Extension's 4-H Youth Development leadership has begun an accreditation process for its four summer camps and restarted two programs to teach youth about government.

"A lot of state 4-H camping programs are accredited," said Joe Kurth, extension assistant director for 4-H Youth Development. "It's important to do that in Kentucky so parents can have the highest level of confidence about the experience. It's all about making us better," Kurth said.

Officials with the American Camping Association, the accrediting agency for youth camps throughout the United States, visited Kentucky's four 4-H camps this summer. To prepare for that review, several improvements were made to the camp program this past year, including expanding training of program volunteers, raising the age requirement for camp counselors from 14 to 15, and putting in place procedures to assure adequate time off for camp staff.

4-H: A Capitol Experience
In February, nearly 600 4-H'ers from across the state traveled to Frankfort as part of the program 4-H: A Capitol Experience to learn how decisions are made in state government.

It was the second year of the revival of this day-long trip.

Participants had opportunities to meet with Gov. Ernie Fletcher and legislators, watch the Kentucky Legislature in session, hear 4-H alumni who now work in state government talk about what 4-H has meant to them, and visit sites such as the Kentucky History Museum and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

It was also a day for legislators to learn more about 4-H from the youth and the volunteers and extension professionals who accompanied them.

“One of the youths attending was 18 the next day, and he went right out and registered to vote,” said Paula Tarry, extension agent for 4-H Youth Development in Barren County, who co-chairs the program with Mark Mains, extension associate for 4-H Youth Development.

American Heritage
In July, 32 4-H'ers traveled to Washington, D.C., in the first American Heritage program in several years—the week-long trip has not been held since 9/11, but interest has resurfaced.

“It wasn't just sightseeing,” said coordinator Mark Mains, who took part in American Heritage when he was a teenager in 4-H. "Our young people actually learned about the legislative process.”

The 4-H'ers stayed at the 4-H National Conference Center in Chevy Chase, Md., where they attended several workshops.

4-H'ers shared information with members of the House representing their districts or with their staffers. They asked them “some really good questions,” Mains said.

The 4-H'ers also visited monuments, war memorials, and museums.

Both 4-H: A Capitol Experience and American Heritage are planned again for 2006.
Tourism in Caldwell County

Tourism and the travel industry provide $3.4 million in revenue and 64 jobs in Caldwell County. The Caldwell County Cooperative Extension Service, along with the Smithsonian Institution, the Kentucky Humanities Council, and Adsmore Museum in Princeton, provided an exhibit entitled *Key Ingredients: America by Food* for the Western Kentucky area. Extension agents arranged for displays in businesses, scheduled and conducted cooking classes, organized volunteers, and held a cooking and canning competition. The exhibit reached more than 500 visitors from outside the community. Five businesses reported a 25 percent increase in business during the six-week program.

Reality Checks in Green County

The Green County Cooperative Extension Service, along with a variety of community organizations, taught youngsters financial management skills. More than 125 students selected a career and had to act as if they were surviving on that career’s salary for a month when they participated in the 4-H Reality Check program. Students had to calculate taxes and review various choices they could make to spend the hypothetical check. Thirty-three percent of the youth who took part now believe an advanced education is important, and 89 percent believe they are now better prepared to enter high school and plan for a future career.

Character Education in Simpson County

The Simpson County Extension Council and teachers at Franklin and Simpson County elementary schools identified character education as an issue facing the community. The Simpson County Cooperative Extension Service trained 18 volunteers to teach character education in 40 classrooms from kindergarten through third grade. They taught lessons on topics including trustworthiness, responsibility, respect, fairness, caring, and citizenship. When the teachers were asked about behavior changes in their students due to the character education program, they reported that “throughout the year the students would refer to the character education lessons, were respectful, and were more caring to each other.”

Leadership in Boyd County

The Catlettsburg Leadership Community Development Club is a grassroots organization that developed with support of the Boyd County Cooperative Extension Service. This group of leaders consists of Catlettsburg’s mayor and city government employees, Boyd County School System employees, and local residents. The club conducts educational tours of historic Catlettsburg with the primary goal of beautifying and revitalizing Catlettsburg, and the club has donated nearly $150,000 to community revitalization projects.

