

2022

LOUISIANA 4-H [ANNUAL] REPORT]



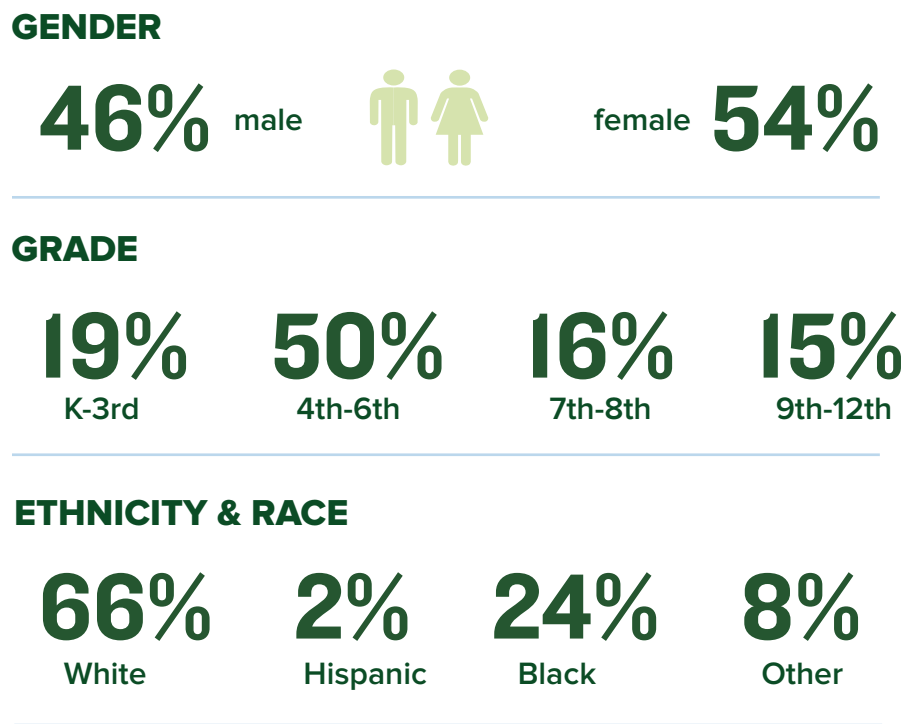
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4 YOUR INFORMATION

HOW YOUTHS PARTICIPATE

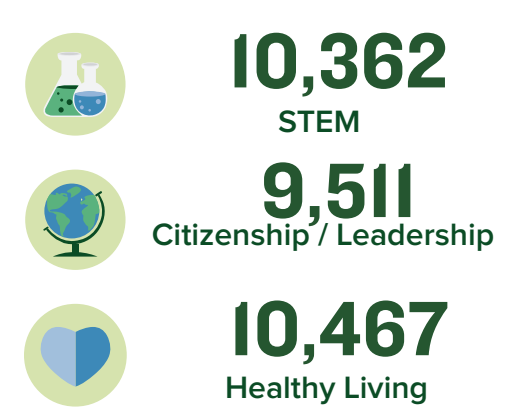


DEMOGRAPHICS



Data from the annual USDA/NIFA ES-237 Report and the Positive Youth Development Study

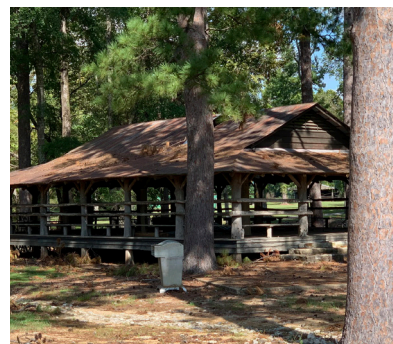
PROGRAM



VOLUNTEERS



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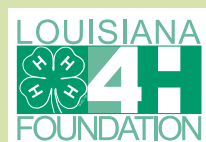


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BRANCHING OUT

Louisiana 4-H partners with others to provide enriching experiences. Some collaborations span decades.

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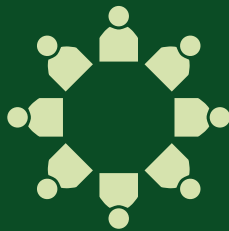
LOUISIANA 4-H NATIONAL DAYS OF SERVICE IMPACT

3,367

youth and adults
led service projects
in communities
across the state.



Assisted 32,655
Louisiana
individuals.



Partnered with over 51
community organizations
and nonprofits.

7,366

community service
hours completed.

Youth participants gained critical thinking,
problem-solving, communication,
collaboration, teamwork, creativity
and innovation skills.



A YEAR OF SERVICE

By Meggan Franks

Volunteering can make a significant difference in an individual's life or in a community or state. This year Louisiana 4-H added multiple opportunities to participate in various days of service, enabling youth and adults to make a greater impact on their community. Members and volunteers were able to volunteer for the Sept. 11 National Day of Service and Remembrance, the Louisiana 4-H Day of Service in December, the Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service in January and the Global Youth Day of Service in April.

To help grow the Louisiana 4-H Days of Service program, specialists Meggan Franks and Kimberly Jones Williams collaborated to secure a grant from Youth Service America that would provide service-project funding to parish programs throughout Louisiana. These grant funds would help agents

and volunteers develop and initiate community service and service-learning programs in all areas of the state.

In all, these service days resulted in 3,367 youth and adults giving a total of 7,366 hours to their communities, benefitting over 32,655 people. Throughout these projects, these young people gained critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, collaboration, teamwork, creativity and innovation skills.

"Serving as a lead agency and being awarded the Youth Serve America grant made it possible to increase our statewide service days from one to four. In addition, it allowed a variety of service projects to be supported and celebrated," said Jones Williams, 4-H specialist and State Citizenship Board adviser.

Parishes that received grant funds for national days of service included Ouachita, Tangipahoa, Franklin, Livingston, Lincoln, Acadia, East Baton Rouge, Bienville, Red River and Sabine.

The Ascension Homegrown 4-H Club sewed pillow cases and gathered supplies for the Cajun Navy after Hurricane Laura.



Sept. 11 Day of Service

The 2020 hurricane season resulted in at least five storms making landfall in Louisiana, breaking the state record for the most strikes in a single season. In the aftermath of the record storm season, several Louisiana regions sustained extensive damage. Louisiana 4-H responded by creating an educational program designed to teach youth throughout the state how to prepare their communities and families for a disaster situation. The educational program included a 31-page facilitator guide, an interactive self-paced Google Classroom, and a live 90-minute workshop for youth on disaster preparedness, disaster kit assembly and serving your community from home.

Through their participation in the program, 403 youth completed 18 unique community projects. As a result, members learned how to become better prepared in a disaster situation and what items need to be included in a disaster kit. They also learned to be confident in their skills to teach others about disasters. Furthermore, youth who participated improved their communication and critical thinking skills and had the opportunity to be creative.

Projects included making disaster kits, volunteering for disaster relief efforts, delivering supplies to hurricane victims, teaching youth and adults how to create disaster kits and home safety plans, writing letters to deployed military, showing appreciation for first responders, and sharing knowledge about disaster preparedness with members of the community.



Faith and Jerell Boykins deliver thank you cards to first responders in Caddo Parish.



East Baton Rouge Junior Leaders collected supplies for the Gardere Community Literacy Initiative.

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“LOUISIANA 4-H DAYS OF SERVICE HAVE ALLOWED ME TO LEARN THAT SERVICE IS GOOD FOR YOUR SOUL. HELPING OTHERS IS WHAT YOU SHOULD DO, AND IT MAKES YOU FEEL GOOD. DOING SERVICE FOR OTHERS HELPS YOU SEE OUTSIDE OF YOURSELF AND GIVES YOU A BETTER PERSPECTIVE ON THINGS.”

— Victoria Wiggins, Natchitoches 4-H Club

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MLK Day of Service

The first federal holiday designated as a national day of service is Martin Luther King Jr. Day, which is observed as the third Monday in January. Martin Luther King Jr. Day is celebrated throughout the United States to honor the life, teachings and legacy of King by engaging in community action. The COVID-19 pandemic has deepened existing inequalities, hitting the poorest and most vulnerable communities the hardest. Volunteering on MLK Day provided an opportunity to unite Louisianians of all ages and backgrounds while building stronger communities.

In response to the diverse needs of communities across the state, Louisiana 4-H created the first Louisiana 4-H MLK Day of Service and enabled children of all ages to participate. The program featured a virtual MLK Day ceremony led by Louisiana 4-H National Conference delegates, LSU Collegiate 4-H members and alumni. In addition, it allowed youth to learn about the legacy of King and provided them with ways they could volunteer safely in their local community.

