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# Virginia 4-H Foundation



Newsletter

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SPRING 2016

volume 4 issue 1

## Up to the Challenge: Nelson Foodies Place Nationally

In just the second year of 4-H Food Challenge programming, Virginia 4-H again sent a team to the national contest at the Texas State Fair. The Nelson Foodies team — composed of Ryan Adcock, Jasmine Johnson, Olivia Johnson, and Kristyn Underwood — placed fourth overall. They were coached by Nelson County 4-H associate Extension agent Corissa Wilson.



Nelson Foodies Team- 4-H Food Challenge.

“Our team had really strong leaders who are naturally competitive,” Wilson said. “Food Challenge pushed their teamwork and communication skills. They learned a lot about getting along and delegating tasks.”

4-H Food Challenge is a team event in which participants receive a bag of ingredients and have 40 minutes to prepare a dish, develop a presentation including the recipe’s nutrition and cost, and clean up their area. It’s fast-paced and educational, and it allows for creativity. It also tests time management, teamwork, planning, and execution skills.

Details are important throughout the contest, and each team of three to five youths must figure out how to cook the food item, incorporate at least two items from a standard pantry, practice food safety, and create a presentation that includes all the necessary requirements. One set of judges evaluates the actual preparation and teamwork, while another set listens to and scores the presentations. Presenters share information about the food groups and nutrients in their recipe. Artful arrangement of the food matters too.

Kaci Daniel, 4-H Extension agent in Orange County, served on the National 4-H Food Challenge planning team and judged the 2015 event. “It was very helpful to be on the other side of the contest, especially to see the caliber of teams at nationals,” Daniel said. “I’ve been a coach and contest organizer. Being a judge was a great professional development opportunity, allowing me to continue helping Virginia youth and volunteers improve.”

Along with Daniel, Madison County 4-H agent Kelly Mallory has been key to helping the 4-H Food Challenge spread throughout Virginia. “It’s nice to see this take off so quickly,” Mallory said. “We doubled participation from the first to the second year, and we are active in 4-H camps, clubs, special interest, and military programs. Food Challenge is relevant and accessible to urban and rural audiences, and builds the critical life skills of planning, problem-solving, and working with others.”

The Nelson Foodies’ 4-H Food Challenge career has ended, so what Virginia 4-H youth team will excel in 2016? We’ll find out at State 4-H Congress, because that’s where nationally eligible teams are decided.

## Virginia 4-H Nets Several Wins at National Contests

The Virginia 4-H Livestock Judging Team placed first and the Virginia 4-H Livestock Skillathon Team placed third at the recent North American International Livestock Exposition in Louisville, Kentucky. The event is the world’s largest purebred livestock show.

The **Livestock Judging Team** competed against 34 other teams in the 91st National 4-H Livestock Judging Contest and was the highest scoring team overall, with 2,525 points, followed by teams from Illinois and Georgia. As the 2015 National Champion 4-H Livestock Judging Team, the team is eligible to represent the United States at the Royal Highland Show in Scotland in June, along with the second- and third-place teams.

The Virginia team also placed first in cattle, fifth in swine, third in sheep and goat, and third in reasons. Virginia has won the event eight times.

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Virginia 4-H Foundation, Hutcheson Hall (0419), 250 Drillfield Drive, Blacksburg, VA 24061

The Virginia 4-H Foundation is a division of the Virginia Tech Foundation, Inc., which has been granted 501(c)(3) nonprofit status by the Internal Revenue Service.

## Chair’s Update

Dear Friends,

As you read this newsletter, I know that you, like me, are proud of the programs showcased here and proud of the people who make them happen. If this were an interactive column, we would hear firsthand the excitement from the participants, and we would all be smiling knowing these experiences matter.



It is likely that some of you reading this newsletter have taken a moment to reflect on your own 4-H experiences and the impacts they have had on your lives. While you might not be able to point to one instance, I feel certain you wouldn’t trade the experience for anything, because 4-H is woven into your very fabric.

We know these lifetime benefits are impossible to measure, and I think we can agree that future generations must receive them. This is why I am equally excited that this newsletter showcases how giving enables these programs. What better way to have a lasting impact than to enable others? I am inspired by each and every gift that made these experiences possible, as well as everyone who contributes to 4-H, and I thank you for your generosity and belief in the future.

In closing, there are three things I would like to ask of you.

First, share this newsletter. Read it and pass it on to friends. Or send me an email, and I will add your friends to the list for future newsletters. Help us share the impact of our outstanding 4-H programs.

Second, learn more about investing in 4-H. It would be fabulous for each county to have the resources needed to grow their programs. Learn to engage others in investing in the future of outstanding youth like those you will read about in this newsletter.

Finally, if you are inspired to join the movement to expand the reach of our programs and ensure the future of 4-H in Virginia, I invite you to contact me or other members of your board to learn more. There is so much to do. We have all been warmed by fires we did not build, and there comes a time in our lives when we are asked to provide a spark for the future. I want to be a spark, and I suspect that many of you feel the same way. Working together, we can take a spark and create a bonfire.

