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FULTON COUNTY 4-H

Fall 2025 Newsletter

Welcome to the new 4-H Year!

I want to wish each of you a very "Happy New Year!" No, I am not 4 months early, (or eight months late!) if you are looking at it that way. The new 4-H Year began on September 1 and I am excited for all the promise that comes with a fresh, new year! I hope you are looking forward to a year full of new experiences, club meetings, opportunities, workshops, and FUN! Our four-county unit is busy planning events for the upcoming year, and we hope that you will join us. Invite a friend or two to your next 4-H club meeting to share the fun!

Here's some fun! Can you find all **29 pumpkins** that are in this edition?

Your questions and calls are especially important to me. I can be reached any of the following ways during regular business hours (8am-12pm & 1-4:30pm M-F). If you reach out using other communication tools, I will respond during our normal work hours. Thanks!

Krista Gray

Fulton 4-H Program Coordinator

Office phone: 309-547-3711

Email Krista: kristakg@illinois.edu

Teams phone Krista: 217-300-6714

Other ways to connect

Facebook:



Webpage:



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FOR EVERYONE

NEW CLUB

Are you interested in the outdoors? Would you like to learn more about outdoor survival such as fire-building, shelter-making, foraging, or first aid? We have a volunteer in the Lewistown area interested in starting an Outdoor Survival Skills SPIN club. Please contact the Extension Office at 309-547-3711 if you are interested in joining this new club!

VOLUNTEER GATEWAY

Adult volunteers that are club leaders or co-leaders and are background screened will be required to sign up in Extension's Volunteer Gateway, a new U of I website. All annual paperwork and 3 year recertifications will all go through the Gateway. This new system and ZSuite are linked, and the Gateway will need to be completed before being able to enroll in Zsuite. Our office secretary, Deb Balagna, has sent an email to leaders. If leaders have any questions or need help, contact Deb or Krista at the office.

ZSUITE OPENS OCT. 1

4-H enrollment/re-enrollment will start in ZSuite on October 1. Please visit <https://4h.zsuite.org/> to enroll in the 2025-2026 4-H year. You must enroll/re-enroll each 4-H year. **The annual 4-H program fee will be waived until December 1!** Please enroll/re-enroll early to save \$20 per member! It's a huge savings for families; don't miss out!

4-H FEDERATION NEWS

4-H Federation is a Leadership club for 4-H youth ages 13 – 18 as of September 1, 2025. Members of this club are responsible for planning county-wide community service opportunities and parties for Fulton County. This club has a slate of officers like the community 4-H clubs – President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. In addition to planning county-wide events, 4-H Federation members help serve refreshments at the Fall Leader's Meeting, assist with set-up and clean up at the annual Achievement Program/Volunteer Recognition event, help unit staff with Clover Clinic, Farm Safety Day, workshops, and are instrumental in helping with the Fulton County 4-H General Show and 4-H Food Stand. 4-H members also get to have fun with field trips and an end of the 4-H year appreciation party. Older 4-H members are invited to

check out this club and have fun! Officer elections will be held on Saturday, October 4 at 4 pm at the Extension office with games and pizza to follow the meeting. Please check out 4-H Federation!

Federation members are needed to assist Krista at both the 4-H Leaders meeting on Monday, September 22 at 6:30 pm at the Extension Office and at the Achievement Program on Sunday, October 19 at 1 pm in Canton. Please watch for an upcoming unit-wide Fall Federation gathering!

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

This year several volunteer 4-H club leaders are transitioning leadership responsibilities due to their children aging out of 4-H, work, and other life changes. We are needing a few 4-H livestock superintendents and are always looking for judges and department superintendents for each of the summer shows. If you would like to explore volunteerism in the Fulton 4-H program, please contact Krista at 309-547-3711 or by email at kristakg@illinois.edu.

SAVE THE DATE

The Fulton-Mason-Peoria-Tazewell 4-H Team will once again be offering an Officer & Leader training this year. All 2025-2026 club officers and leaders, please mark your calendar for Saturday, November 15. Time and location to be determined.

PROJECT GUIDE

The Illinois 4-H Project Guide for the 2025-2026 4-H year is now available online by following <https://go.illinois.edu/Illinois4-HProjectGuide> Hard copy guides will be available in late September. Please start looking through this guide to see what project (s) sound interesting to explore this year. Some new projects this year are Llama & Alpaca, Hay, and Creating with Building Bricks!