With the help of over 70 adult and youth leaders, more than 458 youth and adults participated in the first Louisiana 4-H Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service program. Projects benefited deployed soldiers, single mothers, local first responders, impoverished youth and families, local food pantries, youth and adults with disabilities, local schools and teachers, children in foster care and several other nonprofits that provided critical resources to those living in poverty.

As a result of the dedication and hard work of 4-H leaders and members in over 22 parishes, hundreds of books were donated, meals were served, cards were delivered, funds were raised and trees were planted in honor of Martin Luther King Jr. Day. Preston Parker, a 4-H member from Lincoln Parish, said, “Through participating in Martin Luther King Jr. Day this year, I learned that even a small act of service can have a large impact.”

The program enabled youth to exercise critical thinking, communication, collaboration and teamwork skills and practice creativity and innovation. Moreover, youth reflected that they learned about diversity and how critical it is to serve others and make their communities a better place.



AFTER DAMAGES AND DISASTER, CAMP GRANT WALKER FINDS NEW WAYS TO REACH 4-H’ERS



By Christine Bergeron and Adam O’Malley

The Grant Walker 4-H Educational Center has been a staple in the Louisiana 4-H community for almost a century. Nestled in the pine forests of the Kisatchie National Forest in Grant Parish, Camp Grant Walker hosts educational programs, corporate meetings and youth events along with 10 weeks of summer camp serving all 64 parishes of Louisiana. The center also provides facilities, lodging and management for various meetings, and camps throughout the fall and spring seasons.

On Aug. 27, 2020, Grant Walker suffered significant damage from Hurricane Laura. The destruction was primarily from uprooted pine trees that damaged a bunkhouse, two log cabins, and several other buildings and facilities around the camp. Two of those buildings, the beloved Dance Pavilion, where nightly dances are held during summer camp, and the Arts and Crafts Building, are original structures that were built on the grounds as part of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in 1939.

Although Camp Grant Walker pivoted to a virtual 4-H Summer Camp in 2020, six weeks later the camp suffered another major setback because of severe flooding during Hurricane Delta. Unfortunately, while navigating through the lengthy rebuilding process resulting from these two major hurricanes, Camp Grant Walker was not able to reopen for 4-H Summer Camp 2021.

To continue our mission of providing high-quality outdoor programming to the 4-H youth of Louisiana who were looking forward to spending the summer at camp, the 4-H staff decided to take camp on the road. The state 4-H program’s first “traveling

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Clockwise from left: Jon-Patrick Couvillion, of Lafayette Parish, collected diapers for families in need after Hurricane Laura. The Louisiana 4-H Citizenship Board created Geaux Bags Disaster Kits to be donated to the State Evacuation Shelter. East Baton Rouge Junior Leaders club members collected books for the LINE4LINE Community Reading Program.

INNOVATION MEETS OPPORTUNITY

By Christina Hebert

IN A WORLD OF MOVERS, makers and shakers, the Louisiana 4-H Program is on the hunt for innovative, business-minded students to compete in the 4-H University Tiger Tank Entrepreneurship Contest. Each summer, 4-H'ers with entrepreneurial spirits have an opportunity to pitch their business ideas to some of the savviest "Tigers" — or judges — in Louisiana. Whether 4-H'ers are working hard to make it in "Death Valley," or they dream of making it in Silicon Valley, the panel of strategically recruited Tigers will fight to support businesses that have potential to be successful.

THE TIGER TANK ENTREPRENEURSHIP CONTEST offers youth the opportunity to create a product or service-based business plan and pitch. There are two divisions offered: Ideation and Up and Running. Many of the business ideas are inspired by the competitors' 4-H project work. The winners of each division receive a cash award sponsored by the Mott Foundation. They are encouraged to reinvest the award to strengthen their business and personal entrepreneurial skill sets.

AS THE 2021 TIGER TANK CONTEST WINNERS REFLECTED on their experience, they shared the following insights.

Natchitoches Parish 4-H members Katie Anderson and Hannah Roquemore won the Ideation division with their Amazing Graze business idea for on-the-go charcuterie-style snack boxes.

Ideation Division: Katie Anderson

■ *What was your favorite part of preparing for and competing in the 2021 Tiger Tank contest?*

My favorite part of preparing and competing in the Tiger Tank competition was presenting our pitch to the judges. Preparing and making our business model was enjoyable, but presenting our business was exciting. Everyone gets nervous, but I was lucky to have such a great partner to answer questions with.

■ *What was your biggest takeaway from the contest?*

My biggest takeaway from this competition was right after the competition. Hannah and I started giggling because there were some obvious mistakes in our budget! That's okay, and we knew we were there to learn. Miscalculated budget or not, it worked out in the end.

You may have learned some new skills while preparing for the contest. How do you think these skills will help you in the future in your career?

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Through this contest I learned many new skills. I'd never written a business plan before. Now that I've moved away to college and am majoring in marketing, I know I'll be writing more business plans. The contest motivated me, and I feel excited about my college major.

Hannah Roquemore

■ *What was your favorite part of the Tiger Tank contest?*

My favorite part of the Tiger Tank competition was the actual competition day. Pitching to the judges was a great experience. Even though it was nerve-racking, it was awesome to get feedback from the judges on what they would do if they were in our position.

Up and Running Division: Eliza Foster

Tangipahoa Parish 4-H'er Eliza Foster won the Up and Running division with her Breakfast Laid Daily business, which focuses on marketing and selling freshly farmed chicken eggs to local businesses and individuals.

■ *What was your favorite part of preparing for and competing in Tiger Tank?*

My favorite parts of the Tiger Tank contest were creating eye-catching visuals, practicing for my friends and family, and getting to show other people how a little work can go a long way. My creativity was able to shine through in this contest by having to create a poster to represent my business. Practice makes perfect, and practicing allowed me to show off my business in an informal yet effective way. Presenting my business to the panel of judges made me truly realize how far I have come. This business started out as a 9-year-old trying her hardest to scratch up a few pennies. Now it has become a 14-year-old being able to not only please herself but help the community also.

■ *You may have learned some new skills while preparing for the contest. How do you think these skills will help you in the future in your career?*

Some new skills that I have learned from this contest are memorization skills, confidence and patience. I had to memorize my business pitch, which took time and effort. Walking into a room full of judges you have never seen before is pretty scary. Confidence is important so that you look prepared and not scared. Patience is important. For the contest, I had to wait for my turn. I had to wait for the judge's question, and I had to wait for the results of the contest. All these skills will be used in life as time goes on.

■ *What was your biggest takeaway from the contest?*

My biggest takeaway from this competition would definitely have to be that this could be a really successful business that could be scaled beyond the one that we've piloted at our local farmer's market.

■ *You may have learned some new skills while preparing for the contest. How do you think these skills will help you in the future in your career?*

Tiger Tank helped me develop skills I can use in my future career, for example by knowing your community and your potential customers. You have to know your community to know what they might like and be willing to purchase. Living in Louisiana, we knew that many of our potential customers would like spicier things. Knowing this, we included spicier meats on our charcuterie board and in our snack boxes.



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summer camp," the 2021 Louisiana 4-H Traveling Road Show Day Camp Program, served 31 parishes and nearly 800 youth and traveled over 3,000 miles.

The 2021 Louisiana 4-H Traveling Road Show was a huge success. One parent said, "It was amazing! I was so excited that my child stayed and felt safe and reassured. My son struggles with new things, and he made it through both day



camps! This, in my book, was a huge win!"

Another parent added: "My son has been asking to go to 4-H camp for a few years, but he has really bad asthma and allergies, so I was never comfortable enough to let him go for a week alone. This was perfect for him!"

As 4-H Summer Camp is completely at capacity, serving over 4,000 youth each summer, the 4-H Youth Development Program is looking forward to exploring this great program alternative in future years as a way to reach additional youth.





LOUISIANA 4-H REIGNING NATIONAL SHOOTING SPORTS CHAMPIONS — AGAIN

By David Boldt

While it wasn’t done in consecutive years, the Louisiana 4-H Shooting Sports Program has once again been crowned national champions and defended the title it won in 2019.

Each June, 4-H shooting sports participants meet in Grand Island, Nebraska, to take part in the shooting sports national championship. This year, 593 competitors from 32 states gathered to compete in several disciplines, including archery, muzzleloading, shotgun and small-bore rifle.

The Louisiana team consisted of 36 students representing nine teams. Eight teams placed in the top five of their respective disciplines. One individual was crowned national champion, and two groups captured the national titles in team competition.