I look forward to hearing from you.

All the best,

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*Congress continued from front*

Individual awards were garnered by Blake Hopkins, who placed fifth overall, eighth in sheep and goat, and 12th in beef cattle; Hannah Craun, who placed third overall, second in beef and performance cattle, and 11th in reasons; and Sarah Harris, who placed eighth in reasons, ninth in beef cattle, and 17th overall. Craun, Hopkins, and Harris were also named All-Americans for placing in the top 20 overall.

“The teams performed phenomenally well overall and individually,” said David Roper, 4-H youth livestock Extension specialist with Virginia Cooperative Extension and coach of the Livestock Judging Team. “I am very proud of all the work the students put into this competition and how they represented the state.”

The livestock team will travel to Europe in June 2016 and will be fundraising for the trip until then. In addition to participating in the Royal Highland Show, the group will have the opportunity to visit several other European countries to learn about their agriculture systems.

The **Livestock Skillathon Team** also performed well at the North American. The team placed second in identification and quality assurance, sixth in evaluation, and third overall.

Individually, John-Robert Helsley placed first in quality assurance, second in identification, and third overall; Hailey Shoemaker placed eighth in quality assurance and 10th overall; and Gracie Bailey placed 18th overall.

The **Virginia 4-H Foundation's** 4-H Livestock Youth Development Endowment provided support for the teams' travels this past fall.



The 2015 Virginia 4-H Livestock Judging Team from left, front row: Hannah Craun, Blake Hopkins, Sarah Harris, and Caley Ellington. Back row: Doyle Wolverton, sponsor; David Roper, youth livestock Extension specialist; and Todd Conway, a sponsor from Westway Foods.

## Teen Cuisine Cooking Program Mixes Cooking Lessons and Life Skills

Introduce a few teenagers to some healthy ingredients, show them how to safely prepare a tasty new recipe, sprinkle in some nutrition facts, throw in a dash of fun, and voila! — those teens are on their way to making better food choices.

The Teen Cuisine cooking program is one of the many ways that Virginia Cooperative Extension's Family Nutrition Program and Virginia 4-H are helping low-income families make informed and healthy food choices on limited budgets. The curriculum focuses on food preparation and cooking, including the safe use of knives and the importance of hand-washing.

The 4-H'ers are involved from start to finish, from the initial recipe selection to food prep, cooking, and cleanup. “The kids learn how to prepare food on their own that they would not normally cook,” said LaSonya White, a former middle school family and consumer sciences teacher who regularly used the curriculum with her students in Newport News. “We'd make colorful coleslaw to introduce the kids to a variety of vegetables. They would scrunch up their faces, but after they tried what they had made, they absolutely loved it.”

Teen Cuisine reached more than 12,000 students in 2015 and made a major impact. Nearly three-quarters of participants indicated that they are making healthier food choices as a result of Teen Cuisine. Of that group, 78 percent reported eating more fruits and vegetables, 67 percent said they drink fewer soft drinks, and 61 percent reported eating less junk food.

This program received assistance from a Walmart Youth Voice - Youth Choice grant in support of 4-H Healthy Living programs.

“From introducing these 4-H members to new foods to educating them on healthy, inexpensive food preparation techniques they can use at home, the Teen Cuisine program is making a positive impact on the healthy behaviors of these youth that will hopefully last a lifetime,” said Tonya Price, 4-H Extension specialist.



High school teacher Katherine Morris supervises Doug Gibson, a ninth-grader at LIFES Academy, as he cuts broccoli for a chicken and vegetable stir-fry.

## Expansion of the 4-H Energy Program

With generous support from the Dominion Foundation, the 4-H Energy Program has expanded by building on the long-standing 4-H Electric Project popular with junior members and school partners. Recently, middle and high school 4-H and FFA members were introduced to the basic concepts of green energy. Students also learned about the role that coal and natural gas play in our state's energy mix.

The 4-H Electric Project develops project and life skills such as decision-making, science and technology, teamwork, and communication. The project also motivates youths to explore careers in related fields. Fun-filled, hands-on learning experiences teach students and volunteers about various energy sources and help them explore the characteristics of electricity. For example, youths erect solar panels and measure the energy produced. They also construct scale-model wind turbines and perform tests to determine the most efficient turbine designs.

This year, Virginia 4-H introduced the 4-H Electric Challenge, giving youths an opportunity to gain additional energy knowledge and to test their skills through competition. Another popular component is the Youth Energy Fact of the Week, a fun fact about energy that is shared statewide.

By investing in Virginia 4-H, Dominion is helping to create an ongoing, high-quality, statewide, youth energy program.



Dan Swafford, Curriculum Specialist, teaches a group of 4-H youth about solar energy.

To invest in Virginia 4-H, visit [www.4-h.ext.vt.edu/give](http://www.4-h.ext.vt.edu/give) or send your gift to:

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