



CLOVER CHRONICLE

News and features written by Pennsylvania 4-H Members.

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National 4-H Conference

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Communications Committee

One of the most anticipated events in the 4-H program is the National 4-H Conference, held each spring in Washington.

At this premier gathering, youths age 15 to 19 from across the country convene to engage in roundtable discussions on pressing national issues. Delegates are selected from each state based on their 4-H resumes and essay submissions, reflecting both achievement and leadership potential.

Upon arrival, participants are assigned to teams aligned with their interests. These groups collaborate to develop presentations addressing real-world challenges, which they then deliver to relevant federal agencies.

One difficulty that was discussed was that rural communities have fewer career options, which often leads to young adults leaving their hometowns following graduation. Rural communities lose talented young people who would benefit their community.

Throughout the conference, delegates put their leadership and public speaking skills into practice while contributing to thoughtful, solution-oriented dialogue. A proposed solution to address the limited career options was to integrate new technologies and a digital workforce to create competitive jobs.

This year's Pennsylvania delegates included Madison Cousins of Armstrong County, Victoria Miller of Westmoreland County, Riley Fink of Indiana County, Sarah Bupp of Butler County and Sophia Leiden of Clearfield County.

During the conference, Sarah, Riley and Victoria Miller presented to the National Park Service. They focused on the use of technology to support park operations and attract more young visitors.

Sophia participated in a roundtable centered on leveraging social media to increase interest in agriculture across rural America. Meanwhile, Madison and her team presented to the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service on forest recreation and strategies to expand access for youth and teens.

Through these experiences, delegates shared perspectives on education, technology and environmental stewardship, contributing ideas that may help shape the nation's future.

"Our roundtable was actually very lucky to receive such positive feedback and an invitation to continue to work with the USDA to explore two of our ideas more," Sophia said.

The National 4-H Conference also provides a firsthand look at how government works, giving youths the opportunity to engage directly with federal officials.

Participants gain a deeper understanding of the democratic process, strengthen their commitment to active citizenship and build confidence as they translate their 4-H experiences into actionable recommendations.

The skills developed extend well beyond the conference itself. The 4-H program plays a vital role in preparing young people for the future.

Through hands-on project-based learning in areas such as STEM, agriculture and civic engagement, youths explore potential career paths while developing essential life skills under the guidance of adult mentors.

According to 4-H.org, more than 80% of 4-H participants demonstrate career readiness by identifying a career interest through their involvement in the program.

"This opportunity really opened my eyes to potential career paths and helped me feel more prepared for my future," said Riley.

"Being surrounded by so many leaders gave me the chance to learn from them while contributing to my own experiences and ideas."

Many of the young people who attend



Pennsylvania 4-H delegates in front of Capitol Hill.

Photos provided by 4-H State Council



Pennsylvania delegates inside the Capitol.

the conference return to their communities inspired to give back and make a difference. Therefore, the National 4-H Conference's impact extends far beyond its attendees as those who attend are empowered to help the next generation of informed and engaged leaders.

4-H Clover Campaign

Kelton Wenger

Communications Committee

From April 17 to May 3, Tractor Supply hosted the Paper Clover Campaign at all its stores nationwide to raise money for the 4-H program. This program has taken place

since 2010, raising over \$24 million for the program.

Tractor Supply shares the proceeds between national and state 4-H programs. In Pennsylvania, a larger portion is distributed back to the county where the store is located.

The program works through Tractor Supply customers buying a paper clover at checkout to donate money to the 4-H program. In addition, community clubs often take part in tabling events at the store, educating the public about what 4-H is or hosting a fundraiser like a bake sale.

The money raised from the campaign allows all youths regardless of their financial

situations to access the youth leadership and camping opportunities 4-H offers.

Through this program, youths who could not normally afford 4-H activities, such as a camp or conference, can now attend due to the financial assistance provided.

"The partnership has positively impacted 80,000 young people, offering them opportunities to build life skills and prepare for their futures," Tractor Supply stated.

The program will run again from November 27 to December 13 and with help from donors, it will allow additional youths to access new opportunities.

Administered in Pennsylvania by Penn State Extension, 4-H is a community of more than 6 million young people across America learning leadership, citizenship and life skills. Penn State Extension 4-H youth development educators in all 67 counties throughout the commonwealth administer local 4-H programs through non-formal education and outreach. To find your local program, visit the Penn State Extension website at <https://extension.psu.edu/programs/4-h>.



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