

LOUISIANA Agriculture

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Louisiana 4-H serves more
than 200,000 youth

'4-H Grows'

Campaign Promotes Youth Potential

Olivia McClure



4-H is often called one of the best-kept secrets when it comes to youth development programs.

The organization has been around for more than 100 years, and many people associate it with its agricultural roots. But 4-H Clubs and activities offer a wide range of activities – from robotics and fashion to cooking and shooting sports – that appeal to many different interests. With that come numerous opportunities for young

people to develop leadership skills.

4-H Grows, a new nationwide campaign, is striving to make more people aware of those benefits.

"The message is that 4-H grows life skills, and 4-H helps lead people to workforce development," said Janet Fox, LSU AgCenter 4-H Youth Development department head. "It might be those soft skills that 4-H'ers learn. It might be that they discover a passion that ultimately leads them to a career."

The idea of the promotional campaign comes from the many things that 4-H "grows," like leadership, service to others and specific skills. 4-H allows young people to explore areas they're interested in or care about in settings that bring about other advantages, Fox said.

"When I tell people I participated in 4-H, they always ask, 'like showing cows?' But 4-H is so much more than just growing farmers," said Hailey Johnson, president of Collegiate 4-H at LSU and a former state 4-H president. "It's about growing leaders, professionals, artists and more. 4-H grows the confidence needed to speak up in any situation, from crowded college auditoriums to job interviews. As a 4-H alumna, I attribute my confidence and my communication skills to the 4-H program."

Many 4-H programs, like camps and 4-H University contests, bring together students from around the state, which can teach them many lessons – teamwork, communication and appreciating diversity. At the same time, 4-H'ers must learn to make decisions on their own and be good examples to their peers.

Another major aspect of 4-H is engaging with the community. Clubs frequently do service projects, which encourage students to be aware of others' needs and step up to help them, Fox said.

In addition to traditional agriculture activities, like showing livestock, 4-H offers an ever-expanding science, engineering and technology (SET) track that includes robotics, coastal erosion, forensics and technology. There's also a newly added Performing Arts Troupe, plus a number of projects that focus on healthy living.

"We're using our project areas to develop the child," she said. "It did start out to be about agriculture, and now we see agriculture as a route to develop youth or any of the more than 40 projects areas they can participate in."

While 4-H'ers benefit from the experience and mentorship of dedicated agents and volunteers, they also have the chance to become leaders themselves. That is an invaluable experience to have at a young age, Fox said.

"The 4-H program has changed my life," said Jill Wiltz, of Natchitoches Parish, who is the state 4-H president. "I am confident and have a greater empathy for others. I embrace diversity and love to see others fulfill their potential. I embody the '4-H Grows' campaign. I have never been involved in traditional agriculture programs. Instead, I've thrived in 4-H's leadership and citizenship projects."

Olivia McClure is an assistant communications specialist with LSU AgCenter Communications.

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ON THE COVER: LSU AgCenter engineer Randy Price demonstrates how a drone works during National Science Day activities. Photo by Olivia McClure



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AgCenter NEWS

Kenyan scientists learn post-harvest, marketing techniques



The AgCenter and Egerton University in Nakuru, Kenya, are joining forces to develop a program to improve economic development and poverty reduction in rural areas of the African nation.

During the first three weeks of October, Egerton University agronomy professor Anthony Kibe and senior lecturer Mariam Mwangi spent time in the United States in a post-harvest horticulture training program they will be able to use in their country, said David Picha, training leader and director of AgCenter International Programs.

The program is designed to benefit the private sector, particularly small-scale Kenyan farmers and female stakeholders in the horticulture sector.

The Kenyans met with Tara Smith, resident director of Sweet Potato Station in Chase, to learn about research projects at the station.

Bioprocessing researchers look forward to next steps

As it reached the end of a five-year grant, the AgCenter gathered participants in the Sustainable Bioproducts Initiative to summarize their work and look forward to how to apply what they learned to new endeavors.

The initiative grew out of a \$17.3 million grant to speed up the process for developing bio-fuels and biochemicals from energycane and sweet sorghum. The funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture supported research in transforming energycane, a relative of sugarcane, and sweet sorghum into high-value

products using existing agricultural practices and processing facilities in Louisiana.

The project involved a team of university and industry partners led by the AgCenter who are improving the regular production of biomass for economically viable conversion to bio-fuels and bioenergy using existing refinery infrastructure.

AgCenter, College announce award winners

The LSU AgCenter and the LSU College of Agriculture announced the winners of their annual faculty and staff awards at a ceremony held Dec. 13 at the LSU Student Union Theater.

Ernest Girouard received the Floyd S. Edmiston Award for his work as the coordinator of the Louisiana Master Farmer Program.

Tina Goebel, Central Region 4-H coordinator and extension parish chair in Allen Parish, received the Extension Excellence Award for helping increase retention rates of 4-H youth in the 10-parish area.

Yi-Jun Xu, a professor in the School of Renewable Natural Resources who specializes in hydrologic and biogeochemical modeling, received the G&H Seed Company Inc. Research Award in recognition of exemplary work in the past five years.

Plant pathologist Jeff Hoy received the Doyle Chambers Research Award in recognition of 32 years with the AgCenter focusing on sugarcane diseases.

The Denver T. and Ferne Loupe Extension Team Award was given to a team that has taught yoga to 4-H youth as well as a high school football team. The team includes state 4-H agent Jessica Stroope, parish 4-H agents Esther Boe, Brooke Lafargue, Joanna Strong, Betsy Crigler, Lekeisha Lucas-Powell, Elizabeth Lynn, Kori Meyers and Ashley Powell and parish nutrition agent Vicky Green.

A group of researchers who study the effects of insecticides on both mosquitoes and non-targeted organisms, such as honeybees and fireflies, won the Tipton Team Research Award. They are insecticide toxicologist James Ottea, medical entomologist Kristin Healy and insect physiologist Daniel Swale.

Christina Zito Hebert, a 4-H agent in Iberville Parish, received the Rosalie Bivin 4-H Youth Development Award for her work with special needs students.

Gary Whatley, research farm supervisor at the Central Research Station in Baton Rouge, received the Ganelle Bullock Outstanding Service Award. Mitch Boudreaux, a research associate and coordinator in the School of Animal Sciences, was named the winner of the Outstanding Service Award for Associates.

Marlene Janes, a professor in the School of Nutrition and Food Sciences who specializes in food safety issues, received the Sedberry Award for Outstanding Graduate Teacher. Kristin Stair, an assistant professor in the Department of Agricultural and Extension Education and Evaluation, received the Sedberry Award for Outstanding Undergraduate Teacher.

Georgianna Tuuri, an associate professor in the School of Nutrition and Food Sciences, received the National Association of Colleges and Teachers of Agriculture Teaching Award.

College of Agriculture Tiger Athletic Foundation Outstanding Teacher Awards were presented to Michele Ball, an instructor in the School of Nutrition and Food Sciences, and Kristin Healy, a medical entomologist.

Glen Gentry, associate professor and coordinator of research at the Bob R. Jones-Idlewild Research Station in Clinton, was the winner of the 2016 Article of the Year for Louisiana Agriculture magazine.

AgCenter agents earn national awards



Several AgCenter professionals were honored at the National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences 2016 annual meeting.

The Distinguished Service Award was presented to Mandy Armentor, of Vermilion Parish, and first place Communicator Award for Photography was awarded to area nutrition agent Layne Langley.

The national first place Communicator Award Educational Publication was presented to a northeast Louisiana team led by area nutrition agent Cathy Agan. Other members were agents Terri Crawford, Brittney Seay, Alethia Lawrence, Ashley Powell, Betsy Crigler, Monica Stewart and Karol Osborne; Elma Sue McCallum, AgCenter Communications; and Sandra May and Diane Sasser, School of Nutrition and Food Sciences.

The team developed a brochure, "Take Time With Your Kids," to encourage healthful physical activity and nutrition for parents of young children.

Growers learn ways to profit from pumpkin patches



Kylie Miller, right, AgCenter agent in Concordia Parish, and AgCenter fruit and vegetable specialist Kiki Fontenot gave instructions at a workshop at the Northeast Research Station in St. Joseph on how to be successful at growing a pumpkin patch for fun and profit. Taking an agritourism approach is one way to enhance profits on the farm, Fontenot said. Farmers can earn more per pumpkin by operating a corn-type maze and pumpkin patch to attract families and school groups.

Healthy Communities initiative works to improve rural health



As three rural parishes wrapped up their first year participating in the AgCenter-led Healthy Communities project, community members are now making plans for how they will make sustainable changes to improve residents' health in 2017.

A grassroots effort to improve life in rural Louisiana by making healthful foods and recreation opportunities more accessible, the project was launched in West Carroll Parish in 2013 and expanded to St. Helena, Madison, West Feliciana and Tensas parishes when the AgCenter received a two-year, \$1.45 million grant from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in 2016.

The Healthy Communities concept will soon be implemented statewide through AgCenter family and consumer sciences programs, although the focus will remain on the selected parishes.

Youth activities have included opportunities for students to participate in Southern University Ag Center-led gardening workshops to plant school gardens.

AgCenter faculty receive awards

Two AgCenter professors were recognized as regional award winners at the annual meeting of Epsilon Sigma Phi, the national organization for extension professionals.

Nematologist Charles Overstreet was selected for the Distinguished Service Award, and family life educator Diane Sasser received the Continued Excellence Award.



Overstreet was cited for his outstanding research in applied nematology – in particular the management of the reniform and other nematodes in crops grown in Louisiana – and for his service to Latin American agriculture.

The state leader of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed), Sasser has led a successful nutrition education social marketing campaign, promoted the use of iPads for teaching nutrition education to youth and initiated a nutrition education texting service for parents of school-aged children.



AgCenter professor awarded honorary degree in Thailand



Witoon Prinyawiwatkul, professor in the AgCenter School of Nutrition and Food Sciences, has been awarded an honorary doctoral degree from Kasetsart University, Bangkok, Thailand.

The degree was conferred at a ceremony at the university, where Prinyawiwatkul has contributed to curriculum development and revision of higher education in food science and technology for the past 20 years.

At the AgCenter, Prinyawiwatkul, who holds the Horace J. Davis Endowed Professorship, conducts research on food product development from Louisiana agricultural, seafood and aquaculture byproducts and wastes from processing plants.

Researchers awarded technology transfer grants

Two AgCenter researchers were recently awarded more than \$42,000 in grant funding that will help them promote their inventions to industry partners.

The grants are from the LSU LIFT2 Fund, which began in 2014 to stimulate technology transfer between LSU and the marketplace. LIFT grants help researchers cover the costs of any additional work that is needed to demonstrate an invention is ready for the market.

Frank Bastian, a professor in the AgCenter School of Animal Sciences, is working to develop a live test for chronic wasting disease, which can cause neurodegeneration, emaciation and, ultimately, death in animals such as deer and elk. Testing normally requires harvesting brain matter from a dead animal, and the infected material is contagious to other animals.



Changyoon Jeong, a water quality specialist at the Red River Research Station, hopes to create an affordable system that can obtain a more complete picture of carbon dioxide emissions from agricultural environments.



Linscombe received Rice Industry Award

Steve Linscombe, who holds the American Cyanamid Professorship for Excellence in Plant Genetics, Breeding and Variety Development, received the the Rice Industry Award at the 2016 USA Rice Outlook Conference for his work as rice breeder and director of the H. Rouse Caffey Rice Research Station.



Linscombe has worked for the LSU AgCenter for 34 years, and his breeding work has resulted in 24 new varieties. He said the cooperative research between the LSU AgCenter and universities in other U.S. rice-producing states is essential to making progress for rice farmers.

Linscombe said the Louisiana check-off system that funds research and promotion is vital to his work and the Louisiana rice industry. "Our rice leadership has really stepped up to the plate to make sure those research and promotion funds drive our programs well into the future."

College of Ag NEWS

Meeting brings minorities together



Members of the LSU chapter of Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences, MANRRS, (front) KeVonn Faulkner, Chrystal Kerbo, Norlethia Harris, (middle) Janae Tatum, Alexandra Ruiz, (back) Greer Darden, Shanara Dyson and Samantha Smith participated as the LSU College of Agriculture hosted a regional MANRRS meeting on Oct. 28-30. About 60 students and advisers attended from MANRRS chapters at LSU, Southern University, Alcorn State University, Prairie View A&M University, Texas A&M University and Texas State University.

"The goal of this meeting is to encourage diversity and inclusion and promote the development of leadership skills that our members can use in their careers in agriculture and related sciences," said Tim Sandles, diversity coordinator for the college.

Ag Week spotlights agriculture on campus



Emily LeBlanc, Kayleigh Price and Shelby Evans, members of the agriculture sorority Sigma Alpha, set up a photo booth and passed out Mardi Gras masks in Free Speech Alley during Ag Week on Oct. 17-23 to raise awareness about agriculture. Each mask had an agriculture fact on the back. A sign on their table said "Removing the mask of agriculture."

Ag Week on campus included activities for students, faculty, alumni and agriculture businesses and industry. Student organizations held socials, set up information booths, displayed animals and held a scavenger hunt to create awareness of agriculture.

