



Charlotte Manvell and horse Foxy

From 4-H'er to Veterinary Student, Charlotte Shares her 4-H Journey

By Charlotte Manvell, Orange County 4-H

When I was nine years old, I remember sitting among the members of my 4-H club as the president discussed various programs, everything from field trips to educational contests. Little did I know, all of these opportunities would transform me into an independent and confident 18-year-old. I cannot tell you where I would be without 4-H.

Without 4-H and horses, I would be unsure of what I wish to pursue as I open this new chapter in my life. While I have a passion for many topics like calculus and chemistry, none of them compare to the passion I have for animals and animal healthcare. 4-H has not only helped me determine what I wish to pursue, but it also has equipped me with important skills such as public speaking, being comfortable working with people of all ages and backgrounds, as well as those more specific to the veterinary field, like how to handle and care for animals from birth to old age.

4-H has also helped me connect to mentors within my area of interest, veterinary parasitology. Through a 4-H equine youth program associate, I was introduced to Dr. Martin Nielsen, an equine parasitologist and professor at the University of Kentucky. Dr. Nielsen is seeking to develop new technologies to prevent the spread of parasitic disease within horses while also educating the general horse owning population on how they can improve their parasite control. In attending college and veterinary school, I hope to continue performing research in these fields in order to prevent parasitic disease within both companion animals and livestock.

Through my years in 4-H I have benefitted from the dedication of many volunteers, Extension agents, parents, and 4-H club members. I have experienced what a powerful impact these individuals can have on a young 4-Her's life. I hope to be able to influence others not only to pursue horses as a hobby or career, but also to give back to their community through service projects and volunteering. The backbone of a successful 4-H club is dedicated volunteers, and I hope that someday I will be able to be an adult volunteer for a 4-H club so that I can use the knowledge I have gained through higher education and my 4-H experience so that young individuals can continue to enjoy all that the 4-H program has to offer.

While I may be away at college for the next few years and unable to be a leader, I know that my involvement at educational events will still help impact and inspire other 4-Hers.

Message from the 4-H State Program Leader

Dear Friends,

4-H was founded on the belief that when kids are empowered to pursue their passions and chart their own course, their unique skills grow and take shape, helping them to



become true leaders in their lives, careers, and communities. When we "Inspire Kids to Do" we cultivate an environment that allows curiosity and imagination to spark and ignite passion in a wide variety of areas. From drones to horses, robots to livestock, cooking to archery, 4-H projects serve as a vehicle that provides youth with an opportunity to develop life skills that will prepare them for the future. An investment in the Virginia 4-H program helps to build a community of youth that are prepared to solve complex problems through leadership and civic engagement. It is our responsibility to make a commitment to our children to help them grow the confidence needed to realize their dreams and improve the world.

All the best,

Jeremy Johnson
State 4-H Leader
jejohns1@vt.edu

Farm-to-Table: "Get Out and GROW"

In this time of increasing urbanization and shrinking of rural and farming communities, many children are missing out on what it means to be able to grow their own food. During a day camp series with Mecklenburg 4-H, youth engaged in hands-on activities such as gardening from farm-to-table, touring the local Southern Piedmont Agricultural Research and Experiment Station and conducting experiments in their community garden.

The program included gardening activities like growing plants, identifying common weeds, collecting soil samples and analyzing results, creating a fertilizer plan, and harvesting crops. After harvest, participants made salsa, learned safety skills, and then offered products for sale at the Farmer's Market in Chase City. One 4-Her shared, "I learned a lot about science. My favorite activity was extracting DNA from a strawberry. It was fun! I also had fun selling the pumpkins we grew."



Mecklenburg 4-Hers garden

Sales from the market supported the 4-H scholarship program and excess produce was donated to the local community food bank. Jennifer Bowen, 4-H Agent in Mecklenburg said, "We wanted our 4-H members to have a better understanding of where food comes from. In addition, we were able to show them that gardeners and farmers are also scientists. Their favorite experiment was testing a homemade weed killer and a commercial product."

Funding from the Virginia 4-H Foundation provided plants, gardening supplies and for up keep of the garden.



4th Graders Design and Build Package Delivery System in Dinwiddie

Our nation's economic success depends on the next generation's ability to solve complex challenges of the 21st century. Science, Technology, Math and Engineering education cultivates students' curiosity and creativity while teaching them to work as a team and develop critical life skills. 4-H STEM programming is offered through in-school enrichment programs, after-school programs, local clubs and during camps at 4-H Centers. Program focus areas include robotics, rocketry, environmental science, agriculture, biotechnology, and veterinary science.



Dinwiddie 4th graders fly a drone

In Dinwiddie, a group of fourth graders at Southside Elementary engaged in five team exercises led by 4-H agent Hannah Robbins. Student exercises included making predictions and hypotheses, taking measurements, and conducting trials. Each task or challenge required students to write code, and one challenge tasked students to design and build a drone package delivery system to move an item from point A to point B. The experience provided many opportunities, allowing students to learn how to conduct an experiment, develop critical skills and have fun along the way.

Hannah shared, "students have a blast learning to code the drones and compete in various challenges. It is a fun learning tool that introduces youth to the world of coding through a different medium. There is not a child out there who does not want the opportunity to fly a drone." One student shared that the exercises were "super fun and I bet other kids would like it too."

To watch a video of the excitement, visit <https://bit.ly/2DlxNAF>

Funding for this experience was provided by the Virginia 4-H Foundation Annual Fund.

An Eye-Opening Experience Prepares Youth for the Future

Washington and Smyth 4-H partnered with the United Way of Southwest Virginia to provide an eye-opening experience for 952 area eighth graders. The Reality Store is an exciting way for students to experience what it's like to live as an adult. The program provides an opportunity for students to engage in a realistic simulation to increase financial literacy and career exploration.

Students completed a survey prior to the event to identify career interests. During the event students visited nineteen "Life Stations" that included volunteer representation from car dealerships, insurance companies, banking institutions, grocery stores, Uncle Sam, child care, utilities, personal care, furniture, contributions and entertainment.

Lexi, a Washington County 4-H'er shared, "The biggest challenge was making sure you are spending money on the right stuff, making sure you spend your money on what you need rather than what you want."

After the Reality Store experience, one mother shared that her son was shocked at the cost of feeding a family, and asked if it was "real." After accompanying her to the grocery store, he decided only to ask for work boots this Christmas.

Students also participated in workforce development activities. They met with human resources representatives from local organizations to complete job applications, and to learn about making first impressions, how to dress for success, and the skillsets needed to have a successful interview.

Programs like Reality Store offer 4-H'ers the opportunity to broaden their perspectives as they prepare to for the next step in their lives, be it continuing their formal education or entering the workforce.

To view United Way of Southwest Virginia's video of this event, please visit <https://bit.ly/201L2uv>.



Students visit a Reality Store "Life Station"



Abingdon police patrolled the area to confirm car insurance and monitor "road" safety.

4-H Foundation by the Numbers

Gift Income
\$620,678



In-Kind Donations
\$509,964



Endowment Income
\$163,117



Total Gifts and Income
\$1,293,759

To invest in Virginia 4-H, visit www.4-h.ext.vt.edu/give or send your gift to:

**Virginia 4-H Foundation
Hutcheson Hall (0419)
250 Drillfield Drive
Blacksburg, VA 24061
540-231-3360**



The Virginia 4-H Foundation is a division of the Virginia Tech Foundation, Inc., which has been granted 501(c)(3) nonprofit status by the Internal Revenue Service.