

ISSUE 01 • 2020-2021

# THE 4-H DIRECTION



UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA  
EXTENSION  
*Jackson County*



# THE 4-H DIRECTION

2020-2021

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# **FROM THE AGENT'S**

## **DESK**

### **APRIL EDWARDS**

### **4-H & YOUTH DEVELOPMENT**

### **AGENT**

Jackson County 4-H's 2020-2021 program year can be summed up with the words of Charles Dickens, "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times...". 2020 will go down in history as one of the most unusual 4-H program years Georgia 4-H has ever faced. However, Georgia 4-H has demonstrated its continued resilience while maintaining CDC guidelines for preventing the spread of the virus we were able to return to pre-COVID operations by the end of the program year. Jackson County 4-H met the challenges 2020 threw at us head-on and we were back seeing 4th and 5th graders in 80% of our schools in the first weeks of September 2020.

As you look through The 4-H Direction you will see just some of the many achievements our Jackson County 4-Her's accomplished in spite of the unusual program year. You will also see highlights of programs that could not be possible without our strong volunteer base. All of our specialty clubs (SAFE Archery, SAFE BB, SAFE .22, and SAFE Shotgun) are led by certified volunteers giving of their time and talents. According to Independent Sector, a national membership organization supporting non-profits, the value of the volunteer hour jumped almost 5% during the pandemic. Considering the new rate of \$28.54 our volunteers contributed \$108,023 in in-kind volunteer hours to the youth in Jackson County 4-H. Once again, our specialty clubs along with many of our other after-school activities would not exist without our tremendous volunteers.

The 4-H clover is one of the most recognized symbols of the United States. To many, it represents our American roots investing in agriculture and youth. Our motto states, "To make the best better." My goal is to not only fully support the 4-H clover and the 4-H motto but to go further and grow relationships with our families, community members, school systems, and stakeholders.

Thank you for taking the time to meet some of our 4-Her's through this magazine. As a friend of Georgia 4-H, you have seen first-hand how 4-H can empower youth with the skills to lead for a lifetime. As part of this, we invite you to tell us your 4-H story and play a larger role in our 4-H program. I look forward to learning more about your 4-H experiences and how they helped you become who you are today.

Best Wishes,

A handwritten signature in green ink that reads "April Edwards".



# WHAT IS 4-H?

Georgia 4-H began in 1904 when Newton County school superintendent, G.C. Adams, organized an agricultural corn club for boys in Covington, Ga. 4-H is a very large and successful youth development institution. The four H's symbolize the development of the HEAD (to think, plan and reason), the HEART (to be concerned with the welfare of others, accept the responsibility of citizenship and develop positive attitudes), the HANDS (to be useful, helpful and skillful) and HEALTH (to practice healthy living, enjoy life and use time wisely).

4-H is a major partner in education. Lessons taught, experiences shared, and information presented in 4-H is based on the research of the University of Georgia and Fort Valley State University. A national research impact assessment project revealed that four elements are essential to positive youth development. They are MASTERY, GENEROSITY, BELONGING, and INDEPENDENCE.

University of Georgia Cooperative Extension is a successful, grassroots-based deliverer of informal education in every community of Georgia. 4-H is the youth component of Extension. 4-H can be found in:

- County Extension offices
- School classrooms and school programs
- Community clubs and homes

As a part of the educational system of our state, 4-H is university-approved and research-based. The curriculum is designed for local use.

Georgia 4-H reaches approximately 200,000 young people each year. These youth are diverse and come from all areas of the state.

4-H is part of the University of Georgia College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences and relies on the support of the College of Family and Consumer Sciences, the USDA, the National 4-H Council, and Georgia counties.

