



Illinois Extension

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

4-H generosity brings life-saving equipment and first aid to county fairgrounds and 4-H events.

During the 2022 Mason County Fair, there was a health emergency that inspired 4-H members and volunteers into action. Thanks to the efforts led by Mason County Pleasant Workers 4-H Club and Kountry Kritters 4-H Club there are now two automated external defibrillators (AED) and nine new first aid kits available to use during events at the fairgrounds. One AED will also be used throughout the year at 4-H events throughout the University of Illinois Extension Fulton-Mason-Peoria-Tazewell Unit.

As the Pleasant Workers went through the planning process to address the need for one AED, the service project became a collaborative effort with the county fair board. The fair board contributed a second AED and provided signage directing the public to the placement of the emergency equipment.

The Kountry Kritters 4-H Club also witnessed a need for more accessible first-aid kits containing updated supplies on the fairgrounds and they took similar actions to develop and carry out this important community service project.

Studies show youth become more motivated when a need is observed and they feel a sense of obligation to others and to society. In the case of these local needs, it took the diligent guidance of the 4-H leaders, who also serve as mentors to the club members, to use these examples of need as teachable moments. The positive relationships between caring adults and youth members within a 4-H club, provides a safe and inclusive environment where service learning can take place. The end result in the partnership between these youth/adult relations can result in providing copious generosity to individuals and communities, as it did with both of these 4-H clubs.

While addressing the needs of the county fairgrounds, it was determined the purchases of a device such as an AED and first aid kits would be costly. The clubs planned their fundraising accordingly, and worked diligently to reach their goals, not to profit but only to fulfill a need. Fundraising becomes more successful when the efforts are faced with a critical need. One club's annual holiday wreath sales were enough for the AED purchase. The other club partnered with the Forest City Rotary organization. 4-H youth agreed to help with clean-up of the annual Rotary sponsored community auction, in turn, receiving a donation to help cover the cost of the first aid kits.

The 4-H program is a platform for teaching youth about the element of generosity. Generosity, along with Belonging, Independence, and Mastery, are the four essential elements of the 4-H program. These elements help youth become more competent and contributing citizens, and they are what make characteristics which contribute to positive youth development.



An Automated External Defibrillator (AED) and nine first aid kits were purchased with the efforts and generosity of two Mason County 4-H clubs, to be placed for public use on the county fairgrounds. An additional AED was purchased to be available at all 4-H events in the four-county unit.

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