

Mason County 4-H: KEEPING 4-H MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS ENGAGED AMID COVID-19

Amid the current pandemic and Washington's Stay Home, Stay Healthy order, Mason County 4-H is facing many unforeseen challenges. Our staff and network of trained 4-H volunteers have had to quickly understand the impact of COVID-19 and develop a plan of action to support our members and our community. While this time of uncertainty has presented new obstacles to navigate, our commitment to positive youth development is unwavering and 4-H remains present to support the young people we serve and all kids who need educational resources, mentorship and a sense of belonging in this time.

Adapting - We are successfully hosting events and meetings in a virtual format. Regularly scheduled Office Hours and Council meetings are well attended by both youth and adults, with youth taking an active leadership role in the meetings.

Accessibility - We continue to share resources for families to stay connected and engaged in learning throughout this time. These resources are available on our website and Facebook page to all families in our community.

Successes – A virtual Animal Meet-Up was held giving youth an opportunity to Zoom with their project animals or pets, we learned about poultry, dogs, goats, rabbits, and cats. A virtual scholarship interview allowed for one high school senior to share her story of personal growth through her 4-H journey with a committee of 3 members. A 4-H member has entered a virtual horse show by submitting a video of her riding her horse; she is anxiously awaiting the contest results. "This is so great. People say there is nothing for kids to do in Shelton, but this has been so fun"- Keri D., community parent.

Moving Forward - We are developing plans for alternate activities that will keep youth engaged in summer learning and fun while our traditional summer programs are paused. With the Grays Harbor County Fair being cancelled, the 4-H program is planning a virtual showcase for members to exhibit their projects and showcase their learning. We will be using the online program called *FairEntry*. Stay tuned for more information on this exciting opportunity! We are also creating 4-H activity kits that will be available to 4-H members to take home. These kits will include some hands-on learning activities that are sure to keep youth engaged and learning at home. More on this will be available soon!

For more information regarding the Mason County WSU Extension office call [360-427-9670](tel:360-427-9670) Ext. 680, or visit our website at <https://extension.wsu.edu/mason/>

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