

VIRGINIA 4-H ALUMNI & FRIENDS NEWSLETTER

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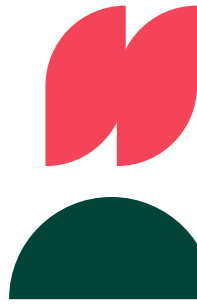
2023 OVERALL YOUTH IN ACTION AWARD WINNER

2023 YOUTH IN ACTION AWARD WINNERS

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4-H has inspired Alice to follow her passions, no matter how unattainable they may seem. She was first inspired to do so after virtually attending the Virginia 4-H Teen Summit in 2020. From there, her love for advocacy and mental health awareness grew, but Alice did not know how to pursue her goals. Alice was a very reserved individual and found it difficult to shine as a leader. After she joined the local 4-H Teen Leadership Club, the Teen Summit Leadership Team, and Virginia 4-H State Cabinet, she truly learned what it means to be a compassionate and dedicated leader. 4-H has pushed Alice out of her comfort zone in the best way possible, and now she serves as an advocate for mental health awareness and education across the Commonwealth. Alice plans to continue this work as the Healthy Living Pillar Winner, and is exceedingly optimistic about what the future holds.

"4-H has shown me what personal growth I can make, but more importantly how I can grow to help others."




ALICE MILTON
OVERALL YOUTH IN ACTION AWARD WINNER
HEALTHY LIVING PILLAR
- BEDFORD COUNTY



Join our Virginia 4-H Alumni and Friends Network

We are forming the Virginia 4-H Alumni and Friends network. Stay connected about upcoming 4-H Alumni and Friends events, statewide 4-H programming efforts, volunteer opportunities and much more. Sign up to receive information from Virginia 4-H.




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2023 Virginia Youth In Action Award Winners

“Each of these youth has done tremendous things for their communities and for 4-H. These awards are a way for us to recognize how they have gone above and beyond in their actions.”

*- Jeremy Johnson,
Virginia 4-H State Program Leader*



To read more about their story, visit [VT News](#).



KELLI GARRETT
AGRICULTURE PILLAR
- WASHINGTON COUNTY

The beginning of Kelli's 12-year enrollment in 4-H commenced early on when she was enrolled as a cloverbud; however, it wasn't until she was required to deliver a presentation in 4th grade that she became an active member. After presenting to her class about raising pullets, the 4-H Agent, Crystal Peek, saw her potential and introduced Kelli to the county livestock club. The livestock club is where her interest in agriculture began to develop. Every year she submitted project books to detail different projects; the areas of her work have included: Mini Gardens, Ham Curing, Beef Cattle, Public Speaking, etc. Leadership is an additional necessary life skill that 4-H has allowed her to construct. Throughout Kelli's youth in 4-H, she has served numerous officer positions that have helped her in her current role as Virginia 4-H Cabinet Secretary. Kelli values 4-H because of the efforts that have sculpted her into a confident, driven young lady who has the necessary abilities to advance in the future.

“4-H has truly captivated my passion for agriculture and supported my growth to gain knowledge about it.”

Nikhita has been a 4-H'er for 7 years, and a member of the 4-H Honors Society for 2 years. She is the president of the Shooting Shamrocks 4-H Club. She enjoys participating in 4-H contests such as public speaking and share-the-fun. Through being a Teen Lead and leadership member at the VA Teen Summit Event, Nikhita was inspired to make a change in her community. During the Summer of 2020, she and her sister founded the non-profit organization 4 Art 2 Heart as a way to create more community engagement and address the issue of stress and isolation. Using her passion for art, she taught free, virtual art classes to the public and throughout the U.S, Canada, and India. This past summer they worked on expanding their art classes and they installed art nooks at several community parks in the Richmond area. By creating these art nooks, communities would be able to access art supplies, borrow them for the time being, and return it to the art nook for others to use. They hoped to provide the community with a free outlet that would be accessible to everyone despite any socio-economic barriers.

“4-H has molded me into a better citizen, and I will always be grateful for it.”



