

Happy Trails!

Greetings! My name is Jaime Flora. I am 14 years old and a graduating Honor Roll student at Alhambra Traditional School. I live on a small farm in Laveen and have many different kinds of animals that keep me very busy. I belong to the Laveen Pathfinders 4-H Horse Club and the Laveen Lamb Lovers 4-H Sheep Club. This year at school I was a member of the Yearbook Staff and the National Junior Honor Society for a second year. Now that I have told you a little bit about myself, I would like to take the time to tell you about my 4-H year. This is my fifth and last year in 4-H as a Junior member (I was a Cloverkid for four years before I turned nine) and next year I will be a Senior for the first time. My projects this year are Horse, Sheep, Vet Science, Photography, and Safety. I have been enrolled in Horse and Sheep for five years, and Vet Science, Photography, and Safety for four years. I've continued enrolling in the last three projects because I have had so much fun with them these past few years and they really help me with my main projects and other pastimes.

For the past five years, my main project has been Horse. In my Horse club this year, I held the offices of President and Secretary and was also in charge of the Recreation Committee and a Co-Chair on the Scrap Book Committee. My club, the Laveen Pathfinders, is small, having only four members. I really like being in a small club because it feels like we're a family. We are always supportive of each other and we are closer than most members in larger groups. As a club, we always help each other with any difficult task, as well as help in our community. While we help others, we always remember to have a good time, even if it's hard work! This year we cleaned trails on South Mountain, purchased gifts for needy children through the Christmas Angels program, and participated in Trick or Treat So Others Can Eat. We try to help as many people as we can because we enjoy helping them. At our meetings, we usually have an educational program where we learn about and discuss horsemanship, safety, vet science, and photography. We also plan clinics and workshops where we learn new skills and improve old ones with the aid of our leaders. We don't always work though. We try to

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plan as many fun and recreational activities as possible. In the past we have gone on trips to corn mazes, had annual Christmas parties, gone on bowling outings, held summer swimming parties, and gone goofy golfing. We try to combine educational with recreational activities by taking trips to horse shows, horse racetracks and touring various horse and agriculture related businesses. Our club also had many workshops this year that were really great learning experiences for us all. At one workshop we reviewed how to clean tack, and to top it off, we put our skills to the test by cleaning our own tack. Several clinics and workshops covering ground handling basics were “hands on” and we all practiced with my old pony, Cinders. In other clinics we learned about horse judging, breeds of horses, miscellaneous tack and its uses, the body systems of the horse, and the different types of show classes, such as showmanship at halter, rail classes, and performance classes. We were also able to get in practice for Hippology, Quiz Bowl, Demonstration, and Horse Judging competitions.

This year in 4-H, I went door to door with my club gathering canned and non-perishable foods for Trick or Treat So Others Can Eat. I also purchased gifts with my club for needy children through the Christmas Angels program. In mid January, I went to a 4-H Gymkhana with my new horse, General Lee. Even though we did not do well we had fun and it was a great experience for both of us. At the end of February, I went to County 4-H Communications Day and gave a demonstration on the horse’s digestive system entitled “Digest This!” I took first place and went on to tie for second in Hippology. At a Quiz Bowl contest I took third place. For the first time, I participated in Prepared Speech and I took second! At a Horse Judging competition I ranked in the blue category. I participated in these five events because the Horse Committee is presenting a buckle for the High Point in the educational events. I hope to receive this honor because participating in these events is my main focus and I personally feel they are very fun. Unfortunately in March, my new horse General Lee cut his foot bellow the fetlock and I

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had to call the vet. For six weeks I treated and rebandaged his leg until it had healed. He had severed extensor tendon but luckily it will not affect his soundness.

I learned many new things in 4-H this year. I was able to improve my horsemanship skills by perfecting my balance, working on riding on the correct leads, and learning new John Lyons training techniques that will help me better communicate and work with my horses. This year, I was able to participate in one gymkhana with my new horse. I learned that I need to work with him more if we want to be competitive. I learned the body systems of both horse and human not only through 4-H but through school as well. I learned how similar they are and I learned their differences too.

In the Laveen Lamb Lovers 4-H Sheep Club, I have lots of fun which is really surprising because there is only one member... yours truly! I raise Natural Colored Hampshire and Suffolk cross sheep. Some of these I show as breeders, while others I show as market lambs. When I can, I sell lambs to other 4-H kids so that they can use them as market lambs. I currently have twenty head of sheep, including five Southdowns and seven little lambs. Next year, I plan on continuing my Natural Colored breeding, as well as breeding my new Southdowns. In the future, I would also like to include Oxfords in my breeding project.

I have accomplished many things in Vet Science, Photography, and Safety this year. In Vet Science, I learned about basic nutrition and health care, taking equine vital signs and basic first aid, horse vocabulary and terminology, parts of the hoof and lower leg, feeds and feeding, equine nutrition, ration balancing, equine disease & prevention, internal and external parasites, and equine body systems. In Photography, I learned about Light and Composition. I was able to enter some of my photos in the Maricopa County Fair and I did fairly well. One of my photos even took first place and was given a special award. I have learned a lot about Safety this year, as well as reviewing previously learned things. I learned many things that will keep my horses and I safe around others, such as

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horses with red ribbons tied in their tails kick and that you can ride two horses together even if they don't get along.

Next year in Horse, I would like to learn how to ride on the correct leads and learn the muscular system of the horse. I would also like to pass my Level 3 Progressive Riding Test and my Level 5 Progressive Written Test as well as participate in 4-H riding events with my new horse, and even try Team Penning. I will continue to give Demonstrations at County Communications Day, as well as compete in Hippology, Quiz Bowl, Horse Judging, and Prepared Speech because I really enjoy doing it and also I am quite successful at it. In Vet Science, I would like to learn more about injuries, the equine body systems, feeds and nutrition, and unsoundness and blemishes. I also hope to go on tour with my club to an animal hospital and see a surgery again, like we have in previous years. In Photography, I would like to learn more about the parts of the camera, how to take low-light, night scene, portrait, and close-up shots, and how to know whether you have enough light. I would also like to perfect my focus technique and maybe get a digital camera. I will continue to enter my photographs in Maricopa County Fair and I may even enter some in Arizona State Fair. In Safety, I would like to learn more about trailer safety and how to stay safe around stray dogs. I will continue to execute proper safety procedures on and around my horses to prevent accidents.

4-H is really a great role model in my life. 4-H is fun and has taught me many new skills that I will use later in life at school and jobs. Skills such as business management, note/minute taking, handling money, assessing profit/loss, analyzing business practices to improve profitability, and keeping important records will be a great help to me in anything I choose to do. Through 4-H I have made many new friends that share the same interests that I do. 4-H has given me goals to work on and many opportunities to do things that most kids don't have the chance to do. I feel very fortunate to have all that I have and do all that I do. I really can't imagine my life without 4-H!

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Finally, I titled my story for this year "Happy Trails" because even though it's my last year as a Junior, there will be many more adventures ahead for me as a Senior. To top it off, this is also my last year as an 8th grader at my current school so next year will be a new beginning in High School. Next year is just full of new beginnings and I can't wait to begin! So even though I'm leaving friends behinds and we're going our separate ways there will be many good times ahead.

Tune in again next year!... Same 4-H time!... Same 4-H channel!