

Biographical Narrative

On September 17, 2018, I started as an OSU Extension Educator I, 4-H Youth Development in Fairfield County, specializing in Camp. I serve as one of two 4-H Educators in the county, alongside a full-time program assistant and 2 full-time office associates operating on a \$434,000 annual budget. Within the county office, I started as lead steward for the county plan of work, and now am the lead Fiscal and Commissioner Relations & Budget Development Proposal Steward.

Based on the 2019 U.S. Census, Fairfield County's population is 157,154. Of the population, 86.8% are white, 9.4% of the population has a disability, and 23.9% are 5–18-year-old youth. The county is predominantly rural with less than 2% of the county's land in urban areas. The 2019-2020 ES237 report indicates Fairfield County 4-H served 1,305 youth through fifty 4-H community clubs with 224 adult 4-H certified volunteers.

Job Description

This Extension Educator provides co-leadership to a comprehensive positive youth development program while focusing educational programming on camps, youth health and wellness, mentoring and other topics identified as county priorities; Plans and conducts educational events in collaboration with 4-H adult and teen volunteers, as well as partners with organizations to provide opportunities for development of subject matter knowledge and teen leadership; Responsible for all summer camp-leadership training, overseeing day-to-day camp activities and all associated committees.

Degrees

Master of Public Health, The Ohio State University, Public Health – Epidemiology, 2019

Bachelor of Science, Shawnee State University, Natural Science – Biology Concentration, 2013

Areas of Focus and Specialization

I have identified my areas of specialization as Healthy Living and Cloverbuds. In the 2019 calendar year, the Fairfield County 4-H Cloverbud (youth ages 5-8) program had 169 youth participate in 21 community clubs and 115 youth participate in countywide programs. Themes I would like to continue focusing on are project development (14%), volunteerism (10%), 4-H promotion & marketing (10%), and teen leadership development (14%). These are the additional programs that I focused on during the reporting year. Some of the groups I worked with during these programs are the Fairfield County Horse Advisory Committee, Fairfield County Tractor Maintenance 4-H Club, Fairfield County 4-H Shooting Sports Program, Junior Leaders (youth ages 13 & up), and the Fashion & Nutrition Board.

Major Accomplishments

4-H Camp has been a major accomplishment in programming. In 2019, our numbers increased to 60 youth (ages 5-8) attending day camp at Alley Park, 316 youth (ages 8-19) attending overnight camp at Tar Hollow Resident Park. We added new activities at camp including archery for all campers and outdoor cooking for our intermediate campers. In 2020, we designed an all-new virtual camp¹ for 103 youth and 30 camp counselors where over 10 days of content and 2 live meetings were created and hosted. To reduce the cost of camp for our members, the Bertha Wilson Trust has offered camp scholarships for years. In 2019, the Bertha Wilson Trust covered a 50% scholarship for all campers who applied in addition to covering the cost of any family with financial needs resulting in a \$19,271 monetary contribution. In 2020, virtual camp was offered to all youth for free and a larger campership fund was established when in person camp resumes. The total amount contributed was \$23,526.98.

- In 2020, I wrote a peer reviewed lesson that was taught at the Making Extreme Counselors (MXC) Conference. The lesson was titled, “Well, now what?!?” and was designed to help

¹Virtual camp can be viewed at: <https://u.osu.edu/spacecamp/>

counselors problem solve by thinking through those tricky camp situations and coming up with new solutions.

- In 2021, I have another lesson accepted to teach at the MXC Conference on Supportive Relationships that will focus creating a welcoming environment that puts campers first.

Teen Leadership Development is a program I have been working on since I started in 2018. My main goal of advising the Junior Leaders is that the teens will learn how to work as a group, organize events, and evaluate activities. Each fall the teen board organizes the Advisor Banquet for over 200 guests and this was successful in 2018 and 2019. In 2020, they designed a drive thru to recognize the adults who help them all year. This group of 17 teens has also meet virtually through most of 2020, carried out community service projects and found new ways to promote 4-H. Currently they are working on a new recruitment video to be shared in over 15 elementary schools.

The primary goal of the 4-H Cloverbud program is to promote children's healthy development –mentally, physically, socially, and emotionally. Since starting in my position, we have actively recruited in schools for new Cloverbud members and assisted starting additional Cloverbud clubs across the county. There are now more countywide activities for these youth to participate in including: Virtual Space Camp, Stuffed Animal Show, Cloverbud Graduation, Cloverbud Show-N-Tell, and Skillathon. A project of success for Cloverbuds is Graduation. In 2019, we hosted our first in-person graduation ceremony to recognize Cloverbud youth who were aging up to the Traditional 4-H program during the Fairfield County Fair. Five youth participated and received special recognition. In 2020, Graduation occurred virtually with a video montage of each youth's favorite projects, memories, and things they were looking forward to. Youth that participated received a special prize pack with a 4-H graduation certificate and a gift certificate for their first 4-H book. Twenty-eight youth participated in graduation this year, and we have already received feedback about the excitement over the gift certificate and deciding which project book to buy in 2021.

