

EXTENSION SNAPSHOT

Fulton-Mason-Peoria-Tazewell Unit

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Federation helps youth build skills, character, and friendships

Leadership development is an important part of 4-H. Peoria 4-H has used fun and creative ways to entice new teens to join Federation and put their leadership skills into practice.

“When I was a 4-H member, Federation was a really big deal,” explained Kristi Smith, Peoria 4-H program coordinator. “When I started my job as coordinator in 2022, we only had one or two members attending meetings. Now we have 12 members from five different 4-H clubs and they are excited to get involved.”

Kristi used her own leadership skills and 4-H experiences to put a new plan into action with her Federation members. The group began introducing new activities that focused on teambuilding and service leadership. In addition to their monthly business meetings, Peoria 4-H Federation members worked together to plan a volunteer recognition event called Leaders Appreciation Tea and a service leadership program in which they hosted a Parents Night Out.

“We also like to incorporate fun teambuilding activities during our monthly meetings. The nerf battle and messy games were a huge hit,” Kristi mentioned. “The group has also tried activities such as painting on cakes, dying eggs, and game nights. They really enjoy getting together and socializing.”

The recreation activities have added an element of fun and have given the youth a safe environment to connect with each other.

Federation President Serenity Martin remarked, “I’ve loved being able to rise to the challenge of leading Federation. Federation has helped me develop and work on many skills that will help me into the future.”

“Federation is awesome sauce,” Vice President Bernadette Mattern said.

Federation gives youth a space to build skills, develop positive character traits, and gain healthy friendships. Through business meetings, community service projects, 4-H volunteer roles, and social activities the teens develop valuable skills that they will use throughout their lives:

- Personal and professional development
- Parliamentary procedure
- Leadership
- Responsibility
- Teamwork

Federation recently hosted their second annual 4-H Leader’s Appreciation Tea. Federation members take care of making and sending invitations, planning meeting activities, executing a menu, and decorating. They are also responsible for serving the leaders. It was another successful event for both leaders and Federation members.



The Peoria County 4-H Federation recently hosted their second annual Leader’s Appreciation Tea. This is one of the special events the group of teens have added to their list of activities. Thanks to new activities the group has grown from two members in 2022 up to 12 members in 2024.

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