dear, and I am grateful for the opportunities this club has presented me, the goals I have set for myself, and the stepping stone 4-H has provided for my future. I have been able to meet and connect with people and develop great relationships that I will cherish my whole life.

Mississippi State Fair

The Mississippi State Fair is a collaborative community event that showcases and promotes the achievements and talents of 4-H'ers as they work toward building successful futures. The 4-H Village at the fair featured more than 40 counties and more than 1,000 exhibits.

The last Saturday of the fair is declared "4-H Day," and 4-H'ers and other fair visitors participated. Activities included 4-H Science Day, 4-H public speaking, shooting sports hands-on activities, ATV educational handouts, and Fashion Revue activities (modeling and other clothing-judging activities). The Mississippi

Volunteer Leaders Association provided refreshments throughout the day.

At state fair, 4-H'ers enjoy

- educational experiences relating to projects, activities, personal skills, and accomplishments.
- opportunities to sharpen leadership skills.
- a dynamic review of 4-H and its accomplishments in Mississippi.
- opportunities to broaden relationships with other young people and adults.
- recognition and inspiring other 4-H members and leaders toward greater achievements.





2017 4-H Livestock Program

The Mississippi 4-H Livestock Program provides unique opportunities for 4-H'ers to develop life skills by learning about the responsibility and dedication needed to raise beef and dairy cattle, sheep, goats, swine, and horses for competition.

Participating in the 4-H livestock project allows 4-H'ers to

- learn management decisions that influence how their animals will perform.
- create quality assurance practices to ensure they are raising a wholesome product.
- win and lose with dignity and grace.
- communicate in written and oral platforms.
- become productive citizens by seeking ways to give back to their communities.

These skills enable 4-H'ers to become the leaders of tomorrow.

4-H'ers, along with their families, club volunteers, and Extension agents, take countless hours preparing their animals for the show ring. Participation at the Mississippi State Fair and Dixie National Junior Round-Up livestock shows continues to be high compared to shows held over the past decade. The contributions of time and financial resources expended by supporters of these programs make them memorable for 4-H'ers each year.

Support from buyers at the 2017 Dixie National Sale of Junior Champions was outstanding: the 43 champion and reserve champion market animals

sold for \$328,257. In addition, 37 scholarships, totaling \$58,500, were awarded to young people. These accomplishments are possible because of the many individuals and businesses in Mississippi who, understanding the importance of livestock, buy animals and make contributions toward scholarships.

The Mississippi 4-H horse program remains strong and competitive. More than 300 4-H'ers competed in horse educational contests and showed 442 horses at the 2017 Mississippi 4-H Horse Championship. The commitment to this event by Extension agents, volunteers, and families is unsurpassed, and it helps to make this one of the largest and most competitive 4-H horse programs in the southern region.

While 4-H'ers enjoy competitions in the show ring, the Mississippi 4-H Livestock Program places great emphasis on educational contests. 4-H'ers are extremely knowledgeable about their project animals, and it is rewarding to see them make presentations; compete in quiz bowls or skill-a-thons; judge livestock and orally defend their placements; and demonstrate their skills among numerous other opportunities. There is much more to the 4-H Livestock Program than winning with animals: 4-H'ers' experiences with their livestock and the knowledge they gain builds true character and helps young people achieve their goals in life.

Like Mississippi 4-H Livestock and Horse Programs on Facebook.

Mississippi 4-H Shooting Sports Program

With more than 9,000 youth participants and almost 500 state-certified volunteers, the Mississippi 4-H Shooting Sports program was one of the fastest growing project areas in Mississippi 4-H during 2017.

All disciplines were represented at the 4-H Shooting Sports National Championship in June 2017. Thirty-two 4-H members from Mississippi attended the competition, and teams and individuals won various awards. Also, more than 200 4-H'ers competed at the Mississippi 4-H Shooting Sports Invitational held in July at the 4-H Range in West Point and the nearby Starkville Gun Club.

Tom Ganann, past president, was recognized at the invitational for his accomplishments on the 4-H Shooting Sports State Executive Board. Mr. Ganann is an excellent example of a diligent 4-H volunteer who sees Mississippi's young people as the most important investment in our future.

