

THE PEACH PRESS

The Official Publication for the Georgia Association of Extension 4-H Youth Development Professionals



Important Reminders

NAE4-HYDP Conference
in Atlanta, GA
October 28-30, 2025

A Message from President Megan

Welcome to our 2025 GAE4-HYDP Professional Development Conference where we will be “Lighting the Future of 4-H”! Just like any great movie has a vision, team, and a lot of behind the scenes work, so does a 4-H program! As a 4-H Extension professional, each day you are preparing for the young people of Georgia to become the next stars of our world. We empower our 4-H’ers to write their own scripts by developing self-confidence, leadership, public speaking, and many other life skills.



Whether you are behind the scenes or in the spotlight, we all work tirelessly to create opportunities for our 4-H members – just as a movie crew would. This conference is a time to connect with 4-H professionals from across the state and recharge with new tools to take back to your county programs. Take advantage of everything the conference offers: meet new people, engage in sessions and committee meetings, think about awards you might apply for in the future, and ask questions!

Serving as the President of GAE4-HYDP this year has been incredibly rewarding, and I appreciate everyone who has supported me and our association along the way. Our board has come so far, and I know the momentum will continue. Thank you all for your engagement in our association and everything you do to make the best better!

Lights, camera, action—together we will light the future of 4-H, and I know it is bright!

Best Regards,

Megan Veal

Growing Minds: Agriculture Sensory Bins Bring Hands-On Learning to Gifted Classrooms

By: Katrina Searcy, Cook County 4-H Agent

In an effort to make agriculture education more accessible, engaging, and inclusive, Cook County 4-H recently brought a hands-on sensory bin lesson to four gifted classes in the school system. This lesson was more than just play—it was a well-crafted educational experience rooted in math, science, and agriculture, with the added goal of reaching all types of learners, especially those with neurodiverse needs.

Each sensory bin focused on a different agricultural theme—gardening, farm animals, and pig farming—blending math concepts like counting, measurement, and addition with tactile exploration. Students dug into soil to measure and “plant” seeds, scooped feed into animal pots based on number cards, and even learned about pig ear notching as a method of livestock identification. By combining academic content with sensory play, students were able to experience agricultural learning in a deeply immersive and meaningful way.

A highlight of the lesson was the participation of teen leader and County 4-H President Bella Cain, who served as a co-teacher for the day. Bella shared her personal experiences and passion for helping neurodivergent youth by introducing the class to her neurodivergent kits—a project she’s developing as her 2025-2026 4-H Leadership-in-Action initiative. Her kits are designed to support children with ADHD, autism, and other learning differences by providing sensory tools that can help regulate focus, emotions, and sensory input during club meetings and classroom instruction. “Bella did an outstanding job modeling leadership in action,” said Mrs. Kathy Jones, Cook County Schools gifted class teacher. “Not only did she help lead the lesson, but she also shared her heart and vision for inclusion. She reminded students that different brains process the world differently—and that’s a strength, not a setback.”

This initiative reflects the broader mission of Georgia 4-H: to provide meaningful, youth-centered learning experiences that meet students where they are. As educators and club leaders continue to adapt programming to meet the needs of all youth, efforts like these demonstrate how sensory-based, inclusive approaches can open the door for deeper engagement, confidence, and belonging. Bella’s neurodivergent kits will continue to evolve and be implemented across Cook County 4-H programs in the coming months. With teen leaders like her paving the way and sensory learning becoming more widespread, the future of 4-H is not only bright—but beautifully inclusive.



Houston County Celebrates Spring Day of Service

By: Samantha Price, Houston County 4-H Agent, Noah Shedd, Houston County 4-H Educator, Michelle Modesitt, Houston County 4-H Program Assistant, and Bella Espada, Houston County 4-H AmeriCorps

Houston County 4-H is passionate about giving back, and this year's annual Spring Day of Service was no exception. Ten enthusiastic youth volunteers came together to make a meaningful difference in their community through a variety of thoughtful activities.

The day began at the Middle Georgia Community Food Bank, where the group lent a helping hand and learned about the organization's efforts to support 24 surrounding counties. While there, the volunteers also created Kindness Cards to be included in food boxes for individuals who live alone—a simple but touching way to spread positivity.

Next, the group visited the Ronald McDonald House, donating essential supplies and participating in a guided tour to better understand how the organization supports families in need. Former 4-H'er and current 4-H volunteer, Robby Walker, joined the group to explain how their ongoing pop tab collections contribute to the cause—bringing their efforts full circle.

The service continued with a creative twist as the youth made no-sew emoji and monster pillows for local senior citizens, offering comfort and cheer. They also painted bright and cheerful flowerpots, which were delivered to school administrative assistants in appreciation for their dedication and hard work.

To cap off their impactful day, the group prepared and delivered baked goods to local law enforcement officers—"super treats" for the community's real-life superheroes. It was a small but heartfelt gesture to thank those who serve and protect. Houston County 4-H's Spring Day of Service was a powerful reminder of how youth engagement can create lasting change. These young volunteers proved that even small acts of kindness can make a big difference.



