



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FAYETTE COUNTY 4-H YOUTH NAMED MARCH 'FACES'

Uniontown, PA – Spring – the time of year when temperatures begin to rise, flowers begin to bloom again, and 4-H members begin to prepare their projects for the annual Fayette County Fair.

When people think of the 4-H program, they most often think of agriculture. Both National Ag Week and PA 4-H week fall in March, making this the perfect time to spotlight local 4-H programs as part of Fayette County's 'Faces and Places'.

Fayette County 4-H Educator Jennifer Deichert said the organization provides numerous benefits to its members. "The 4-H program is a great opportunity for kids to explore either project areas that they are interested in or that they want to get to know more about," Deichert said. "They have the opportunity to learn something new, but then if they repeat, they can develop that mastery."

Members of 4-H can explore these areas of interest in several ways, whether through traditional clubs and school programs or even day and residential camps.

Deichert said 4-H membership also offers kids a safe environment and a sense of belonging, among other positive benefits. "They can make friends outside the classroom and learn important skills."

The program also encourages team building, leadership and problem solving, and can help improve public speaking skills. Deichert explained that 4-H leaders often help members figure out how their areas of interest could become a potential future occupation. "Sometimes, they're kind of exploring what their spark is but we're always looking to make that connection with careers."

Deichert said 4-H is full of good kids involved in a variety of worthwhile projects. Among them is A.J. McMullen Middle School seventh-grader Olyvia Kamp, who is a member of the gardening program and the Teen County Council.

Kamp has been involved in Fayette County 4-H since she was "5 or 6" and said she and other 4-H gardeners began working last month on what their project would be for the garden sale. They have begun weeding and working with the soil in preparation for planting. "We're growing tons of vegetables," she said.

Belonging to 4-H has benefited Kamp in many ways. "It's made me come out of my comfort zone a lot," she said. "I'm a very shy, keep-things-to-myself kind of girl. It's helped my public speaking, and I've made a lot of new friends – that's one of my big things."

Kamp said she also enjoys the open atmosphere. “A lot of it is just having fun,” she explained. “Nobody judges; you can say what you want without being told something’s wrong. And the teamwork is good.”

Eli Wolfe, a seventh-grader at Albert Gallatin North Middle School, is involved in 4-H livestock clubs, raising and showing lambs, pigs, steers, and this year, a goat. He said belonging to 4-H has impacted his life in so many ways. “It’s helped me learn how to look after animals and to take responsibility, and also, just to do hard work in general,” Wolfe said.

4-H has also aided him in building relationships with others who share his interests. “Usually, during the summer, I go to shows with my friends every weekend,” Wolfe said. “It’s fun to spend time with them, and it’s also fun to compete with other people.”

Deichert noted that while what often comes to mind about 4-H is young people raising farm animals for the fair’s annual livestock auction, the organization offers so much more. And it is growing and evolving all the time.

“We have three or four new clubs.” Among those is a new five-day finance club starting in June that will teach interested members about things such as budgeting and balancing a bank account. A new gaming club will encompass both board games and trading card games, and a new equine club set to begin in April will teach members how to care for horses.

She said Fayette County 4-H has been doing many afterschool programs recently, partnering with East End United Community Center and Albert Gallatin Middle School, as well as Verticals and One Voice One Community. “It’s a way for us to continue growing and expanding.”

Deichert said Fayette County 4-H’s membership enrollment is going on through the end of March. Last year, she reported, there were about 440 individual members, with 2,000 kids participating in some type of enrichment program. The organization also includes about 100 volunteers.

She anticipates this year’s membership numbers will be similar. “I’m hoping we at least still get our 440, if not grow a little bit from that number,” she said.

The 4-H motto is “To Make the Best Better.” It’s evident Fayette County, and our rich agriculture industry, is made better thanks to the efforts of local 4-H youth.

Learn more about Fayette County 4-H by visiting www.extension.psu.edu/programs/4-h/counties/fayette.

Learn more about the Fayette County Fair, slated for July 27-August 5, at www.fayettefair.com.

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