

December 1, 2020

Hello Friend of 4-H!

When life gives you lemons, you make lemonade.

Never has this old adage been more appropriate than this year. And never has it applied to our 4-H youth as it has these past few months.

But if 2020 has taught us anything, it's that our 4-H youth, volunteers and staff are resilient.

I didn't really understand the true meaning of resiliency until I watched a conference for hundreds of youth held virtually. Or attended a leader's meeting from my home office. Or judged a showmanship contest while wearing a mask and keeping my distance.

It's clear that even with all of the challenges and disappointments, Wisconsin 4-H is growing, and our 4-H youth are blooming.

When the 2020 Wisconsin 4-H Youth Conference was cancelled our state drama team, who creates and stages performances during conference week, could have walked away. Instead these youth, and their dedicated adult advisors, turned the summer into a triumph. Nearly 500 youth and adults Zoomed in for the conference and the Drama Company executed a series of performances presented virtually.

Wisconsin 4-H Art, Drama and Communication teams start planning for a summer full of activities and performances while snow is still on the ground. This year their work didn't stop with the quarantine ... it just went virtual. The Drama Company worked through the spring and summer with the goal of a public presentation.



The climax of the summer: An online, public event that allowed youth to share their talents and celebrate their creativity. People across the state shared the evening of art, leadership and resiliency.

A Drama Company member from Dane County shared, *“During the 4-H Virtual Team Week, I learned that through determination and hard work we can have our 4-H family together, even under hard circumstances. And I learned that sometimes what you are hoping to do doesn't always work as planned, but you have to adapt and realize that it's different but still good.”*

The drama team wasn't alone in moving forward despite adversity.

With the cancellation of county fairs, judging contests and most summertime livestock activities, it would have been easy for 4-Hers to just throw in the towel. But through the clever use of technology and a little Wisconsin ingenuity, our 4-H youth turned their livestock projects into leadership projects. Youth were challenged to share information related to their projects as a way to help other 4-Hers learn and grow.

The Livestock Lessons contest was open to all 4-H members with beef, sheep, swine or meat goat projects. Each youth could enter an oral presentation and a written public service announcement. Winners were chosen in three age categories with the top lessons receiving monetary awards and featured on Wisconsin Youth Livestock Program social media, YouTube channels and other media outlets.

An Iowa County Mom said, *“Caleb got to share his sheep-showing techniques, but he also learned so much about how to prepare a ‘lesson’. And he discovered he likes to edit videos. In the end, he had so much fun!”*

Twenty-five youth took the challenge and created videos and lesson plans as part of Livestock Lessons. The program had such positive feedback from participants and educators that Round Two of Livestock Lessons was launched this fall with winners announced next spring.



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Quarantines quickly put an end to any plans for a 4-H camping experience this summer. With camp cancellations came bitter disappointment from our youth and frustration about how to fill summer hours from their parents. Once again, our 4-H staff came to the rescue by creating Camp-In-A-Box. This program allowed youth to have activities and experiences that mimicked camp programs ... all without leaving their own backyard.



the camp YouTube channel. They provided demonstrations, led camp songs, created a camp welcome and virtually provided leadership to younger 4-Hers.

All told more than 1,500 youth went to camp this summer. And it was through this program that county staff and volunteers were able to form true community connections by learning together, across the state, about ways to work in a virtual environment.

A Lincoln County parent shared,
“Camp-In-A-Box was an amazing experience and opportunity for my kids. This just proved that even though we are in this time of craziness, kids can still stay engaged.”



You can see that 4-H people are resilient. They are making lemonade every single day. But it’s a challenging time for our determined 4-H youth and the adults who work so closely with them. It’s obvious that now, more than ever, **Wisconsin 4-H Foundation support is needed** to help provide funding that allows 4-H to create and deliver brand new hands-on learning opportunities that help young people thrive - even in difficult times.

So, in the wake of cancellations and amidst ongoing uncertainty, we are reaching out to you.

Without your support, the Foundation will simply not have enough funding to help make 4-H happen across the state as we have in the past. Your gift allows us to support a wide array of programs:

- Leadership programming such as Wisconsin Leadership Council, Wisconsin 4-H Youth Conference, National 4-H Conference and Congress, international programs, community/youth partnerships and Citizenship Washington Focus.
- Membership opportunities for youth to become involved in 4-H, including new programs designed to reach urban youth, rural youth and youth from areas not historically involved in 4-H programs.
- Agriculture-related programs like Area Animal Science Days, judging contests, horse and dog leader development, quality assurance programming, digital resource development and horticulture and animal science activities and events.
- Arts programming such as ArtBeat!, arts camp, state arts teams and Art Lab.
- STEM-related programs like Tech Changemakers and Space Camp.
- Shooting Sports youth programs and adult training programs.

As we come to the end of this strange year, we are extremely grateful for the understanding and support of everyone who makes 4-H possible. And as we reach out to you, **we hope you will consider making a contribution that will sustain and grow 4-H.**

We are looking forward to better times ahead. Please know that we will be working hard to come back bigger, better, stronger and smarter in 2021.

Thank you for being a champion for our 4-H youth and for providing opportunities that empower them to lead for a lifetime.

Living the Pledge,

Brenda Scheider
Executive Director

PS: You can make a difference in the life of a child! Your gift will provide hands-on, learn-by-doing opportunities that allow our kids to dream and grow.

4-H GROWS HERE