Pre-Conditioned Feeder Calves in the Green River Area

Cooperative Extension Service agents in the Green River Area coordinate their educational efforts in beef cattle production through the Certified Preconditioned for Health 45 program. Beef producers learn how to improve their herds through better herd management and improved record keeping, holding feeder calves longer past weaning, and selling only preconditioned feeder calves. Feeder calves raised by producers in the program have received an average premium of $7.64 per hundredweight, which is an average net income increase of nearly $80 per calf.
Boosting Market Skills in Logan County

Many farmers are looking for opportunities to enhance their incomes. Some farmers are finding that marketing their produce through farmers markets is an excellent opportunity to add to their income. The Logan County Cooperative Extension Service has served as advisor, facilitator, and educator for its local farmers market as well as for individual producers. As a result of extension educational programs, four growers have earned home-based processing certification, and one received a microprocessing license that enabled expansion of the grower’s product line to include breads, jams, and other products.

Diabetes Education in Jefferson County

With diabetes being one of the top five killers among chronic diseases, Kentuckians need education about it. The Jefferson County Cooperative Extension Service, in collaboration with the county health department, sponsored bimonthly diabetes management workshops at the Park DuValle Health Center. The extension family and consumer sciences agent worked with health department dietitians to teach classes about managing the disease. Eighty-five percent of those attending indicated they would use what they learned in their daily menus.

Environmental Education in Grayson County

Nearly 115 sixth graders and 16 adult volunteers in Grayson County participated in the county’s 4-H environmental day camps, coordinated by the Grayson County Cooperative Extension Service, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and community volunteers. Evaluations by teachers and students indicated that students gained a greater appreciation for the environment and their role in preserving it. Teachers also indicated that the camp was the most educational field trip that the students had experienced, with long-term rewards in increased understanding of the environment.

Precision Agriculture in Ballard County

Precision agriculture uses networks of satellites and receivers to pinpoint exact locations in fields. Applications of fertilizers and pesticides to crops can be precisely monitored using the technology, resulting in savings to producers. The Ballard County Cooperative Extension Service, in conjunction with the College’s Department of Biosystems and Agricultural Engineering, conducted farmer meetings for 41 producers. As a result, 23 guidance systems and nine GPS yield monitors have been purchased. In the first season of operation, the guidance systems were used on more than 75,000 acres of corn, wheat, and soybeans. Data revealed actual yield lost due to fencerows, tree lines, and weed infestations and the effect drainage has on yield.

On the Move in Christian County

More than 40 percent of Kentuckians report none of the regular physical activity that could reduce blood pressure and the risk of heart disease, diabetes, stroke, and perhaps some forms of cancer. Exercise also strengthens bones and can help control weight. The Christian County Cooperative Extension Service sponsored Get Moving Kentucky, a program which encourages people to exercise more. Of the 71 people who attended, 44 reported feeling better, 37 reported feeling more energetic, and 15 reported weight loss.

Master Food Volunteers

County extension agents for family and consumer sciences are experiencing an increasing demand for information about food and nutrition, including food preparation and safety. To help deal with this increased need for information, family and consumer sciences agents in eight Northern Kentucky counties worked together to train 14 volunteers to help distribute accurate information about the topics. Program participants will teach good nutrition practices, with each of them volunteering 40 hours in their local communities.
The article on page one and many of the short program highlights included in this issue of *Extension Today* illustrate how Cooperative Extension, through 4-H, is fulfilling the College’s vision as stated in its most recent strategic plan: To foster “learning that changes lives, discoveries that change the world, and opportunities that shape the future.”

The Cooperative Extension Service plays a key role in carrying out this vision, reaching the youth of the Commonwealth who are Kentucky’s future through 4-H Youth Development programs such as our camps and civic engagement activities.

Many adults recognize the positive impact 4-H camp has had on their lives, and we remain committed to providing a positive camping experience for thousands of youth annually at our four 4-H camps across the state. This year, we have not only taken steps for accreditation of our camping facilities, we have upgraded facilities, which will benefit campers for years to come.

The page one article discusses both the expanding interest and opportunities offered through 4-H: A Capitol Experience in Frankfort and the revived American Heritage program in Washington, D.C.

Many current legislators, others involved in state government, and individuals in the private sector attribute much of their success to a positive experience in 4-H through their projects and activities in communications, public speaking, and leadership development.

We appreciate the dedication and effort of 4-H agents and adult volunteers across Kentucky that make these and other quality programs possible. They are truly fulfilling the 4-H motto by “making the best better.” Our state 4-H office, under the leadership of Joe Kurth, is providing the kind of excellent support necessary for such endeavors. The Kentucky 4-H Foundation, with a new executive director, Chris Clabes, is seeking to enhance monetary support for 4-H programs and is making great strides. We are excited about the possibilities for 4-H Youth Development programs in Kentucky. We do indeed believe that we are providing “learning that changes lives and opportunities that shape the future.”

—LARRY W. TURNER, Director
Cooperative Extension Service

**HELPING 4-H’ERS CHANGE THEIR LIVES, SHAPE THEIR FUTURE**

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