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Oklahoma 4-H expands its impact

CHASE HARVICK

Oklahoma 4-H is expanding student activities to include more science and technology based projects, such as website design and rocketry, as a part of its continuing effort to create new leaders.

Oklahoma 4-H, the youth development arm of Oklahoma State University's cooperative extension program, has been active for almost 100 years.

Charles Cox, state 4-H program leader and OSU 4-H youth development interim director, said what is now known as 4-H began as an effort to encourage those involved in agriculture to adopt new technologies.

"The early goals of the Cooperative Extension Service included helping adults learn better agricultural production practices," Cox said. "However, adults were found to be more hesitant in accepting new technologies than children were, so 4-H set out to target them."

Initial projects included corn clubs for boys and tomato clubs for girls. The clubs utilized improved feeds and fertilizers which led to greater crop yields.

"The older people saw this and took notice," Cox said. "This not only mainstreamed new agricultural methods, but it created a new generation of farmers."

Implementation of these early projects became the basis of the 4-H philosophy: learn by doing.

"The 4-H organization uses the experiential model of learning: do, reflect, apply. Young people learn by doing and then reflect and talk about what they did," Cox said. "Oklahoma 4-H offers more than 100 projects to meet the different learning goals of its members."

Jill Rucker, agricultural communications instructor and former OSU student government president, attributes much of her success to skills acquired through 4-H.

"Holding 4-H offices not only taught me to present myself professionally but also instilled

in me the willingness to serve others," Rucker said. "I believe this directly led to my decision to run for SGA president at OSU."

Rucker said 4-H is unique because it creates a foundation of knowledge and builds upon that by having members apply what they learn through various projects.

"They don't just give you a patch or a medal for learning about something and then move on to the next item on the list," Rucker said. "By the time I graduated from high school I had presented over 100 speeches to various organizations as a part of my public speaking training."

While 4-H started in the agricultural industry and is still deeply rooted in the development and promotion of it, both Cox and Rucker acknowledge the need for the program to diversify.

"Oklahomans are moving from rural areas to more urban settings," Cox said. "We are currently developing program ideas that will increase student interest in urban groups."

Cox pointed out that urban settings present transportation problems and a higher frequency of member relocation, requiring 4-H to collaborate with other youth services.

"We recognize that we have to work more closely with the schools," Cox said.

"Many of our educators are now becoming resources for other youth organizations such as Boys and Girls Clubs, YMCA and the Scouts," Cox said. "Using the expertise that we have in youth development to help them, we are actually strengthening our organization."

Rucker said 4-H recently added projects dealing with website development and computer technology.

"Organization leaders are looking at new trends and ways to use them to develop students professionally and personally,"

Rucker said.

Rebecca Lasich, OSU collegiate 4-H president, described efforts to increase 4-H offerings.

"The state 4-H office is working to develop new curriculum in many areas, especially in the newer science and technology areas," Lasich said. "The office is working to expand the model rocketry curriculum because of increasing student interest in that area."

The curriculum may change generation to generation, but Cox said one thing that will remain constant is the importance of creating a learning environment with caring adult volunteers.

"What most affected my 4-H experience was observing the volunteer leaders' willingness to attend every meeting while getting only the personal satisfaction of helping young people in return," Cox said. "I had opportunities I never would have taken advantage of had someone not cared enough to push me."

"When you look at people who were raised in the 4-H program and see the successes they have achieved, it makes all the time and effort spent worthwhile," he said.



Rebecca Lasich

OKLAHOMA STATE Portraits Celebrating the Centennial: OSU contributions



She never played organized basketball, but "Mrs. Basketball of Oklahoma" Bertha Teague coached the Byng High School Lady Pirates to eight state championships and amassed a 1,152-115 win/loss record. The 1932 Oklahoma A&M College graduate also founded the first girl's basketball clinic in the Southwest and, in 1962, wrote "Basketball for Girls."

For her astonishing record, including a 98-game win streak and multiple coach-of-the-year awards, Teague received a Special Service Award from the Oklahoma Men's Coaches Association and remains the only woman to receive the honor.

OSU and other NCAA Division I women's basketball programs in the state observe the legacy of the first woman inducted into the Oklahoma Athletic Hall of Fame and the National Basketball Hall of Fame by participating in the annual Bertha Teague Classic.

Spring Break
March 19-23
Classes resume
March 26



Opportunities abound with Outdoor Adventure

ALEX DENKINSKA

OSU's Outdoor Adventure organization offers students opportunities to experience the great outdoors and learn more about environmental awareness.