College of Agriculture participates in national initiative



Leslie Blanchard, assistant dean of the LSU College of Agriculture, talks about the college's Governor's School for Agricultural Sciences during the America the Bountiful meeting at the U.S. Department of Agriculture headquarters in Washington, D.C., on Oct. 6. Blanchard, Karl Binns, with the University of Maryland Eastern Shore, and Riley Pagett, with National FFA, were on a panel on agricultural engagement with K-12 students.

The initiative to expand and diversify the U.S. agricultural workforce is sponsored by the USDA and the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy and includes the LSU College of Agriculture, along with other federal agencies, private sector stakeholders and educators. Nearly two dozen participants outlined ways to encourage more individuals to pursue a career in agriculture.

The Governor's School for Agricultural Sciences, which debuted in 2016, is a one-week residential program for academically talented high school seniors interested in agricultural sciences.

Blanchard said the college plans to expand the program to two weeks in 2017.

Cocktails and Cuisine supports scholarships



LSU College of Agriculture students Faith Parish and Sam Nichols, left, spoke about how they have benefited from a scholarship from the Dean's Scholarship Fund during the third

annual Cocktails and Cuisine Benefiting Scholarships at the Baton Rouge Gallery on Oct. 21. Attendees included alumni and friends as well as Frankie Gould, second from right, director of communications for the LSU AgCenter, and Cynthia Nicholas, Sam Nicholas' mother. Event sponsors included Zen-Noh Grain, ConAgra Foods/Lamb Weston, Bracy's Nursery, Black Gold, Louisiana Agricultural Consultants Association, Elizabeth and David B. Means III, Don Welge, Associated Food Stores, Louisiana Land Bank, Monsanto, Louisiana Rice Growers Association and Louisiana Association of Conservation Districts. The event raised more than \$20,000 for scholarships.

Jamaican students study in food science lab



Ronamae Bradford and Dellecia Roberts, graduate students from the University of the West Indies at Mona, Jamaica, spent a month at LSU in Subramaniam Sathivel's food science lab. The two, along with another graduate student, Tushane Taylor, conducted research for their master's theses.

Sathivel, a food processing and engineering professor, also is an adjunct professor for the Food and Agro-Processing Technology program in the Department of Chemistry at the University of The West Indies, where he teaches a food processing technologies class over several weekends.

"These students are pursuing master's degrees in Food and Agro-Processing Technology while they work in the Jamaican food industry and the Bureau of Standards Jamaica," Sathivel said.

Bradford and Roberts are both working with the probiotic *Lactobacillus plantarum*. Bradford developed a milk powder with probiotics, while Roberts is adding probiotics to apple juice. Taylor is creating a Jell-O-like product that contains an oral rehydration solution to help treat children with illnesses such as diarrhea that lead to dehydration. The students paid their way to come to LSU and conduct their research. The LSU AgCenter and College of Agriculture helped arrange their visit.

New Faculty PROFILE



Intercontinental 'Leap' Brings Assistant Professor to LSU

Tobie Blanchard

Maria Bampasidou never really dreamed of living and working in the United States. Bampasidou, a native of Greece, is an assistant professor in the LSU College of Agriculture Department of Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness.

She ended up here after professors at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, where she received her undergraduate degree in mathematics, and at the Athens University of Economics and Business where she earned a graduate degree in economics, encouraged her to apply to doctorate programs in the U.S.

"I saw moving as a way to test myself and my skills, and how I cope in another place," Bampasidou said. "I saw it as an adventure."

Bampasidou received the highest scholarship from the Department of Food and Resource Economics at the University of Florida and decided to take a leap.

"It was eye-opening to come here," she said. "But I really appreciate the diversity, not just of people, but of ideas."

After receiving her doctorate, Bampasidou taught at the University of Florida for two years before coming to LSU in July 2015.

Here she teaches a graduate-level course on agriculture production and labor supply and an undergraduate class on agricultural price analysis. Her students affectionately refer to her as Dr. Maria.

Bampasidou serves as the faculty adviser for the LSU Agribusiness Club and is the professional service adviser for the student sections of the professional Agricultural and Applied Economics Association and the Southern Agricultural Economics Association. She said these roles help her understand the "vibe" of the students.

"We are small department, so I can help with recruiting, mentoring, internships and scholarships," she said.

Bampasidou is also interested in helping students find research opportunities within the department.

Her research focuses on labor supply and agriculture production, labor economics, agriculture finances, and risk and uncertainty.

She said her move to the U.S. and the start of her career here has taught her "you can have opportunities if you have perseverance."

Bampasidou said she sees a lot of potential for growth and opportunities in her position, and she is enjoying life on the LSU campus.

"I really like the atmosphere of campus. The architecture and landscaping are very beautiful," she said.



Maria Bampasidou, assistant professor in the LSU College of Agriculture Department of Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness and faculty adviser to the LSU Agribusiness Club, is pictured with club members Olivia Burroughs and Alexis Agard and Don Ator, research associate in the Department of Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness.

Tobie Blanchard is a communications specialist with the LSU AgCenter and communications coordinator with the College of Agriculture.

4-H Is for Everyone

Belonging, mastery, independence and generosity are the essential elements of this youth development program.

Rick Bogren

4-H is thriving in Louisiana. Under the direction of the LSU AgCenter 4-H Youth Development Department, the program serves nearly 200,000 Louisiana youth nine to 19 years old each year.

Head, Heart, Hands, and Health are the four H's in 4-H, a national program operated through 110 land-grant public universities by the Cooperative Extension System and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture within the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

One of the hallmarks of the program's success in Louisiana is its relationship to schools. In 1988, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education decided the 4-H program would be considered co-curricular and would be allowed to conduct meetings and other activities during the school day, said Mark Tassin, AgCenter associate vice president.

"This lets us bring the program to the kids," he said. "We can reach a nonmobile population and eliminate barriers to travel."

The in-school programs allows access to school facilities not only to conduct club meetings during school hours but also to provide after-school and weekend activities.

"Another positive component is the use of school transportation systems to bring youth from all over the parish to one location for parish events and to transport youth to and from regional and state events, such as camps," Tassin said. "The school systems are great partners and in many parishes provide salary support for the local 4-H agents."

School club meetings are often led by AgCenter 4-H agents, but teachers, coaches, counselors and school secretaries also join in to help keep the program available to a large number of students.

Although not all Louisiana public schools offer 4-H, the program is also available in private and charter schools as well as for home-schooled youth. This is important because Louisiana 4-H requires participants to be enrolled in school.

"If you've dropped out or if you've graduated before your 19th birthday, you can't participate in 4-H," Tassin said.

In addition to school-based clubs that serve about 139,000 students in school enrichment programs, Louisiana 4-H has a growing number of project clubs that include livestock, horses, food and nutrition, photography and many more subjects.

Most of these clubs meet outside of school and are led by adult volunteers.

"4-H is program of positive youth development," Tassin said. The research-based program focuses on four essential elements: belonging, mastery, independence and generosity.

Youth development research through land-grant universities provides the foundation and best practices for positive programming, said department head Janet Fox. Evaluation data are collected to document the impact of the program, and the information is used to promote life skill development.

Belonging creates an environment where 4-H'ers can feel a sense of community, Tassin said.



Kadan Guillory, past 4-H president, presiding at 4-H University in June 2016. Photo by Olivia McClure

Mastery gives them an opportunity to develop skills. "That's why we're project-based," Tassin said. "A young person needs to master or accomplish a task."

Since its establishment in 1902, 4-H has moved beyond traditional rural programming and added activities to allow participants the chance to find programs and pursuits that appeal to them.

"Louisiana provides exceptional opportunities in areas such as food, outdoors and wetlands," Fox said. "Our fastest growing area is shooting sports, but we still have strong programs in animal agriculture and horses."

Contests and other competitions offer 4-H'ers the chance to participate and get to know their peers. "And we give them opportunities to go places like national camps to broaden their experiences," she said.



4-H Day at the Capitol occurs every year around June 1 when 4-H'ers from around the state visit their legislators. Photo by Olivia McClure

Independence creates opportunities for 4-H'ers to make decisions, assume responsibility and build leadership skills.

Club participation includes serving as a club officer or in leading club projects such as food drives or community beautification, Tassin said. Most parishes have Teen Leader Clubs for older youth to develop programming to present to younger 4-H'ers.

"We grow leaders by offering opportunities to be club officers, camp counselors and activity guides," Fox said, pointing to leadership boards and service-learning projects as additional avenues for youth engagement.

More than 400 youth serve as camp counselors at summer camp and about 700 participate in a number of state-wide leadership boards, including the Citizenship Board, Executive Board, Fashion Board, Food and Fitness Board, SET (Science, Engineering and Technology) Board as well as Shooting Sports Ambassadors and Performing Arts Troupe.

Service-learning projects build on the foundational element of generosity. "We

want the youth to be 'givers back' to their community or school," Tassin said.

Louisiana starts 4-H'ers early. A program called Cloverbuds offers activities for children from kindergarten through third-grade. "It's like pre-4-H," Fox said.

4-H Clubs meet monthly to learn about subject matter, work on 4-H projects, perform community service, develop leadership skills and work together,

Fox said. Guided by one or more adult volunteers, a club can include number of youth from a school, neighborhood or parish.

The relative age breakdown for Louisiana 4-H includes about 16 percent in Cloverbuds, 45 percent in grades four through six, 20 percent in grades seven and eight, and 18 percent in grades nine through 12.

Rick Bogren is a professor and science writer in LSU AgCenter Communications and associate editor of Louisiana Agriculture.



Achievement awards winners visit LSU Tiger Stadium. Photo by Olivia McClure



Fashion Revue, an annual event at 4-H University. Photo by Olivia McClure

Since its establishment in 1902, 4-H has moved beyond traditional rural programming and added activities to allow participants the chance to find programs and pursuits that appeal to them.



During National Science Day on Oct. 5, 2016, these 4-H'ers learned about drones. Photo by Olivia McClure

4-H School Connection Complements Curriculum

Bruce Schultz

4-H adds to school curricula, enhancing what is taught in the classroom . . . allowing teachers the chance to include science, math and writing into a hands-on experience.

Louisiana 4-H and school systems statewide share a rare connection. In most states, 4-H programs are not part of school curricula. Only in Louisiana, Georgia and Tennessee are 4-H programs used in school systems.

The co-curricular arrangement with the school systems allows Louisiana 4-H to reach a broad range of youth, said Janet Fox, LSU AgCenter 4-H Youth Development Department head. She said 4-H adds to school curricula, enhancing what is taught in the classroom.

"Schools gardens are a perfect example of that," Fox said.

The school gardening program demonstrates the potential 4-H has to complement what is being taught, Fox said, by allowing teachers the chance to include science, math and writing into a hands-on experience.

Fox said 4-H agents work with principals and schools to identify priority areas. Parish 4-H advisory committees also provide input about program needs.

With more people living in urban settings, 4-H can be used to educate people where their food comes from and how it's grown with agriculture awareness events

held throughout the state to explain the origins of food.

Educators guide 4-H agents on the subject matter to be taught, said region 4-H coordinator Tina Goebel. "The focus is determined by an advisory committee. They prioritize what the issues are," she said.

Subject matter has included bullying, health and science-related topics. Every parish covers wetlands education, Goebel said.

The 4-H program has adapted as more standardized testing has become common. "They support the state academic standards that are required," she said.

Esther Boe, 4-H agent in Avoyelles Parish, said 4-H was used to help at Bunkie Elementary School after it was designated a failing school and taken over by the state Department of Education. The 4-H program was used to help third- and fourth-graders with math skills, using games and hands-on activities.

After three years, test scores improved sufficiently to remove the school from its failing status.

The opportunity gave 4-H Club members the chance to work with younger kids. "Youth from two 4-H Clubs assisted, and they were true leaders," Boe said.

Working in the school regularly gave 4-H a presence and the chance to recruit several new 4-H Club members. "Some of those teachers have become our 4-H leaders," Boe said.

Also in Avoyelles Parish, science programming is used for roughly 400 third-graders in the 4-H Cloverbuds program aimed at children too young to be regular 4-H'ers, Boe said.

The lessons coincide with classroom lessons. Topics have included rocks and minerals and forensic fingerprinting, in addition to a wetlands series, she said.

In Vermilion Parish, the 4-H program has been enlisted in a partnership with the Vermilion Parish School Board to help with an alternative school program designed for students who have difficulty learning in a traditional setting.



LSU AgCenter vegetable specialist Kiki Fontenot shows elementary students at St. Aloysius Catholic School in Baton Rouge how to check for insects and to determine when water is needed in their school garden. Photo by Johnny Morgan

The program, Virtual Vermilion, allows students to remain at home and complete their coursework online. “It’s like a home-school program coordinated by the school board,” said Shannan Waits, 4-H agent in Vermilion Parish.

The involvement of 4-H in Virtual Vermilion resulted from a conversation with school system Superintendent, Jerome Puyau, Waits said.

The 4-H programming involves a hands-on science component, taught by Alex LeBlanc, a school system employee, tied to the curriculum. “We provide once-a-week lab sessions,” Waits said.

In addition to learning science, students also interact with their peers. They become 4-H Club members and have monthly meetings. “These students would have never joined 4-H at their schools,” Waits said.