NATIONAL 4-H WEEK

October 5-11, 2025

Beyond Ready is the National theme but here in the Fulton-Mason-Peoria-Tazewell unit, this year's theme is Red, White, and Blue and Clover, too!

Your club is invited to help publicize its activities and Fulton County 4-H during National 4-H Week, October 5 – 11, 2025, with the theme of “Red, White, and Blue and Clover, too!” or Beyond Ready. 4-H has a vast array of activities — many ways to build character and leadership, and many ways to care for others through community service. As a 4-H member, you are one of six million other youth who are 4-H members. Show how 4-H enhances the lives of 4-H members, their families, and communities. Fulton County 4-H is excited about what it has to offer and wants to let everyone know!

We want families to get involved in the 4-H Program! The list of ideas for 4-H promotion could be endless. Here are a few:

- Put up a Window Display or Bulletin Board.
- Design a poster to be put up in store windows, in support of 4-H.
- Invite a new person to join your club — Do this one for sure!!!!!!
- Wear an article of clothing that has 4-H on it. — *Wear 4-H T-shirts, green shirts, pins, etc.!!!*
- Thank your leaders -- send a thank you note; bake him/her some cookies.
- Talk to your local newspaper or radio station about a 4-H story or put an ad in the paper.
- Give a talk or demonstration to civic organizations about what 4-H has to offer.
- Plan a member recruitment drive for your club; distribute fliers about 4-H to area schools.

All Fulton County 4-H clubs are encouraged to participate in National 4-H Week. Federation will once again be awarding \$50 to the club with the 1st place window display and runner up will receive \$25. Please email or call Krista by October 3 if your club would like to participate. National 4-H Week can be a wonderful way to advertise your club and let people know what 4-H is about. A bonus is that National 4-H Week falls during the Spoon River Scenic Drive so more people will be able to see these festive windows. Please consider participating!



CONGRATULATIONS

4-H HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE

Crista Hartstirn of the Fairview Huskies was recently inducted into the Illinois 4-H Hall of Fame during a special ceremony at the Illinois State Fair on Saturday, August 9, 2025.



Crista Hartstirn; photo credit Illinois 4-H

Crista has been a dedicated key leader of the Fairview Huskies 4-H Club for the past 15 years. Under her leadership, this club's membership exploded in numbers and for several years, maintained the distinction of being the largest multi-project club in Fulton County. Crista makes meeting attendance and membership fun by balancing community service events, business meetings, talks and

demonstrations, with enjoyable activities such as ski trips and going to trampoline parks.

Crista is one of those leaders who exemplifies the motto, Learn by Doing, by how she lives her life and teaches others. Community service and giving back is apparent by the different activities her club participates in and completes each year. Yard clean-up in the spring, collecting donations for the Humane Society of Fulton County, Christmas caroling at area nursing homes, and sending gift baskets to the elderly are just some of the activities Crista encourages her club members to plan and participate in each year.

In addition to being a wife, mother, and 4-H leader, Crista works full-time for Graham Health System in Canton. In addition to the special induction ceremony at the State Fair, Fulton County 4-H will honor Crista on October 19 during the Achievement Program/Volunteer Recognition event starting at 1 pm at the Donaldson Center in Canton. Everyone is welcome and invited to attend.

Congratulations, Crista, on your induction into the

Illinois 4-H Hall of Fame!

SUMMER 4-H ASSISTANT

This summer, Cole Ricker was tasked with assisting 4-H staff in preparing for the busy show season. From Farm Safety Day to the General Show, Official 4-H Horse & Pony Show to the 4-H Food Stand, if supplies needed loaded, hauled, venues set up and cleaned up, you could bet Cole was in the thick of it! Cole is a nine-year member of the Busy Bees 4-H Club, member of 4-H Federation, and a senior at Lewistown High School. All of us at Illinois Extension Fulton-Mason-Peoria-Tazewell unit appreciate Cole's efforts this summer and offer him a sincere "Thank you!"