Harold Seguin, a volunteer coach for archery, said being part of the national championship is rewarding, but it is not his primary goal.

“It’s very satisfying to come home with the trophy,” he said. “But it’s just as satisfying to get the competitors to do their best and reach their full potential.”

Seguin got involved with the program 10 years ago when his children started competing, but he continues to remain as coach even after they finished competing.

“Every kid is different, so it takes some patience because they each learn differently,” Seguin said.

Seth Montgomery, of Lafourche Parish, placed first in the archery compound bow competition.

In the team category, the small-bore rifle group of Aidan Cole, of Ascension Parish; Kensli Dumas, of Desoto Parish; Julia Johnson, of Ouachita Parish; and Charles McLemore, of Union Parish, were the overall winners.

Dusty Dumas served as the volunteer coach of the small-bore team. Serving as the coach was an easy decision for her.

“My daughter started five years ago, and I couldn’t go on the range with her,” Dumas said. “I asked what did I need to do? So, I decided to take the courses that would allow me to get inside.”

Dumas said that shooting sports is another outlet for students who may not be geared for traditional team sports.

“It’s an individual event, but it’s also a team sport,” Dumas said. “Our team in Desoto is like a family. For those that stick with it, I’ve seen them develop so much confidence.”

The team of Adam Hubbell, of Lafourche Parish; Aiden Jones, of Bossier Parish; Seth Montgomery, of Lafourche Parish; and Jesse Walker, of Tangipahoa Parish captured the title in archery compound bow category.

The event was cancelled in 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic, but Louisiana was able to capture a second title in a row in 2021.

As the state shooting sports coordinator, I am proud of what the program competitors and volunteers have accomplished.

This is the most well-rounded team that Louisiana has brought to the national championship. The work their coaches, volunteers and parents have done is phenomenal.

The Louisiana team consisted of 36 students representing nine teams. Eight teams placed in the top five of their respective disciplines. One individual was crowned national champion, and two groups captured the national titles in team competition.

YOUTH WETLANDS PROGRAM GOES ONLINE

The Youth Wetlands Education and Outreach Program launched its new online learning platform in January 2021. During the last half of the 2020-2021 school year, 148 teachers and students registered for the system. The platform uses Learning Management System (LMS) software. LMS allows YWP to create individual classrooms and learning flows for participants.

Another feature of the LMS is the ability to “see” how participants are using the system. For example, we can look at what lessons or activities are popular or how often participants are engaging with the LMS. One question we asked ourselves was, “How do teachers that don’t have any students registered in their online classroom use the system (if at all)?” What we discovered is that most of these teachers were engaging with the program without their students registering. How do we know this? Teachers were accessing the same lesson multiple times over several days or weeks and printing out one or more copies of the materials. This kind of information is invaluable to the program to better capture youth impact estimates.

We are also excited about the development of an individualized training program within the online platform. With support from the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority, YWP is creating a suite of wetlands-related online training modules. Once an educator completes a module, they would be eligible to receive materials for a lesson related to that module. We hope to have our first sets of trainings available in early 2022.

— Brian Gautreau





Mitchell



Gleason



Bourriaque



Bordelon



McFarland



Stelly



Bergeron

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

By Karen Martin

Staci Albritton Mitchell

Ouachita Parish class of 1986

A professional photographer and the mayor of West Monroe, Louisiana, Mitchell sees a direct line between her career and 4-H.

“My involvement and participation in the 4-H program has definitely played a big role in my career path in photography and as an elected official serving the public,” Mitchell said. “4-H’ers understand the importance of good citizenship, serving others and giving back to their community.”

Growing up in her Ouachita Parish 4-H club, Mitchell showed market lambs and won state and national 4-H photograph competitions. As a 4-H’er, Mitchell’s work hung in the National 4-H Conference Center and at the Walt Disney World Epcot Center in Florida.

Today she is the owner of Albritton Photography. She and her husband, Jay Mitchell, have four children and four grandchildren.

Randi Schamerhorn Gleason

Vernon Parish class of 2001

An executive sales director for Mary Kay cosmetics, Gleason participated in public speaking and livestock projects in 4-H. She served on the National Club Congress Planning Committee and was the state 4-H secretary.

“4-H was the place that I learned how to set goals and persevere until the task was complete or the goal was reached,” Gleason said. “That is a skill that I will forever use in business and in life.”

Ryan Bourriaque

Cameron Parish class of 2001

Before serving District 47 in the Louisiana House of Representatives, state Rep. Bourriaque showed livestock and won at 4-H Short Course, a forerunner of 4-H University.

“4-H taught me responsibility and, at times, how to deal with losing,” Bourriaque said. “The relationships that I formed in and out of the show ring were numerous, and I am proud

to call many of those individuals friends today. To be able to watch my oldest daughter participate in Contest Day, Achievement Day and the livestock program is one of the best feelings I have experienced as a father.”

Brett Wicke Bordelon

Cameron Parish class of 2002

Bordelon is the director of training and development for LHC Group Inc. in Lafayette, Louisiana, an in-home healthcare service with 30,000 employees. In 4-H she developed leadership skills and perseverance at 4-H University and through livestock judging and raising and showing animals.

“There are so many areas I could attribute to my 4-H experience, from general exposure to practical knowledge and skills” she said. “I would have to say, 4-H without a doubt helped build my confidence, my courage, my ability to adapt and my ability to work under pressure. It provided me with opportunities to develop myself and to serve others.”

Ryan Perkins

Concordia Parish class of 2004

A faculty member at Harvard Medical School and an adult and pediatric pulmonologist at Boston Children’s Hospital, Dr. Perkins cares for children and adults with lung diseases, particularly those with cystic fibrosis. During his 4-H career, Perkins was the state 4-H president and a delegate at the National 4-H Conference.

“4-H was pivotal in helping me to develop into the person I am today,” Perkins said. “Through my experiences in 4-H, I learned invaluable lessons about communication and leadership that I continue to utilize. These tools have been instrumental in helping to open doors and have given me the confidence to pursue my dreams of caring for people with lung diseases.”

Cody Hood

Assumption Parish class of 2011

Hood has traveled the world, teaching in Korea, Poland and Aruba. He currently teaches in New Orleans at the International School of Louisiana.

“4-H gave me confidence and let me experience positive opportunities that I may never have had the opportunity to do. I’ve traveled to 30 countries since my involvement with the program. The only way to experience opportunities is by getting the courage to experience them.”

Daniel McFarland

Caddo Parish class of 2011

The administrative lead for the Pediatric and Congenital Heart Center and for adult cardiac surgery at Johns Hopkins Medicine in Baltimore, Maryland, McFarland credits 4-H with his personal development.

“4-H played a significant role in my development, both personally and professionally,” McFarland said. “It instilled a sense of responsibility through my beef projects, a drive for excellence through the various competitions and development programs, and taught me how to be an effective communicator through the various speaking opportunities, Toastmasters program and leadership roles. My experiences in 4-H have provided me with a wide array of connections in work and lifelong friendships of which I am forever grateful.”

Gabriel Stelly

St. Landry Parish class of 2011

Stelly is an Air Force captain working as a contracting officer managing programs valued at more than \$1 billion.

“The 4-H servant leadership model made me both an empathetic and effective leader,” Stelly said. “It taught me the importance of managing ideas across a wide array of people and ensuring that all of those people felt that their voices were heard. As state 4-H president, I had to manage ideas and interests of the entire executive board while still remaining effective as a leader. That same skill is so useful today as I manage relationships across the Air Force, our sister services and other government agencies. I think about 4-H and what it taught me every day. I can say without a doubt that I would not be the man, Air Force officer or friend to others that I am today with the 4-H club.”

Ariel Bergeron

Terrebonne Parish class of 2012

Bergeron’s career as poultry nutritionist for animal nutrition company Adisseo USA is informed by her 4-H experience as a State Food and Fitness Board member and a member of the 4-H University champion poultry judging team.

“One 4-H motto is ‘To Make the Best Better.’ I truly utilize this motto for every instance in my life,” Bergeron said. “Every step in my path I have strived to make the best of every opportunity and focused on how I could make it better.”

HELPING HANDS



THROUGH THE PANDEMIC AND NATURAL DISASTERS, 4-H'ERS HELP OTHER COMMUNITIES

By Lanette Hebert

Every year 4-H'ers make a pledge to devote their "hands to larger service," promising to step back from their own personal needs and serve others. The COVID-19 pandemic, as well as natural disasters of hurricanes and flooding, led the 4-H community to numerous service opportunities. The pandemic is a major cause of trauma in young people in many areas of the country, but in Louisiana, many young people are coping with an extra burden — the psychological effects of hurricanes and other natural disasters.

