



# MASON COUNTY 4-H CLOVER CONNECTIONS

FALL 2013

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## Showcasing a Stellar 4-H Year!

Mason County's annual 4-H Achievement Night was held on October 18 at Veteran's Memorial Hall in Shelton. Special guests, families and 4-H members gathered to celebrate the many accomplishments that 4-H youth achieved during the 2012-2013 4-H year.



The event began with the Presentation of Colors, and pledges, led by 4-H members. After a brief welcome, the room was quickly filled with laughter as those present were engaged in fun energizer activities led by 4-H Regional Specialist, Dan Teuteberg.

the Mason Area Fair. 4-H club leaders Julia White and Melissa Seals were presented with Outstanding 4-H Service awards for their commitment to youth development.

Throughout the evening 4-H youth members were recognized for excellence in many areas, including leadership, community service, public speaking, personal development, record keeping and sportsmanship.

New this year was an opportunity for youth to showcase where 4-H has taken them during the past year by bring photos, projects and posters to share. Unique items, including walking sticks, pillows, photos, dresses and community service projects were on display for all to see. Gumdrop engineering, an interactive, hands-on science display provided an opportunity for members to learn about structural support using basic items.

Each year Mason County 4-H members and volunteers nominate individuals who have made significant contributions to the program during the year. Volunteer extradanoire, Leanne Gunter received Leader of the Year recognition for her contributions to Mason County 4-H programs and

The K-9 West 4-H club served as hosts for the evening, providing festive fall decorations and delicious treats.



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## What Makes 4-H Youth Development So Special?

By Dan Teuteberg, 4-H Regional Specialist

Have you ever been asked the question: What makes 4-H Youth Development so special? This is one of the harder questions to answer. Do you share the research pieces around 4-H Youth Development? According to the latest research findings from Tufts University, young people in 4-H are:

- nearly two times more likely to plan to go to college
- more likely to pursue future courses or careers in science, engineering, or computer technology
- shown to have had significant lower drug, alcohol and cigarette use than their peers
- over two times more likely to exercise and be physically active
- over three times more likely to actively contribute to their communities when compared with youth who do not participate in 4-H.

Do you talk about the wonderful role adult volunteers play in the 4-H program? Adult volunteers play an important role in the 4-H program. They mentor 4-H youth, coordinate local community clubs, and help plan and run educational events and activities. All this is done to educate and teach valuable life skills in an experiential way – learn by doing.

It all boils down to this: 4-H is so special because effective youth development requires intentional educational experiences of sufficient intensity, duration, and frequency. 4-H works because of the 4-H community clubs, project meetings, contests, shows, club meetings, gatherings, and events. 4-H is so special because of you! You provide tremendous support to the youth in the 4-H program. This support is tailored to the individual and that relationship is what is so special. Volunteers make the program so great!

Thank you for being such an important part of the 4-H program. The next time someone asks about 4-H, talk about the passion of our volunteers. That’s what makes 4-H so special.

Have a wonderful Holiday with family and friends! Thanks for the making the best better in 4-H!

## 4-H Café Brings Volunteers Together

By Kathy Fuller,

Mason County 4-H Program Coordinator

When you invite wonderful, caring adults who happen to be 4-H club leaders and volunteers for an evening of delicious food and meaningful conversation you can’t help but have a great time.

The 4-H Café events were held on three evenings during September in both Mason and Grays Harbor counties. Over a meal of hearty soups, salad and breads, 4-H volunteers and staff shared two hours of meaningful conversation centered around 4-H Youth Development.

The roundtable discussion provided opportunities for volunteers to share ideas, learn new skills, and strengthen their relationships with fellow 4-H volunteers. The evening’s conversations were cen-



tered around six questions, including, “What draws us together as 4-H?”, and “What drives and motivates you to be active in the 4-H program?” It was no surprise to hear the words passion, wholesome, learning, world-changers, pride, opportunities, communication, and personal growth throughout the night.

“I am here to support youth to go out of their comfort zone, and to

help them learn and grow” said one Mason County volunteer. “We are preparing youth for something more.”

The input, comments and ideas that were shared during the evenings have been compiled and will help to provide needed support to volunteer leaders and keep the 4-H program moving in a positive direction.

## 2013 4-H LEADER OF THE YEAR: **Leanne Gunter** **Why I Volunteer**

4-H has been part of my life since I was 5 years old. I would not be the woman I am today without the 4-H program. I have been able to develop and use many skills through 4-H. Among them are public speaking skills, social skills, and problem solving skills, these are skills that I have used in my adult life extensively. I also realized, later in life, that it really wasn't just the 4-H program that made me who I am today; it's also the wonderful volunteers that put in so many hours to make all the programs work! I knew I wanted to be a part of 4-H and give back to the youth of Mason County!