Cole Ricker; photo credit Anita Wilkinson

QUEEN PAGEANT PARTICIPATION

Fulton County 4-H is proud to announce the following young women's participation in the Queen Pageant held during the Fulton County Fair this year: Morgan Tracey from Avondale 4-H Club/Fulton County 4-H Shooting Sports Club, Julia Tourtillott from Big 10 4-H Club; and Victoria Cooper from the Jolly Workers 4-H Club. All three young ladies did a wonderful job representing themselves with intelligence, courage, beauty, and grace. Congratulations on a job well done!

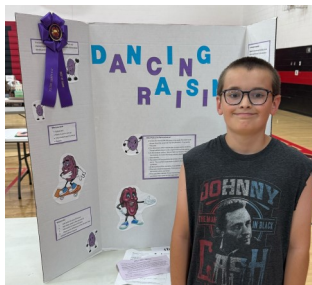


AWARDS & RESULTS

STATE FAIR RE-CAP

Congratulations to all Fulton County 4-H members who worked hard and exhibited their projects this year! Whether you participated in the Public Speaking contest, to Performing Arts show, Pet Show, Clothing Show, General Show, Horse Show, Dog Show, and all the Livestock shows held during the Fulton County Fair, you are all AWESOME! Lots of smiles and memories were made this 4-H Show season, and we at Illinois Extension are happy to witness the growth and skills exhibited by each of the Fulton County 4-H members. Fulton County 4-H also made a strong showing this year at the Illinois State Fair with thirty-six non-livestock projects and 142 livestock class entries! Wow! Fantastic job, Fulton County 4-H!

FOOD SCIENCE AWARD WINNER



Max Mercer; photo credit Amy Coffman

The Chicagoland Food Science Foundation provided a \$50 Amazon Gift Card to the overall Food Science winner in Fulton County. This year's winner for his "Science Fun with Kitchen Chemistry" exhibit at the General Show was Max Mercer of the Pleasant Spacemakers. Congratulations Max!

MASTER SHOWMANSHIP



L to r: Kristi Smith, Taylor Hendel, Zach Maher; photo credit Krista Gray

Congratulations to Taylor Hendel of the Avondale 4-H Club! Taylor won the Fulton County Master Showmanship contest sponsored by First Mid Bank & Trust of Galesburg. Vice President Commercial and Ag Lender, Zach Maher, awarded Taylor with a "big" check, in addition to presenting winners of the beef, sheep, and swine division with cash awards. Taylor was promoted to and competed in the Master Showmanship contest held during the 2025 Illinois State

Fair. Thank you, First Mid Bank & Trust, and Zach Maher, for sponsoring this contest and to Taylor Hendel for your fine representation of Fulton County 4-H at the State Fair!

2025 STATE FAIR RESULTS

General Projects

A total of 36 non-livestock projects were exhibited at the Illinois State Fair on Saturday, August 9, 2025. All exhibitors received red, white, and blue project exhibit ribbons and 14 exhibitors earned medals for superior work. Fulton County 4-H is proud of each of these hardworking members!

Grace Bedwell – Family Heritage; Carsyn Braun – Design Decisions; Knox Braun – **Champion** - Entomology 1; Amelia Carley – Quilting; Victoria Cooper – Shopping in Style; Ella Farr – Chalk, Carbon, Pigment on Paper; Grace Hanes – Sewing 2; Aliyah Janssen – **Reserve Champion** – Photo Editing; Benton Janssen – **Inspire Award** – Theatre Arts 3; Riley Kinsel – Nature; Declan Kotewa – **Inspire Award** – Photography 2; Mallory Kotewa – Poetry; Dexter Leady – **Inspire Award** – Animated Video; Seth McClure – Woodworking 3; Luke McEwen – **Inspire Award** – Woodworking 4; Briley Mercer – **Champion** – Clothing Embellishment Applied; Max Mercer – **Inspire Award** – Beginning Visual Programming; Aaliyah Naff – **Reserve Champion** – Animal Science; Skylar Naff – Wildlife 1; Krew Peirce – Plastic Block Art; Taylor Pittman – Food Decorating; Cole Ricker – Leather; Brady Robinson – Entomology 2; Miles Robinson – **Inspire Award** – Sportfishing 2; Blake Shelby – **Reserve Champion** – Wood Art; Logan Shelby – Metal Art; Aerianna Spangler – Sewing 2; Briley Spangler – Paper 2D; Cooper Stephens – Advanced Visual Programming; Lillie Stephens – Vegetable Gardening Display; Cameron Stone – **Reserve Champion** – Veterinary Science; Danni Stout – Photography 1; Sara Stufflebeam – **Champion** – Chalk, Carbon, Pigment on Canvas; Chloe Sutton – Heritage Arts; Luke Wetterauer – **Inspire Award** – Vegetable Gardening Display; and Kinslee Wickert – Sewing 3.