4-H'ers contributed many hours of service in response to the pandemic. Louisiana 4-H partnered with 7-Dippity Inc., a Florida-based organization, to offer educational webinars and resources to 4-H professionals and volunteers, school systems and other community partners. The three-part webinar series helped participants learn strategies for talking with children, understanding their stress and providing tips for coping.

"It was a great training, and the information presented was valuable for all of us living in areas affected so much by frequent storms," said one webinar participant.

With the impact of hurricanes Laura and Delta, many 4-H members were anxious to aid and support fellow 4-H members and others. Many parish 4-H programs organized hurricane recovery drives to collect supplies and funds. To address long-term recovery needs, the Louisiana 4-H program established Clovers Connect, a pen pal initiative. 4-H members from throughout the state "adopted" a 4-H member whose life was changed by the storms. The letter writing kicked off in November 2020 with 100 participants receiving 4-H notecards and letter writing tips. Rylee Bourriaque, a Cameron Parish 4-H'er, was a recipient of a caring peer through Clovers Connect. "It feels good to have a pen pal, and I want to eventually meet her one day," she said. "It's nice to make a new friend."

The Louisiana 4-H Program also worked to connect school systems hit by the storms with Learning Undeclared, an organization that provides science-based experiences in mobile science labs. Summer camps were offered to sixth through 12th graders in partnership with the Calcasieu Parish School System. After the camp experience, students reported a greater excitement in going back to science class when returning to school, and an increased number of students felt strongly that they could have a career in STEM if interested.



Above: Calcasieu Parish youth participated in a summer enrichment program provided through Learning Undeclared. Photo provided by Learning Undeclared. **Left:** Rylee Bourriaque, a Cameron 4-H member affected by the storms, looks forward to receiving mail from her Clovers Connect pen pal, a Natchitoches Parish 4-H member. Photo provided by Bourriaque family.

The phrase "boots on the ground" can be used to describe the numerous service efforts organized through the 4-H program. From tarping homes to serving food, 4-H members and volunteers jumped into action. Through a coordinated effort led by Natchitoches 4-H Agent Pam Pearce, parish representatives of the Northwest Region convoyed relief efforts to storm-struck areas with stops in Beauregard and Calcasieu parishes. Using resources and conducting supply drives, the effort provided an 18-wheeler filled with bottled water, numerous cleaning supplies and 500 hot meals.

"It was great to have our teens travel with us to the impacted area and serve the meals," Pearce said. "It helped them to develop an appreciation for the service they were providing to those in need. It was a great hands-on experience that will stay with them and provided great lessons."

Bossier Parish 4-H Agent Jeannie Crnkovic was happy to join her Northwest Region co-workers in the effort spearheaded by Pam Pearce. Crnkovic said this experience provided 4-H members with an opportunity to aid others and helped them to realize that there are always people in need, but the needs change based on the situation.



CLOVERS
CONNECT

Kickoff Date:

Nov. 2020

100
Participants

PLANTING THE SEEDS

AGRICULTURE PROGRAMS LEAD TO KNOWLEDGE, SELF-RELIANCE

By Esther Boe

Agriculture education programs do not only teach students how to be gardeners and farmers. They also train tomorrow's scientists, nutritionists, teachers and health professionals. Applied ag education programs with hands-on learning are important to help young people gain knowledge.

While the COVID-19 pandemic presented many challenges to the delivery of traditional 4-H programs, 4-H agents in the Central Region determined that a healthy, hands-on, family friendly project club focused on gardening was important for development and appropriate for delivery while youth were learning remotely at home. The 4-H Seed of the Month Club emerged to meet these needs.

4-H agents created a nine-month seed subscription that was made available to youth throughout the region beginning in August 2020. With this project, participating 4-H'ers were provided seeds of various plants, including rainbow carrots, easter egg radishes, lettuce, green beans, okra, squash, pine tree seedlings and coneflowers, which are great at attracting pollinators. Agents used the LSU AgCenter Louisiana Suggested Planting Guide publication as a resource to select which seeds to offer each month. 4-H agents distributed seeds either through pre-packed mailers or local extension offices. 4-H'ers were also provided educational materials on how to plant, maintain and harvest the plants. The agents worked as a team to create a monthly publication for each featured plant that the youth could refer to as they navigated through each stage of growth.

Approximately 350 youth from across 10 central Louisiana parishes participated in the project club over a nine-month period. 4-H agents collaborated on marketing, advertising, writing educational publications and distributing seeds.

A survey was utilized to gauge the value and success of the program. With a variety of questions to collect input from youth, agents were able to realize many successful impacts from the project club. The survey revealed that students overwhelmingly wanted to continue the Seed of the Month project. Survey results also revealed that the top seeds by preference were green beans, lettuce, carrots and sweet potatoes. Radishes were listed as the least popular seed distributed. Most surveys indicated a family member was

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One of the largest impacts that lesson study provides is a support network for agents. Agents shared that they were able to support their learning and the learning of colleagues, ease workload, share resources and ideas, and manage their time with other work demands because of participation in lesson study.



LOUISIANA 4-H EMBRACES LESSON STUDY PRACTICE

By Esther Boe

Lesson study is a community of practice in which a team of educators takes an active role in collaboratively planning, teaching, observing and revising a series of connected lessons. Louisiana 4-H agents have embraced the practice of lesson study, and they are growing professionally while teaching youth in a purposeful and strategic manner.

During the 2020-21 academic year, lesson study leaders conducted programs across 60 parishes and advised 83 agents within Louisiana 4-H. Approximately 7,560 youth were provided high quality lessons through hands-on, face-to-face and virtual methods. Agents overcame barriers presented by the pandemic and challenges posed by natural disasters, reaching youth through the network of lesson study partnerships.

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One of the largest impacts that lesson study provides is a support network for agents. Agents shared that they were able to support their learning and the learning of colleagues, ease workload, share resources and ideas, and manage their time with other work demands because of participation in lesson study.

Vermilion Parish 4-H Agent Shannan Waits provided leadership with a 4-H science lab lesson study. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, agents spent time together converting lessons from in-person to virtual deliveries and had to shift from small groups to individual student-led experiments. While the method was effective, it was also more expensive. Despite the challenges presented, the 4-H science lab lessons were delivered to 2,745 members from fourth through 12th grade. Lesson topics included chemistry, electricity, physics, and plant and food science. 4-H'ers said they enjoyed working at home with their families conducting the lessons and were excited about their experiences.

Louisiana 4-H state staff member Tanya Giroir provided leadership on an "adulting" study for youth aged 12-19. Often, young adults and teens are moving into adulthood without the knowledge of daily life skills. The study provided lessons on living on your own, car ownership, workplace etiquette, internet safety and shopping for quality clothing. The high school students in the study said they felt more confident moving into their futures with skills and abilities sharpened by the program.

Healthy Living Program Coordinator Clair Zak provided a study called What's on Your Plate and reached 430 youth. The program focused on the scientific principles used in food preparation. Also, youth were exposed to food science concepts by discovering gluten, the effects of heat on fruit, vegetables and eggs, and the enzymatic process in fruit.

Brian Gautreau, extension associate, served as the Youth Wetlands Program lesson study leader. One lesson study leader, Katlin Lucas, was able to take Youth Wetlands Program lessons and create a Wetlands Field Day for West Feliciana Middle School.

Adriana Drusini and Ashley Istre, 4-H agents serving St. Mary parish, led a study on personal development in a lesson titled Picture Perfect YOUth. The agents made many modifications and additions with their lesson study group to accommodate the needs of youth living in hurricane affected while also living through the pandemic. The personal development lessons were timely and relevant as youth navigated through many difficulties encountered. "I learned that setbacks happen in life and to achieve goals you have to keep trying and never give up, no matter what," one participant said.

Esther Boe, 4-H regional coordinator, promotes lesson study because of the academic focus. She has witnessed the growth in parish programs and increased enrollment firsthand and believes that the impacts of collaborating to learn and teach 4-H curricula will result in greater retention of our 4-H youth as they transition through elementary, junior high and high school.

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supportive of the program, with moms and grandpas as the most invested.

Student survey responses indicated that participants learned how to properly grow each seed variety, including how to space, sow, fertilize and take care of each plant from seed to harvest. Many 4-H'ers shared that they used trial and error to be successful. For example, one student said that he had to put a fence up around the garden to prevent rabbits from getting into the garden patch. Others shared that they had to carry water to their gardens or

that they lost many plants to overwatering caused by an abundance of rain.