I PLEDGE MY HANDS

to larger service



Professional Development

Conferences for 4-H Agents Interested in State, National, or International Scholarship/Presentation Opportunities By: Professional Development Committee

Conferences for 4-H Agents Interested in State, National or International Scholarship / Presentation Opportunities

Conference / Organization Name	Dates of Conference	Month for Abstracts Due Generally	Recommended by	Other pertinent info
Ex. NAE4-HYDP	October 28-30, 2025	March	Melinda Miller	Consider tying your session title to the conference theme
GA After School Youth Development Conference	September 15-18, 2026		Christina & Kasey	Happens every 2 years; Many different connections - afterschool programs, community partners, etc. (aligned with after-school standards)
National Health Outreach	April 29 - May 1	December	Christina	Great for those who do programming related to healthy living or collaboration with FACS
National Epsilon Sigma Phi Conference	October 6-9, 2025	February	Jenna	Great for programming that spans Extension program areas.
American Camp Association - natl conference	February 18-21, 2025	September	Kasey	Highlight after-school programming ideas, teen/volunteer trainings, etc. - does not have to strictly focus on 'camp' in the context of Ga 4-H
American Camp Association - Southeastern Conference	Fall 2025 (dates TDB)	Summer/early Fall	Kasey	Highlight after-school programming ideas, teen/volunteer trainings, etc. - does not have to strictly focus on 'camp' in the context of Ga 4-H
National Youth Advocacy and Resilience Conference	March 2-5 2025	Fall	Kasey	Conference strands - head, heart, hands, health, and home
Gulf-South Summit	March 26-28, 2025	Fall	Kasey	Focuses on service-learning and civic engagement through higher education
Engagement Scholarship Consortium	October 8-9, 2025	31-Mar-25	Kasey	community-university engaged scholarship
Ga Science Teacher's Association	January 30-31, 2025	Fall	Kasey	science-related programming
National Tri-States Camping Conference	March 11-13, 2025	Fall	Kasey	Highlight after-school programming ideas, teen/volunteer trainings, etc. - does not have to strictly focus on 'camp' in the context of Ga 4-H
National Ag in the Classroom	June 23-26, 2025	October/November	Kasey	agriculture-related programming
ICEP - Extension Leadership Conference	February 19-20, 2025	Fall	Kasey	"operations" of Extension (program management, staff development, leadership, mentoring, etc.) and not actual programming
ICEP - Public Issues Leadership Development Conference	April 7-8, 2025	Fall	Kasey	"operations" of Extension as it relates to government, organizations, etc.
Association for Experiential Education	November 6-8, 2025	1-May	Kasey	experiential education used in our work (club mtgs, summer programming, etc) https://www.aee.org/events/2025-aee-international-conference
Natl Assn of Natural Resources Extension Professionals	Happens ever-other-year (will occur in 2026)	Spring	Kasey	natural resource-related programming
National Association of Community Development Extension Professionals	June 9-12, 2025	Spring	Kasey	community programming involving youth

Ohio State University Leadership Center's Leadership Moments By: Samantha Price, Houston County 4-H Agent



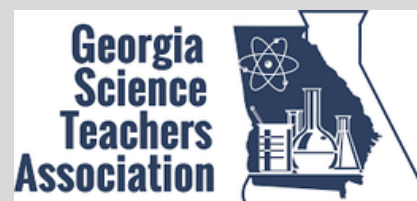
Emails quickly become a "bane of our existence". Whether personal or professional, emails take over our LIVES and we are constantly looking for the "unsubscribe" button. There is one email listserv that I have not regretted joining, and in fact, encourage many of you to join! The Ohio State University Leadership Center has a weekly "Leadership Moments" edition. Something new, something different and something SHORT! This email covers topics from making connections, to characteristics of a leader, acknowledging your people and SO MUCH MORE. Join the email, it's refreshing.

<https://leadershipcenter.osu.edu/>

Georgia Science Teachers Association By: Donita Legoas, Richmond County 4-H Agent

Georgia Science Teachers Association is committed to supporting excellence in science teaching for the students of Georgia. GSTA works to CONNECT, INFORM, SUPPORT, and ADVOCATE for science teachers in Georgia. We also seek to PARTNER with like-minded formal and informal science education organizations like 4-H in order to further GSTA's mission and goals. Georgia Science Teacher Association is one of the best resources for science professional learning, mini grants, curriculum resources, and awards! Check out the website for details, and be sure to mark your calendar to attend the next **GSTA Conference, January 30-31 in Columbus, GA.** You will love it!

