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Steuben 4-H youth practice citizenship, leadership

Sarah Wise, Howard Hillbillies 4-H Club member, attended the 2013 Citizenship-Washington Focus Trip (CWF) in July with Rachael Draper serving as her chaperone. The week-long 4-H citizenship program is for youth ages 14-19 at the National 4-H Youth Conference Center near Washington, DC. 4-H youth can explore, develop, and refine their community and civic engagement skills to be outstanding leaders in their communities. Through hands-on educational workshops, and sightseeing tours, they learn about the history of our nation, the leaders who have shaped it, and how they can apply the leadership and citizenship skills they learn during CWF when they return home.

Sarah said, “At first I was worried about being the only one from Steuben County, then I found out that I was the only one from New York. The workshops let us socialize with teens from across the U.S. and hear their prospective on problems in our society and world. We ran a town hall meeting where we ran discussions on the topics we created in the workshops, and on capitol day I met with Congressman Tom Reed. That meant a lot, because he took time out of his schedule to meet with me, and he asked for my opinions and ideas.”

Lindsey Draper, Independent 4-H member, was one of six NYS 4-H Foundation Opportunity Scholarship winners for 2013-2014. She is a 10-year Steuben 4-H member, has been a STARR Planning Committee Member, earned the title of National Shooting Sports Ambassador, participated in Career Explorations as a Focus Assistant, and worked as a Judging Assistant. Lindsey currently attends the Occupational Science/Therapy program at Keuka College.

Career Explorations is a three-day event for over 600 youth on the Cornell University campus created to provide youth with exposure to academic fields and career exploration, to develop leadership skills, to provide hands-on experience in a college setting, and to introduce them to Cornell University.
Extension tackles insurance options

Steuben Financial Educator Nancy Reigelsperger was one of two educators in New York State chosen to attend a national training program in College Park, MD for an emerging initiative around the health insurance marketplace. Smart Choice Training is a strategic initiative identified in the ECOP National Task Force on Health. Research indicates that Americans are confused and uninformed regarding health insurance needs and options, so CCE is ready to respond with its Smart Choice Health Insurance consumer education program. It is designed to reduce confusion and increase capability and confidence among consumers making health insurance plan choices. It is also the basis of two upcoming curriculums on Smart Choices for Farm Families and for Young Adults.

Market shares the harvest experience

The 2013 Bath Wednesday Farmer’s Market season ran from May-October, and CCE-Steuben was pleased to play a part in helping promote local produce to the community. Six times during the summer Nutrition Program Educator Jon Sterlace served up samples of easy-to-prepare recipes using nutritious local fruits and vegetables.

“Visitors to our booth shared with us how much they appreciated learning new ways to prepare the produce they bought at the market. There is a good relationship among CCE, the vendors, and the public at the market encouraging families, seniors, and individuals to come to the weekly event. The market vendors accept different forms of payment, including WIC checks, Senior Farmer’s Market nutrition coupons, wooden tokens that can be acquired by swiping EBT cards, and of course, cash, making it easier for most everyone to purchase fruit and vegetables from the market.” Volunteer Pam Soles and RSVP Volunteers Al and Elaine Lafarge aided Jon at the CCE booth passing out recipes and interacting with the vendors and public.

“One really interesting aspect of promoting the local farmers this year was visiting the fields where their produce was grown. These folks have a lot of pride in what they do, and are excited about sharing the experience of what it takes to harvest their own food.” Jon visited gardens in Bath, Hammondsport, Howard, Hornell, and Penn Yan during the season. CCE promoted garlic, potatoes, fresh green and sugar snap peas, green and wax beans, corn, summer squash, and cabbage over the season.

Tree growers discuss pest challenges

Over the 2013 growing season, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Steuben County hosted Dr. Elizabeth Lamb and NYS IPM Specialist Brian Eshenaur to present at the Steuben Area Christmas Tree Growers Annual Meeting in July. A field tour through Marcus Farms Christmas Tree plantings allowed the presenters to discuss pest challenges with the growers and for a hands-on experience. Integrated Pest Management options were discussed throughout the tour. Local Christmas tree growers were also able to network and connect through this workshop.

Nutrition and horticulture merge for youth

In the early part of the growing season, the Canisteo Wimodaughsian Free Library contacted CCE-Steuben for a gardening workshop. Pat Lamphier and Stephanie Mehlenbacher spoke to the families in attendance about growing food and nutrition. The children were able to plant their own vegetable garden and found out how much fun gardening can be.