While many students shared photos of successful harvests, some were dismayed that they lost plants due to an unusually hard Louisiana freeze. Weather was a recurring topic in the evaluation. Agents reflected that youth experienced firsthand the trials and tribulations farmers and gardeners face.

When asked what students liked least about the 4-H project, one member said he disliked his parents trying to get him to eat what he grew. Perhaps the "eat your vegetables" conversation needs more attention in the future!

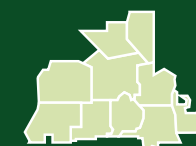
4-H SEED OF THE MONTH CLUB



350
youths



10
central La. parishes



9-month
duration

Two members of the Boys and Girls Club build a model of the Lower Mississippi River using masking tape and sewing pins to test how sediment diversions work. Photo provided by 4-H Youth Wetlands Program.

LOUISIANA 4-H PARTNERS WITH OTHERS TO PROVIDE ENRICHING EXPERIENCES

By Catherine Fox

For over 100 years, Louisiana 4-H has provided enriching, hands-on experiences for our youth — and others have noticed.

This has led to 4-H agents and specialists becoming leaders for youth development outreach and opportunities in their communities and across Louisiana.

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BRANCHING OUT

FULLY IMMERSED

State 4-H specialists Brian Gautreau, Catherine Fox and Meggan Franks collaborated with the Boys and Girls Club Youth Volunteer Corps during the STEM Immersion Experience. The experience included developing youth leadership skills for social change, exploring the importance of Louisiana's wetlands and the threats they face, and how to use their leadership skills to positively impact wetlands.



Youth paint with different Louisiana soils to create an artistic expression of something they are learning during the STEM Immersion Experience. Photo provided by 4-H Youth Wetlands Program.

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"4-H has a wonderful relationship with the community," said Lekeisha Lucas-Powell, the East Carroll Parish 4-H agent. "We often collaborate on projects to provide meaningful opportunities to make a positive impact on youth and the community."

These relationships are only strengthened by the continual high-quality and enriching experiences and leadership 4-H provides to communities and the state.

"It is such a pleasure working with the Vermilion Parish 4-H office every year," said Adrienne Theriot, Vermilion Parish School District supervisor of middle school instruction. "Their staff provides well-rounded learning opportunities for all students in our district to engage in activities they may not have time to experience during the school day. These hands-on lessons help our students grow and develop into caring and productive citizens."

Some partnerships and collaborations span decades. Louisiana Sea Grant and Louisiana 4-H have partnered on Marsh Maneuvers, a coastal ecology educational program for high school 4-H'ers, for over 30 years.

"Our long-term relationship with Louisiana Sea Grant allowed us to build a truly unique program that is one of the best experiences that Louisiana 4-H offers," said Catherine Fox, Youth Wetlands Program specialist and co-director of Marsh Maneuvers.

Other partnerships and collaborations developed more recently. Launched in 2016, the Youth Conservation Corps is a partnership between Orleans Parish 4-H and the Audubon Nature Institute to provide youth with learning and service opportunities related to the environment and conservation.

"I shared leadership responsibilities with the youth volunteer manager at Audubon Nature Institute," said Derek Landrum, a Louisiana 4-H agent. "My role was to provide positive youth

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GOOD HABITS

Iberia 4-H partnered with the Boys and Girls Clubs of Acadiana for their 2021 4-H Healthy Habits program funded by the Walmart Foundation. Together, they created community gardens and educated youth on healthy living and nutrition.



Above: Maddox Miller, Iberia Parish 4-H agent, talks to members of the New Iberia Boys and Girls Club about the importance of healthy living and eating. Photo provided by Iberia 4-H. **Top right:** Iberia Parish 4-H'er Blake Gisclair assists Boys and Girls Club members with planting strawberries. Photo provided by Iberia 4-H. **Right:** Iberia Parish 4-H'er Blake Gisclair teaches a healthy living lesson on the "parts of the plant we eat" to Boys and Girls Club youth. Photo provided by Iberia 4-H.



■ Continued from Page 22

development expertise. I developed age-appropriate learning activities for eighth through 12th graders and recruited partner organizations to plan service projects that were age and skill appropriate."

It's not just 4-H staff who are youth development leaders. 4-H volunteer leaders reported working with almost 100 community agencies and nonprofits across the state to provide over 6,220 youth with educational experiences and opportunities to give back to their communities and connect youth to community resources.

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CHALLENGE ACCEPTED

East Carroll 4-H hosted the 4-H STEM Challenge at the 2021 Louisiana Soul Food and Heritage Festival in Lake Providence. Funded by TC Energy, this 4-H event offered experience-based activities and experiments led by 4-H teen leaders and community volunteers. Youth learned about robotic concepts, engineering and technology process skills, and life skills that included teamwork, communication, critical thinking, sharing and planning.



Top left: A youth participant completes the Boats and Buoyancy Challenge at the 4-H STEM Challenge during the 2021 Louisiana Soul Food and Heritage Festival. Photo provided by East Carroll 4-H. **Above:** David Dixon, an Alcorn State University drone pilot and former 4-H'er, leads a presentation on drones in agriculture at the 4-H STEM Challenge event during the 2021 Louisiana Soul Food and Heritage Festival. Photo provided by East Carroll 4-H. **Left:** A youth participant tests his balloon-powered race car after designing and building it at the 4-H STEM Challenge during the Louisiana Soul Food and Heritage Festival. Photo provided by East Carroll 4-H.



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"As a result of these collaborative efforts, youth learned about their community and opportunities to give back and make their community a better place for others," said Meggan Franks, the Louisiana 4-H volunteer and leadership specialist.

As COVID-19 restrictions rolled back later in the spring of 2021, West Feliciana 4-H Agent Katlin Lucas found that collaborative programming helped reaffirm the value of 4-H in her community after over a year of socially distanced and virtual events. Lucas collaborated with the 4-H Youth Wetlands

Program and teachers at West Feliciana Middle School to put on Wetlands Days for sixth through eighth grade students.

"After COVID, it was very important to me that schools see that we are interested and care very much about the academics of the students," said Lucas. "Wetlands Days truly helped rebuild that relationship, recruit volunteers, and teach youth about 4-H and agriculture. It helped show the community how much 4-H cares about our youth."

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Teachers at West Feliciana Middle School also feel that Wetlands Days was a success.

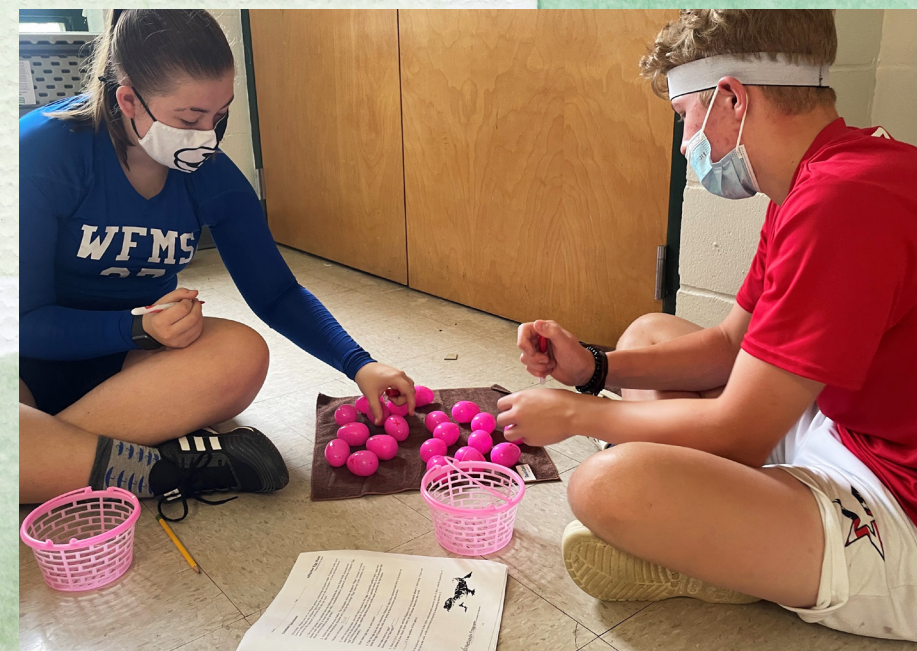
"The work 4-H does and the programs they bring to our school enrich the learning experience we are able to provide to our students," said Ali McMillan, literacy and intervention specialist at West Feliciana Middle School. "Students engaged with each other in critical thinking related to the topics presented at Wetlands Day. Through hands-on activities, they were able to be active participants in their learning and take ownership of the process."