# JACKSON COUNTY 4-H 2020-2021



## Summer Participation

12 Activities

4 Volunteer/Teen Leaders

55 Volunteer Hours

113 participants

242 Hours of Fun

Topics Covered:

Agriculture, Water,  
Wildlife, STEAM,  
Ecosystems, Teamwork,  
Nutrition, Logic, Kitchen  
safety, Food Safety,  
Culinary skills, Forestry



2020-21 membership: 794 members  
School Meetings: 7 schools visited  
427 Club and Activity meetings  
458 Project Achievement participants  
Largest Club Enrollment: West Jackson Ele.  
Largest Project Achievement category: Wildlife  
Total Donations received: \$6,267

## Residence

Farm: 7.5%



Rural Non-Farm: 82%



Town & Suburb: 10.5%



## Grades

Elementary: 86.7%

Middle: 8.3%

High: 4.9%



49% Male



51% Female

## Volunteer Hours



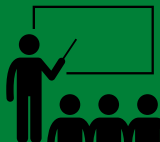
112 adults and teens  
contributed 3,665  
hours

## Clubs

Afterschool: 7



In-School: 32



Community: 4



## Diversity

White: 46.1%

Black/African American: 4.7%

Asian: 1.2%

American Indian/Alaska Native : 0.1%

Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander: 0.5%

More than one: 0.7%

Unknown: 37.9%

Ethnicity:

11.1% Latino/Hispanic



# VOLUNTEER REPORT

BY AVERY MOORE, 2020-21 VISTA

In 2020-2021, Jackson County 4-H has increased volunteer development efforts to keep volunteers engaged and build a greater sense of community. Each of these efforts has focused on streamlining current volunteer processes, facilitating better communication with volunteers, or strengthening current relationships. By focusing more on volunteer development, Jackson County 4-H hopes that its volunteers feel appreciated, heard, and involved in the organization.

To improve resources and communication with volunteers, several development efforts were created. The first was a new monthly newsletter aimed specifically at volunteers and information most relevant to them. In order to show greater appreciation for volunteers, this newsletter also highlights a “Volunteer of the Month” who has worked hard and contributed a lot to Jackson County 4-H. The second was the creation of a Volunteer Resources page on the Jackson County 4-H website, which outlined the volunteer application process. It also includes two surveys, with one aimed at anonymous volunteer feedback and the second aimed at volunteers who wish to share positive experiences to help recruit other volunteers in the future. The third installment included the creation of a page on UGA GivePulse, a centralized platform to post volunteer opportunities and allow for easy sign-up, application, and involvement.

By improving volunteer communication, appreciation, involvement, and recruitment, Jackson County 4-H hopes to continue working at keeping our volunteers engaged and involved. Overall, strengthening our relationship with volunteers helps strengthen our organization as a whole.



# PANDEMIC PROGRAMMING: COMMUNITY EXPLORER

When the 2020-21 school year began, pandemic guidelines made it difficult to plan in-person activities. Drawing upon existing digital tools and the need for a family-oriented program, the Community Explorer program was born. Community Explorer combines the thrill of scavenger hunts with problem-solving, civic engagement, and technology to take participants on a unique tour of their community.

A total of four explorer packets were released over the course of the year. The cities of Jefferson, Commerce, and Braselton served as the basis for the first three explorers, and the final explorer covered the entirety of Jackson County. Each explorer makes use of existing locations within the community; historical sites, local businesses, and government buildings. Locations had to be carefully selected, they needed to be accessible at any hour, have signage or markers, and were a notable landmark in the community. Using these resources, the puzzles and clues were designed and linked together. Solving one puzzle led participants to their next location, each explorer made use of roughly 10 locations. The final clue led to the Jackson County 4-H office where participants could claim a prize.

The Explorer program made use of booklets that could be accessed online or picked up from the 4-H office. The booklets also provided QR codes that linked to different clues and activities when scanned by a smartphone or tablet. This allowed for the use of even more unique puzzle creation and integration within the program.