Generation six of the new Shooting Sports Ambassadors was added to the rosters. The four new members look forward to assisting in events on the local and state levels. Also, two new Level Two instructors were added to the state training team in the rifle and archery disciplines. Finally, four state instructor certification workshops were held in each of the state districts.





Mikayla
Shelton
of Calhoun
County

Since the age of 8, I have shown livestock through the 4-H program, which ultimately led to my involvement in many other clubs and groups within the organization. However, 4-H is much more than an organization that offers opportunities for children to experience new things. 4-H offers young people the ability to step out of their comfort zones, set goals, and achieve the goals by overcoming the obstacles along the way.

4-H has taught me when to lead and when to sit back and be led. Through my involvement with 4-H livestock projects, I have been awarded ample opportunities that have put me on a path to educate and involve those around me. These projects taught me that there are times in life when it is appropriate to speak up and there are other times to listen.

Also, 4-H taught me when to set boundaries for situations and when to go past those boundaries and do my own thing. 4-H has given me the confidence to step up and speak for what is right and to encourage those around me to do the same.

Friendships turn into family relationships in 4-H. It means gaining the opportunity to meet others, develop life-long relationships, and realize how important it is to put others before yourself. At 4-H, children and young adults gain a network of people who are interested in encouraging, loving, and ensuring you are the best person inside and out at all times.

To me, 4-H means striving always to do my best. It has also taught me to encourage those around me to improve their personal goals by making the best better. 4-H offers the opportunity to adventure, set goals, and live life while you always strive to be the best you possible.

4-H means discovery and adventure. It is learning to explore the world around us and develop a longing to learn about what we don't know already. 4-H is gaining knowledge through listening to those wiser than you. It is developing a love for spontaneity because, throughout life, the best experiences are established from spur-of-the-moment ideas. It's learning to be comfortable outside of your comfort zone.

4-H means achievement. It means leadership. It provides me with a purpose, a sense of boldness and accomplishment.

4-H means always having a place to go, someone to talk to and relate to. I will always consider being a member of this awesome organization as one of my most prized opportunities in life.

4-H: Making the Best Better in Mississippi



CALHOUN COUNTY
4-H School Club

Calhoun City Elementary School features an in-school 4-H club. With the help of a certified volunteer and supportive school staff, this club was formed to serve a group of children who are unable to attend 4-H meetings at the local Extension office. Members elected club officers, learned the 4-H pledge, and chartered the club. Members are excited about 4-H activities, including writing recipes and creating crafts. Parents reported how excited their kids were to attend the 4-H Awards Banquet and be recognized as 4-H'ers. The former mayor of Calhoun City expressed much excitement about this local 4-H club.



COVINGTON COUNTY
4-H Teaches County Children

4-H'ers in Covington County participated in many activities during 2017. At the Summer Foods Camp, young people learned how to make nutritious sandwiches. 4-H'ers also learned about placing table settings in the 2-day Etiquette and Manners Workshop. Young men hosted a Mother-Son Tea, and state Sen. Joey Fillingane visited to share his knowledge of good manners.



CARROLL COUNTY
The Pillowcase Project

As part of the 4-H Pillowcase Project, young people learned about emergency preparedness for tornadoes and interesting facts about these massive storms. They received pillowcases that they personalized and filled with emergency-preparedness items. The program was presented to Carroll Academy fourth- and fifth-graders and Marshall Elementary fifth-graders. About 90 4-H'ers participated in the program.



JEFFERSON DAVIS COUNTY
4-H Leadership Skills You Never Outgrow

Extension Agent Latonya Ramsey annually teaches the Jefferson Davis County Teacher Academy students, under the direction of Mrs. Lila Broom, about the seven disciplines of leadership. The high-school course is designed to attract students to the field of education and create school leaders. The students explored understanding self, communication, getting along with others, learning to learn, making decisions, managing, and working with groups. After they completed the sessions, 4-H'ers engaged in craft sessions, and they received a handmade leadership kit with items representing each of the seven disciplines. Each 4-H'er produced a leadership portfolio.



