

## ***4-H and Youth***

### **Anne Manlove**

*Laura's four Jackson County Fair 4-H champion cake decorating ribbons garnered a job in the bakery at a local grocery store.*

*Sarah wanted a part-time job while in high school. A visit to a local grocery's floral department, with photographs of winning Fair arrangements in hand, earned her a job on the spot.*

*After nine years in the 4-H dog program, Jordan has a part-time job working at a kennel and pet resort.*

*Stacy, an accountant and former 4-H sewing member, just returned from Afghanistan, where she is working with village women to create fine embroidery for pillows that will then be marketed in the United States to help impoverished Afghan families earn a living.*

Few kids join the 4-H program with the lofty goal of preparing to enter the workforce. Yet learning the skills that help young people succeed in the working world is one important piece of the Oregon 4-H program mission: *...develop youth and adult potential to improve communities through learning to make a living.* The examples above demonstrate how our 4-H program is making a difference in the lives of participants.

In 2007, 9,997 Jackson County youth participated in programs offered by the SOREC Youth staff. Whether through the traditional 4-H club experience, in one-day events, or in after-school programs, youth developed valuable life

skills and gained knowledge to help them become productive, healthy adults.

In 2007, 1,222 members were enrolled in traditional 4-H clubs, led by 340 volunteer leaders. Animal Science remains the program's largest subject area; members are also enrolled in Home

Economics, Engineering/Technology, Expressive Arts, Horticulture and Natural Resources projects.

The County Fair serves as a popular incentive for

members: 720 members entered 3,213 exhibits at the 2007 fair. Many others participated by doing barn duty, creating club displays or participating in contests.

No report would be complete without auction data. In 2007, 118 steers, 247 hogs, 224 lambs, 3 pens of rabbits, two turkeys and two goats grossed \$925,873. Funds go back into the community in the form of college tuition, veterinary supplies, grain, new livestock purchases or school clothes. The dollars from generous businesses and citizens – who pay above-market prices – are rewarding the acquisition of valued skills and behaviors. Local survey data indicates that participants learn responsibility, cooperation, decision-making, communication, time management, salesmanship and other skills.

Camp is another important traditional 4-H activity. Because of the growth of the program, the camp was split in 2007, allowing 113 members and 20 counselors to travel to the rustic setting of Lobster Creek. Campers assisted ODFW with a salmon census on the

*In 2007, nearly 10,000 Jackson County youth participated in programs offered by SOREC.*

Rogue River, slept under the stars, learned to cooperate with their cabin mates, spent time at the beach, developed a sense of responsibility for the outdoors and had fun.

Jackson County members participated in a variety of other activities. One member won the national Beekeeping Essay Contest. The Senior Horse Judging Team earned the honor of representing Oregon at the national competition to be held in January 2008. Two members were selected to represent Oregon at the National 4-H Congress in Atlanta. One member traveled to Australia for a six-week home stay. Sixteen families hosted members from Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania on the second half of an Interstate Exchange. The Oregon State Fair saw 113 representatives of Jackson County. Local youth also took a strong interest in leadership development: 17 attended the Youth Leadership Retreat in Klamath Falls and 12 went to the OSU Summer Conference in Corvallis. Many others participated in other activities.

In 2007, Jackson County 4-H leaders and staff hosted the annual Oregon Leader Forum. Volunteers from Josephine, Curry, Coos and Douglas counties joined in the effort. Leaders from across the state attend this event for inspiration, education, celebration and rejuvenation. Because of the quality of the program, participation doubled from the previous year.

The traditional 4-H audience makes up approximately 12% of the participants reached by Extension Youth programming. The remaining 88% were involved in short-term activities or events, enrolled in after-school programs, and/or attended school

enrichment programs. Thus, 8,775 kids have been reached by staff hired with grant dollars or participation fees. This number was down from 2006 due to the departure of four staff members.

#### **Sams Valley After School Program Alicia McCuen**

The 4-H Sams Valley After-School Program (Sams Community Options for Recreation & Education, or SCORE) has 45 students enrolled as full or part time participants. Under the direction of Alicia McCuen, SCORE continues to offer extraordinary learning opportunities to K-5<sup>th</sup> grade students from 2:00-6:00 pm, five days per week.

#### **4-H School Enrichment Program Theresa Leonardo**

In 2007, SOREC's successful agriculture and food/nutrition school enrichment program expanded to include more schools. Fourth graders from Howard, Abraham Lincoln, Washington, Wilson, Sacred Heart, Hoover, Roosevelt and White City elementary schools participated.

The program is designed to introduce youth to agriculture. After a couple of months of classroom study, students are invited to the Fairgrounds for Hands-On Agriculture Day. Members watch sheep being shorn, brush leaves for insects and identify them with a microscope, observe a horseshoeing demonstration, sample goat milk fudge, discover the importance of honey bees, learn about grains and much more. This program is made possible by grants from several agriculture-related businesses and organizations in the community.