Roughly 15 students are in the program from grades six through 12. “It fluctuates because they have the flexibility to go in and out of the program,” she said.

4-H is involved in several other collaborative projects with the board, including a healthy living session for parish educators, Waits said. A school gardening program started in the parish two years ago with Dan Devenport, the LSU AgCenter horticulture agent in Vermilion Parish.

The Evangeline Parish public school system is in the early stages of implementing yoga in physical education classes in the spring of 2017. Kimberly Deville, 4-H agent in Evangeline Parish, said she brought the lesson plans for yoga to school principals and physical education teachers.

“They loved it,” Deville said. “The state 4-H office provided everything, so they have everything they need to do it.”

Joanna Strong, 4-H agent in Richland Parish, holds weekly yoga sessions for the Delhi High School football team.

The football coach heard she was teaching yoga, and he asked her if she would lead his team through a regimen of poses and relaxation exercises. “It helps the kids focus and calm down,” Strong said.



Teachers from throughout south Louisiana learn how to maintain a school garden as part of a program grant obtained by LSU AgCenter vegetable specialist Kiki Fontenot, standing at right. The grant covers the cost of seed, materials and training at the LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens at Burden. Photo by Johnny Morgan



Inner-city students in New Orleans are learning the value of eating fresh vegetables. These Warren Easton High School students are learning math and science along with the importance of good nutrition. Photo by Johnny Morgan, LSU AgCenter

The coach has credited the yoga program for preventing major injuries on the team this year. “He feels like the focus and stretching is a major reason,” she said.

Strong also helps science teachers by bringing a hands-on approach to the seventh-grade science class at Mangham Junior High School. For example, when the class was learning about genetics and heredity, her lesson demonstrated probability with a coin toss to determine what traits would be inherited for rabbits. The students made a

model bunny to demonstrate how the offspring would look.

“What I teach depends on what they are studying at that point,” Strong said.

Her lessons reinforce what the regular teachers are trying to get students to understand. “The more times kids see something or hear it, the more likely they are to remember it,” she said.

Bruce Schultz is an assistant communications specialist with LSU AgCenter Communications.

Protecting The Environ

4-H Tackles Louisiana's Coastal and Wetland



ment

Challenges

Randy LaBauve

When 11th-grader Clay Zaunbrecher attended National 4-H Club Congress in Atlanta, he compared notes with other 4-H'ers about environmental programs in their respective states and found that Louisiana was much more committed.

"Whenever we mentioned our work with alligators, wetlands and all the things we do with the environment here, they seemed embarrassed about their work," Zaunbrecher, a Vermilion Parish 4-H'er, said of the other state representatives.

Louisiana is one of the few states where 4-H Club work is part of the school curriculum. This unique symbiosis of school and club has opened opportunities to teach 4-H'ers about important environmental challenges.

"The goal of environmental education is not only to create awareness and increase knowledge, but to inspire youth to take action to resolve environmental issues," said Ashley Mullens, coordinator of the 4-H Youth Wetlands program.

One crucial concern is Louisiana's wetland ecosystem, which contains some of the greatest biodiversity in the world. Since 1930, more than 1 million acres of Louisiana's protective coastal wetlands have vanished, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The state's coastal loss comes with grave threats to homes, property and seafood fisheries.

... more than 800,000 students have gotten their hands wet and muddy while actively learning about the delicate balance of wetland ecosystems and the importance of wise conservation and restoration practices.

Young people who have participated in the Youth Wetlands program may be the most well-versed segment of the population when it comes to the issue. Since the nationally recognized program officially began in 2007, more than 800,000 students have gotten their hands wet and muddy while actively learning about the delicate balance of wetland ecosystems and the importance of wise conservation and restoration practices.

"4-H youth have more knowledge than an average adult about the importance of the environment," said Natalie McElyea, a 4-H Youth Wetlands program associate in Vermilion, Lafayette and Iberia parishes.

"In Louisiana, almost anything related to environmentalism overlaps with the wetlands," she said.

More than 10,000 teachers have implemented 4-H Youth Wetlands lessons in their classroom curricula. Statewide, 4-H'ers and other youth participate in service projects that help purify water systems as well as activities like trash bashes, beach sweeps, removing invasive species and planting vegetation in wetland areas.

"When I first started volunteering, I remember we cleaned up almost a mile of litter along the Comite River," said Skylar Bueche, an East Baton Rouge Parish

◀ 4-H'ers in the Advanced Marsh Maneuvers camp in December 2016 at the White Lake Conservation Area near Gueydan head out into the marsh at dawn. Directing the canoe at right is Hilton Waits, 4-H agent in Vermilion Parish, who assisted with the camp. Photo by Mark G. Shirley

high school student. “We picked up nearly 100 pounds of cans to recycle, and it made us happy to do something about this serious litter problem.”

“Being able to plant something and go back a year later and see what had been open water, now full of grass and keeping sediments in place, is something special,” Zaunbrecher said about his experience planting smooth cordgrass in a susceptible marsh.

4-H Club members in one service-learning project built 3,000 feet of coastal fencing at Breton Sound, a feat that helped create 10 acres of wetland, according to U. S. Fish and Wildlife estimates. 4-H youth in Vermilion Parish conducted a public awareness campaign to inform local officials about proper flood elevation strategies and hazard mitigation techniques.

“We have a lot of commercial fishermen and people living on water here,” said Wayne Burgess, an AgCenter agent in St. Bernard Parish. “There’s not traditional 4-H events like livestock shows, so we try to address issues that are important to these kids and their environment.”

Alligators were once almost extinct, but thanks to one of the most successful conservation efforts in American history, the reptile is now thriving in Louisiana. 4-H members have served as ambassadors, informing the public about the importance of native animals like alligators and the Louisiana black bear, which was listed as threatened until 2016.

“Black bears were getting into people’s homes and property looking for food, and they were sometimes shot or hit by cars,” said Jennifer Ducote, 4-H agent in St. Mary Parish. “4-H members cleaned up litter and planted fruit trees and pecan trees deep in bear habitat to help keep them in the woods.”



Terry Barker, an elementary education major at LSU of Alexandria, gives students a closer look at insects found during a scavenger hunt during Youth Wetlands Week in 2015 at the Grant Walker 4-H Educational Center, Pollock, Louisiana. Photo by Brandy Orlando

4-H’ers were also an important part of an awareness campaign, warning residents to keep food away from bears and promoting use of bear-proof garbage cans, Ducote said. Nearly seven years later, bear numbers are up in the area, with estimates of nearly 100 bears in St. Mary Parish alone but with fewer negative incidents with humans in these urban interfaces.



Carol Franz, LSU AgCenter and Sea Grant agent, helps students identify macroinvertebrates found in a pond at Shell’s Training and Conference Center in Robert, Louisiana, during 4-H Youth Wetlands Week in 2014. Photo by Craig Gautreaux

In many parishes, unique environmental camps are a mainstay for helping 4-H’ers understand nature and respect it while safely enjoying it.

Youth from across the state attend events like Mini-Survivor Camp in central Louisiana, where they learn about forest management in the Kisatchie National Forest, and Survivor Camp and Roughin’ It Camp, held at nearby Jimmie Davis State Park on the banks of Caney Creek Reservoir.

Whether building wood duck boxes to help conserve a species or cleaning up lakes and forests, campers are also able to learn while serving.

“They learn how to cook, fish, identify edible plants, build fires and tents with available materials and reuse, recycle and renew,” said Donny Moon, 4-H agent in Winn Parish. “It gives them a greater awareness of the fragile nature of their surroundings while helping them become self-sufficient.”

“We’re well-equipped to survive if we’re stuck outdoors — even how to keep safe from natural predators” said Claiborne Parish 4-H’er Ethan Coker, a three-year veteran of Survivor Camp. “It’s always a blast and I learn something new every time.”

Possibly the most unique camp is Marsh Maneuvers, which takes place at Rockefeller Wildlife Refuge in Vermilion and Cameron parishes.

Marsh Maneuvers, which started in 1989, is considered one of the premiere wetland camps in America. Adult educators immerse high school youth from every part of the state into wetland ecosystems along the Gulf of Mexico, teaching them firsthand about marine ecology and hydrology.

4-H’ers glide on airboats past the heads of bobbing alligators, cast nets for fish and crabs, and hold baby alligators while learning about the life cycles of marine life. Then they plunge into the muddy marsh to plant special grasses selected for preventing erosion and building up sediments.

“It gives those kids a sense of stewardship,” said Mark Shirley, an LSU AgCenter and Sea Grant fisheries agent. “That little bit of grass they planted, now they’re part of coastal Louisiana, and they remember that forever.”

“It was a one-of-a-kind experience, and it makes you appreciate all that we have here,” Bueche said.

Statewide competitions with impressive prizes are effective at drawing youth into educational experiences as well. 4-H

University on the LSU campus offers contests like environmental threat resolution, forestry studies, environmental conservation and wildlife habitat judging.

State evaluations have shown an increase in youth knowledge because of 4-H environmental education. Researchers found when youth acquire a skill, it takes on practical significance when they are involved in service-learning projects.

Youth in Louisiana 4-H have helped improve the quality of regional ecosystems throughout the state and have positively affected individuals and communities.

"In Louisiana 4-H, we use environmental education programs to relate real-world issues to the lives of 4-H'ers," Mullens

said. "It encourages them to use critical thinking and problem-solving skills to inspire positive change."

One of the biggest advantages of 4-H environmental efforts is the change in attitude they create.

"I always had a passion for the environment, but I had friends who didn't appreciate it," said Bueche, who wants to become a wetlands researcher. "I encouraged them to join 4-H, and it changed them. Now, they want to do more to help."

Randy LaBauve is an associate communications specialist with LSU AgCenter Communications.

Louisiana 4-H'ers Learn to Maneuver Marshes

Mark G. Shirley



Students construct and then place hen houses for ducks to nest in during the Advanced Marsh Maneuvers Camp in December 2016 at the White Lake Conservation Area near Gueydan, Louisiana. These hen houses are a cost-effective tool to increase the mallard duck population and are being used in the key breeding areas of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and Ontario in Canada and in North Dakota and Minnesota in the U.S. Photo by Mark G. Shirley

The idea for Marsh Maneuvers began 27 years ago when the Vermilion Parish 4-H Junior Leader Club spent a couple of nights at a camp on the western shore of Vermilion Bay. The experience was offered to other parishes for the next few years. The program grew to involve more youths and more parishes when the camp moved to the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries marine lab facility on Grand Terre Island near Grand Isle. Since then, four camps have been held each July with 16 4-H teenagers attending each week. The opportunity is rotated to involve students from all parishes.

Sixty-one 4-H members from 17 parishes participated in the summer 2016 Marsh Maneuvers program. From that group, 16 students were selected to receive further training in coastal resources by attending Advanced Marsh Maneuvers Camp in December. The winter camp has been held at the LDWF's White Lake Conservation Area near Gueydan since 2005. During the weekend experience, the youths learn about fresh marsh habitats that are managed for migratory waterfowl, alligators and other wildlife. They tour the marsh at sunrise in mud boats and canoes to view

ducks, geese and other marsh animals. One of the highlights of the weekend was the opportunity to view eight newly arrived juvenile Whooping Cranes.

As part of a conservation service project, the students constructed 15 "hen house" nesting structures. The hen house design comes from the Delta Waterfowl organization. The elevated nesting structure consists of a wire mesh cylinder, packed with hay and mounted on a pole about 4 feet above the water. Delta Waterfowl has demonstrated success with nesting mallard ducks in the Canadian prairies. It is hoped that mottled ducks, which are native to southwest Louisiana and are nonmigratory, will adapt to these nest structures. The biologist at White Lake will monitor the houses during the spring to see if any ducks or other birds use the houses. The local chapter of Delta Waterfowl donated the funds to pay for the materials. The hen houses cost about \$15 each.

Marsh Maneuvers is part of the 4-H Youth Wetlands Program which is funded by Louisiana's Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority. The Department of Wildlife and Fisheries cooperates by providing the facilities at Rockefeller Refuge and at White Lake. The McIlhenny Company provides logistical support for the summer camps to conduct the marsh revegetation project. Support is also provided by the Louisiana Sea Grant Program.



Mark Shirley, left, has been conducting Marsh Maneuvers camps since 1989. In 2005, he began also offering the Advanced Marsh Maneuvers camp. Photo by Hilton Waits

Mark G. Shirley is an AgCenter and Sea Grant aquaculture and coastal and natural resources extension agent headquartered in Abbeville. He is the creator of the Marsh Maneuvers camping experience as well as its continuing director.



4-H'ers Discover Drones on National Science Day

Craig Gautreaux



... a lesson emphasizing science, technology, engineering and math or STEM.

4-H Club members in Rapides Parish got an up-close look at a collection of drones, and they got to build one of their own during 4-H National Youth Science Day on Oct. 5. The exercise was part of a lesson called Drone Discovery, and nearly 1 million students nationwide participated.

For nine years during National 4-H Week, the youth organization has dedicated one day to a lesson emphasizing science, technology, engineering and math or STEM.

Chrystal Bowie, 4-H agent for Rapides Parish, said the activity helped teach students basic flight principles.