BY JONATHAN PAGE, 4-H EDUCATOR





# ARENA ROUNDUP

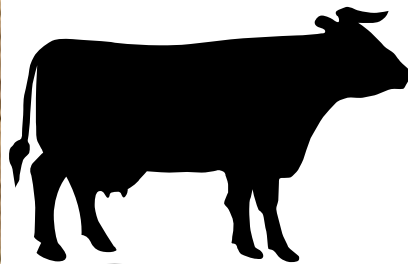
Livestock shows are one of the most recognized aspects of the 4-H program. Youth participating in this program dedicate themselves to the care and training of their chosen animal. 4-H members can begin showing lambs and goats as young as 3rd grade and graduate to larger breeds as they get older. The livestock show program helps to teach youth responsibility, decision-making, and time management skills.

Jackson County has a large, dedicated community of livestock show participants in beef, hogs, lambs, and goats.

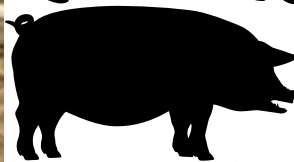
Livestock shows happen year-round, though the largest is the Georgia Junior National Livestock Show which takes place in October at the Georgia National Fair in Perry.

## 19 EXHIBITORS

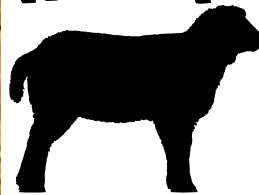
## 12 STATE LIVESTOCK SHOWS



**4 Heifer/Steer**



**7 Hog**



**5 Lamb**



**3 Goat**





## ARCHERY

The 2020-21 Archery Team was composed of 15 members in 4th - 12th grade. One of the largest SAFE programs in Georgia 4-H. Archery participants can utilize a recurve or compound bow. Archery members practice from August through the State Match in April. The Archery team coaches for 2020-21 are Mark Gipson, Tim Lockman, and Ronald Whaley.

## SHOTGUN

The Jackson County Shotgun team had 16 participants in grades 7th - 12th. The Jackson County Shotgun team participates in the modified trap competition in April at Rock Eagle 4-H Center. Shotgun is led by CJ Sykes and Wayne Dills.

## .22

The .22 Rifle team is composed of 9 members in grades 9th -12th. The .22 team begins practice in the early spring and goes until the State competition in late April. The .22 Rifle team is led by volunteers Wayne Dills and Ronald Silzewski.

## BB

The largest SAFE program in Jackson County 4-H is the BB team. They begin practice for new members in September with the BB 101 program. Returning shooters begin practice in January and continues until the state match in early May. The BB team has 18 members and is coached by Ronald Silzewski, Wayne Dills, Arleen Byrum, Ted Byrum, and Melinda and Victor Krueger.

# PORTRAITS IN GREEN: CAROLINE PHILLIPS



Caroline Phillips has long desired the opportunity to become a Master 4-H'er and in 2021 she earned that title when she placed 1st in the Target Sports project at State Congress. Caroline has been a 4-H member since 7th grade and has been heavily involved in an astounding number of 4-H activities over the course of her career. Some of her more recent projects have included serving as a host on the 4-H News Network videos presenting updated information on 4-H activities and is also working to organize a 4-H based podcast. Despite having participated in everything from archery team to escape rooms and DPA, her favorite activity remains Summer camp, "My experience with GA 4-H camp is slim, but the experience I had as a Teen Leader during Cloverleaf Camp in 2019 instilled in me a passion for all things 4-H camp. For that never-ending week, we Jackson County 4-H'ers were in the mountains of Dahlonega at Wahsega 4-H Center. Being surrounded by the woods, mosquitoes, and young 4-H'ers was a recipe for a good time; and boy did we have one! I'll never forget that exciting, sleep-depriving, smelly week of camp, but I especially won't forget the amazing campers who made that experience fun, exciting, and reminded me what 4-H is all about." As a Master in the Target Sports project, the door is wide open for her next project as she enters her senior year and looks to the future.