In 2019, an End of the Year survey was designed for all 4-H families and advisors to complete. Utilizing this survey and its results allows program staff to identify areas of need in the community and ways to improve programming, customer service, and overall experience.

Some highlights include:

- In 2019, over 180 responses were received, “90% Had a positive experience with 4-H”, 6,608 volunteer hours were reported among 65 advisors, and 85% of 1st year members felt they received enough information to be successful.”
- In 2020, 157 responses were received, “83% had a positive experience in 4-H, 2,332 volunteer hours were reported from 56 advisors, and 82% of 1st year members felt they received enough information to be successful”.

The Tar Hollow Raise the Roof Crowdfunding campaign started in March 2020 to raise funds for a new shelter house at Tar Hollow Resident Camp. In November, the Ross-Hocking Extension Camp Association sent thank you cards to all camp families and donors. To assist with this campaign, I wrote multiple press releases, organized camp alumni to share their memories, and designed social media posts. I also designed, organized, and coordinated the Thank You Note Campaign that directly resulted in \$11,000 being donated to the shelter house project. At the end of 2020, there were 68 donors with \$27,040 raised for the project.

The Thank You Note Project started in 2019 to educate Junior Fair Exhibitors about the importance of showing appreciation to community donors and sponsors. In 2019, an interactive display was set up at the

Fairfield County Fair where exhibitors could receive help writing thank you notes. Over 40 exhibitors participated in the Thank You Note Station and 180 cards were mailed. In 2020, three stations were set up to allow for socially distanced education and over 100 cards were received during fair week. We received media coverage on this project from community members and within the extension family. This project also led to a presentation at the Ohio Fair Managers Conference in 2020.

Service major accomplishments

On a local level, I have served as an active Ohio Farm Bureau Member and a voting delegate for Franklin County Farm Bureau during their annual meeting from 2018-2020. This service opportunity allows me to connect with the community about important agricultural issues and ways to involve our youth. Fairfield County is also a member of the Ross Hocking Extension Camp Association which governs the camping program at Tar Hollow State Park Resident Camp. Within this board, I have served as Vice President for 2 years and organize the Multi-County Counselor Camp for all older youth serving as camp counselors from the 4 counties that camp there.

On a state level, I am an active member in the Ohio Joint Council of Extension Professionals serving on the marketing subcommittee, and Epsilon Sigma Phi (ESP) Alpha Eta Chapter. I participate in committee and organizational meetings as they are scheduled. By being involved with these organizations, I have been able to connect with other educators from across the state and in different program areas. This has allowed for new ideas to be shared and adapted for our county programming.

On a National Level, I have served as the Ohio Representative to the geographic information system (GIS) working group. I am an active member in the National Association of Extension 4-H Youth Development Professionals (NAE4-HYDP), having attended two national conferences and. I have participated in two national presentations with fellow educators on camping curriculum and community club recruitment.

Plans for future

In the coming years, I plan to bring new healthy living activities to countywide programming. In 2019, I became a certified Yoga for 4-H instructor and would like to add classes when in-person programming can resume. There are five Ohio Health Heroes in Fairfield County who I would like to incorporate into more countywide programming. In 2020, I started teaching lessons on mindfulness, mental health well-being and dealing with loss to our teen boards. I participated in the Trauma Informed Care Approaches Instructors Training from OSU and look forward to continuing to teach it at the county and state level. As the pandemic continues, the mental health and well-being of our youth and volunteers will be impacted. I would like to find additional ways to connect with our 4-H members, families, and volunteers to teach about mental health and public health concerns.

One of the areas of research I am most excited about is partnering with Dr. Tiffany Wild, Associate Professor & Interim Assistant Department Chair, College of Education and Human Ecology – Department of Teaching and Learning, to evaluate county and state 4-H activities that youth participate in and the accessibility of them for our youth with disabilities. I would like to identify areas within this study where Fairfield County could improve on programming and make it more accessible to all youth. This would also allow us to bring more diversity to our program and meet our members where they reside.

I believe 4-H has the ability to get more youth involved in community clubs and countywide activities. I look forward to working with our county staff to find new, innovative ways “to make the best better”.