"We are doing this to promote STEM education among our youth. I think it's a great opportunity for them to engage as engineers for the day," Bowie said.

One of the focal points of the lesson involved the students constructing their own foam plate glider, which was called an FPG. After constructing the FPG — made entirely from a single foam plate — the students test flew it and observed how it reacted when certain modifications were made.

"It was fun cutting it out and kind of challenging, and I like things that are challenging," said Michael Cruz, a 4-H Club member.

Parents helped some of the students assemble their aircraft.

"He's so active in 4-H. He was the grand champion in cookery. He's been to 4-H camp. He's done several different projects. He loves 4-H, and it's a good way to keep his mind strong and keep him off electronics," said Jessica Cruz, Michael's mother.

4-H'er Kloria Sewell said she likes that 4-H has allowed her to visit many different places across the state, including 4-H camp in Grant Parish and the State Capitol in Baton Rouge.

"I like that I can go places and I can do things through 4-H. I got to attend LOST Camp and go to the Capitol," Sewell said.

Randy Price, an LSU AgCenter agriculture engineer, demonstrated flying a small drone to gather information related to agricultural crop production.

Craig Gautreaux is a communications specialist with LSU AgCenter Communications.



LSU AgCenter engineer Randy Price demonstrates how a drone works during National Science Day activities at the Dewitt Livestock Show Facility near Alexandria. Photo by Olivia McClure

4-H Fosters Sense of Belonging Among Members

Melissa Cater

Youth development research suggests that happiness and feeling a sense of belonging are strongly connected.

Belonging is characterized by feeling liked, respected and valued by peers and adults. When youth feel that they belong, they are more likely to experience feelings of independence and intrinsic motivation. Youth who lack feelings of relatedness are more prone to feelings of loneliness and emotional distress and may be more susceptible to mental illness. Research also suggests that youth who develop stronger ties with peers and adults through positive out-of-school programs have fewer discipline problems in school.

Experiential learning is a cornerstone of the Louisiana 4-H Youth Development program. Hallmarks of experiential learning include hands-on, concrete experiences and real-world problem-solving, often delivered in a group setting. By providing access to a broad range of youth and adults with similar interests, the 4-H program offers many avenues for youth to develop a sense of belonging. The opportunities to build relationships with peers and adults cut across all levels of the 4-H program from school-based clubs, where youth are familiar with many of the group members, to parish-level programs that allow youth to form friendships with people who are close to them geographically but with whom they may not interact on a daily basis. Youth have access to regional and state camps, contests, leadership boards and workshops that provide opportunities to build friendships with peers and adults whose paths they may never otherwise have crossed.

While access is key, getting youth to join a group and stay involved are two of the most critical aspects of building belonging. A variety of strategies have been used to help youth feel more connected both to peers and adults in the program. One of the most common approaches is the use of games and team-building exercises that help youth

get to know each other better. Another common strategy is the use of smaller groups so youth have a better chance to interact with each other. The use of small groups is often combined with hands-on activities that require every member of the group to participate. The mechanisms that support group communication and success also foster belonging by helping youth feel included and important to the group's accomplishments.

... youth who develop stronger ties with peers and adults through positive out-of-school programs have fewer discipline problems in school.

Badges of membership are another common strategy used to build group cohesion and individual sense of belonging. T-shirts designed by camp groups and teen leadership groups are used to symbolize membership in the group and to foster a sense of contribution through working together to create the t-shirt design.

Caring adults are another important factor in inspiring a sense of belonging among youth. Many 4-H programs have increased their training and use of adult

volunteers so youth have better access to adults. Adults provide a place where youth feel safe, both physically and emotionally, to build new friendships.

The purpose of this study was to determine the level of belonging experienced by youth in the 4-H program. Data were collected from 27 seventh- to 12th-graders across three years of membership. At the beginning of the study, youth ranged in age from 11 to 15 with a mean age of 13.41. A little over half of the youth were female (59 percent). A 21-item questionnaire was used to assess youths' general sense of belonging, their perception of adult facilitation of their belonging and their perception of the assistance that peers provide them in feeling a sense of belonging. Paper surveys were distributed to youth in May of each year.

Overall, youths' general sense of belonging increased slightly each year of the study (Table 1). Adults appeared to fulfill an important role in youths' feeling of belonging to the group. Mean increases in sense of belonging were observed for all three years, with statistically significant differences between the median for years 1 and 2 and years 1 and 3. Likewise, peers seemed to hold a notable place in youth developing feelings of belonging to the group.

The Louisiana 4-H program provides a place for youth to connect with both peers and adults in a safe and engaging environment. While the generalizability of this study is limited by the small sample size, it does suggest there are psychological benefits for youth who are involved in the program for longer periods of time. The potential reciprocal effects of 4-H program participation on reducing problem behaviors in school provides additional value for families, schools and communities.

Melissa Cater is an assistant professor in the Department of Agricultural and Extension Education and Evaluation.

Table 1. Mean and Median Scores for General, Adult-facilitated and Peer-facilitated Sense of Belonging in a Cohort of Louisiana 4-H Youth (N = 27).

Variable	Year	Mean	Median
Perceived General Sense of Belonging	1	3.65	3.83
	2	3.74	4.00
	3	3.85	4.00
Perceived Adult Facilitation of Belonging	1	3.50	3.67
	2	3.81	4.00
	3	3.86	4.00
Perceived Peer Facilitation of Belonging	1	3.52	3.78
	2	3.73	4.00
	3	3.67	3.89

4-H Shooting Sports



Kaitlyn Watson, from Bossier Parish, was among 350 Louisiana regional shooting sports winners who participated in state competition in Shreveport and Grand Cane, Louisiana, in April 2015. Photo by Brandy Orlando

Perfect Fit for Louisiana

Craig Gautreaux

If numbers are any indication, young people like to fling arrows and bust clay targets. Nearly 6,000 youth are involved in the 4-H shooting sports program, which is one of the newer programs offered by the organization. The first shooting sports event took place in 2000.

One of the biggest draws of the program is its ability to get the entire family involved, said 4-H shooting sports coordinator David Boldt.

"If you attend any of our events, you can see tents set up, cooks will be going, and just about all members of the family will be here," Boldt said. "They will be out here all day for both the competition and the camaraderie."

Benny Bell, an agriculture education teacher at Ebarb High School in Sabine Parish, sees the program as an opportunity for students who are not involved in traditional extracurricular activities such as football, softball or track.

"I pick kids that don't compete in other sports. It's an outlet for them that they might not have otherwise," Bell said.

Just like traditional sports, Bell said, the students practice at least once a week. Bell has had six students advance to the national finals held annually in Grand Island, Nebraska.

Miles Singara, a 17-year-old 4-H'er from Tangipahoa Parish, competed in the national finals held this past June. He was crowned national champion in the air pistol silhouettes and the air pistol slow fire categories. He was also a member of the Louisiana team that won the overall air pistol team national title.

"It was an overwhelming experience to win the national championship," Singara said. "The ultimate goal is to just qualify, and to win, it was just breathtaking."

Singara has been a competitive shooter for nearly six years. He grew up shooting and hunting with family members and learned that 4-H had started a shooting sports program. He decided to explore the program and figured it would be something he might try for a couple of years.

"It brought me further than I expected," he said. "Being able to shoot this long and in competition has been a real awesome experience."

Singara has competed at shooting events across the country, including events in Fort Benning, Georgia; Anniston, Alabama; and Colorado Springs, Colorado.

Bob Davis, of Jackson Parish, served as the coach of the national championship air pistol team. He became involved because his secretary's son had joined the program and was looking for a coach. He has served as both a coach for participants and a trainer for other volunteers.

"It's very gratifying to see young people grow by being a part of the program," Davis said. "You can definitely see their confidence grow. It also teaches them a system of a way to get better at something. It takes time, discipline and dedication to improve."



Brooke Walker, 16, of Webster Parish, examines animal pelts during a wildlife ID test. The test was part of the outdoor skills competition held during the Louisiana 4-H North Regional shooting sports contest at the Long Range Gun Club near Frierson. More than 900 4-H youth competed at the event, with qualifiers advancing to the state finals held April 20-24 at the Lamar Dixon Expo Center in Gonzales. Photo by Craig Gautreaux

According to Boldt, one of the critical components of the shooting sports program is the many volunteers who help coordinate the events and serve as coaches to the competitors. This year, nearly 1,000 volunteers helped stage competitions and served as coaches statewide.

Scott Blank is one of those many volunteers. He became involved in the St. James Parish program when his son joined 4-H five years ago and is a volunteer instructor. He has seen firsthand how the program has influenced its participants.

"One of the biggest impacts I see is it teaches goal setting,



Dakota Puckett, of Webster Parish, competes in bow competition in the north Louisiana shooting sports contest at the Long Range Gun Club near Frierson in March 2016. The five components of the outdoor skills challenge are a wildlife ID test, shooting a bow, shotgun and rifle, and an orienteering test. Photo by Craig Gautreaux

focus and concentration,” Blank said. “Youth from all walks of life and different athletic abilities are able to set goals and stay focused on achieving their goals.”

While having a good time is important to the program, both Blank and Boldt added that safety is an essential element of any shooting sports activity.

“All of the kids competing have to go through hunter education to get their card in order to participate. Safety is our No. 1 priority. We want them to have fun, but we want to be safe,” Boldt said.

“Each participant has to have eight hours of instruction in each discipline they choose to participate in,” Blank said.

Davis, who is a certified instructor through the National Rifle Association, echoed the program’s commitment to safety. “It is a continuous effort. If we can stop one accident, then we will have made a difference,” he said.

An array of categories are available to participants in shooting sports. They can shoot air rifles, pistols, shotguns, rifles, muzzleloaders or bows. They also can compete in an outdoor skills competition that includes wildlife identification test, shooting a bow, rifle and shotgun, and an orienteering activity.

Nan Arthur, an AgCenter 4-H agent in Sabine Parish, plays the role of both volunteer and parent. Her son, Conner, competes in the outdoor skills program and the modified trap shooting contest.

She said the program has taught her son responsibility.

“He is responsible for getting all of the equipment he will need over the entire competition together and packing it. It also teaches sportsmanship and being disciplined,” Arthur said.

Conner normally practices shooting his bow or shotgun every day, and the Sabine Parish team typically has organized

practices twice a week, she said.

Arthur said about 12 parent volunteers are in Sabine Parish. The volunteers provide adult supervision at competitions and practice.

The Louisiana shooting sports program has experienced phenomenal growth since its inception. The first match had approximately 75 competitors. This year, nearly 2,000 youth competed at the two regional shooting matches. With a reputation as being a sportsman’s paradise, shooting sports is a natural fit for Louisiana. And with a large group of eager volunteers and participants, it will remain an integral part of 4-H.

Craig Gautreaux is a communications specialist with LSU AgCenter Communications.

Shooting Sports Has Many Competition Opportunities

Craig Gautreaux

For a young person interested in the 4-H shooting sports program, there is no shortage of opportunities. Six main areas of competition comprise several categories. Youth can choose one area to specialize in or compete in multiple categories. Participants can enhance their skills in one area but are still able to compete in others that they enjoy.

Air-powered firearms. The three categories are air rifles, air pistols and BB guns. This area is geared toward younger competitors and does not require a range as large and complex as some of the other areas.

Archery. The four categories are compound bow, bare bow, sighted recurved bow and Genesis. The four categories range the gamut of bows, starting with the simplest – the bare bow – and advancing to the complex: the compound bow.

Shotguns. Categories are modified trap shooting and advanced shotgun, which consists of trap shooting, skeet shooting and sporting clays.

Rifles. Only .22 rifles are used in three categories – CMP (Civilian Marksmanship Program), the National Rifle Association three-position (prone, kneeling and standing) and silhouettes.

Muzzleloaders. Categories are bulls-eye, bottle and critters, and silhouettes.

Hunting skills. The five categories are hunting ethics, rules and laws, wildlife identification, shooting and orienteering.

Craig Gautreaux is a communication specialist with LSU AgCenter Communications.

4-H Shooting Sports Program Promotes Belonging, Builds Independence

Mark Tassin

The foundation of the 4-H youth development program is built on four essential elements: belonging, independence, mastery and generosity. One of the fastest-growing 4-H program areas in Louisiana and the United States is the 4-H Shooting Sports program. Shooting Sports stands out as an example of a program that develops youth as individuals and as responsible, productive citizens. The program provides an opportunity for young people to develop life skills, self-worth and conservation ethics through interaction with many caring adults. This program, like many others in 4-H, builds on all of the four essential elements.

The initial building block to any youth development principle is belonging. If youth do not feel they belong, the program will not be successful.

Pairing youth with a caring adult is critical to building a sense of belonging. This youth-adult partnership is vital for the success of the program. The structure of 4-H Shooting Sports promotes this concept more than any other 4-H program. A local parish program cannot be initiated until we have several formally trained adults to conduct the program. Level 1 training is conducted by Level 2 instructors in all of the shooting sports disciplines. A program cannot begin until an adult has success-

fully completed Level 1 training and is certified. This ensures adults have been trained not only in all aspects of safe handling of firearms but also in positive youth development and life skills.

