



2020 END OF YEAR AWARDS

Volunteer of the Year: (no nominations received)

2020 4-H Member of the Year: **Mattie DeBord, member of Washington County 4-H Saddle Club**, lives on a farm with her parents and brother in SW Virginia. Her application was impressive with numerous activities and events spanning the 2019-2020 4-H year. As an active member of her club, county, and District, she served in many leadership and speaking roles, and in community service. Her involvement with 4-H spans many projects as well and provided her numerous awards over the past year not only in the horse project but also in natural resources, creative design, leadership, and Country Ham. Mattie is now a 2nd year horse ambassador, demonstrating active involvement statewide and locally in many 4-H events. She has presented in several speaking opportunities to include Intro to EquiSmartz and the state volunteer leader conference. Notably, Mattie produced two Virginia 4-H at Home with Horses episodes, part of an Ambassador team effort. Her 4-H project horse this year was a yearling that she received through the AQHA Young Horse Development Program. It was through the 4-H at Home with Horses platform that Mattie shared about her project horse, goals, and newly-learned horsemanship skills to serve in educating youth. Her tenacity and hard work earned her the AQHA program's National Championship title and a scholarship. Mattie says "4-H has given me many opportunities to be involved in not only agriculture but in my community, providing me confidence, independence, resilience, compassion, and leadership opportunities. I have been able to set goals, accomplish them and succeed with the help of caring adults." Mattie hopes to someday be a vet or operate and own her own business training horses and teaching riding. She believes 4-H has given her these skills and the confidence needed to begin pursuing a career she is passionate about. Congratulations Mattie and all the outstanding member applicants!!

2nd place - Samantha Whysong, Nokesville Equestrians 4-H Club, Prince William County

3rd place - Emily Sears, member of Hoof N Woof 4-H Club, Albemarle County

Honorable Mention - Cora Hoemann, member of Triple Crown 4-H Club, Caroline County

2020 4-H Club of the Year Runner Up: *Triple Crown Equine 4-H Club, Caroline*

2020 4-H Club of the Year: **Hoof N Woof 4-H Club, Albemarle** – For the 2019-2020 year Hoof N Woof had 27 members that participated in no less than 38 4-H events from the local to National level. Meeting regularly throughout the year, this club, like many others, had to work through all the challenges that Covid presented. Meetings continued to involve field trips and guest speakers through Zoom. And when the time came for awards, senior officers were creative delivering packets, balloons, and a goody bags to each member's house. The club enjoyed social distanced meetings, including the virtual State Show awards, and other events such as a gymkhana, a drill team, a horse show, and a horse judging contest. The club's structure holds opportunities for 10 officer positions and 5 committee chair positions and is supported by 3 adult leaders, Bertha Durbin, Katie Sears, and Laura Butler. Community service involved road clean-up projects, fundraising for Hope's Legacy, the Angel Tree drive, and the Toy Lift projects. Fundraisers include organizing an annual horse show, redeeming feed tag labels through Southern States and Triple Crown feeds, and having an annual

tack sale, all of which support members competing in and traveling to the 4-H knowledge competitions. Hoof N Woof recognizes all of their adult parent volunteers as the invaluable backbone to the club which also includes those who no longer have children in the Club. These volunteers work at the state contests, assist in mounted events, chaperone at knowledge competitions, and serve on the board. The club says they are able to do so much because of the special talents and devoted time from their leaders, volunteers, and members. Like many clubs, Hoof N Woof serves a diverse membership whether they have a horse or not — all one needs is a love, interest, and curiosity in horses! They consider their club family and enjoy time with one another, they laugh a lot, have fun, and care for and support one another in good times and in bad times. It is not uncommon to see high-fives, hugs, hand-shakes, and smiles. The atmosphere is such that the kids do not want to go home and parents enjoy the social time. Of course, this looks a bit different with masks and social distancing. However, even though they may be physically further apart than ever before, 4-H has been a bright spot for so many members, and friendships are closer than ever. Hoof N Woof's application was unique in that they gave great focus to the 4-H Clover's Head, Heart, Hand, and Health. Below, we share with you an excerpt from their submission:

Devoting our Head to Clearer thinking:

- The monthly meetings always have an education focus learning about topics on the horse in great detail.
- this knowledge results in improved rider safety and healthy horses.
- Members learn leadership skills from their meetings and model skills for younger and new members.
- knowledge is passed down from leaders to members, and seniors to juniors
- they communicate and recruit for all the competitions through the National Level
- Open-mindedness is encouraged to others' opinions.
- Creative collaboration throughout COVID was necessary to establish a safe, stress-free, and flexible environment for all

Prioritizing our Heart to Greater loyalty:

- We are a friendly, and inviting club! All are welcome from near and far, horse or not
- mentoring is the centerpiece character seen in all of our youth. A strong sense of teamwork and support is noticeable and many often comment about how club members operate like a well-oiled machine to ensure that every member is taken care of.
- Officers are dedicated and loyal to the structure and importance of their meetings
- The adult volunteer are firmly dedicated to supporting the members in every activity
- And amidst the COVID lockdown, Hoof-n-Woof members looked after fellow club members who were feeling under the weather and paid attention to their well-being in this stressful time

Committing our Hands to larger service:

- outreach through community service at numerous events modeled members to see to others needs.
- riding scholarships were provided for lessons for a child in the community who otherwise could not afford it.
- Active fundraisers facilitated more learning and participation in competitions
- And Hoof N Woof is proud to say that their kids love to serve - they don't have to be 'voluntold!'

And finally, Pledging our Health to better living:

- This club, like all others, supports diversity and inclusion which also means including riders of varying disciplines, non-riders; horse-lovers and dog-lovers; boys and girls.
- Youth learn about varying related disciplines and occupations in the equine world, and alums in the field give back to the club sharing exciting stories of opportunities that abound
- 4-H becomes a way of living and giving back to their club, community and the 4-H program.
- Learning to balance life and time (families, school, work, horse care, etc.)
- And following the COVID guidelines ensures the safety of all, good physical health, and emotional well-being.