# IN THE CLASSROOM

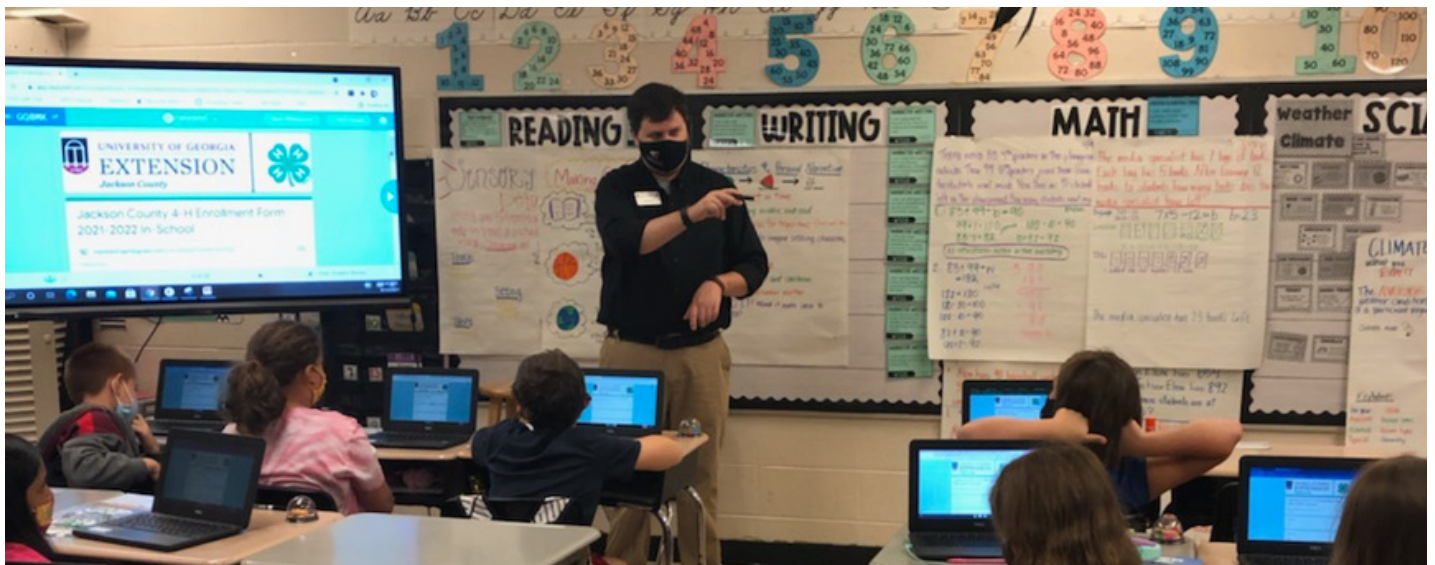


An important component of Georgia 4-H is our in-school club meetings. Club meetings vary in the subject matter by grade level but all follow a similar format.

The in-school program covers a variety of subjects that meet state education standards for 4th and 5th grade. In the 2020-21 school year these subjects included public speaking, the moon cycle, microorganisms, ecosystems, and healthy living.

Club meetings for 2020-21 also made use of new virtual tools to improve the experience and also allow for students participating virtually to take part as well. Nearpod became the primary tool for presentations and activities in 4-H Club meetings. Nearpod allows for students in 1:1 technology classrooms to interact with the subject matter and provide direct feedback to 4-H leaders. Nearpod can also be streamed to students who are attending class virtually from home, allowing them to receive the same information and learning experience as those students who are in-person.

In the 2020-21 school year, the 4-H staff conducted 240 in-school club meetings at 7 elementary schools, reaching over 700 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade students.



# CLOVER CORNERSTONE: PROJECT ACHIEVEMENT

Project Achievement is a cornerstone of Georgia 4-H. A program designed to encourage youth to step forward into the spotlight to deliver a presentation or performance; it's a terrifying but fun opportunity for 4-H members of all ages to take part in. Participants can present in one of over 50 subject categories.

In the 2020-2021 school year, Jackson County 4-H had an outstanding year with 116 4th and 5th-grade participants (The largest delegation in the contest) at the District Competition held virtually in March against 4-H members from 12 neighboring counties. The culmination of a series of in-school competitions (School Project Achievements) at each school that involved more than 400 presentations. The top 3 in each category were then invited to record a video of their presentation to upload for the competition. Jackson County came away from the contest with 81 of its participants placing 1st, 2nd, or 3rd.