I also watched my dad put in so many of his own hours to help de-



velop the Mason County 4-H program but it wasn't till he passed away in 2009 that I realized what an impact he actually made on the 4-H community! Since he passed I have had numerous people tell me just what he did to develop this

program and how he helped the youth of Mason County! My dad has always been a huge inspiration in my life and will continue to be for the remainder of my life!

One of the biggest rewards for me is to watch a child's face light up, when they first realized they accomplished something they didn't think they could! Watching the kids interact with each other at functions is another rewarding perk I get out of being involved, some life time friendships have happened right in front of my eyes between two kids that never would have met, if it had not been for 4-H. Watching kids learn acceptance of other people's culture, gender, race or even sexuality is probably one of the MOST rewarding aspect of my volunteer time. I will continue to volunteer in the hopes that I can make a difference in the life of one child.

## **Young Scientists Discover Fun!**

*By Mollie Taylor, 4-H, AmeriCorps*

Gumdrops and gak meant more than just sweets and silliness at the November Discovery Science 4-H club meeting. Young scientists were "learning by doing" about states of matter and structural support while engaging in fun, hands-on activities. Science has been a core philosophy of 4-H for a long time now. Whether youth are doing 4-H cooking, robotics or livestock projects, scientific concepts are key components as you learn from observations, measurements, record keeping, problem solving and much more. Identifying science in 4-H projects, and in our everyday lives, is a great start to raise STEM (Science, Engineering,

Technology and Math) awareness for youth and adults in our community. In the Mason County 4-H program, STEM outreach is handled by AmeriCorps member, Mollie Taylor who goes into local schools teaching hands-on science during and after the school day, as well as leading the 4-H Discovery Science club and groups in the community to promote science education. If you would like more information on joining the 4-H Discovery Science club or upcoming "Wacky Science" sessions at the Shelton Timberland Regional Library contact Mollie Taylor at [mollie.taylor@wsu.edu](mailto:mollie.taylor@wsu.edu) or 360-427-9670 Ext 691.



## 4-H Alumni Spotlight

# Jasmin Feist

Jasmin Feist has always had a passion for animals. She joined 4-H when she was 9 years old, enrolling in the horse project. Now a recent WSU College of Veterinary School graduate, Jasmin's days are filled with providing care for a wide variety of animal species. She remains passionate about 4-H, now serving as a volunteer. Jasmin loves to barrel race with her horse, Leo in her spare time.



### **Q How did 4-H prepare you for life?**

I think one of the strongest skills 4-H instills in us is self confidence, by requiring us to take responsibility for our projects. This self confidence is developed by our pride in our project, all the hours of hard work, sweat, and sometimes even tears building up to fair. Even at fair our leaders required us to take responsibility for our animals. Fair taught us the importance of helping our peers and how to be a good sport, even in times of failure. They required us to do herdsmanship, which taught us to be effective communicators and the importance of educating the public on our animals.

### **Q What were your favorite 4-H activities?**

Camp! I think horse camp was probably my favorite every year. When I was a junior and intermediate I learned how to become a better rider. By the time I was a senior and horse camp counselor it was my opportunity to give back and teach the juniors. Camp was great because they somehow had the ability to motivate 30+ kids to accomplish something with their project. By the end you had new friends and new stories with your old friends.

### **Q What would you like to tell youth who are going through the 4-H program now?**

**GET INVOLVED!** Whether it is a leadership position in the club, county, or state level, or volunteering at a 4-H event. Any involvement will make an impact on the 4-H program. You will make lifelong friends and have unique experiences by branching out.

### **Q Which 4-H life skills have assisted you most for your career in veterinary medicine?**

The skills that I developed in 4-H have become so ingrained in me that I'm not 100% positive which came first. I use communication skills daily, talking to other professionals and animal owners. However, I think the most important skill 4-H taught me was balance. Head, heart, hands, health. From the very beginning 4-H instills in us that we need to balance our professional and personal life, and find time to give back to our community. Juggling work, life, and hobbies is a daily task for me.

### **Q What would you say to teens who aren't quite sure of their future path right now?**

Relax, you have a long time to figure it all out. Aspire for a career that you are passionate about. If you can figure out what you are truly passionate about, you will never work a day in your life.

### **Q In 4-H, youth and adult volunteers often work together. How did that time influence your personal development?**

Working with adult volunteers facilitated my leadership growth. 4-H volunteers come in all flavors. I would say I learned just as much about how I could be a great leader, as I did on how I didn't want to be perceived. Some of my greatest mentors were 4-H volunteers. One wrote me an amazing letter of recommendation for vet school that I credit for me getting in.

### **Q What is one of your best memories of 4-H?**

Senior year at the State Horse Bowl contest in Spokane. We were Top 10 in the State! We just left out the part that there were only 10 teams. After the awards ceremony, we had two counties come to us and tell us we all the best attitude of any team they had encountered. Really that was all that mattered to us.