



Illinois Extension

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Growing together: The impact of 4-H on young learners

The 4-H Cloverbud program, designed for youth ages 5 to 7, is an important first step for young children to explore the world of 4-H and set the foundation for future involvement. Through a variety of hands-on activities and age-appropriate projects, Cloverbuds build relationships with their peers, participate in fun and educational experiences, and start developing the values of responsibility, community, and leadership that will carry them throughout their 4-H journey.

For many, graduating from the Cloverbud program is a pivotal moment. Cailyn Martin, a recent Cloverbud graduate and member of the Edelstein Eager Beavers, reflects on her experience, saying, "Graduating Cloverbuds was special to my 4-H career." It made her feel like she was stepping up into something bigger. This was Cailyn's first year in 4-H, and her favorite experiences included attending the State Fair and showing her cattle. Her younger sister, Ember is currently a Cloverbud, continuing the family tradition of 4-H involvement. She is especially excited for upcoming events like the Barnyard Games and Cake Decorating, which offer even more opportunities to develop new skills.

Henry Moore, another recent graduate from the Limestone Leaders, shares his excitement, saying, "The activities are amazing! I have so much fun!" Henry's brother Sam, a current Cloverbud, enjoys making crafts and preparing trail mix at meetings. These fun, hands-on activities help children develop creativity and teamwork, while giving them a taste of the broader 4-H experience.

The program also fosters a sense of belonging. Dollar Perham, a member of the Laura Winners, says that when he walked into his first meeting as a full 4-H member, the whole club clapped and cheered for him! This warm welcome solidifies the sense of community and encouragement that defines the 4-H program.

Graduation ceremonies for Cloverbuds are held at the Peoria County 4-H Fair, where each graduate receives a cap and a new 4-H t-shirt. These small gestures make the children feel valued and celebrated, reinforcing their place in the larger 4-H family. Through the Cloverbud program, young members are set up for long-term success, instilling a love for learning, leadership, and community.



A special graduation ceremony is held at the Peoria 4-H Fair to honor Cloverbuds as they move up in the 4-H program. The Cloverbud program helps youth ages 5 to 7 build relationships with other youth their age and begin developing responsibility and leadership skills, while making them feel welcome in the 4-H family.

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