Lucas also sees events like Wetlands Days as a valuable recruitment tool for her 4-H program.

"It gives youth a chance to meet their 4-H agent and other 4-H'ers, and they don't have to come to us first — we are coming to them," Lucas said. "My hope is that through events like this our 4-H program will grow and grow!"

Lucas isn't the only person who sees the benefits in collaborative programming. Iberia 4-H partnered with Boys and Girls Club in New Iberia for its 2021 4-H Healthy Habits program funded by the Walmart Foundation. Together, they educated youth on healthy living and nutrition.

"Collaborating and partnering with other youth-serving organizations helps broaden the reach of the 4-H program," said Maddox Miller, an Iberia Parish 4-H agent. "By expanding our audience, we are able to make a larger impact on the communities we serve." ■



EXPLORING ECOLOGY

Students at West Feliciana Middle School got the chance to explore Louisiana's wetlands, wildlife and ecology through a series of hands-on activities during 4-H Wetlands Days. The event was a collaboration between West Feliciana 4-H Agent Katlin Lucas, teachers at West Feliciana Middle School and the 4-H Youth Wetlands Program.

Top: Two students collect "alligator eggs" as part of an activity where they learn about alligator conservation and management during the West Feliciana Wetlands Days. Photo provided by 4-H Youth Wetlands Program. **Top right:** Eighth grade students at West Feliciana Middle School build a model of a coastal community. Photo provided by 4-H Youth Wetlands Program. **Right:** Two students collect macroinvertebrates for a water quality activity during the West Feliciana Middle School Wetlands Day. Photo provided by West Feliciana 4-H.



4-H GOES LIVE

VIRTUAL BBQ BOOTCAMP HEATS UP

By Claire Zak

When traditional Louisiana 4-H summer camps were forced to cancel because of the COVID-19 pandemic, thousands of fourth through seventh grade students lost the opportunity to attend camp. Across the nation, COVID-19 signaled an urgent need to transform 4-H programs to remain viable in this new socially distanced reality. Louisiana 4-H answered the call through many avenues, one of which was a highly successful Virtual Summer Camp, which included Virtual BBQ Bootcamp.

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Crystal Ahrens
cuts up a brisket
for BBQ Bootcamp
beef lesson.
Provided photo.

FRANKLIN PARISH TEACHER NAMED 2021 SOUTHEAST REGION VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

By Ashley Powell

Jessica Parker was taken by surprise when she heard the news that she was chosen as the 2021 Southeast Region 4-H Volunteer of the Year. This National 4-H Council honor is bestowed upon a 4-H volunteer. Parker was nominated by Franklin Parish 4-H Agent Kelly Lafferty.

"Through creating an inclusive environment, her programs inspire youth to adopt a welcoming attitude, and as a result, her youth learn to appreciate the diversity of all people," Lafferty wrote. Parker "always looks to the positive" and encourages the youth to do the same as a 4-H Club leader and Spanish teacher at Franklin Parish High School.

By encouraging the youth to become more involved in their community, Parker said they become motivated to help others and will eventually become productive citizens, benefiting all who live in that community. From participating in canned food drives to visiting nursing homes, she pushes her 4-H'ers to become involved. Parker is also looking forward to her stepson Dakota taking on more leadership roles in 4-H as he moves into the high school club this year. "I really want to increase our club's numbers this year, and maybe Dakota can help with that aspect," Parker said.

Parker balances her responsibilities by utilizing 4-H Club officers. By asking them to assist with duties of 4-H Club meetings and assigning them tasks, Parker said it "helps the youth have a sense of empowerment" and encourages them to feel a sense of ownership. Her goal for the 2021-22 school year is to hold club meetings face to face after having to meet virtually during the COVID-19 pandemic. Throughout the pandemic, Parker tried her best to remain in contact with the 4-H'ers. She used Google Classroom to keep in touch with them and disseminate information but would really like a more personal connection with them this year.

"She is a wonderful role model for the 4-H Club members," Lafferty said. "As Jessica Parker continues to serve as a role model for the youth in Franklin Parish, she truly shows us how to use our head, heart, hands and health to make Louisiana 4-H a place for everyone."



Parker

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The 4-H Youth Development State Office team spearheaded a new virtual camp experience for 4-H and non-4-H youth in Louisiana, across the nation and around the world. Virtual 4-H Camp was organized by the Camp Grant Walker team. The plan consisted of four weeks of virtual camps: photography; science, engineering and technology; barbecue; and gardening. The BBQ Bootcamp was unique as the only fully live virtual camp event and was hosted by Crystal Ahrens, 4-H animal science specialist, and Claire Zak, 4-H healthy living specialist. The three-day event served to educate youth on pork, chicken and beef commodities from farm to plate, incorporating animal, meat, and nutritional and health sciences for an all-in-one program. Each day highlighted one commodity.

Due to Louisiana 4-H's large Facebook following (13,000-plus), it was selected as the main hosting site. All sessions were uploaded to the Louisiana 4-H YouTube channel as well. Each live session was approximately one hour long plus

time for additional questions and comments. To enhance engagement, Ahrens and Zak utilized the Be.Live platform for streaming to Facebook to allow guests into the stream and provide engagement options such as comments with profile pictures on screen. 4-H youth were invited to serve as virtual camp counselors to start each day with the 4-H pledge and song just as it would happen at on-site 4-H Summer Camp. Online trivia challenges were created using the Kahoot! Virtual learning program each day. The challenges matched the topic of the day to recreate game time at camp.

Another virtual learning program, Flipgrid, was used to incorporate camp vespers each day. Flipgrid is a virtual tool that allows youth to post videos and encourages social connection and evaluation. The final day of BBQ Bootcamp culminated with a Family Game Night Trivia event live streamed to YouTube. The bootcamp on Facebook had a total three-day cumulative reach of 15,900 with 1,488 interactions. Over the three camp days there were over 150 minutes of engagement using Flipgrid and 61 Kahoot! trivia challenge completions.

VIRTUAL BBQ
BOOTCAMP



15,900
people reached

1,488
interactions

150
minutes of
engagement

SPIRIT OF SERVICE



Landry is an instrumental part of the St. Mary 4-H Healthy Living program and the implementation of Operation Cook.

LANDRY COMMITTED TO 4-H THROUGH VOLUNTEER ROLES

By Lanette Hebert

Kathleen “Kathy” Landry has been involved in the Louisiana 4-H program for more than 40 years. Her involvement as a 4-H member instilled in her a spirit of service that continues to this day.

Landry started her 4-H career as a member more than 40 years ago in Iberia Parish, where she participated in several projects, from livestock to clothing. After finishing college, she returned to the 4-H program as an agent in St. Mary Parish. Following nine years as a 4-H agent she decided to teach in the school system. Even with the transition, she was still committed to 4-H and served as a volunteer.

“Working with Ms. Kathy has been one of the most rewarding experiences since being a 4-H agent,” said St. Mary 4-H Agent Adriana Drusini. “Kathy is always excited about helping the youth and has been an instrumental piece of all our healthy living programming. Kathy is the person you contact when in need of a volunteer, and she will be there. It does not matter if it is judging at the fair or helping train for a 4-H University contest.”

As a volunteer Landry has served in many roles, including club leader, advisory board member and chaperone, always making valuable contributions. After her retirement from the public school system, Landry shifted her attention to implementing a 4-H Club at the Chitimacha Tribal School.

Through her work alongside the 4-H agents, a National 4-H Council grant was obtained and brought additional resources to the school to teach healthy living habits.

In 2016, through another grant, two schoolwide events were established. At the Healthy Habits Fun Day, students, faculty and staff participated in stations and activities focused on nutrition information, meal planning with MyPlate guidelines, table manners, etiquette and healthy snacks.

“The reason I continue to be a 4-H volunteer can be summed up in one word — rewarding,” Landry said. “As a volunteer leader, I have the pleasure of seeing youth grow and develop into responsible, capable and successful leaders. I truly believe that the 4-H program has opportunities for all youth to learn by doing. These rewards keep me coming back year after year.”

Given her passion for the healthy living project area, she also serves as an Operation Cook volunteer, working with agents and teens on workshops that focus on teaching healthy living, physical activity and food preparation.