NIKHITA SARAVANAN
- CIVIC ENGAGEMENT PILLAR
- HENRICO COUNTY

Jack serves as the president and founder of the 4-H Games N Games club and a member of the Bow Benders archery club. He is excited to help more people in his community learn about the work done by the organization where he volunteers, Computers in Education. They refurbish computers donated by public schools and donate them to classrooms in developing nations like Haiti and Uganda. Jack enjoys learning about computers while helping this nonprofit help kids. Jack is also happy to have been able to start his own 4H club for STEM in Fauquier. The club is growing quickly and is entirely teen led. Jack is proud of the fact that 4-H recognizes the need for the STEM in the rural counties. He plans to use this recognition to get more youth interested in STEM in his community.

“The impact 4-H has had on me cannot be overstated, and I am sure the guidance I have received will serve me well in my adult life.”



JACK WOODARD
STEM PILLAR
- FAUQUIER COUNTY

**JOHN G. ROCOVICH, JR.
HONORED WITH
VIRGINIA 4-H'S
EMERALD CLOVER AWARD**



In recognition of John G. Rocovich, Jr.'s decades of service to Virginia 4-H, he was honored with Virginia 4-H's Emerald Clover Award at the recent Evening with 4-H event. The award is presented to an individual for outstanding and sustained commitment to the 4-H youth of Virginia.

"I'm grateful to Bill Skelton that he saw potential in me when I was a young kid and recruited me to join 4-H," said Rocovich, who graduated from Virginia Tech with a degree in business in 1966. "When I started practicing law in Roanoke, he again saw potential in me and an opportunity to make a difference. I'm flattered and grateful to receive this recognition because thousands of people work with 4-H to make a difference in the lives of our youth."

[Read More>>>](#)

In recognition of the Pearson family's many contributions to Virginia 4-H, Bernice Pearson and her son and daughter-in-law, J. and Renae Pearson, were presented with the Friend of 4-H award at the recent Evening with 4-H event. The award recognizes a citizen or organization for outstanding contributions to Virginia 4-H.

"Ever since I can remember, my mother has worked with 4-H, and it's what helped her children benefit from 4-H's mission of positive youth development," J. Pearson said. "She spent countless hours helping other children attend the 4-H meetings and events. She would pick them up and take them home. This award recognizes her for many years of time and effort. It's amazing and I can't say enough about how much this means."

[Read More>>>](#)

**PEARSON FAMILY
HONORED WITH
FRIEND OF VIRGINIA 4-H AWARD**



**Inspire the Next Generation.
Become a 4-H Volunteer!**

You are more than just a volunteer in 4-H — you are instrumental in inspiring the next generation.

4-H programs look to volunteers to help our young people learn the skills they need to prepare for their futures while also having fun!

More than 14,000 volunteers worked with Virginia youth last year — helping them learn by doing. In 4-H, you can help youth have opportunities to master life challenges, cultivate independence with guidance from caring adults, gain a sense of belonging within a positive group, and share a spirit of generosity with others.

[**Learn more about how to volunteer!**](#)

SHARE YOUR INTERESTS

If you are interested in leading a project-based club, you can share your expertise to provide young people with learning opportunities as varied as rocketry, GPS mapping, public speaking, agricultural science, photography, community service, and so much more.

Using research-based 4-H project curriculum, you will have the resources to learn as you teach. Either way, you will have the support you need from your local Virginia Cooperative Extension office.

You can also create a new project-based club and invite other youth and adults to join you in learning about that topic in your community.



AROUND THE STATE...



***Photos courtesy of Tim Skiles,
Deanna Summers, Brian Hairston*

4-H Day at the Capitol January 18, 2023

An Evening with Virginia 4-H January 19, 2023



UPCOMING 4-H EVENTS FOR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS

March 31, 2023
Experience CALS

April 19, 2023
Virtual Program - Diversity, Equity
and Inclusion within VCE and
Virginia 4-H

April 13 2023
4-H Alumni and Friends Social
Smithfield, VA

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