Procedure

To gauge the success of the 4-H Shooting Sports Program in Louisiana in regard to belonging and independence, a survey of 229 youth was conducted. Youth were instructed to select from one of four categories on a Likert scale survey where a response of 1 was strongly disagree, 2 was disagree, 3 was agree and 4 was strongly agree. The survey consisted of nine statements regarding the 4-H Shooting Sports program and what the youth have learned.

Results

In response to the statement that adults in the Shooting Sports program help them feel safe, 93 percent of the youth agreed or strongly agreed, and 94 percent agreed or strongly agreed they respected the adult in their Shooting Sports program. Ninety-four percent also agreed or strongly agreed that adults in the Shooting Sports program cared about them, and 95 percent agreed or strongly agreed that adults in the Shooting Sports program are important to them.

Regarding independence, 92 percent of the youth agreed or strongly agreed that they look for information to help understand the problem, and 94 percent indicated they consider the risk of a choice before making a decision. Ninety-three percent agreed or strongly agreed they think about all the information they have about different choices, and 95 percent agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that they think of past choices when making new decisions.

Conclusion

This survey indicates the 4-H Shooting Sports program overwhelmingly meets the needs of the two essential elements measured. Youth responding to the survey agreed or strongly agreed to the statements relating to the interaction with a caring adult in the program. It provides evidence the youth-adult partnership is strong, which is critical to meeting the essential element of belonging. Additionally, the statements regarding decision making, choices and researching information measure the essential elements of independence.

Youth also agreed or strongly agreed with all these statements with a strong degree of confidence.

Mark Tassin is the associate vice president for 4-H youth and family development.

Table 1. Belonging and Independence in 4-H Shooting Sports

Item	Disagree or Strongly Disagree	Agree or Strongly Agree	Total Responses	Mean
Adults in our Shooting Sports program help me feel safe.	7%	93%	229	3.61
I am respected by the adults in our Shooting Sports program.	7%	93%	229	3.59
I respect the adults in our Shooting Sports program.	6%	94%	229	3.66
Adults in our Shooting Sports program care about me.	6%	94%	229	3.62
Adults in our Shooting Sports program are important to me.	5%	95%	229	3.6
I look for information to help me understand a problem.	9%	91%	228	3.4
I consider the risk of a choice before making a decision.	8%	92%	228	3.49
I think about all the information I have about different choices	7%	93%	229	3.41
I think of past choices when making new decisions.	6%	94%	229	3.46

State 4-H Food & Fitness Camp

March 2015

Seashells & Living Well



HEALTHY LIVING

4-H Fights the Obesity Epidemic in Louisiana

Bruce Schultz

Brittney Watson, a teen leader from Iberia Parish, left, checks out a smoothie being made in a blender powered by a bicycle during the 4-H Food and Fitness Camp in March 2015 at Grant Walker 4-H Educational Center in Pollock. Laura Elnaggar, of Evangeline Parish, is on the bike. Photo by Olivia McClure



Teen leader Leneigh Hennigan, of Natchitoches Parish, shows campers how to take their pulse after exercising during the 4-H Food and Fitness Camp in March 2015. Photo by Olivia McClure

Louisiana has the dubious distinction as the most obese state in the nation, with 36.2 percent of adults overweight, according to the Centers for Disease Control. Obese adults have an increased risk for a number of problems, including diabetes, hypertension, stroke, cancer and sleep apnea.

The adult obesity rate in Louisiana gives the 4-H Healthy Living Program motivation and urgency. “Our main focus is to increase the consumption of fruits and vegetables and increase physical activity,” said Lanette Hebert, southwest regional 4-H coordinator.

At the state level the food and fitness camp for families at Grant Walker 4-H Educational Center is where families learn about different ways of cooking healthy food and exercising. The program uses the original 4-H strategy of educating children who take the message back to their parents.

Hebert said 4-H has a unique opportunity to address obesity because Louisiana 4-H has access to children across the state through partnerships with school districts. “Louisiana 4-H can reach kids with limited transportation options, from all backgrounds, living in all corners of the state.”

She said more than 26,000 kids participated in some type of healthy living programming as a part of club activities, classroom projects and various regional and state events.

Grants from the National 4-H Council, Wal-Mart Foundation, United Health Care and ConAgra provide substantial funding for programming. Healthy living grants received by Louisiana 4-H in 2015-16 included \$150,000 from ConAgra, \$55,000 from United Health Care and \$65,000 from Wal-Mart.

Lekeisha Lucas-Powell said her work as 4-H agent in East Carroll Parish is especially challenging in a parish where almost half of the population lives below the poverty level. “We were once noted as one of the poorest places in America by Time magazine,” she said.

People who are poor and uneducated tend to eat less healthy, she said. “There a lot of people unaware of what is healthy and what’s not.”

Lucas-Powell said she has formed partnerships with organizations, local businesses, churches and law enforcement to teach children about the importance of good nutrition and exercise.

She regularly shows students vegetables growing in a garden. For many, it’s the first time they realized that vegetables grow in soil. “You would be surprised at how amazed the children are to see food grown in a garden,” she said.

Every year during spring break, she said, fourth through sixth graders attend an event focusing on healthy living. Many older students in 4-H help teach the sessions along with LSU AgCenter nutrition agents and community health professionals.

Healthy living habits are also a big part of monthly 4-H Club meetings, Lucas-Powell said.

This winter, she said, teenage students from East Carroll Parish will attend a Teen Health Advocate Training where they will learn to teach healthy living subjects, and develop leadership skills while developing a plan for change.

Adriana Drusini, 4-H agent in St. Mary Parish, has used grants from ConAgra and Wal-Mart to help third- through eighth-grade students at the Chitimacha Tribal School.

Healthy living grants received by Louisiana 4-H in 2015-16 included \$150,000 from ConAgra, \$55,000 from United Health Care \$65,000 from Wal-Mart.



Aubrey Menard, of Iberia Parish; Blair Little, of St. Landry Parish; and Juliana Carbalan, of Jefferson Davis Parish, participate in a stretching activity during the Food and Fitness Camp in March 2015. Photo by Olivia McClure

Last year, the ConAgra grant provided funding to involve students from kindergarten through eighth grade. The Wal-Mart grant obtained this year provides money for healthy living education in Native American communities.

To involve as many students as possible last year, grant funds were used to cover the fees for 41 students to enroll in 4-H. At the monthly 4-H Club meetings, healthy living practices were

taught. Students were given samples of the different types of food. For example, several different kinds of milk, from soy milk to almond milk, all were available for sampling.

As a part of the grant requirements, students took some of the ingredients home, such as sweet potatoes, to cook with their families.

4-H agents Betsy Crigler, of Tensas Parish, and Ashley Powell, of Catahoula Parish, joined forces in the northeast corner of Louisiana to address obesity. They formed the TenCat group (from the first syllable of both parishes) made up of teens. TenCat holds cooking workshops to introduce students to spinach, kale and spaghetti squash that children might not have at home. Older students are placed in positions of authority and lead the younger ones in activities.

"The younger kids are more likely to listen to them," Powell said. "Teachers say the kids encourage their parents to actually buy things they've tried."

Grant funding has been essential. "That's why we're able to do what we do," Crigler said.

Bruce Schultz is an assistant communications specialist with LSU AgCenter Communications.

Healthy YOUTh in Shreveport

Johnny Morgan

To make 4-H more appealing to urban youth in the Shreveport area, the LSU AgCenter in Caddo Parish was awarded a five-year, \$600,000 Children, Youth, and Families at Risk (CYFAR) grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. It is being implemented in cooperation with Shreveport Parks and Recreation community centers serving as the hub, said AgCenter 4-H regional coordinator Karen Martin.

The Healthy YOUTh Healthy Communities program, which is in three Shreveport neighborhoods, is designed to help participants sustain positive changes in attitude, involvement and behavior related to healthy life choices, community involvement and their future.

"The Healthy YOUTh Healthy Communities program began in 2014 by providing a series of lessons and activities designed to develop the leadership skills of youth and adults through the use of hands-on learning experiences," Martin said.

The experiences target two age groups, with the younger group focusing on gardening and nutrition education and the older group using the garden to develop their communication, technology and leadership skills.

Youth and adult partnerships are being developed through a series of advisory meetings and volunteer trainings designed to develop ownership and increase participants' knowledge, Martin said.

The program includes year-round programming on topics such as team-building, general nutrition and garden knowledge.

To create a sustainable urban program, community involvement is a key factor, Martin said. Each quarter, volunteer trainings and family workshops are held to get the community involved.

Johnny Morgan is a communications specialist with LSU AgCenter Communications.

... positive changes in attitude, involvement and behavior related to healthy life choices, community involvement and their future ...

Teen Leaders Learn Nutrition, Leadership in Healthy Living Program

Jessica Stroope

National 4-H Healthy Living grants provide funding for Louisiana programming, and more than 8,500 kids have been reached through these grants during the 2015-2016 year. Grant requirements help keep programming centered on the essential: a minimum of six direct contact hours with kids, nutrition education and physical activity, and tapping in to teens as teachers for younger participants. Parishes can implement healthy living grants in a variety of ways. This year, parish projects have included cooking clubs, school gardens, Yoga for Kids, food insecurity awareness and advocacy projects, a food preservation mini-camp and outdoor adventure camps.

There were 520 4-H'ers who served as teen leaders in the healthy living programs during the 2015-2016 year. Of that number, 233 were evaluated using the national 4-H evaluation instrument Common Measures, which uses a five-point Likert scale with responses ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." Results show that teen leaders

tend to apply the nutrition lessons they teach to younger kids to their own lives, with 89.7 percent of teen leaders reporting increased intake of fruits and vegetables, 76.8 percent reporting increased intake of whole grains, and 91.4 percent of teen leaders reporting drinking more water.

Not only do the teens make improvements in their nutritional habits, they also grow as leaders. Results of the evaluation show that 95 percent of teen leaders serving on grant projects report that because of their experience on the project, they have increased confidence in themselves and increased confidence in helping others, and that they can make a difference in their communities through community service. While 75 percent of teen leaders reported being interested in pursuing a health-related careers, others found their calling through the experience of teaching.

Following are testimonials about the value of teen leaders to the 4-H program:

“It is important to incorporate teen teachers in programs in 4-H because the younger generation looks up to us and wants to do what we do.”

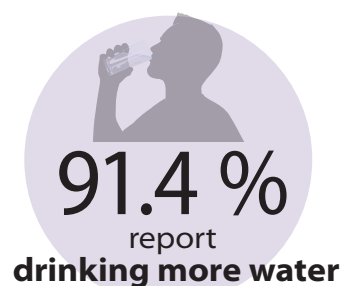
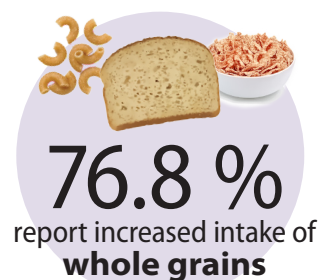
Alexis Cole, a teen leader from Avoyelles Parish

“It is rewarding to work with teen leaders. They not only bring new ideas to the table but are constantly reinventing themselves as they are always ready to do whatever we ask them to do. I have personally seen them grow as leaders, from shy to outgoing, from not ready to speak in front of peers to shine in front of anyone.”

Adriana Drusini, 4-H agent in St. Mary Parish

“Teaching kids has inspired me far more than I have inspired them. They are so full of joy. Through working with kids I have learned that I want a career with children. They make my day every time. They just put a certain energy around you that you can't get anywhere else.”

Kennedi Williams, a teen leader from St. Mary Parish



4-H Camps Build Independence, Responsibility

Olivia McClure

Many Louisiana 4-H'ers look forward to camping with their friends, both old and new, every summer. It's an experience that is meant to be fun, but attending a 4-H camp provides countless other benefits.

"We're trying to build independence and get kids to do things on their own while they're away from home," said Mark Tassin, LSU AgCenter associate vice president and program leader for 4-H. "We're also trying to build a sense of belonging, like they belong to a bigger group than just their 4-H Club at school. And we are exposing them to a diverse population because not the same parish-es camp together. Kids from all over the state mingle during camp week."

Every summer, about 5,000 children in fourth to sixth grades go to Camp Grant Walker in Pollock. Nine weeklong camps, which are open to 4-H'ers as well as non-members, are held annually.

The camp facilities have expanded over the years, and so have program offerings, Tassin said. 4-H summer camp once emphasized outdoor activities, but because that doesn't appeal to all children, several other educational tracks have been added to meet a variety of interests.

All camp programming is based on research and designed to be hands-on, Tassin said. Campers get to choose which track they want to participate in, giving them a chance to make their own decisions and pursue subjects they're interested in.

The seven tracks are water safety; food

and fitness; science, engineering and technology (SET); outdoor adventures; Louisiana's wetlands; arts; and hunting safety. In addition to educational sessions tied to their track, campers have time for a range of recreational activities, including swimming, canoeing, sand volleyball, talent shows, dances and presentations from guest speakers.

An added bonus of going to camp is the level of physical activity it demands, Tassin said. Walking the campgrounds and taking part in different camp events takes effort but gives children – especially those who live in cities – an opportunity to appreciate the outdoors.

"They may never get a chance to go out to the woods or a creek or a pond," Tassin said.

