MARYLAND COOPERATIVE EXTENSION
UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND
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Newsletter

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4-H MESSENGER

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2007

October was a very busy month in 4-H! The month kicked off with National 4-H Week. Our 4-Hers did a terrific job of putting posters up at schools, wearing their 4-H shirts, putting displays around the county, and sharing their love of 4-H with friends and family.

Ms. Shannon, Ms. Stacey and Ms. Heather headed out on October 14th to Pickering Creek's Harvest Hoedown. The weather was absolutely spectacular… and the warm sun was perfect for our worm display. Youth who visited learned about vermiculture, composting, 4-H and the Junior Master Gardener Program that we have in after-school. We got to see a lot of 4-H families too!

The following weekend I was in Atlanta, GA for the annual National Association of Extension 4-H Agents Conference. It was a very exciting meeting because I served as co-chair of the 4-H Afterschool Pre-Conference and we had over 75 4-H Educators from all over the country attend. We learned from Judy Nee, President and CEO of the National Afterschool Association about what the after-school professionals need to stay in the workforce and how Extension can help them achieve their goals. We had 16 workshops from prominent 4-H Afterschool Educators about nutrition and exercise to building partnerships for afterschool to 7 workshops involving Science, Engineering and Technology. And one of these workshops was presented by the author, LuAnn Dahlman of The Engaging Antarctica Flexhibit, which we are piloting in Talbot County at Easton Middle School!

The rest of the NAE4-HA Conference was action packed. The Georgia team went all out to host this event. We even had a private concert with Jennifer Nettles from the country duo Sugarland in Olympic Centennial Park. She grew up in 4-H through a club called Clover & Co that has been around for 26 years, was the State 4-H President, and went to 4-H Camp. She sang with the current members of Clover & Co who do everything from singing, dancing, and playing instruments. Another famous person who got their start in 4-H!!!

When I returned I had a surprise letter in my checked luggage…the TSA officials must have been having a time with all of us 4-H Educators! I was "questionable" with my shotgun shell ID kit that I had picked up for the Claybusters 4-H Club and the black sand I had for the Antarctica project…but it all made it back to Maryland☺

Look for more information inside about November and December programs. Plus we have some important dates as we start the new 4-H year in January.

Happy Holidays,

Stacey E. Hofmann, Extension Educator
4-H & Youth Development

Welcome!

Jayne Fitzgerald, our new 4-H Program Assistant, who joined our office on November 5th is a welcomed addition to the Talbot Extension Office. Stop by the office and say hello!

A Note From Jayne…

Hello Talbot County 4-Hers. This is Jayne Fitzgerald, your new 4-H Program Assistant. I am so excited to be a part of 4-H here in Talbot County and getting to know all of you. But before I get to know you, I'm sure you'd like to know a little about me.

Although I am new to 4-H, I have years of experience working with youth from elementary school through high school. I was a Girl Scout leader for many years and I have spent the past five years working as a substitute teacher in Montgomery County. I have been lucky enough to teach every grade from kindergarten to twelfth and every subject from P.E. to science!

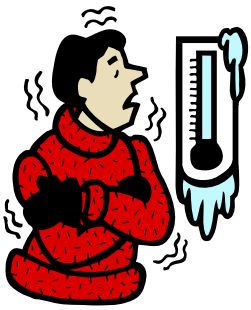
My experience with children extends to my home life, too. I have two wonderful kids – Natalie is a recent graduate of the University of Pennsylvania and Michael is currently a student at the Brooks Institute in California. Please come introduce yourselves to me, I am eager to meet you all.

Jayne
4-H Program Assistant

Enrollment Update

We have **152 members** enrolled in Talbot County. Lets start 2008 with 200 members! Each of you have 2 hands, grab the hand of 2 friends and bring them to your next club meeting! With 37 Senior 4-Hers (14 to 18) and 49 Intermediates (11-13), Ms. Jayne is planning on getting Teen Club up and going again. Stay Tuned!

BAD WEATHER POLICY



It's that time again! We need to remind everyone of the bad weather policy for 4-H Activities: If there is no school or early dismissal from school in Talbot County due to inclement weather, all 4-H events are cancelled. In addition, if the snow emergency plan is in effect by 6 pm, all 4-H events are to be cancelled for that evening.

Success Stories

Spend some time this month to put together your 4-H success story. This should be about 4-6 sentences long. Things you could address in your story – why you joined 4-H, one reason your life is better now that you are a 4-Her, what your favorite project area is, and one thing you hope to accomplish before you graduate out of 4-H. Email those to hofmanns@umd.edu or bring them to your next 4-H meeting for your 4-H leader to turn in.

Congratulations!

Sara Urry has received **The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards Certificate of Achievement** honoring her for distinguished achievement in community service for her 4-H Diamond Clover Project. Sara developed the first ever recognition program for the wonderful children and adults who ride with Talbot Special Riders. Sara's awards package will now be judged along with all the other packages submitted from 4-H and schools across Maryland. Good Luck Sara!

50/50 Conversation

We had 12 members (equal youth and adults…hence the 50/50) attend our 50/50 4-H Conversation on November 6th. Several other members and volunteers have turned in their surveys and we hope to have a 100% return rate. Your input counts!!! Thank you to Senior 4-Her, Ryan Snow, for serving as our youth rep to the State 4-H 50/50 Council. Ryan will be attending the 50/50 meeting at the MD 4-H Volunteer and Teen Forum.