Landry’s volunteer efforts extend to the state level as she served as a volunteer adviser to the Louisiana 4-H Food and Fitness Board, a teen leadership board working to offer outreach to others on the importance of nutrition and fitness. In this role, Landry modeled adult-youth partnership and advocated for youth voice. She has served for 10 years and represented Louisiana 4-H at two National 4-H Council grant trainings. She has served as chaperone to 4-H Club Congress and the 4-H educational trip.

“Ms. Kathy is an amazing volunteer and asset to the Food and Fitness Board,” said Annaclaire Zerangue, Louisiana 4-H Food and Fitness Board member. “She is always willing to lend a helping hand and inspires all of us to live healthy lifestyles and give back through service.”

“The reason I continue to be a 4-H volunteer can be summed up in one word — rewarding. As a volunteer leader, I have the pleasure of seeing youth grow and develop into responsible, capable and successful leaders. I truly believe that the 4-H program has opportunities for all youth to learn by doing. These rewards keep me coming back year after year.”



Landry isn’t afraid to get her hands dirty as she is seen kneading dough at a state board field study.

LOUISIANA 4-H VOLUNTEERS EARN STATE, REGIONAL AND NATIONAL SERVICE AWARDS

By Meggan Franks

Each year thousands of adults provide time, expertise and resources to reach youth in all communities of the state, enabling them to develop the essential life skills needed to become the leaders of tomorrow. This year several volunteers and retired staff were honored at the state, regional and national level for their service to Louisiana 4-H and communities across the state.

Gloria Miller: 2021 National Lifetime Volunteer of the Year, National 4-H Council

Serving the Louisiana 4-H program over two decades, Gloria Miller was honored by the National 4-H Council for her selfless service, adaptability and advocacy for the Louisiana 4-H program. "Gloria is such a generous, genuine person. She truly bleeds green and is an asset and a true advocate for St. Charles Parish and Louisiana 4-H," said Kali Zammit, a 4-H agent for St. Charles Parish.

Throughout her various volunteer roles, Gloria has affected thousands of youth by providing hands-on learning experiences, being a positive role model, bridging generation gaps and nurturing youth and adult partnerships. Gloria has delivered over 500 workshops and seminars during her tenure with 4-H. A constant in her community and parish, Gloria has dedicated her time to learning new delivery modes and adapting to changes in technology.

Jessica Parker: 2021 Volunteer of the Year, Southeast Region, National 4-H Council

Jessica Parker works tirelessly to ensure her club is inclusive and accessible to all. Named the 2021 Volunteer of the Year for the Southeast Region, her program inspires youth to adopt a welcoming attitude and appreciate diverse groups of people.

Parker has an "open door" policy. "Any time we need her for anything, she is there," said one 4-H'er in her parish. "We know we can go to her office if we need an adult to talk or give advice."

Parker is a champion for the Louisiana 4-H program. She helps spread awareness by showcasing programs and events on her school's website and various marketing channels. An active recruiter, Parker utilizes in-person events and virtual tools to connect with parents and members. For example, when the pandemic restricted her ability to have events and promote 4-H programs, Parker used Google Classroom as a 4-H Club meeting space and kept members updated with newsletters and club information.



Laura Strahan: 2021 Champion of Service, Volunteer Louisiana

As a decorated volunteer with over 30 years of service to Louisiana 4-H, Laura Strahan knows 4-H is "making the best better" for countless rural youth in Natchitoches. So, when the pandemic caused several programs across the state to suspend 4-H activities, Strahan worked with her school principal to allow 4-H meetings to continue and ensured policies and procedures were in place for her club to meet safely.

From fundraising over \$60,000 for her 4-H program over the last three years to shipping children's clothes needed after a hurricane, no task is too large or small for Strahan. Through her service she has enabled countless youth to develop the essential life and leadership skills to be successful beyond 4-H.

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OTHER NOTABLE MENTIONS:

2021 Louisiana 4-H Hall of Fame Inductees:

- Donald Aguillard, Lafayette
- John Andrus, Vermilion
- Charnel Bailey, Vernon
- Trishan Charles, St. Charles
- Russell Guarino, Lafayette
- JoAnn Hullum, Ascension
- Charles Hymel, St. James
- Paul Jackson, State
- Felix Landry Jr., St. James
- Harry Laws, West Baton Rouge
- Cathy Mouton, Iberia
- Amie Skipper, Lincoln

2020 Louisiana 4-H Hall of Fame Inductees (Publicly Inducted in 2021)

- John Broussard, Natchitoches
- Linda Coates, Livingston
- Melissa Echols, Lincoln
- Cathy Falcon, Lafayette
- Norris Grabert Jr., Iberia
- Denise Hymel, St. James
- Michelle Puissegur, Acadia
- Patti Rodrigue, St. John
- Traci Simon, Vermilion
- Camelia Soprano, St. Mary
- Brian Spillman, West Feliciana
- Jerry Whatley, Calcasieu

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Lisa Wiggins: 2021 Ag in the Classroom Teacher of the Year

The Ag in the Classroom award recognizes a Louisiana teacher for achievements and efforts in educating students on the importance of agriculture. Wiggins, who earned her Louisiana 4-H Master Volunteer credential in 2020, teaches and serves as the librarian at Northwestern State Elementary Lab School in Natchitoches, where she teaches English language arts, science and reading to her kindergarten through fifth grade students using literacy gardens.

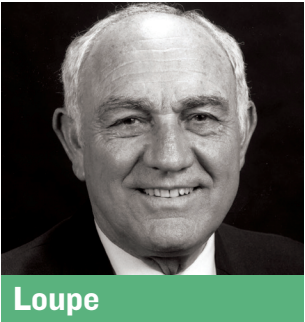


Wiggins does not claim to be an expert gardener but enjoys growing her gardening skills with her students. "I'm learning along with the kids," Wiggins said. "We're applying a lot of our research into discovering new things, so I feel like a student along with them. We're all growing together!"

Wiggins is a two-time winner of the Ag in the Classroom award, which she also received in 2011. Since then, Wiggins expanded her garden by adding an outdoor classroom, a greenhouse for aquaponics and a garden for each grade.

Denver Loupe: 2020 National 4-H Hall of Fame Inductee, National 4-H Council (officially inducted in 2021)

The National 4-H Hall of Fame was established to recognize 4-H volunteers, financial supporters, staff and pioneers who made significant impacts within the 4-H movement at the local, state and national levels.



Denver Loupe, former LSU AgCenter vice chancellor and extension director, spent his life supporting 4-H personally and professionally. He was officially inducted into the National 4-H Hall of Fame during a public ceremony in Washington, D.C., in October 2021. Under his leadership, Louisiana 4-H worked closely with public school boards to incorporate 4-H into schools as a cocurricular opportunity, a partnership that remains strong today.

He also helped establish the Louisiana 4-H Foundation and secured funding for at least two 4-H agents in each Louisiana parish. In addition, he served as a trustee of the National 4-H Council and the Louisiana 4-H Foundation.

"Because of his leadership, not just with the 4-H program but with extension as a whole, the Louisiana 4-H program was able to have a strong foundation for continued support and outreach throughout the state," said Toby Lepley, associate vice president and 4-H program leader.

WHERE'S THE BEEF?



By Ashley Powell

“Where’s the beef?”

For Union Parish 4-H’ers that’s an easy question to answer, thanks to a partnership formed with a local veterinarian. For the past two years, Drs. Charles “Chuck” and Ashley Edwards have teamed up with Union Parish 4-H Agent Brandon Reeder to conduct grilling workshops utilizing beef and pork products.

Family and Consumer Science Agent Markaye Russell and nutrition educator Marianna Langston also joined the team, providing food safety lessons during the workshop. Chuck also competes in cooking competitions as part of the High Steaks Cooking Team. Aside from that, he enjoys teaching others the art of grilling. So, when Reeder asked if he would be willing to help with a 4-H grilling workshop, Chuck Edwards was all in. The first grilling workshop happened just before

the COVID-19 pandemic began. That first class in 2020 and the second in 2021 have allowed over 20 Union Parish youth to learn proper grilling techniques.

During the workshop series, the youth learned about different models of grills, grill safety, cuts of meat, how to check the temperature of the meat and where the meat came from. For Chuck and Ashley Edwards, it is their love of grilling and of teaching that makes this a perfect fit. The cost of the workshop series was offset through sponsorships from P&L Steaks Grilling Supply Inc., which donated the seasonings; Royal Oak, which supplied charcoal and fire starters; GrillGrate, which provided grilling gloves; and High Steaks LLC, which supplied grates for the grills, food safety gloves, thermometers and other grilling supplies. Reeder anticipates this event growing over the next few years.