Another key part of the 4-H camp experience is simply being away from home for a week, which offers a chance to develop life skills and learn to make good choices by themselves. At the same time, the campers – who aren't allowed to have cellphones – learn the importance of communicating, building relationships and appreciating diversity, Tassin said.

Children from different parishes camp together, and many of them end up becoming lifelong friends. 4-H'ers who are in high school can serve as camp counselors, which gives them an opportunity to learn about leadership while setting an example for younger campers to look up to.



Louisiana 4-H also offers specialized camps, such as the Louisiana Outdoor Science and Technology (LOST) Camp for seventh- and eighth-graders, and Marsh Maneuvers, a high-intensity camp for small groups of high school students that focuses on coastal biology in Cameron Parish.

Camp offers an ideal environment for teaching science, Tassin said, because of the many opportunities for experiential learning. The hands-on, fun nature of camps helps spark an interest in science for many children, which is important because of growing workforce demand for trained scientists, he said.

Each of the five AgCenter administrative regions holds Challenge Camps that teach middle school-aged 4-H'ers about teamwork. Several parishes host their own camps, too. And the themes depend on the interests of the students.

One thing all the camps have in common, Tassin said, is that they further the 4-H mission to help children grow into responsible, caring adults.

AgCenter surveys have shown that 4-H camps make several positive impacts on children and their families. While kids reported that camp helped them gain self-confidence, make friends and learn new skills, parents said their children had also become more respectful of others and more responsible.

"At camp, you're exposed to all the different things in 4-H that you can't get in a club meeting, and you get exposed to all of these different kids from all over the state," Tassin said. "It expands your world."

Olivia McClure is an assistant communications specialist with LSU AgCenter Communication.

Photos by Christine Bergeron, Camp Director, and Ashley L. Powell, Associate Program Coordinator



Environmental Center Fosters New Opportunities

Bruce Schultz

Since the Environmental Education Center opened at the LSU AgCenter Grant Walker 4-H Educational Center in 2012, youngsters attending the summer camp have benefited from new opportunities.

"The Environmental Education Building is the primary building used during summer camp for wetlands and environmental studies," said camp director Christine Bergeron.

The Environmental Education Center, located on the former Camp Windywood property, was completed in early 2012. The acquisition was possible through the efforts of the Louisiana 4-H Foundation.

Campers also use the building for classroom learning, and a 1-acre pond is used for aquatics and wetlands experiments.

"Our pond is also used for canoeing, kayaking and stand-up paddle boarding during summer camp as well as available to rent throughout the year," Bergeron said. "Our goal is to not only use this facility during summer camp but to provide educational workshops and programs to youth throughout the year."

Surrounding the center are a skeet range, rifle range and archery range.

The center also is available for rent to outside groups, Bergeron said.

"When the center is not being utilized during summer camp, this facility can be used for adult and youth workshops, teacher workshops, meeting space for businesses to hold meetings and conferences."

A smaller building near the Environmental Education building is used during the summer for campers to obtain their Hunter Safety Certification. Throughout the year, the building is rented to the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries for hunter education classes.

The shooting sports facilities also can be used for gun safety training and competitions.

Bruce Schultz is an assistant communications specialist with LSU AgCenter Communications.



4-H'ers Pledge Their Hands to Larger Service

Janet Fox

Albert Einstein once said, “Only a life lived in the service of others is worth living.” Louisiana 4-H’ers are assuring themselves a life well lived with their pledge of their “hands to larger service.” 4-H members across Louisiana help out and come to the aid of individuals and communities in need. They assess critical needs in their communities and parishes and design service projects that address these needs. They partner with local communities to create synergy to expand resources available to serve others.

4-H service projects take many forms, including assisting an elderly neighbor, cleaning up flooded houses, beautifying a community, growing vegetables for



Cameron Parish 4-H'er Jordyn Stickell, 13, helps move boxes of donations at Live Oak United Methodist Church's food pantry in Watson, Louisiana, on Aug. 27, 2016. She and other 4-H'ers took part in cleanup efforts following historic flooding in the area and dropped off food to donate to the church's supply. Photo by Olivia McClure



Cameron Parish 4-H'ers remove damaged materials from the kitchen of a Livingston Parish home that was damaged in historic flooding in August 2016. The 4-H'ers visited the parish on Aug. 27 to donate food they had collected and to help this homeowner begin the cleanup and recovery process. Photo by Olivia McClure

low-income citizens, mentoring children and collecting items for the needy. These service projects provide youth with valuable learning opportunities to increase knowledge about their community as well as develop critical life skills. Youth connect the learning outcomes and skills to real world experiences that prepare them for their transition as caring, connected competent citizens.

During the program year July 1, 2015, to June 30, 2016:

- 23,074 4-H'ers in 36 parishes reported participating in community service activities and 4,623 4-H'ers engaged in service-learning projects. Louisiana 4-H embraced state service opportunities by reaching almost 60,500 people.

- More than 23,000 4-H members and 3,660 adults promoted the cause of service learning. Parishes, local 4-H Clubs and 4-H'ers logged more than 13,458 hours of service worth \$317,094.

Each year, Louisiana 4-H'ers choose a statewide service focus. At 4-H University in June 2016, 4-H members from across Louisiana voted foster care and child development as the 2016-2017 State 4-H Service focus. The project's goals are to support youth in foster care by promoting healthy intellectual, social and emotional development. Twenty-one parishes reported foster care service projects reaching almost 5,500 youth.



A 4-H'er wears a dust mask as he gathers damaged floor tiles on Aug. 27, 2016, at a home in Livingston Parish that was damaged when the area flooded earlier that month. Photo by Olivia McClure

Approximately 4,600 youth and 1,250 adults donated 2,698 hours for a total worth of \$63,565. Youth generated almost \$8,200 in funds and more than \$6,500 in donated items benefitting foster children.

Each December for the past four years, Louisiana 4-H'ers have participated in a National 4-H event called the State 4-H Day of Service. In 2015, 18 par-

ishes participated in the State 4-H Day of Service. Parishes reported conducting 32 Day of Service projects benefitting more than 21,570 people. More than 2,500 youth gave a total of 1,441 hours for a total value of \$33,950.

More than 87,479 individuals were reached through service-learning and service projects conducted by 30,205

4-H'ers and 5,261 adult volunteers. The accumulated value of the general 4-H service projects, Day of Service efforts and Foster Care State Service Focus projects was \$414,609 in total volunteer hours, \$135,529 in donated funds and \$37,370 in donated items.

Janet Fox is department head for 4-H Youth Development.

4-H Animal Projects Have Deep Roots

Rick Bogren

Animal projects have been a staple of 4-H for almost as long as the organization has been in existence. County and state fairs have featured livestock judging for generations, and 4-H joined the exhibition trend a long time ago.

The LSU AgCenter presented the first annual State Livestock Show in 1936, and the first State Horse Show in 1970. Both events include not only 4-H'ers but also FFA students.

The livestock show provides opportunities for youth to be recognized for their hard work in learning to grow and care for a wide array of animals.

"This show also is about the dedication of the many parents, teachers, volunteer leaders, 4-H agents and FFA advisors who have worked with these young people to help them grow as people and responsible citizens," said Bill Richardson, LSU vice president for agriculture.

To qualify for the state livestock show, competitors have to first participate in parish and district livestock shows across Louisiana. In 2016, 2,467 youth participated in district shows, with most moving on to the state competition, said AgCenter livestock show manager Dwayne Nunez. And 322 youth participated in district and state horse shows.

"4-H'ers from many north Louisiana parishes and some in the south participate in the Louisiana State Fair in Shreveport as well as Southern University shows that we don't have numbers for," Nunez said.



Contestants show their pigs at the LSU AgCenter Livestock Show on Feb. 18, 2016. Photo by Olivia McClure

Judges at the state livestock show select more than 250 state champions in various breeds of beef and dairy cattle, goats, hogs, poultry and sheep.

In addition to awards for top animals, the AgCenter conducts the Premier Exhibitor and Showmanship programs. Premier Exhibitor recognizes 4-H and FFA members in grades nine through 12 who have a thorough understanding of animal science, and showmanship contests focus on exhibitors' presentation and sportsmanship.

"The Premier Exhibitor awards are based on performance in tests of each youth's knowledge of the livestock industry, practical exercises demonstrating skills and the ability to communicate effectively," Nunez said.

Program participants have to pass written and skill tests, write an essay, prepare a résumé and participate in an

interview, Nunez said. The program recognizes outstanding participants in horse, beef cattle, dairy cattle, poultry, sheep, goat and swine projects.

The program began in 1999 with an endowment from Gerry Lane Enterprises of Baton Rouge, which has recently increased the endowment to assure the endowment income will be up to the level necessary to fully fund the program.

PotashCorp of Geismar has provided a total of \$90,000 to establish an endowment to fund showmanship awards for dairy cattle, beef cattle, swine, exhibition poultry, broiler poultry, sheep, breeding goats and market goats.

Rick Bogren is a professor and science writer in LSU AgCenter Communications and associate editor of Louisiana Agriculture.

Youth Leadership Boards

Give 4-H'ers a Voice

Tobie Blanchard

4-H'ers have the opportunity to shape their organization through youth leadership boards. Approximately 160 4-H'ers serve on these boards and help determine the path Louisiana 4-H will take.

"Serving on a youth leadership board offers a higher level of participation," said 4-H youth development specialist Leslie Moran. "The youth learn leadership skills, which transfer to what they are doing in their daily life."

The first youth leadership board in Louisiana was the Executive Board, which was created in 1921. It consists of 4-H's elected state officers.

Not until the 1990s did the idea for additional boards start to flourish. The first Fashion Board was established in 1990, and the Food and Fitness Board followed in 1995. The Performing Arts Board is the most recent addition – it formed in 2014.

Louisiana 4-H now has seven youth leadership boards: Citizenship; Executive; Fashion; Food and Fitness; Performing Arts; Science, Engineering and Technology (SET); and Shooting Sports.

The boards consist of 20 to 40 4-H'ers who must be at least 13 years old. Board members are elected or selected during 4-H University, which occurs annually in June.

The boards provide an opportunity for 4-H'ers to see the bigger picture, said 4-H regional coordinator Karen Martin.

"They plan camps for other 4-H'ers. They get to teach their peers. You can really see the board members grow as they go through the planning process and plan all the details of camps or educational programs," Martin said.

Adult volunteers, consisting of parents, retired 4-H agents and college students, work with the boards. When adults serve as partners to the youth, youth gain the support and power that help them achieve both their individual and group goals, Martin said.



Youth leadership boards give 4-H'ers a voice in shaping their organization. Members of the 4-H Fashion Board help plan a fashion camp for 4-H'ers. They also travel to New York City to visit the textile and garment district. The 2016-2017 board is pictured here. From left, front row, Brielle Brumfield and Shaylee Puls; second row LSU AgCenter 4-H Youth Development department head Janet Fox, Gabrielle Fontenot, Lauren Harrell, Brittany Flynn, LSU AgCenter associate vice president Mark Tassin; third row, 4-H Youth Development instructor Tanya Giroir and Ra'Janae Morris, current chair. Photo by Olivia McClure

While the adult volunteers are crucial, both Moran and Martin said youth are at the helm of the boards.

"We adults think we know what they want or need, but they really know. And this allows them to have a voice in their organization," Moran said.

Helping youth develop leadership skills is an important outcome of the youth boards. Research conducted on the Louisiana 4-H state youth leadership boards concluded that youth engaging in membership on the boards thought they were able to think independently, mastered some leadership skills and improved their ability to communicate with others, Moran said.

"Youth can develop, enhance and use leadership skills to influence change. That is the real purpose behind the boards," Moran said.

Boards have activities tailored to their areas of interest. The Food and Fitness Board visits restaurants and learns about health. The Shooting Sports Board hosts shooting events. The Fashion board visits New York.

"They go to the garment and textile district in New York City. When else would these students have these opportunities?" Martin said.

The 4-H'ers often provide programming at local events that have relevance to the subject matter, Moran said. The boards participate in service-learning activities and volunteer at the local level. Also, each board puts on a culminating event, such as the Executive Board organizing the Junior Leadership Conference for 300 of their peers.

Through these leadership boards, youth get connected to a larger context than their immediate circle, and they really take ownership of their 4-H youth development program, which ultimately enhances every youth's experience in 4-H, Moran said.

Tobie Blanchard is a communications specialist with LSU AgCenter Communications and communications coordinator for the LSU College of Agriculture.

4-H Program Serves As Avenue for Career Exploration

Melissa Cater

Selecting a career path is one of the most challenging decisions an adolescent makes, and it is one that often complicated by not knowing how to make such an important, life-changing choice.

When youth face barriers like the increasing cost of post-secondary training or a lack of support from family or peers, the decision becomes even more difficult. It is not uncommon for youth to be unsure about the steps they should take in making a career choice. Additionally, the internet and other sources can provide too much information for youth to sort and organize so a decision can be made. In the face of all these hurdles, youth often rely on informal sources of information and their own experiences to make a career path determination.

The programs offered by Louisiana 4-H play an important role in adolescents' career exploration process and provide a natural complement to the work of local school systems. Many 4-H programs include an intentional career component, such as field trips and visits with professionals. Youth have the

opportunity to ask questions and to experience the work firsthand. For this particular study, youth were actively engaged in educational club meeting lessons. Some youth also had access to additional field trip opportunities and job shadowing experiences.