The following questions were discussed using a small group format (6 people in each) and then reported back to the group as a whole:

- How would you describe your local 4-H Program?
- What are some of the key issues and concerns around youth development in your county, state, and in the nation?
- How does the 4-H Program currently address the above issues and concerns?
- How can 4-H better address issues and risks amongst the youth?
- What are some ways that Maryland 4-H can increase diversity within 4-H Programs?
- What are some of the local key players that can collaborate with 4-H in your county?

The results of this conversation will serve as a jumping point for the first youth and adult driven strategic plan for Talbot County 4-H for 2008-2010.

Some overreaching goals from the conversation include:

1. **Increase membership and the volunteer base. This can be done through increasing the number of specialty clubs and educating families on the idea of family involvement.**
    - The youth would like a photography club, journalism club, and a scrapbooking club.
    - The current volunteers will work to recruit other community members at the Volunteer Showcase held in the Spring in Talbot County. Potential recruits really want to hear from the people who are doing the volunteering!

2. **Talbot County youth are faced daily with peer pressure and the challenges of drugs and alcohol. By being involved in a youth organization with caring adults and family involvement, youth can overcome these pressures.**
    - 4-H will offer fun and engaging opportunities to our 4-H youth and the youth of Talbot County to keep them safe. This will be accomplished through activities for teens and partnering with other organizations in the area.
    - The Talbot County 4-H Program will continue to offer 4-H Afterschool Programs and support other after-school programs in the county, so that youth are safe between 3-6pm.

3. Today's youth are so tied to technology that they often lack interpersonal skills.
    - Through programming in Science, Engineering, and Technology (SET), a national mission mandate for 4-H, youth will have an opportunity to learn appropriate uses for technology, learn communication skills, interact with other youth, adults and be involved in civic engagement.

4. Talbot County 4-H wants to make all youth and their families aware of what 4-H has to offer. This will be accomplished in the following ways:
    - A grassroots campaign through the local churches will be established to help reach youth in minority groups.
    - Current 4-Hers will be asked to submit success stories. These vignettes will be placed on the Talbot County 4-H website, so that people can find out that 4-H is more than they ever imagined.
    - The members of the new 4-H photography and journalism clubs will work together to document 4-H activities county-wide and submit articles and pictures to the local papers and Delmarva Farmer.

5. The Talbot County 4-H Program, including the youth, will reach out to organizations and members of the community who can help us reach our goals of the strategic plan and our mission to make the best better for youth and families in Talbot County.
    - We will continue to nurture relationships with our current partners: Talbot County Council, Talbot County Public Schools, Talbot Mentors, Talbot Partnership, and some civic organizations.
    - We would like to increase our partnerships with civic organizations and allow our youth opportunities to speak about 4-H at their meetings to help get the word out about what 4-H is all about.
    - We would like to engage in a partnership with the Talbot Chamber of Commerce, non-public schools, local businesses and the PTO's at all our schools.

Senior 4-HERS…
Your 4-H Portfolios Are Due!!!

Applications for the remaining out-of-state trips will be due in the Talbot County Office by **December 14th** and regional interviews for these trips will be held at the Wye Research and Education Center in Queenstown on February 9, 2008. These are wonderful opportunities for youth so don't miss the chance to apply for a trip of a lifetime! This year's essay question is: "**How do you connect 4-H to the community?"**

The Seniors who attended the 4-H 50/50 Conversation requested a 4-H Portfolio Workshop. We will meet **afterschool** on **November 28th and December 5th at the Extension Office. Please have your essay written (2 pages) and bring all of your recordbooks with you.** ***Please call by November 21st to sign up*** so that I know how many portfolio packets to put together.

Share a Bear!

It's Teddy Bear Time again.
For the last 16 years, members of the University of Maryland campus have collected bears for children in need. Last year over 1,500 bears were collected. The Maryland 4-H Program has actively participated in this project.
Teddy Bears will be accepted at the State 4-H **Adul**t and Teen Volun**teer** Forum in Ocean City a**nd at the Talbot Off**ice through December 12th. **This is** a terrific service opportunity!

NEW bears or any type of stuffed animal will be accepted. The animals do not have to follow a holiday theme as they are distributed throughout the year to children who experience some type of crisis.

(What do you see? Hint: After you read the info, just look at the words as a whole)

Recordbook & Winter Workshop
December 21, 2007 from 9am to 3pm

Come spend your first day of winter break at the Extension Office! We will work on your recordbooks on and off all day. We realize recordbooks can be a big undertaking…so let's mix it up with crafts, building Snow Kids kits (hat, scarf, and mittens) for needy children, and a movie.

Important Dates

Dec. 15th – Feb.1st: Re-Enrollment
December 24-25th: Ext. Office Closed
January 1st: Ext. Office Closed, Holiday
January 15th: 4-H Council Meeting, 7pm
January 21st: Ext. Office Closed, Holiday
January 22nd: Recordbooks Due
January 23rd: Corn Club Banquet
January 28th: Talbot Ag Center Annual Meeting
February 8th: Talbot County Public Speaking Award Nominations Due
Officer Books Due
February 18th: Ext. Office Closed, Holiday
March 7th: Achievement Night (Tentative)
March 21st: Ext. Office Closed, Holiday
April 26th: State Communications Event, College Park (No Regional Event for 2008)

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