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“I think once the kids start talking about how much fun they had learning how to cook hamburgers and pork chops, others are going to want to join in,” he said. The Edwardses are hoping the workshop series participation grows, too. “We would like to get grants and more sponsorships to purchase the grills and needed supplies,” Chuck Edwards said.

Ashley Edwards has grand plans to offer the opportunity throughout the Northeast Region of the state. The Edwardses have already conducted the workshop in Concordia Parish. Once the success of the Union Parish events got out, Concordia Parish 4-H Agent Paige Dickey offered this opportunity to her 4-H’ers.

“They loved it and learned so much,” she said, “we hope to be able to offer it again.”

During the workshop series, the youth learned about different models of grills, grill safety, cuts of meat, how to check the temperature of the meat and where the meat came from.

HARD WORK, DEDICATION LEAD TO SUCCESS IN 4-H HORSE PROJECTS

By Hannah Devall

The 4-H horse project is a well-known and beloved project that encourages mastery inside and outside of the arena. During the LSU AgCenter State Horse Show, 4-H'ers can qualify for the Southern Regional 4-H Horse Show Championship held in Perry, Georgia, at the end of July. Students may qualify through riding events as well as the educational contests held during the state show at the Lamar Dixon Exposition Center in Gonzales, Louisiana, in mid-July.

"It takes a lot of hard work and dedication to succeed in the horse project. Louisiana 4-H'ers and their supporters have

committed the time and resources into striving for excellence," said Neely Walker, LSU AgCenter horse extension specialist.

Louisiana's exceptional delegation surpassed all expectations in 2021 with successes in and out of the show ring while competing at the Southern Regional 4-H Horse Show Championships. Louisiana 4-H members' participation kicked off with the communication contests, which included public speaking, individual demonstrations, team demonstrations and horse judging on Aug. 29. Nine 4-H members participated in the educational contests while numerous exhibitors competed on horseback throughout the rest of the week in Western, hunter, saddle seat, ranch horse, nontrotting and speed events.



Above: The Natchitoches Parish 4-H horse judging team earned its spot on the horse educational trip by winning the state contest at 4-H University. From left, Cooper Johnson, Cole Johnson, Jeffrey Townson and Tyler Lancour pose along with coach Chris Pearce and Ashley Godke, Horse Premier Exhibitor winner for 2021. **Below:** From left, Lanie LeLeu, Bradlie Debnam, Josie Blanchard and Ali Fontenot, members in St. Martin Parish, participated in the communication contests at the Southern Regional 4-H Horse Championships. Lanie LeLeu and Bradlie Debnam placed third in Team Presentation. Ali Fontenot placed sixth in Individual Presentation, and Josie Blanchard placed second in Public Speaking.



"Stepping out of my comfort zone to compete at the southern regional horse show was one of the best decisions I have made," said Josie Blanchard (far right), St. Martin Parish 4-H member. "Along with the many friendships made, I learned many important lessons. Determination, concentration and dedication were needed for me to do well. Though competing and placing was an amazing experience in itself, meeting one of my biggest idols in the agriculture industry while on the trip was absolutely astounding. Meeting Sonny Perdue (middle), former U.S. secretary of agriculture, wasn't something I expected to do on the trip, but it was an awesome bonus."



Karmyn Spears, 4-H member from Evangeline Parish, prepares for her breakaway roping run at the Southern Regional 4-H Horse Championships.

2021 4-H FOUNDATION SPOTLIGHTS

By Patrick Tuck

Meraux Foundation 2021 Legacy Donor

The Arlene and Joseph Meraux Charitable Foundation is a private 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that was established by Arlene Meraux to benefit the community of St. Bernard Parish. When Arlene Meraux founded the Meraux Foundation, she asked her niece, Rita, to manage it with a simple guiding principle: to ensure that the land resources that Arlene transferred to the foundation would be used to improve the quality of life in St. Bernard.

The Meraux Foundation's LSU AgCenter partnerships in St. Bernard Parish include AgMagic on the River, an educational event presented by the LSU AgCenter; the Center for Louisiana Citrus Innovation and Research; the Black Mangrove program in partnership with Chalmette High School and 4-H; and a \$150,000 gift to perpetually support local 4-H programs.

The Meraux Foundation has previously supported the LSU AgCenter Livestock Show with a \$150,000 gift that established an endowment for supreme champion animals in all six breeding species — beef cattle, dairy, poultry, sheep, goats and swine. This gift represents the single largest donation in the 80-year history of the show.

In the wake of hurricanes Laura and Delta in 2020 and their tremendous impact on the Louisiana 4-H Grant Walker Educational Center, the Meraux Foundation stepped up once again with a gift of \$25,000 toward rebuilding and restoration efforts. "It was an easy decision for them knowing how many St. Bernard kids experience overnight camping at Camp Grant Walker every year," said St. Bernard 4-H Agent Lauren Faust. The Louisiana 4-H Foundation announced this year's Legacy Award at its July 2021 meeting at Docville Farm. Meraux representative and 4-H Foundation trustee Bill Haines recalled the long-standing relationship between 4-H and the Meraux Foundation. "We are very honored to receive this award, and we very much appreciate our years of work with the LSU AgCenter and 4-H," he said.

Haines shared further that there is a recurring theme Meraux representatives hear every year when St. Bernard kids return home from Camp Grant Walker. They love the overnight camping experience and how it opens their eyes to new opportunities in a new and different environment. "I know that Camp Grant Walker is a special place for so

many," he said, "and it seems even more so to the St. Bernard kids who go there every year."

Todd Tarifa, 4-H department head, grew up in St. Bernard Parish, and he remembers what the Docville Farm property looked like when he was a child. "I remember when there was just the house, the barn and not much else," he said. "The work Meraux is doing for the community and the way the farm has grown are amazing! We are so appreciative for all they do for Louisiana 4-H and for the AgCenter."

2020 4-H Foundation Legacy Award given to Cleco

When Hurricane Laura reached so far into Louisiana during the 2020 season, many parts of Louisiana that rarely experience hurricane devastation were affected in ways that many considered once-in-a-lifetime. Hurricane Laura made landfall on Aug. 27 and was the 12th named storm, fourth hurricane and the first major hurricane of the record-breaking 2020 hurricane season. Then came Hurricane Delta on Oct. 9, and these areas were devastated once again. Delta was the record-tying fourth named storm of 2020 to make landfall in Louisiana. In total, the 4-H Grant Walker Educational Center was affected with damage to 23 buildings across its 90 acres. "Laura's impact was mostly wind and tree damage, and with Delta we experienced flooding on some of the highest spaces on our property," said Christy Bergeron, camp director. Soon after Laura, CLECO employees arrived at Camp Grant Walker to stage energy restoration services for the surrounding region. While on the property, they witnessed the extensive tree devastation firsthand. Thankful to have a partner like the LSU AgCenter and 4-H, CLECO was eager to give back and helped to facilitate over \$50,000 of in-kind tree removal services to 4-H Camp Grant Walker. After Laura damaged many of the camp road beds and open green spaces, CLECO helped again by facilitating restoration of several areas across the property.

Cleco Power has a long history of philanthropic involvement across its 24-parish service territory. As a Louisiana company, Cleco Power is committed to improving the quality of life in the communities it serves. Its community investment priorities include education, youth programming, health and wellness, low-income assistance, diversity and causes that Cleco employees support. "They have consistently supported our Louisiana 4-H programs for many years," said 4-H Program Leader Toby Lepley.

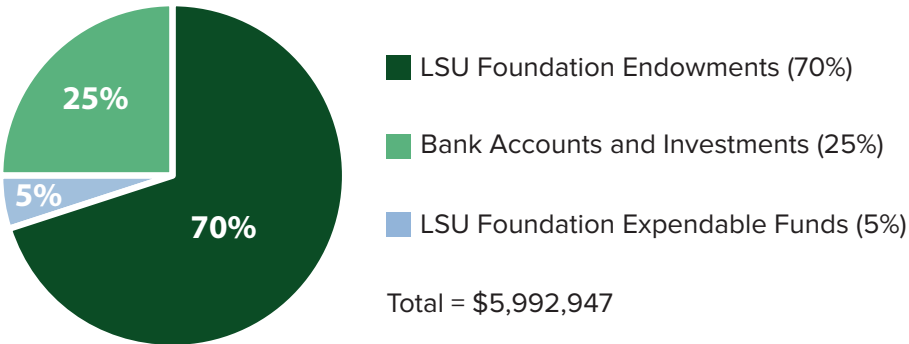


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