RANKIN COUNTY

4-H Summer Workshops, Camps, and More

4-H'ers in Rankin County participated in a series of workshops during summer 2017. These workshops introduced 4-H'ers to various project areas, including record books, Kids in the Kitchen, gardening, crafting, animal/ veterinary science, woodworking, and robotics. Rankin County Cloverbuds had fun participating in Cloverbud Fun Camps. Twelve 4-H'ers completed the ATV Safety RiderCourse at the Rankin County Multi-Purpose Building in Brandon. Collaborating with other Extension agents, Extension professionals, and Mississippi Homemaker Volunteers was a great way for local 4-H'ers to discover success and fun with 4-H!



OKTIBBEHA COUNTY

Dashing to 4-H

4-H'ers discovered many new concepts when they worked with DASH robots in Oktibbeha County. Most students had never used this robot before. 4-H'ers experimented with faux snow, drew their own snowmen, and examined the filling of a diaper. They discussed polymers and measured snow. Snow was placed on the snowmen the 4-H'ers had drawn, a maze was drawn on the floor, and students used ping-pong balls as debris. Then, they had to program DASH to clear the road. Each lesson was taught with hands-on activities for the 4-H'ers using robots.



WASHINGTON COUNTY

4-H Culinary Competition

Washington County 4-H'ers were recognized and celebrated at the Great American Seafood Cook-Off and national culinary competition in New Orleans. Becca Robinson and Ashley Adams prepared and presented healthy, flavorful dishes that highlighted Gulf of Mexico crab and shrimp and Mississippi farm-raised catfish fillets. Robinson and Adams, representing the state of Mississippi, placed third and won a trophy and \$500 with their winning recipes Seafood Stuffed Catfish and Mississippi Caviar.



WAYNE COUNTY

4-H Chicken Chain

The 4-H Chicken Chain project is a program that allows young people to purchase chicks and raise them to sexual maturity. 4-H exhibitors keep record books chronicling their birds' progress. At the end of the process, 4-H'ers choose their top three adult chickens to compete in a county or multi-county show and at the Mississippi State Fair. 4-H'ers participating in the 4-H Chicken Chain project discover all aspects of poultry management. After completion, 4-H'ers have developed excellent poultry-management skills and disease awareness, as well as valuable life skills, including time management, planning, communication, and responsibility.

John Mark
Huff
of Rankin
County

I'm John Mark Huff, the 2017–18 Mississippi 4-H State Council President. I'm always looking for opportunities to speak about 4-H's role as a youth development program in our communities because I've been raising and showing dairy goats my entire life.

Not quite 2 when my older brothers joined 4-H in 2001, I followed my brothers every step they took and tried to do everything they did. To keep me out of their way, my brothers showed me how to fill up water buckets and tend to the new Great Pyrenees puppy, our livestock guardian.

Showing the goats was truly a family affair. I participated in my first 4-H Cloverbud showmanship class at 3 years old. When my brothers left for college in 2012 and 2013, I assumed the responsibilities of managing the dairy goats.

My 4-H mentors, including my older brothers, Jennifer Williams, Greg Williams, Lise' Williams, Deidra Rollins, and Wandra Evans, have offered me advice through the years. They prepared me well.

In 2016, I was named Dixie National Dairy Goat Premier Exhibitor, and my 4-H Record Book placed first in Dairy Animals. I was awarded trips to National 4-H Congress in Atlanta, Georgia, and the 4-H National Dairy Conference in Madison, Wisconsin. There, I applied, with encouragement from Sherry Thompson and Richard Hay, to be on the planning committee for the 2017 conference. At these national and state meetings, I experienced firsthand the importance of cohesiveness and teamwork among 4-H'ers.

It doesn't take 4-H'ers long to realize that I genuinely care about others. Inclusiveness is important to me. I'm never the one to stick with a clique; I reach out to everyone and encourage 4-H'ers and others to get outside their comfort zones so they can get to know and serve others.

I love spending time with and speaking to younger 4-H'ers about their projects. I'm always willing to learn, and I know I don't have all the answers. I have no problem looking to others for help, guidance, and advice.

I am passionate about 4-H and the life skills it teaches, and I enjoy spreading the word about all 4-H has to offer Mississippi's youth.

Mississippi State University Extension Service 4-H Youth Development Program



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Mississippi 4-H



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Making the Best Better