



MASON COUNTY 4-H CLOVER CONNECTIONS

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Celebrating 4-H With the Community

By Kathy Fuller, Mason County 4-H Program Coordinator

4-H enthusiasts from across the county gathered together on October 24 to celebrate and support the Mason County 4-H Youth Development Program at the 5th Annual 4-H Harvest of Hope Dinner, Auction, and Achievement Event. Volunteers, youth, and community members filled the Shelton Civic Center and enjoyed an evening of delicious food, friendly bidding, and celebrating outstanding 4-H achievements. Homemade desserts crafted by 4-H members were the stars of the lively dessert auction.



The evening provided an opportunity to recognize 4-H members and volunteers for their achievements, project completion, and length of service. Over one hundred awards were presented during the achievement program, including awards for 10, 20 & 25 years of volunteerism with the 4-H program!



Blue Ribbon Kids Are Stars of the Fair

By Kathy Fuller, Mason County 4-H Program Coordinator

When you mention the last full weekend in July around any 4-H member and see the excitement in their eyes it means only one thing - it's fair time! 4-H youth spend the year learning, practicing, planning, and preparing for this 3 day opportunity to share their project knowledge with members of the community.

Preparing for the fair can mean different things to members. Depending on their project area, they may be putting the finishing touches on a quilt that they have sewn, checking seals on a jar of preserves, carefully packing a trailer with horse tack, or designing a costume for the llama parade. This is their time to shine....to share their knowledge, public speaking skills, and hours of practice and preparation with the public. Visit any of the 4-H displays at the fair and you will be greeted by enthusiastic 4-H members who will ask if they can answer any questions you may have. You can also find additional information about members and their projects in detailed record books, educational posters, and public presentations at the fair.



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Tradition Reigns at 4-H Summer Camp

By Kathy Fuller, Mason County 4-H Program Coordinator

Amid the laughing, splashing, and moments of quiet reflection big things were happening on the shores of Panhandle Lake last August. For six days more than 70 youth spent their days exploring, learning, making friends and creating lifelong memories. Days were spent transitioning from educational classes to recreational activities, while the evening programs included a talent show, dance, and lively skits! Tradition is a big part of what happens during 4-H summer camp, including morning and evening flag ceremonies, pledges, mealtime, decorated cabins and even dish duty! When asked what makes 4-H camp so special, 12 year-old Grace stated "I love the traditions, the flags and pledges are my favorite." The campers are led by a group of over 20 trained volunteers and teen counselors who are responsible for everything from class instruction to meal preparation, first-aid, safety, schedules and so much more! The anticipation of a memorable summer camp experience and connecting with an energetic teen counselor is something that 13 year old Annabelle looks forward to each year, "It feels like a big family while we're here. It makes me feel loved." Many campers, including Annabelle plan to become trained as a teen counselor once they get a bit older, which is exactly what many of the current counselors have done. And so the tradition of transitioning from camper to counselor continues!



2014 4-H LEADER OF THE YEAR:

Katie Gunter



Wow, I am still in shock that I am 4-H Leader of the Year. It just amazes me, that yes one person can make a difference and that it does not go unnoticed! I have been a member of 4-H since I was seven years old. I participated with my lovely shelter dog, Penny for several years and then I moved on to the horse project. After I graduated high school, I continued to be involved in 4-H. My sisters, and I started a predominantly horse based 4-H club and just in the past couple years we have planned and successfully ran the Mason County 4-H Horse Camp. The reason I love to help my 4-H community is because I want kids that were like me, to experience the joys and challenges that 4-H has to offer. Because of 4-H, I have become a more confident and capable person and I know I owe that to this youth program! Doing a public presentation every year really does make your public speaking better. Creating a record book and keeping track of important documents also makes you a more responsible human being. I feel that giving back to the community after what it has given me, is the most rewarding feeling out there. Finally, I had and continue to have an incredibly positive and supportive family. My mom, and dad, and two sisters were in many ways my support system through my 4-H career. I know that many kids aren't fortunate enough to have that, so I hope that in some way, I can be that support system for other 4-H youth members. That is why I love 4-H and will continue to volunteer for such an outstanding program!

Wacky Science Returns

By Jonathan Andrews, AmeriCorps Member

Wacky Science is back at the Shelton Timberland Library! Wacky Science is a fun way for young students to learn about science while doing hands on experiments and making new friends outside of the school environment. Do some wacky activities like building volcanoes and learning about chemical reactions by making them erupt! Wacky Science meets every 2nd and 4th Monday of the month from 4:00pm – 5:00pm until February 23rd. No registration is necessary. If you have questions call Jonathan Andrews. 360-426-9670 Ext 691.

4-H Alumni Spotlight:

Theresa Fleener

A typical day for Theresa (Brown) Fleener is usually 12 hours and involves working with horses for all or part of the day. Theresa joined 4-H at the age of 5 and was a member for 13 years! Her passion for horses led her to Montana State University, where she graduated with a degree in Animal Science-Equine. Settling in Minnesota, she owns and operates a training business where horses have become her career. Theresa still finds time to work with 4-H youth helping them to learn about and care for their horses, providing lessons and serving as a judge at 4-H shows! Theresa and her husband Luke just welcomed a new baby girl, Lyla to their family on November 28.

Q How did 4-H prepare you for life?

4-H prepared me in many ways for my life both personally and professionally. The community that I grew up with in 4-H is still a large part of my support system! Even eleven years after graduating, some of my best relationships are from 4-H, many of those friends I talk to weekly, and were present at some of my biggest life events. 4-H has also extended far into my work life as well, and the skills that I gained through 4-H were endless. I use record keeping, public speaking, team communication, plus a healthy amount of competitive nature that helps in my field of horse showing. I would say 4-H was the start of my passion with horses and it really helped me develop a strong set of values and morals. I have been able to find common ground with many people through 4-H. This has allowed me to connect on a personal and professional level with new acquaintances. I am very excited to see what opportunities my 4-H connection will unveil in the future!



Q What would you like to tell youth who are enrolled in the 4-H program now?

Take the opportunities that 4-H gives you and don't take them for granted. I know that there were times I didn't want to do my 4-H paperwork, aka record books. However, everything that I did in 4-H helped me later on in life. Also, there are so many opportunities thru 4-H. I feel sometimes we find our niche within the organization and stick with it. But don't be afraid of trying different programs within 4-H!

Q Which 4-H life skills have assisted you most in your professional life?

As a horse trainer I am speaking all the time. So the public speaking we worked on during public presentations and while talking to the public at fair is definitely a skill I use on a daily basis.

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

You are very young in the grand scheme of things. Try new things all the time and try and discover new things about yourself. Follow paths that are going to continue

to build on your future but if you realize that it ends up not being the correct route for you don't be afraid to change your path. I am one of a few people that I know that headed out with a path in mind and stuck with it. A majority of my friends realized their initial idea wasn't the right one and changed to something more suitable for their personalities and abilities. You should enjoy what you do in life, it makes everything so much better!

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

Being a part of an organization that is influenced by all ranges of people definitely helps with personal development. Throughout your whole life you are going to be working with a large range of individuals age wise. It helps to prepare you for a normal work environment with open communication and respect for each other. At least I think that is what can be obtained!

Q What is one of your favorite memories of 4-H?

The tradition of playing a wild man during Wild Man in the Alders at 4-H Camp definitely takes the cake!