Livestock Projects

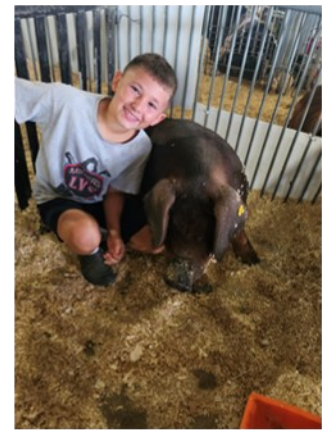
The final results for the Illinois State Fair Junior Livestock competition are not yet available.





Fulton County Day at the Illinois State Fair

Thanks to 4-H families and friends for sharing these pics



IMPORTANT 4-H DATES

Put this page on your fridge so you don't miss a thing!

September

- 1 – 4-H New Year!
- 1 – Labor Day – Extension Office Closed
- 20 – State 4-H Archery Shoot – Pekin
- 22 – 4-H Leaders Fall Meeting – 6:30 p.m. at the Extension office
- 27 – State 4-H Shotgun Shoot – Bunker Hill

October

- 1 – ZSuite begins for 4-H member & leader enrollment/re-enrollment
- 4 – Illinois 4-H State Dog Show - Bloomington
- 4 – 4-H Federation meeting & pizza party – 4 pm at the Extension office
- 5-11 – National 4-H Week
- 19 – Achievement Program/Volunteer Recognition event – 1 p.m. at Donaldson Community Center – Canton

November

- 15 – Officer & Leader Training – Location & Time TBA
- 27-28 – Thanksgiving break - Extension Office closed

December

- 1- Early-bird ZSuite enrollment ends
- 24-31 – Christmas break – Extension Office closed

January

- 1 – New Year's Day - Extension Office closed
- 2 – Livestock (Beef, Dairy, Goat, Sheep, Swine) project enrollment deadline in ZSuite
- 19 – Martin Luther King Jr. Day - Extension Office closed

February

- 7 – (tentative date) Steer Weigh-in – Fairview Sale Barn

March

- Fulton Public Speaking Contest and Performing Arts Show
- Livestock Showmanship Clinic & YQCA training

April

- 1 – 4-H Scholarship applications due to Extension Office
- 25 – State Public Speaking Contest – Champaign

May

- 1 – 4-H enrollment deadline in ZSuite to be eligible to register and exhibit at 2026 summer 4-H shows.
- 1 – Project add/drop deadline in ZSuite
- 1 – Horse Lease/Ownership forms due
- 25 -Memorial Day – Extension Office closed

June

- 10 – Pet Show – Extension Office
- 19 – Juneteenth – Extension Office closed
- 20 - Clothing and General Show – Cuba Jr./Sr. High School

July

- 1 – Fulton County Fair paper entries/fees due at Extension Office
- 3 – Independence Day holiday – Extension Office closed
- 11 – Official 4-H Horse & Pony Show – Fulton County Fairgrounds Horse Arena
- 20-25 – Fulton County Fair – Dog and Livestock shows

August

- 13-23 – Illinois State Fair





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Achievement Program/Volunteer Recognition

You are invited!

The annual Achievement Program/Volunteer Recognition Event will be held on Sunday, October 19, 2025, at 1 pm at the Donaldson Center located at 250 S Ave D in Canton. 4-H members who have submitted award applications will be recognized at this program. 4-H Leaders who have attained milestone years of service, or who are retiring from leading their 4-H club, will also be honored at this event. We will also be honoring and recognizing Fulton County's 2025 4-H Hall of Fame recipient, Crista Hartstirn.

Homemade pies and cakes, compliments of Fulton County HEA, will be served afterwards to all in attendance. **PLEASE** plan to attend this special event. Parents, grandparents, and guardians are all welcome to attend too!