Website link: www.georgiascienceteacher.org



Getting to Know You

This Edition's Theme: Hidden Talents & Hobbies

“My hobbies involve playing in a co-ed soccer league in Atlanta and being in an all woman’s bowling league! I have bowled with my mom, my friend’s mom, and a family friend for 30 weeks from September to April for the past 3 years, and our team name is the “Alley Cats”! I have competed at city and statewide tournaments since I started and have won money in all the tournaments I have entered! I bowled a 222, my highest score ever, this year in league! I wanted to bowl in league growing up, but if you win money as a youth in a tournament, you were considered a paid athlete and would not be eligible for NCAA scholarships for other sports, which in my case would’ve been soccer! That segways perfectly into my next hobby, which is playing in a co-ed soccer league in Atlanta for the past 2 years! I play left mid on a primarily Venezuelan team and our team name is Vinotinto. We even have our own professionally made jerseys! We have made it to the playoffs the last two seasons, placing 2nd in the fall season and then placing 1st in the winter season! If you win you move up a division, so we are officially in division 2 of the league! I have so much fun, and it is great picking up Spanish along the way and learning about various traditions and cultures from my teammates!”

From Cara Rhoad, Fayette County 4-H Agent



“Photography has been a long-time hobby of mine, though not much of a secret. I use my pictures to for a calendar I design and sell each year and also enter photography contests at state and local fairs.”

From Jonathan Page, Jackson County 4-H Educator



Meet the Member

Noah Shedd Southwest District

How long have you worked in Extension?

August will be 1 year with Extension.

Family:

My family consists of my mom, stepdad, and little sister, but let's be real, the true star of the show is my dog, Max.

Hobbies: Just casually living my best life at Universal Studios, decorating for the holidays like my house is a real life Pinterest Board, and making frequent "just browsing" trips to Hobby Lobby and Michaels.

Favorite 4-H Activity: Project Achievement

Favorite Book: Any murder mystery

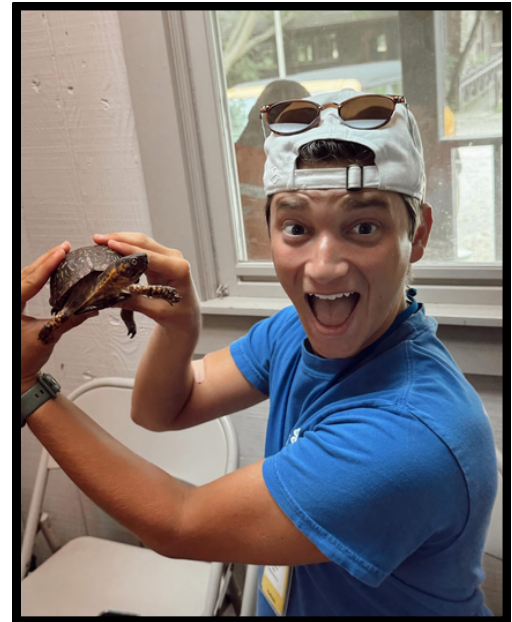
Favorite Movie: Wicked

Favorite Music Genre: Show Tunes

Favorite TV Show: Law & Order SVU

Favorite Quote: "In three words I can sum up everything I've learned about life: It goes on" - Robert Frost

If I didn't work for Extension, I would be: A star on Broadway (still waiting for my 4-H master in performing arts 😂)



Meet the Member

Donita Legoas Northeast District

How long have you worked in Extension?

June will be 1 year with Extension.

Family:

I have an identical twin sister named Kristina, a foster sister, and a brother. I also have a 28 year-old son named Miguel, a daughter-in-law named Caitlin, and a nephew/Godson, named Nick. I also am blessed to have my parents who have been married for nearly 59 years!

Hobbies: I love going to local festivals, thrift stores, and auctions. I also enjoy making wreaths and doing crafts of all types.

Favorite 4-H Activity: My favorite 4-H activity is when my Jr./Sr. County Council have social outings such as when we went Christmas Caroling at local nursing homes. We went caroling, went to look at Christmas lights, and then went ice skating. I love hanging out with the teens. They have so much energy!

Favorite Book: The Outsiders by S.E. Hinton

Favorite Movie: Top Gun

Favorite Music Genre: 80s Music

Favorite TV Show: True Crime shows

Favorite Quote: "This too shall pass"

If I didn't work for Extension, I would be: I would still be a middle school science teacher. I was a teacher for 24 years before making the big change, and so far I love my job!



Meet the Member

Haley Clark Southwest District

How long have you worked in Extension?

Almost 2 years.

Family:

My husband is Nick, and we have two daughters Anna Lynn and Parker.

Hobbies: Anything outdoors, reading, and spending time with my family.

Favorite 4-H Activity: Project Achievement

Favorite Book: Anything written by Nicholas Sparks

Favorite Movie: Sweet Home Alabama

Favorite Music Genre: Country

Favorite TV Show: The Big Bang Theory

Favorite Quote: “The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.” – Eleanor Roosevelt

If I didn't work for Extension, I would be: A teacher; I actually taught for 9 years before becoming a 4-H agent.



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Special thanks to all contributing authors and the 2024-2025 GAE4-HYDP Media Committee for their contributions to this newsletter.

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