



**Illinois Extension**  
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

## Tazewell 4-H Horse Clinics provide positive youth development for past 20+ years

Countless hours of work go into making any 4-H project a success, but have you ever wondered what it takes to get ready for a horse show? Just ask the 22 [Tazewell County 4-H](#) members who showed a horse - or three - at the fair this year, and you may have the answer to your question.

This summer, Tazewell County 4-H carried on the long-standing tradition of hosting horse clinics in the months leading up to the 4-H horse show. 4-H members were invited to bring their horse to the fairgrounds to practice. Doing so allows horse and rider to become familiar with the arena while it is calm, a chance to meet new friends, a knowledge of how their horse reacts to being in a new setting with unfamiliar horses, and an opportunity to learn from an experienced local equestrian, just to name a few.

All of this is done under the guidance of experienced equestrian and 4-H volunteer, Jenna Walker. In addition to being a Tazewell 4-H alumna, Jenna is also the Program Director of [Central Illinois Riding Therapy](#). She was first introduced to horse clinics as a club member, but began teaching clinics alongside her mom, Sue Walker, in 2003. In the 21 years following, Jenna fully took over teaching the clinics and made them into what they are today. Over the years, she has taught many young 4-H members about showmanship, horsemanship, and so much more.

"It's so amazing to watch the kids become more confident on and around their horse after working with Jenna for just a few minutes. You can tell in the way they proudly present their horses and sit tall in their saddles," said [Abbie Phillips](#), Tazewell County 4-H program coordinator.

4-Hers are encouraged to take the techniques they learn at the horse clinics and continue to practice these concepts with their horse at home to prepare for the Tazewell 4-H Show and Junior Fair. Several of the 4-Hers that regularly attended clinics earned top awards at the [2025 Tazewell County 4-H Show and Junior Fair](#).

"We're so thankful for all our dedicated volunteers that make our horse clinics possible. I can't thank them enough for being so giving of their time, resources, and knowledge," Abbie remarked. She explained that many of the 4-H members lease horses or take lessons from additional long-time members of the 4-H community.

Because of these dedicated volunteers, Tazewell County 4-H continues to offer a variety of opportunities for learning about horses in addition to horse clinics. Most of these opportunities don't require the 4-H member to have a horse of their own, only a love for these amazing animals and a desire to learn more about them.



*Jenna Walker grew up attending the 4-H Horse Clinics as a Tazewell 4-H member. For the past 21 years, she has been teaching the annual 6-session clinic. Youth develop showmanship, horsemanship, new friendships, and confidence as they learn from Jenna and her team of volunteers.*

### **Abbie Phillips**

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