In June of 2021, Jackson County sent 7 delegates (one 7th grade, six 9th-12th grade) to Rock Eagle 4-H Center for the Jr./Sr. District Project Achievement competition. A far more difficult competition than that experienced by the 4th and 5th graders, each of the members at Rock Eagle had to submit a portfolio (a resume of their accomplishments in their project area for the previous year) in January and then begin preparing for the actual competition. For high school members, the stakes are high, if they place first they are invited to the next level of competition, State Congress, where they present again for the opportunity to win the coveted title of Master 4-H'er. For the 2021 Jr./Sr. DPA, Jackson County had 1 Junior 1st place winner, 7th grader Coleman Rudisil in the History project. For the Seniors, 12th grader Emily Edwards placed 3rd in Workforce Preparation, while 11th grader Rayann Mitsdarffer and 10th grader Caroline Phillips placed 1st in the Performing Arts- General and Target Sports projects.



# STATE CONGRESS

The final event in the Georgia 4-H calendar, State 4-H Congress is the must-go-to event for many members. In the conference rooms of the Crowne Plaza Ravinia, high school members put their months of preparation on the line during their performances and presentations. It is, for many, their one shot at the coveted title of Master 4-H member.

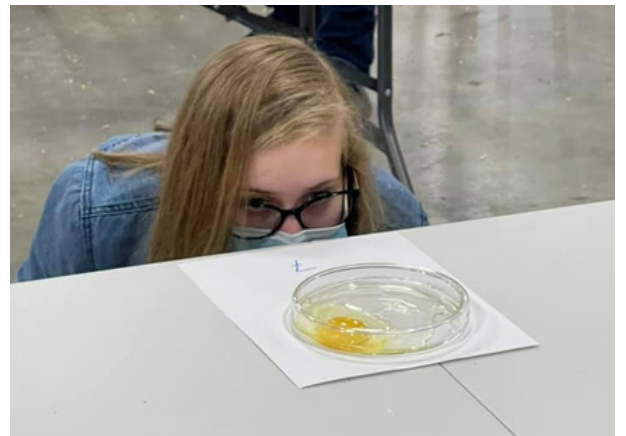
Jackson County 4-H Agent April Edwards attended State Congress (July 20th - 23rd) with senior members Caroline Phillips and Rayann Mitsdarffer competing in the project areas of Target Sports and Performing Arts-General. Caroline's presentation was on the benefits and skills involved with archery while Rayann performed a flag line routine to the tune of "I'm a Believer" by The Monkees. Caroline was also one of 8 finalists competing in the Georgia 4-H Leadership in Action (LIA) program. LIA competitors go through an intensive application and interview process. Each district selects 2 finalists to send to State Congress where another round of interviews is conducted, in addition to a multimedia display of the individual projects being presented during the Leadership banquet Tuesday night. Leadership in Action challenges youth to take on a leadership role in the creation, promotion, and execution of a service project in their community. Caroline's project focused on a school supply drive for foster children with support from local DFCS social workers. Through her efforts, Caroline's LIA project gathered enough supplies to prepare 10 foster children for the upcoming school year. State Congress is intensive, it is the 4-H equivalent of the Super Bowl and the pressure the youth feel hangs heavy in the air. For the 2021 State Congress, Jackson County 4-H would like to congratulate Rayann for placing 2nd in the Performing Arts - General project, an intense and crowded field to stand out in, and Caroline for being named a Master 4-H'er after placing 1st in the Target Sports project. On her achievement, Caroline says "Becoming a Master 4-H'er is the highest status you can achieve in 4-H, and I went into State Congress with high hopes of earning that status. Despite these hopes I was still shocked to actually Master, when my name was called alongside first place, the moment didn't feel real, and I immediately started crying. It is so gratifying to know that all my hard work and determination not only this past year but throughout my 4-H career, has resulted in me becoming a Master 4-H'er."



