

EXTENSION SNAPSHOT

Fulton-Mason-Peoria-Tazewell

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Peoria County 4-H Junior Superintendents provide valuable support to the 4-H Show as they develop leadership skills. Many of the teens who took on this leadership role in 2019 (pictured right) adapted to the changes of the 2020 Virtual 4-H Show and developed new, creative ways to assist and encourage the 4-H volunteers and members.

Peoria Teens Help Boost Virtual 4-H Show Involvement

Peoria County 4-H members look forward to the day they are old enough to become a Junior Superintendent at the 4-H Show. That volunteer role holds a special place of honor for a small group of teens each year. While their responsibilities looked very different for the 2020 Virtual 4-H Show, the Junior Superintendents played an integral part in the success of the show.

“With the switch to a virtual show, we expected turn out to be lower than normal,” explained Cathy Ludolph, Peoria 4-H program coordinator. “but our teen leaders were ready to help in new and creative ways to make the 4-H Show successful and meaningful to our members.”

Typically, Peoria County Junior Superintendents assist the adult Superintendents within a specific department and lend a helping hand throughout the fairgrounds. Sometimes that help is offered to 4-H staff or volunteers, and other times it is offered to 4-Hers and their family. Junior Superintendents become the superheroes of the 4-H Show...especially in the eyes of the younger 4-H members.

“Despite their own disappointment at not having the in-person 4-H fair experience,” Cathy continued, “my teens stepped up to the challenge by thinking outside the box and fulfilling their role as Jr. Superintendent and Federation teen leaders in other ways.”

Jr. Superintendents and 4-H Federation members worked together to plan and create a fair project tour video. It featured the teens with projects they had completed and planned to exhibit virtually. The purpose of the video was to inspire other members to complete and exhibit their 4-H projects virtually. The video posted on the [Peoria 4-H Facebook](#) page had over 2,000 views with another 100 views on [YouTube](#). It not only inspired other 4-H members but promoted 4-H to the public as well.

Additionally, the Jr. Superintendents personally contacted every 4-H family to offer encouragement and assistance with completing the online 4-H project exhibit process.

Their leadership efforts paid off. Peoria County had 95 youth exhibit a total of 431 projects, which is an average of 4.5 projects per youth. In the Fulton-Mason-Peoria-Tazewell Unit the average was 3.3 projects per exhibitor.

Federation president and Jr. Superintendent Sarah Stevens stated it was rewarding to know she had made a difference. Sarah received several reply emails from members and parents letting her know her personal contact was just the encouragement they or their child needed to complete their projects.

Realizing 4-H members would be missing the in-person 4-H Show experience, the teen leaders hosted an online 4-H Show Reunion. It included interactive

activities and games to help 4-H members connect with each other and replace the social aspect that was missing from the online virtual 4-H show.

“Providing leadership while adapting to changes that are out of our control is an important life skill the teen 4-H members gained through this unusual 4-H fair experience,” concluded Cathy.



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