Library Director Amie Acton said, “Thank you so much for taking the time to come out and do this program with the kids! They really had fun, and it brought some new faces to the library, always a good thing!”
Master Preservers partner with local kitchens to demonstrate canning methods

The Master Food Preservers offered two workshops in late summer for those who wanted to take advantage of the abundance of local fresh produce for the winter months. The first workshop partnered with Corning Building Company. Their state-of-the-art demonstration kitchen was used for the session on Pressure Canning. This method is used for any low acid food, such as vegetables and meat. There was a full house, and each person canned a jar of vegetable soup to take home. Meat canning was demonstrated for those who wanted to can venison later.

The second workshop was held at St Thomas’ Episcopal Church’s newly renovated kitchen in Bath, a wonderful venue for the Boiling Water Bath method of canning. This method is used for acid foods such as fruits, pickled vegetables and jams. This was also a hands-on workshop and everyone went home with freshly canned salsa.

MacKenzie Krisher crowned as Steuben Dairy Princess

MacKenzie, the 19-year-old daughter of Darleen Krisher-Meehan and Scott Krisher, is very involved with exhibiting dairy cattle as well as working at RAW Farms in Whitesville and Roll N View Farms in Nunda NY. She is a sophomore at Alfred State College majoring in Ag Tech and is active in the Allegany-Steuben Holstein Club where she serves as treasurer of the junior members and as convention chair for the NYS Junior Holstein Association. New to the Dairy Princess program, MacKenzie is looking forward to providing information about the health benefits of consuming 3-Every-Day of dairy and bolstering support for Steuben County’s dairy farms.

Thank you for your volunteer service!

The CCE-Steuben Board of Directors bids farewell to two faithful volunteers as 2013 comes to a close.

Pepi Leids, a NYS Veterinarian, has served six years and has worked on a variety of tasks including Strategic Planning for the organization. “The biggest challenge has been adjusting to Cornell’s effort at regionalization...” She adds that “it was my pleasure to have served on the Board these past six years, and I appreciated the opportunity to speak out on issues that I felt were important from my perspective as a regulatory veterinarian and as a member of the community.”

Mark Schmiedeshoff, a retired Cameron town council member, is finishing his third year of service on the board. Mark feels the greatest success over this time has been “navigating through the difficult waters of the regionalization while still being able to maintain quality programming and funding.” He says, “I believe that CCE-Steuben is valued by our public and makes a real and positive difference."

Steuben youth earn 1st and 6th in state tractor competition

4-H members from across the state competed in the NYS 4-H and FFA Tractor Operator's Contest held on August 8, 2013 at Empire Farm Days in Seneca Falls, NY. Participants in this contest complete a parts identification test, written exam and a tractor-operating course. Andrew Sullivan placed first earning a $250 scholarship to SUNY Cobleskill. Ian Stewart took 6th place. Volunteer instructors were John Lyons and Dave Dockstader.
2013 4-H Achievement Night recognizes outstanding individuals

Each year, youth are recognized as Outstanding 4-H Members. This year’s award recipients have embodied the 4-H motto “To Make the Best Better” as they have grown in the 4-H Program. The 2013 awards were presented to Jenna Brokaw – Loon Lake Raiders, and Mike Murphy – Southern Tier Livestock.

William Danforth was a successful businessman who dared young people to achieve their highest potential to influence others through lives of leadership and service. As a civic leader, he helped found the American Youth Foundation in 1925. His challenge to all was to “be your own self and at your very best all of the time.” The “I Dare You” Leadership Award recognizes those who, with little encouragement, are ready to be leaders. The 2013 award went to Patrick Acomb, Southern Tier Livestock; Katie Matthews, Willing Workers; and Joel Rosko, Outsiders.

The 6th Annual Steuben County Friend of 4-H Awards were selected from a list of nominees from throughout Steuben County and are presented to an individual and a business who have excelled in their dedication to the Steuben County 4-H Youth Development program through the years and have earned the respect of 4-H members, families and leaders, as well as the community. The 2013 Friend of 4-H Individual went to Nick Pelham and Rick Machuga. The 2013 Friend of 4-H Business went to the Tractor Supply Company of Bath, Hornell, and Painted Post.