"We aim to educate students about the nature that surrounds us through trips, leadership workshops and teamwork," said Scott Jordan, Outdoor Adventure coordinator.

Outdoor Adventure trips and workshops emphasize leadership training through theory and decision making, and to ensure program quality, the OSU organization collaborates on various projects with the Wilderness Education Association. Jordan was recently named president of the national, nonprofit association that spreads its message through teaching students in wilderness settings.

"I am excited and honored to work for the wilderness association," Jordan said. "I have devoted my career to outdoor activities, and now I can help other schools develop great outdoor programs, too."

Outdoor Adventure offers students trips throughout the year to places such as Grand Canyon, Wichita Wildlife Refuge, New Mexico and Arizona.

"Our trips are open to all OSU students," Jordan said. "Students don't need to be members of the organization to participate in a trip."

Jordan said the trips are opportunities for students to make lifelong connections.

"We have students who have met on a trip and married later on," he said. "Being with eight other people for a week creates friendships for life."

For students who don't have the time to camp out, the organization offers activities at the Colvin Recreation Center, including climbing wall lessons.

Jordan said climbing is a unique way to get a workout and become friends with people who share common interests.

"The climbing wall not only gives great exercise but also allows students to socialize," Jordan said.

For students interested in becoming better leaders, Outdoor Adventure provides workshops designed to enhance communication and management skills.

"Our program is one of the few in the nation allowing students to be trip leaders and take care of others when surrounded by nature," Jordan said.

The main goal of Outdoor Adventure is to provide students the necessary skills to lead others in outdoor trips.

"We offer excellent resources for students to learn about safety and protecting the environment," Jordan said. "I believe we should all take care of the earth and the earth will take care of us."

Around the STATE...

College guide gives OSU high marks

OSU is ranked sixth among Big 12 universities in The Washington Monthly's Annual College Guide, a new assessment of American higher education institutions.

In contrast to other national guides, Washington Monthly ranked universities and liberal arts colleges according to national service, social mobility and how they foster research. OSU ranked No. 86 on the list behind Texas A&M, the University of Texas, Iowa State, Colorado and Missouri.

System seeks energy managers to jumpstart conservation

OSU is searching for eight energy managers to guide implementation of the customized, multi-year conservation education program it is developing with national leader Energy Education Inc. The managers will provide energy-tracking software support for assessment of the overall program's effectiveness and communicate to diverse campus audiences.

The hiring of the energy managers for each OSU campus is the key first step in a comprehensive energy conservation initiative expected to save the OSU System more than \$30 million over the next seven years.

Celebration of Teaching welcomes Teachers of the Year

Kimberly Oliver, the 2006 National Teacher of the Year, and Oklahoma Teacher of the Year Linda Hasler-Reid will headline the College of Education's 17th annual Celebration of Teaching April 2.

Oliver, a kindergarten teacher from Silver Spring, Md., will present the keynote address, "Best Foot Forward: Putting Students on the Path of Lifelong Learning," at 9 a.m. in the Student Union Theater. Her talk is free and open to the public. Hasler-Reid, who teaches at Muskogee Public Schools, will present "Echoes in Eternity: The Impact Teachers Have on Their Students" during the luncheon.

More information on the event is available at www.okstate.edu/education/celebration.



Kimberly Oliver



Linda Hasler-Reid

Holocaust survivor to tell story of hope

OSU Women's Programs will host a free lecture March 27 by Holocaust survivor Rosa Blum from 2-3 p.m. at the Student Union Theater. Blum will present "The Will to Live: A Story of Survival" about her experiences in the extermination camps Auschwitz and Dachau.

The event is sponsored by OSU's Women's Studies program, Sociology department, Women's Resource Center and Minority Women's Association, the Stillwater Public Library and the National Organization of Women.



OSU-OKC hosts Native American exhibit

"We Are Who We Were," an exhibit featuring artifacts, tribal music, photographic images, art and oral histories from the Indian tribes of Oklahoma, will be on display at OSU-Oklahoma City through April 6.

The exhibit is housed in the OSU-OKC Learning Resource Center's third-floor library, and admission is free. It may be viewed 8 a.m. - 9 p.m. Monday through Thursday, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. Fridays, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. Saturdays and 1-5 p.m. Sundays.

Representing all 39 of Oklahoma's American Indian tribes, the unique, interactive exhibit allows visitors to explore the traditional historic past of the state's Native people and experience contemporary Indian cultures.