



CLOVER CHRONICLE

News and features written by Pennsylvania 4-H Members.

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A Glimpse Into Other States' 4-H Programs

In honor of National 4-H Week (Oct. 5-11), the Pennsylvania 4-H State Council is spotlighting the incredible diversity of 4-H programs across the country.

Many of our council members have had the opportunity to attend national events and connect with fellow 4-H'ers from coast-to-coast — and we're excited to share their stories in this edition of the Clover Chronicle.

While each state's 4-H program has its own unique flavor, some things remain constant. Every program offers a wide range of projects and opportunities.

4-H is about far more than animals and agriculture. It's a movement that empowers youth, builds leadership, and fosters lifelong skills in every corner of the nation.

Our team spoke with Alana Kimmons from Missouri, Sophie Grow from Oregon, Serenity Conklin from New York, and Kaitlyn Noyes from Montana. We asked the following six questions about their experiences in their state programs.

What 4-H programs, activities, projects and events do/did you participate in?

Alana Kimmons: I participate in photography, entomology and horticulture projects. I have also competed in state livestock judging, and I volunteer as a 4-H camp counselor every summer.

Sophie Grow: I participate in Jackson County 4-H Ambassadors, shooting sports, horticulture, photography, art, sewing, foods, Oregon State 4-H Ambassadors, public speaking and record books.

Serenity Conklin: I participate in dairy bowl, horse bowl and livestock skill-a-thon (Fun fact: I have shown every species you can show in 4-H). I am also active in the teen ambassador program, county and state fair competitions and a variety of community service and leadership opportunities.

Kaitlyn Noyes: I am active in 14 4-H projects, including cooking, scrapbooking, visual arts, quilting, photography, archery, citizenship — interstate exchange, leadership, livestock judging and veterinary science.

Do you hold any leadership positions within 4-H? If so, please provide a brief description.

Alana Kimmons: I serve as a Missouri State 4-H representative, where I help plan state congress and represent members at a variety of events with 4-H foundation members and donors. My role as a civic engagement ambassador focuses on empowering youth to take action within their communities in the form of service projects.

Sophie Grow: I am a Jackson County 4-H Ambassador, which is the teen leadership team representing the youths of Jackson County 4-H, and while in the role, I have spoken on the news and assisted leaders, superintendents, and Oregon State University staff. I was also an Oregon State 4-H Ambassador that focused on leadership at the state level, and a big part of this role was attending and teaching classes at OSU's 4-H Summer Conference.

Serenity Conklin: I am the president of the Chemung County Goat Kids and More Club, a position I have held for a few years. I also currently serve as vice president of



Submitted photos

Kaitlyn Noyes, third from left, and the rest of the Missouri Interstate Exchange group at a farm in Missouri.

the Chemung County Teen Ambassadors. In these roles, I help organize meetings, plan activities, work on my leadership and mentor younger members.

Kaitlyn Noyes: 4-H offers me many opportunities to demonstrate leadership. For example, this last year, I was the president of our 4-H Interstate Exchange program, secretary of the Toston Blue Ribbon 4-H Club and president of our Teen Leadership Club. The two president positions both require me to lead meetings and correspond with the leaders to make agendas, and my role as secretary requires me to keep attendance records and write reports of what was discussed/accomplished at our meetings.

What is something unique to your state's 4-H program?

Alana Kimmons: The Missouri 4-H program takes pride in its civic engagement, career exploration and getting members involved in government at the county and state level. We host a legislative academy that allows teens to meet and shadow state officials and learn how youths can make an impact. We also bring members from across the state together for our "Day at the Capitol" event to meet with their representatives and tour our State Capitol.

Sophie Grow: I think our Oregon 4-H Summer Conference is pretty unique. It's a leadership conference held at Oregon State University, and the participants stay in the dorms. The conference is also when new state ambassadors are interviewed, scholarships are awarded, and National 4-H Congress attendees are selected.

