



State 4-H Honor Club *Newsletter*

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Realizing a Dream

by Todd Austin

An anyone who knows me will tell you that I always set my goals very high. In school, sports or anything else, I always want to be the best, to pursue excellence.

One of my childhood dreams was to play basketball for The University of Tennessee. I was not the high-caliber player that SEC schools recruit, but my heart was set on being a Vol. My only hope was to be a walk-on. During the summer and fall of my freshman year, I was always in the gym practicing.

At tryouts, I performed well, and was devastated when I was not chosen for the team. The coaching staff encouraged me to try out next season. My disappointment turned to determination. I watched the team practice every day and learned from them. I became acquainted with the players, coaches and personnel.

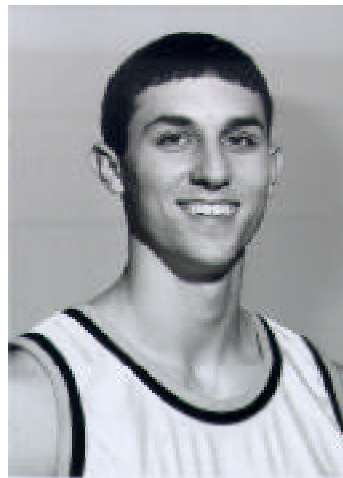
Tryouts came and went. Then one evening in mid-October, I received the call that made my dream come true — I was a Vol. I saw action in ten games, but never played over two or three minutes per game. I finished the season with a grand total of seven points.

I will never forget my experiences as a Tennessee Volunteer. I will always remember the excitement of running onto the court in front of thousands of people with “Rocky Top” booming from the band and the pride I felt being a part of the team that beat Kentucky

twice in the same season. Mostly, however, I will remember the obstacles and challenges I had to overcome to make the team and how sweet it felt to realize a dream.

I can compare this experience to one from my early childhood. Defeated in a fourth-grade public speaking contest in my county, I did not give up. My determination and dedication to succeed helped me become the contest winner for the next eight years. 4-H taught me leader-

ship and citizenship skills, how to be a good winner and a good loser, and most of all, to keep trying. My 4-H experiences helped me realize some of my dreams, and I know my life is fuller because of my 4-H involvement. I urge every young person to give 4-H a try. It may change your life.



Todd Austin is a former 4-H'er from Macon County where he was active in the personal development, leadership and public speaking projects. He was the 1996 4-H Congress Governor, 1997 Tennessee 4-H Council Vice President, and he attended National 4-H Congress as the 1997 state personal development winner. Todd is currently a junior at UT majoring in management and is a respected student and leader around campus. He credits much of his success to his experiences as a 4-H member.

Matt's Corner



Hello, my name is Matt Foster, and I am the editor of the State 4-H Honor Club Newsletter. I am a former 4-H'er from Anderson County, where I was active in the poultry, public speaking and leadership projects. I also served two years on the Tennessee 4-H Council and the Smoky Mountain District All Star Council. I now work as a student staff assistant in the state 4-H office at UTK. Please send your stories and suggestions to me at the Tennessee State 4-H Office at P.O. Box 1071, Knoxville, TN 37901-1071. The fax number is (423) 974-1628. The email address is tn4hhonorclub@ext1.ag.utk.edu. (If you use the fax or email, be sure to put “Honor Club Newsletter” on the cover sheet or in the subject box.)

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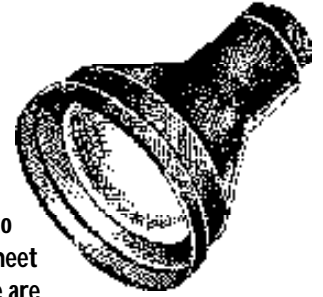
— Linda Halsell

If you are interested in an exchange for your 4-H Honor Club group, visit the National 4-H Web Exchange site at www.4-H.org/exchanges. You can look through ads to find other 4-H groups throughout the U.S. wanting an exchange experience, or you can leave your group's information for others to find.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

4-H Exchange Trips

Many Honor Club groups enjoy summer exchanges with 4-H'ers in other states. The exchange usually involves traveling to another state one year and hosting the next. It's a cool way to meet new friends and get to know another part of the country. There are even opportunities to host and visit people from other parts of the world. Check out these stories...



Is Everything Bigger in Texas?????

By Katie Farrar, 4-H Honor Club Member, Bedford County

That's what the Bedford County 4-H exchange group set out to find over the past two summers. Our exchange with Texas was awesome!

First, the Texas group came to Tennessee to spend an adventure-filled week with us. We entertained them with white-water rafting, a day in Chattanooga, a tour of the Jack Daniel's distillery and other local shops, a day in Huntsville, Alabama, which included a visit to a water park and a full day in Nashville.

The next year we flew to Texas. Everything truly was bigger there, including their entertaining! We spend a day at the world's largest water park, Schlitterbahn, toured the capital in Austin, went to San Antonio, visited the Alamo, took a boat ride at the River Walk, shopped at the Farmer's Market and visited Longhorn Caverns and the Enchanted Rock. Whew, what a week!

We made some lasting friendships. The girl I exchanged with is planning to come back and visit me! Although our project areas are different, we discovered we had many other common interests. Since we had such a great time with the Texas exchange, we are already working to make our exchange with Minnesota this year an equal success.

4-H Members Bring Back a Piece of Minnesota

By Nancy Rucker, Assistant Extension Agent, Cheatham County

4-H members from Cheatham and Dickson counties completed the second part of a two-part 4-H interstate exchange program with Minnesota last summer. This was the first time Cheatham County 4-H'ers participated in an exchange program. We held several fundraisers and asked for donations to help defray the cost. Additional expenses were paid by each participant.