The purpose of this study was to determine if changes occurred in 4-H club members' career decision-making confidence as a result of their participation in the club program. Data were collected from a cross section of 144 ninth- to 12th-graders 4-H Club members. Youth ranged in age from 12 to 18 years old, with the average age 13.9. Males (42.6 percent) and females (57.4 percent) were fairly equally represented. A 14-item retrospective pretest questionnaire was adapted from the Middle School Self-Efficacy Scale and was distributed to youth in the spring after the club educational program was completed. A retrospective pretest questionnaire collects both pretest and posttest information at a single point in time. Responses were collected using a four-point, Likert-type scale with responses ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

Two mean scores representing pre-

test and posttest levels of confidence were created for each youth's responses to the 14 items. Youth reported lower confidence levels at pretest (2.94) and higher confidence levels at posttest (3.45). There was a statistically significant increase from pretest to posttest. Youth experienced the most change in their confidence that they could decide what they valued most in an occupation (Table 1).

Making a career choice is one of the most important decisions that a person makes. Programs like the Louisiana 4-H program can help increase adolescents' confidence they can make a decision and they know the appropriate actions to take in making the choice. Results of this program suggest that when youth engage in intentional career exploration programs, their confidence to make a decision increases. As the Louisiana 4-H program expands its focus to better meet the needs of today's youth, programs like the educational club program can fill an important niche in the lives of youth.

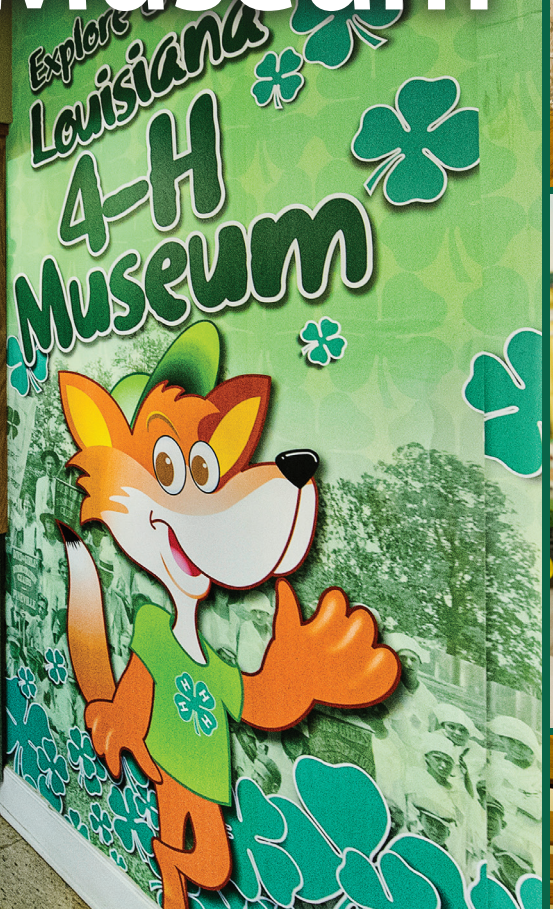
Melissa Cater is an assistant professor in the Department of Agricultural and Extension Education and Evaluation.

Table 1. 4-H Club Members' Career Decision-making Confidence As a Result of Participation in the Club Program

	Before		Now		Change	
	Number of Youth Agreeing/Strongly Agreeing	Percentage of Youth Agreeing/Strongly Agreeing	Number of Youth Agreeing/Strongly Agreeing	Percentage of Youth Agreeing/Strongly Agreeing	Change in Number of Youth Agreeing/Strongly Agreeing	Change in Percentage of Youth Agreeing/Strongly Agreeing
I can decide what I value most in an occupation.	81	69.2%	106	92.2%	25	22.9%
I can describe the job skills of a career I might like to enter.	80	69.0%	105	91.3%	25	22.3%
I have talked to people who have jobs in which I am interested.	66	55.5%	90	77.6%	24	22.1%
I know how to determine what occupation would be best for me.	83	70.9%	107	92.2%	24	21.3%



Louisiana 4-H Museum





Louisiana 4-H Museum Features Organization History

Olivia McClure

The rich history of 4-H is celebrated at the Louisiana 4-H Museum in Mansura, which opened in 2008 to commemorate the youth development organization's 100-year anniversary in the state.

"The 4-H museum is a walk down memory lane for many and a place to learn more about what 4-H has to offer," said Esther Boe, LSU AgCenter 4-H agent in Avoyelles Parish.

The museum is located in a building that also is home to LSU AgCenter and Southern University Ag Center extension offices and the Avoyelles Commission of Tourism. The location is significant because Louisiana's first 4-H Club – originally called a Corn Club – started in 1908 at Avoyelles High School in nearby Moreauville.

V.L. Roy, the high school's agriculture teacher, organized the club and challenged boys to grow corn as well or better than their fathers. The Corn Club concept was promoted by agricultural extension pioneer Seaman Knapp with the goal of spreading new, more effective farming practices.

Since then, 4-H has grown into the nation's largest youth development organization, with close to 200,000 youth participating yearly in Louisiana.

It was Dwight Landreneau's idea to start a museum documenting how 4-H evolved over time. Landreneau, an extension administrator who retired from the AgCenter in 2013, hired Roseanne St. Romain for two years to pull together the museum.

Visitors to the facility can learn about 4-H's early history, which focused on farming and homemaking skills, and how the organization expanded and helped attract a larger audience by including topics such as photography, dog care and robotics.

Visitors can also see how 4-H has remained the same in many ways. Livestock shows and cooking contests are still popular. Summer activities like camp and 4-H University – a weeklong educational experience held at LSU previously known as Short Course – have long been the highlight of many young Louisianans' time in 4-H.

Photos, newspaper clippings, ribbons, pins and record books from 4-H activities of yesteryear are stored at the museum.

The facility also plays host to a yearly ceremony where outstanding agents and volunteers are inducted into the Louisiana 4-H Hall of Fame.

"The 4-H museum is an important feature for the state because it allows us to cherish our past and to celebrate the success that 4-H has been for the state for more than 100 years," Boe said. "It's still going strong, and maybe the best is yet to come."

The museum, located at 8592 La. Highway 1 in Mansura, is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission is free. Arrangements can be made for small groups to visit.

Olivia McClure is an assistant communications specialist in LSU AgCenter Communications. She also took all the photos.

... celebrate the success that 4-H has been for the state for more than 100 years.



Camille Brady, a 4-H agent in Ascension Parish, holds a 2-week-old goat as students from St. Helena Arts and Technology Academy pet it during Ag Wonders, an event hosted by the LSU AgCenter on April 20, 2016, at the Florida Parishes Arena in Amite City. Photo by Olivia McClure

Promoting Agriculture Literacy Through Awareness Field Trips

Terri Crawford, Janet Fox, Frankie Gould, Karen Martin and Renee Castro

Agriculture provides the sustenance of life, and yet, a majority of consumers – youth and adults – do not have a fundamental understanding of agriculture or how agriculture affects their lives. To meet the challenges of the future, it is imperative that youth and adults are aware of the role that agriculture plays in their everyday lives. Youth and adults must increase their agricultural literacy to become informed consumers, advocates and policymakers.

LSU AgCenter faculty across the state provide multiple opportunities each year for more than 25,000 youth to increase their agricultural literacy. These opportunities include:

Ag Alley

Held each January in West Monroe, this event reaches first- and fourth-grade students from the 12-parish area of the Northeast Region. Through interactive stations, first-graders learn how food gets from the farm to their table while fourth-graders learn more about commodity crops grown in the region.

Ag Adventures

Held yearly in February at the Delhi Civic Center, this event targets second- and third-graders. They learn more about gardening, farm animals, hand-washing and crops through hands-on educational activities.

AgMagic

This interactive, visually stimulating, educational journey through Louisiana agriculture takes place in three locations: Baton Rouge, Violet (near New Orleans) and Shreveport at the State Fair.

- In Baton Rouge, the audience is pre-school through middle school. The students explore and learn about agriculture and the environment at Parker Coliseum on campus every April.
- In Violet, the event is held at Docville Farm in St. Bernard Parish. Kindergarten through fourth-grade youth get to tour and learn about agriculture on an actual working farm. They see live animals and taste Louisiana products.
- In Shreveport, the exhibit is set up in the agriculture building at the State Fair, which is in October and November every year. More than 3,000 students in grades three to six from the surrounding area visited in 2016. The theme was safety.

Ag Wonders

Held in Amite City in April, this event provides an opportunity for students to visit more than 20 agriculture exhibits where they learn about aspects of agriculture, especially those prominent in the Florida Parishes region, such as dairy production, nursery crops and forestry.

Northeast Region 4-H Youth Field Day

This event is held annually at the Sweet Potato Research Station in Chase at the end of September. Seventh- through 12th-graders are taken through a series of educational stops, where they learn about various careers, best management practices and research in agriculture.

Table 1. Agriculture awareness of students who visited 2016 AgMagic-Baton Rouge as measured by their teachers.

As a result of the Ag Awareness experience, my students:	Strongly Disagree, Disagree %	Not Sure %	Strongly Agree, Agree %
Were introduced to Louisiana agricultural products	3.2	0.00	96.8
Have a better understanding of the importance of agriculture	3.2	14.4	82.4
Are more aware of where food comes from.	1.6	4.8	93.6
Are more curious about agriculture	4	16	80
Have a better appreciation for agriculture	3.2	13.6	83.2

Southwest Region 4-H Ag Career Field Day

The goal of the event – usually in December every year at the H. Rouse Caffey Rice Research Station – is to expose high school students to the many career opportunities in agriculture.

Each event is unique, but they all provide youth with an interactive, visually stimulating environment that links food and fiber products used every day to forests, aquaculture, field crops and livestock produced by Louisiana farmers, ranchers and forest landowners.

For a measure of the results of these types of experiences, an online survey elicited responses from 124 of 305 teachers who brought their classes to AgMagic in Baton Rouge in 2016. The results showed 97 percent of the teachers reported their students were introduced to Louisiana agricultural products, while 82 percent of the teachers believed their students had a better understanding of the importance of agriculture (Table 1).

A new Ag Alley exhibit “From the Farm to the Table to You” was designed to increase elementary students’ awareness of the link between food origins, nutrition and health. Youth were evaluated through a post pictorial survey using Qualtrics software and iPads. A random sample of youth (N = 179) completed a posttest to assess their knowledge of healthy food choices and food sources. The overall average of knowledge of healthy food choices was 80.69 percent. Youth were asked to identify sources of foods as part of the farm-to-table initiative. The overall average was 85.67 percent, indicating the majority were able to match selected foods with their farm source.

Ag awareness field trips are a valuable tool to promote agriculture literacy. Evaluations have indicated that ag awareness trips provide students with a relevant, educational opportunity that promotes agriculture. As a result of the field trip experience, youth become aware of the role agriculture plays in their everyday life. Increasing agricultural literacy of youth today will help agriculture continue to have a bright future for tomorrow.

Terri Crawford is 4-H regional coordinator in Winnsboro; Janet Fox is head of the 4-H Youth Development Department; Frankie Gould is director of AgCenter Communications; Karen Martin is 4-H regional coordinator in Homer; Renee Castro is 4-H regional coordinator in Hammond.

Safety Training for Chaperones

Veronica Del Bianco

The Louisiana 4-H Youth Development Program is dedicated to providing a safe and positive environment for all our youth participants. Nowhere is this more challenging than in overnight situations. Every year, thousands of 4-H youth attend life-changing experiences like 4-H Camp for fourth-through sixth-graders at Camp Grant Walker, 4-H University on LSU campus for high school aged kids, and awards trips to places like San Antonio, Atlanta and Orlando. That is why, in 2004, the Overnight Chaperone Program was developed to educate adult volunteers about how to create safe and positive environments in these enriching overnight settings.

The Overnight Chaperone Program has four components. The first is a background check to ensure there are no existing concerns. Second, a volunteer receives a role description so they understand their responsibilities. The next step is that all overnight chaperone volunteers attend a three-hour training that covers youth development principles, discipline, youth and adult protection, health and safety, and crisis management. Then, to reinforce it all, volunteers sign a code of conduct.

Since implementing the Overnight

Chaperone Program, the Louisiana 4-H has trained approximately 200 overnight chaperones annually. An evaluation of the training was sent to these volunteers, and 477 returned the evaluation. The results indicated that 100 percent felt more comfortable and prepared to handle crisis and emergency situations; 97 percent of participants reported gaining knowledge on how to create and maintain a safe environment for youth; and 96 percent were more aware of health and safety considerations in overnight settings (Table 1).

More than a decade after its creation, the Louisiana 4-H Overnight Chaperone Program continues to provide a set of standards, guidelines and trainings for youth protection and teach 4-H adult volunteers how to create safe, positive environments for youth in overnight settings. Whether sending their fourth-grader off to 4-H camp for their first night away from home or their 11th-grader off to 4-H University for their first night sleeping in a college dorm, parents and loved ones know there is a well-trained, caring adult chaperoning their child.

Veronica Del Bianco is the 4-H volunteer and leadership development specialist.