Serenity Conklin: Something unique to New York's 4-H program is the strong connection between county-level programs and the New York State Fair. The fair provides opportunities not only for competition but also for networking, leadership development and showcasing a wide range of projects.

Kaitlyn Noyes: Unlike other youth organizations, Montana 4-H is deeply



Serenity Conklin, right, with a 4-H'er from Pennsylvania at the New York State Fair.

integrated with Montana State University Extension, with MSU being a land-grant university. This connection ensures 4-H educational programs are based on the latest research and "best practices" from the university system.

What are some main differences you've found from your state's program versus other states? What did you share with them? What were some similarities between your programs?

Alana Kimmons: Through National 4-H Congress and the zoo apprenticeship trip, I found that the biggest differences were between Missouri's and other states' activities and contests and how our leadership teams are structured.

Sophie Grow: Differences between Oregon's program and others is the variety of programs offered statewide, such as cat showmanship or certain areas of STEAM that I learned about from talking to members from other states at National 4-H Conference and National 4-H Congress.

Serenity Conklin: I have connected with 4-H'ers from other states through conferences, leadership events, and many different outings beyond the county level. One difference I have noticed is how other states structure their fairs and competitions compared to New York. New York emphasizes both animal science knowledge and communication skills through programs such as Dairy Bowl, Horse Bowl, and public presentations.

Kaitlyn Noyes: 4-H Interstate Exchange has allowed me to connect with other amazing people and 4-H Members from other states. Some main differences I found between my state's program versus these other states are that our basis of agriculture is quite different depending on the state we live in, whether it's the crops we grow, the things our states are known for, etc. Some similarities in our programs are that 4-H is open to all, not just those known as farm kids.

What is the most meaningful experience you've had in 4-H?

Alana Kimmons: My most meaningful 4-H experience was serving as a camp counselor and sharing my love for 4-H and the outdoors with younger members. From teaching the kids about rock formations on morning hikes to helping them build a birdhouse for the first time, camp has provided me and many others with memories that will last for years.

Sophie Grow: 2023 National 4-H Conference, which is held in Washington, D.C. every year, was one of my most meaningful 4-H experiences. Part of that conference was working with a group comprised of about 15 members from around the U.S. and other recognized territories. We also toured around D.C. and created lasting friendships. I am so grateful for that experience.

Serenity Conklin: The most meaningful experience I have had in 4-H is mentoring younger showmen. Watching them grow in their skills and confidence, while knowing I played a role in their journey, has been extremely rewarding.

Kaitlyn Noyes: The most meaningful experiences I've had in 4-H were most likely the two interstate exchanges I had the chance to take part in. I love taking every opportunity I can to travel, and I feel the people I met, the experiences I had, and memories I made will not be easily forgotten.

If you only could use one word to describe your state's 4-H program, what would you use? Why?

Alana Kimmons: "Empowering." From providing leadership and career exploration opportunities to cheering on young agriculturalists in the show ring, it empowers youths to chase their dreams and overcome any obstacles that stand in their way.

Sophie Grow: "Robust" is the word I would use to describe Oregon's 4-H program because no matter what, it is still there for its members and is still youth-focused.

Serenity Conklin: "Opportunity." New York 4-H has provided me with countless opportunities to lead, learn, and grow — whether through competitions, leadership roles or community involvement.

Kaitlyn Noyes: "Opportunity." This word describes all of the possibilities 4-H has to offer within your community, your city and even your state. Additionally, I can guarantee 4-H better equips every member with the ability to grab a hold of anything they set their mind to.

A Large Impact

Hearing from these four individuals, it is evident 4-H can have a very large impact on your life, no matter where in the country you participate. Whether it's mentoring younger members, traveling to new states, leading at the county or state level, or diving into projects from photography to livestock judging, these members show that 4-H is truly what you make of it.

Each state offers something unique, but the main principles of 4-H — growth, opportunity, and connection — stay with you long after they are first established in a member's journey. As we celebrate National 4-H Week, we're inspired by these stories and grateful for the connection they bring to their communities.

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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