# JUDGING TEAMS

Competition programs are an integral part of the 4-H Club experience. Judging teams compete in a variety of program areas ranging from agriculture to consumer education. Jackson County 4-H has three judging programs for youth to participate in.

- **Wildlife Judging:** Wildlife is a new program in Jackson County 4-H. Participants learn to identify nearly 20 species of wildlife native to Georgia. They also learn the habitat requirements and how to manage these species in a given area. Wildlife Judging takes place in early spring, the State Contest happens in late April. Jackson County had four participants in the 2021 contest.
- **Poultry Judging:** Described as the opportunity to learn more about chickens than the participants ever thought possible. Poultry judging participants learn to identify the parts of the chicken, chicken grading, egg quality and grading, and more. Jackson County had 2 participants at the 2021 contest.
- **Cotton Boll & Consumer Judging:** The "smarter shopper" contest; Consumer judging participants learn to compare and contrast different products according to a given scenario and rank the preferred order of the product. Participants also prepare a short PSA or advertisement about the many uses and qualities of cotton.





## STEM CAMP

Focused on the science of flight and space travel, youth were challenged to learn and then build a series of aircraft and rockets as well as plan and budget a NASA mission to Mars.

## COOKING CHALLENGE

Youth interested in learning how to cook were treated to a hands-on series of challenges while learning food safety, kitchen safety, various cooking techniques. Themed after popular reality cooking shows, the youth experienced a 4-H Chopped and Nail'd it.

## AG-VENTURE CAMP

Agriculture and the outdoors were the main themes of the Ag-venture camp which was a joint venture with neighboring Barrow County. The week involved several farm visits, a hike at Fort Yargo, and meeting some farm animals.

## 1-DAY PROGRAMS

Several 1-day programs were held teaching topics in water education, photography, and escape rooms/problem solving.

## CLOVERLEAF CAMP

Cloverleaf camp is one of the most popular events on the 4-H calendar. Youth spend a week away from home having fun while canoeing, swimming, hiking, and taking part in a wide assortment of games and activities directed by collegiate 4-H members who spend the summer as camp counselors at the center. Rock Eagle is named after an ancient Native American archaeological site nearby, and the summer camp has a Native American theme with youth divided among the three Rock Eagle tribes (Muskogee, Cherokee, and Shawnee) to engage in a friendly competition to win the Rock Eagle Tribal Shield at the end of the week.

## WAHSEGA FUN DAY

4-H'ers met some interesting reptile's native to Georgia in the herpetology lab including corn snakes and box turtles, searched for a wide variety of critters in the stream running through the middle of the center during the stream ecology class, and challenged themselves to conquer the Wahsega climbing wall on the high ropes course, a challenge a few succeed at.

# Meet the Team



Greg Pittman, our Jackson County Agriculture & Natural Resource Agent and County Extension Coordinator is a graduate of the University of Georgia with a Bachelor's in Poultry Science. Greg worked in the poultry industry for 21 years prior to joining extension.

April Edwards, our Jackson County 4-H & Youth Development Agent, is a graduate of the University of Georgia with a Master's in Education. April is married to Andy Edwards. They have four children, David (26), Noah (24), Kayley (21), and Emily (19).



Jonathan Page, our Jackson County 4-H Educator began his career in Extension nine years ago as an AmeriCorps member. Jonathan is a graduate of the University of Georgia with a Bachelor's in History and is currently working on his Masters at Georgia College and State University in Instructional Technology.

Eryn Elliott, our Jackson County Administrative Assistant is a graduate of the University of Georgia with a Bachelor's in Agriculture Education. Her family runs a small cow/calf operation and she is working on her Master's at the University of Georgia in Agricultural and Environmental Education.



Amy Ahonen, our Americorps VISTA oversees volunteer recruitment, training, and coordination. She is new to 4-H and Jackson County. She has previously worked as a pre-school teacher in her native Locust Grove.