Table 1. Evaluation of Overnight Chaperone Training (N=477)

	Strongly Agree or Agree
Gained information on how to create a positive environment for youth.	98.1%
Feel more comfortable handling discipline problems.	94.9%
Increased my knowledge of the signs of child abuse.	94.7%
Increased my knowledge of the types of child abuse.	93.5%
Increased my understanding on how to maintain safe environments for youth.	96.9%
Increased my understanding on how to protect adults in overnight situations.	95.8%
Am more aware of health and safety considerations in overnight settings.	96.1%
Feel more prepared to handle crisis situations.	94.6%
Am more prepared to handle emergency situations.	100.0%



Three girls prepare pizza at a CHEF Camp in East Baton Rouge Parish. They are Ashlyn Johnson, Copper Mill Elementary School; Calie Minton, South Walker Elementary School; and Alyvia Pierson, Copper Mill. Photo by Bridget Udoh

Southern University Offers Diverse Opportunities Through 4-H and Youth Development Programs

Linda Foster Benedict

Since its founding in 1880, Southern University has been deeply immersed in providing development opportunities for Louisiana youth and has a long tradition of supporting the 4-H program since its establishment in the state in 1908. Since 1997, the 4-H and youth development program has been administered through the Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center in Baton Rouge. Following is a brief look at six of the programs targeting youth:

School Gardening

“Plant It, Grow It, Try It, Like It” is the motto and mission of the school gardening project, which is currently at three schools in East Baton Rouge Parish — the Southern University Magnet Lab School, Scotlandville Magnet High School and Scotlandville Pre-Engineering Magnet Academy. In 2012, the U.S. Department of Agriculture recognized this project as one

of the most outstanding examples in the country of an effort to help eradicate food deserts, which are neighborhoods with limited access to fresh fruits and vegetables.

Students learn about growing fruits, vegetables and herbs through a comprehensive curriculum in which they also learn the science and math involved in growing food and about nutrition and healthy eating. The young people take home their newly acquired knowledge to their families, which helps the entire community become healthier.

Since its establishment in 2012, the project has provided 214 class sessions and has reached 3,285 youth. It was funded with a \$250,000 four-year grant provided by the 1890 Capacity Building Grant Program from the USDA’s National Institute of Food and Agriculture. Money is being sought to continue the program, according to Tiffany Franklin, project coordinator with Cooperative Extension.

4-H LIFE Prison Program

The 4-H LIFE Prison Program is an attempt to hold together families separated by the incarceration of the mother or father and to make these families stronger through parent education. LIFE stands for “Living Interactive Family Education,” according to Franklin, who directs this program, which is sponsored and funded by the National 4-H Council through the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

The program operates in two prisons — for mothers only at the East Baton Rouge Parish Prison and for mothers and fathers at the St. Landry Parish Jail. The parents go through parent education classes and then once a month get together with their children for family time and activities for the whole group.

The program reaches about 100 youth per year, 50 per prison. The program is in its sixth year and has secured funding for another year. Because of the success of the program, Franklin would like to expand it to other prisons across the state. And she is looking for more funding.

CHEF Camp

In the CHEF (Cooking Healthy Enjoyable Food) Camps, children learn about healthy eating, food preparation, food safety and the importance of physical activity — all in one five-day summer camp. The children, ages 4-14, leave the camp knowing how to prepare their own after-school snacks, how to grow some of their own food, and how to choose healthier foods for themselves and their families.

The program has been conducted jointly by the Southern University Ag Center and the LSU AgCenter since 2012 and was offered in 13 different locations in 2016, including Baton Rouge and New Orleans.

De’Shoin A. York, associate nutrition specialist and coordinator of the Southern program, and Sharman Charles, LSU AgCenter extension nutritionist and manager of the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program in Louisiana, developed the curriculum.

The overall goal of the camps is to help reduce Louisiana’s high obesity rate.

“We targeted the young people by letting them have fun in the kitchen while learning skills to help them and their families. Young people have a way of helping the entire family change eating habits,” Friendship said.

National Youth Science Day

National Youth Science Day is an annual event sponsored by National 4-H to spark interest in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, also known as STEM, among young people. Every year kits with instructions for a science experiment are sent to 4-H offices across the country. Then, on the first Wednesday in October, thousands of young people across the country conduct the same experiment.

At the Southern University Ag Center, this event is a high priority. And this year’s experiment, called drone discovery, was conducted on Oct. 5 and attracted nearly 300 youth from across the state to the campus.

“We try to make the experiment comparable to real life situations so kids can relate,” said Franklin, who has been the coordinator of the event for the past five years.

This year’s historic flooding in Louisiana provided an example of the use of drones that was particularly relevant. As part of their activities, the students viewed videos of the flood damage over cities and agricultural fields captured with drones. They also learned about fixed and rotary wing designs, explored the concept of remote sensing and were exposed to the world of coding for real-world drone applications.



Garrett Edgerson, of Da Edge Productions, left, demonstrates using a drone during the National Science Day activities on Oct. 5, 2016. Nearly 300 students participated. Photo by LaKeeshia Giddens

National Ag Day

Each year, one day is set aside nationwide to call attention to the critical role agriculture plays in society, and it’s called National Ag Day. The Southern University Ag Center has turned this event — usually in mid-March — into an opportunity for youth development and student recruitment as well as ag awareness. Over the past three years, the day’s activities have gone from poster presentations in the hallways at the Ag Center building to a traveling exhibit in which 1,000 students in nine parishes in 20 different schools participated.

It all started when Renita Marshall, associate professor in animal science and extension veterinarian, obtained a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture

to help entice Southern University students into majoring in the College of Agriculture, Family and Consumer Sciences. The program is called Jags in Ag, a play on SU’s jaguar mascot. The National Ag Day event is part of the Jags in Ag project.

The theme for the 2016 National Ag Day was sustainability and stewardship of a healthy planet. Working with faculty mentors, SU students prepared 30-minute lessons about composting and recycling. In teams of two to three, they spent March 15 in 10 schools in East Baton Rouge Parish and one school each in eight other parishes and gave hands-on presentations.

“We want young people to understand that there are many diverse career opportunities in agriculture and that the agriculture profession encompasses much more than farming,” Marshall said.

Citizenship Washington Focus

Each year for the past three years, six students in the Southern University Ag Center 4-H and youth development program have been selected from East Baton Rouge and St. Landry parishes for the Citizenship Washington Focus program, which is funded through Farm Credit. These students get the opportunity to spend six days in Washington, D.C., and participate in civic workshops, committees and field trips and visit with Congressional staff for a behind-the-scenes look at how government works.

Linda Foster Benedict is the associate director of LSU AgCenter Communications and editor of Louisiana Agriculture.



Marquetta Anderson, parish chair and extension nutrition agent in East Baton Rouge Parish, works with youth at a CHEF Camp. Photo by Bridget Udoh

Louisiana 4-H Foundation: A History of Growing the Clover

Patrick Tuck

The Louisiana 4-H Foundation currently holds 74 permanent endowed and nonendowed funds totaling \$2.9 million within the LSU Foundation. Endowments generate interest that is spent annually to support Louisiana 4-H. At their September 2016 board meeting, foundation trustees voted unanimously to embark upon a five-year campaign to establish \$1 million in educational trips endowments. These accounts will permanently support the foundation's \$50,000 annual commitment to educational awards trips for deserving Louisiana 4-H youth.

The concept of funds based on private contributions to augment support of 4-H activities in Louisiana began in 1978

The concept of funds based on private contributions to augment support of 4-H activities in Louisiana began in 1978 when friends and colleagues of John A. Cox sought a suitable way to honor him upon his retirement as director of the Cooperative Extension Service. On April 29, 1978, the John A. Cox 4-H Development Fund was inaugurated to honor a man who had energetically supported 4-H throughout his career.

To expand the scope of private support for 4-H programs, the board of directors of the development fund in December 1983 created several Louisiana 4-H Foundation funds within the LSU Foundation that now encompass the John A. Cox Fund, the Louisiana Campaign for 4-H, many accounts in memory and honor of 4-H supporters and other special-interest drives for funds to support 4-H activities.

The heart of Louisiana 4-H fundraising lives in the 64 parish foundations established in 1993. These affiliated 501(c)(3) foundations hold a total of \$5 million to support daily 4-H program expenses in every parish. Six parish foundations now receive support from

the St. Charles United Way, St. John United Way and beginning in July 2016, the Capital Area United Way.

The Louisiana 4-H Foundation reached \$1 million in funds in 1995. Later that year, the foundation received its first philanthropist-level gift of \$500,000 from the estate of Dr. Carl Baldrige and Beulah Landry Baldrige, an endowment which has since grown to over \$600,000. The foundation reached \$2 million in funds in 2000. It was not until 2013 that the foundation received its second philanthropist-level gift of \$502,000 from RoyOMartin

Inc. The gift was made as a part of the Grant Walker Build the Pavilion Fund. More than \$1.3 million in cash and in-kind donations was raised for the pavilion. A 2015 dedication ceremony named the structure the Ellis S. Martin Pavilion and the road around the camp Lew Ewing Drive. Former state senator Randy Ewing noted at the opening ceremony that he and Bill Richardson, LSU

the Foundation Operating Fund. Now known as the Grow the Clover Campaign, this drive helps sustain a balance of roughly \$40,000 in what has become one of most agile and essential accounts. Annual donors such as the Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation are crucial partners in this endeavor.

The Louisiana 4-H Foundation reached its next major milestone on Sept. 28, 2016, when Honey Brake Lodge representatives Tack Robinson and Drew Keeth visited LSU to sign an agreement for the largest donation from a single donor Louisiana 4-H history. Honey Brake pledged \$1 million over 10 years to create permanent endowments for educational trips and camps.

Honey Brake hosted the Louisiana 4-H annual Guns & Gumbo fundraiser in February 2016. Paul Coreil, LSU AgCenter vice chancellor emeritus, and foundation executive director Patrick Tuck visited Honey Brake earlier this fall to finalize plans for Guns & Gumbo 2017.

Patrick Tuck is the executive director of the Louisiana 4-H Foundation.

Plans for new partnerships are in the works, including shooting sports competitions and training camps, youth wetlands education programs, wildlife photography, and outdoor skills television shows.

vice president for agriculture, conceived of the project at the urging of previous 4-H camp director Kim Landry. Ewing was delighted that all three were in attendance to share in the celebration of this significant improvement to the 4-H Grant Walker Educational Center.

The Louisiana Campaign for 4-H began in 2013 when Dwight Landreneau, retired associate vice chancellor, dedicated his retirement gift to enhance

Honey Brake Makes Historic \$1 Million Pledge to Louisiana 4-H

Olivia McClure

Honey Brake, a hunting lodge in Jonesville, Louisiana, recently pledged \$1 million to Louisiana 4-H to permanently fund educational trips and camps.

Honey Brake representatives Tack Robinson and Drew Keeth visited the LSU campus on Sept. 28, 2016, to sign an agreement for the largest donation from a single donor in the history of Louisiana's 4-H program.

Honey Brake hosted Louisiana 4-H's annual Guns and Gumbo fundraiser several months ago, stepping up to the plate after the original event site became inaccessible due to high Mississippi River levels.

"Louisiana 4-H serves over 200,000 youth annually and Honey Brake breathed new life into our biggest fundraising event," said Paul Coreil, LSU AgCenter vice chancellor emeritus and the committee chair of Guns and Gumbo. "Now they're making history again with this pledge."

Honey Brake has also hosted 2016 4-H Junior Leaders and the Southern Regional 4-H Development meetings.

"Honey Brake is committed to youth and to wildlife habitat conservation, and 4-H shares our passions," said Keeth, who is Honey Brake's CEO. "These young leaders have servants' hearts and we just want to help."

"The Honey Brake pledge is key to expanding and nurturing our youth through camping and education opportunities that surpass our expectations," said Bill Richardson, LSU vice president for agriculture.

"Louisiana has one of the best 4-H programs in the country," said Mark Tassin, LSU AgCenter associate vice president for 4-H Youth Development. "I am proud to have been involved with 4-H all my life and I am thankful for the heart that Honey Brake shows for our youth and our environment."

Louisiana 4-H Foundation executive director Patrick Tuck said plans for

other new partnerships are in the works, including shooting sports competitions and training camps, youth wetlands education programs, wildlife photography and outdoor skills television shows.

Honey Brake, located on 20,000 acres near Larto Lake in Catahoula Parish, is one of the largest wetlands restoration projects in the U.S. It provides several outdoor recreation opportunities, such as waterfowl and deer hunting, fishing, sporting clays and tours for bird watchers.

"The outdoor skills industry is now aligned with Louisiana 4-H in previously unimaginable ways," Tuck said. "This announcement embodies a boundless spirit for 4-H youth development and environmental conservation."

Olivia McClure is an assistant communication specialist with LSU AgCenter Communications.



Drew Keeth, left, Honey Brake Lodge CEO, with Paul Coreil, LSU AgCenter vice-chancellor emeritus and Guns & Gumbo fundraiser chair. Photo by Patrick Tuck

“ Honey Brake is committed to youth and to wildlife habitat conservation, and 4-H shares our passions. ”

Drew Keeth
Honey Brake Lodge CEO

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