Highlights of the exchange included touring the state capital, eating at the Heart Throb Cafe, watching the Laura Ingalls Wilder pageant in Walnut Grove, shopping at the Mall of America (with over 300 stores!) and attending a Twins baseball game. We enjoyed the wonderful hospitality of the Minnesota families, and learned so much about the area. It was truly great experience and we are eagerly looking forward to our next exchange trip.

4-H Exchange Trips Are Exciting

By Linda Halsell, Associate Extension Agent, Pickett County

4-H exchange trips provide an opportunity for you to broaden your travel experience, share life with other 4-H'ers and their families and create new friendships. Pickett County 4-H members hosted 14 New York 4-H'ers and four volunteer leaders in the summer of 1998. Then, New York returned the favor by hosting Pickett County 4-H'ers and leaders the following summer.

We treated the New York 4-H'ers with trips to Opryland, a *General Jackson* river boat cruise, NASCAR Cafe, the Tennessee State Capital, Cumberland Caverns, Clyde M. York 4-H Center and Pickett State Park. While in New York, Pickett County 4-H'ers visited Niagara Falls, Canada and Letchworth State Park.



Jada Crouch, Honor Club member from Pickett County (left) and Kari Cobb of New York created a lasting friendship by participating in a 4-H Exchange trip.

The exchange gave us an intercultural experience that broadened our understanding of other ways of life and 4-H in other states. In fact, the Pickett County 4-H'ers learned that breakfast can be more than just "gravy, biscuits and eggs" and that 4-H camp is much more expensive in New York!

So, what's in the future for Pickett County? The exchange group is currently working with St. Croix County, Wisconsin in pursuing plans for an exchange trip. As a result of participating in the out-of-state exchange trip, one Pickett County 4-H'er is looking into the outbound Japanese exchange.

Vy govorite po Russky*

Don't have a clue as to what this heading means? Well, after participating in this brand new exchange program you might know this and much more!

How would you like to host a high school student from the New Independent States of the former Soviet Union for an entire year while they live and go to school with you? This year, 4-H has the opportunity to participate in the Future Leaders Exchange (FLEX). This is a federal government program that was created to help young people learn all about democracy.

FLEX needs host families and schools just like yours for students in the 15-17 age group. If having an exciting cultural experience while teaching a new friend about our way of life sounds like something you would like to get involved in, just contact your county Extension office. It might just change your life!

* Do you speak Russian?

DATES TO REMEMBER . . .

April 9-15	National 4-H Conference
April 16-18	State 4-H Congress
May 1	Senior 4-H Record Books Due
May 12-13	Sheep Conference Crossville
June 3-10	Citizenship Washington Focus Washington D.C.
June 5-9	Wildlife Conference Greeneville
June 13-16	Jr. High Academic Conference Knoxville
June 22-24	Teen Adventure Weekend Crossville
June 26- July 1	State 4-H Horse Show Shelbyville
June 27-30	Electric Camp Knoxville
June 27-30	4-H D.A.R.T. Conference Nashville
July 5-8	State Target S.M.A.R.T. Columbia
July 11-14	State Junior Beef Expo Nashville
July 17-21	State 4-H Roundup Martin
July 26-28	State Junior Sheep Expo Cookeville
Aug. 3-6	Southern Regional 4-H Horse Show Raleigh, NC
Aug. 18-26	Appalachian Fair Gray

Money for College, Anyone?

If the thought of earning money for college by staying involved in your 4-H projects seems farfetched — THINK AGAIN! While the rewards for your hard work include learning responsibility and gaining leadership and team-building skills, they also can include cold hard cash for college.



There is almost \$14,000 "up-for-grabs" in Tennessee 4-H scholarships, and all you have to do is fill out an application to be considered!

There are \$1,000 scholarships awarded to top winners in Level II personal development, health, leadership and citizenship projects and \$850 in dairy foods. Also, \$500

scholarships are given to Level I winners in all other 4-H projects at Roundup in July. There is a scholarship available for nearly everyone. So ... keep up the hard work with those projects!

For a copy of the application for 4-H scholarships, check out the Tennessee 4-H forms page at <<http://web.utk.edu/~srsutton/4hforms/index.html>> or contact your Extension agent.

Madison County Comes Out On TOP!!!

Madison County initiated more Honor Club members in 1999 than any other county in Tennessee. They welcomed 24 new Honor Club members to their group last year. Humphreys County was a close second with 23 initiates. The Cumberland District was the top district with 125 new Honor Club members.

Want to see your county or district on top in the new millennium? Begin now to help someone in your county

qualify for Honor Club membership. The key to a strong program is at the local level, and that means YOU can make a big difference.

Back Stage with Backstreet

Who would have thought that a 4-H garden project would take someone backstage at a Backstreet Boys concert? Just ask Carrie Harris, an Honor Club member from Campbell County, and she'll tell you a very exciting story.

She was the lucky winner of a \$2,000 grant sponsored by Youth Service America and Sears, Roebuck and Co. As a part of the Larger Than Life Award, Carrie



Backstreet Boys (l. to r.) A.J. McLean, Howie Dorough, Nick Carter, Kevin Richardson and Brian Littrell pose with Campbell County Honor Club member, Carrie Harris, backstage at the recent concert in Knoxville.

received backstage passes to the concert and met all of the Backstreet Boys before the performance. She gave all the group members 4-H shirts for the occasion, and was pleased to learn that Kevin Richardson and Brian Littrell are former 4-H'ers from Kentucky.

Carrie plans to use the grant to continue working on a project at Valley View Elementary School in LaFollette, TN, which she started about a year ago. She helps the children with a 25'x100' garden plot in which they grow, care for and harvest their own garden. Good job, Carrie!

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