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National Volunteer Week Salutes 4-H Volunteers in Stoddard County

APRIL 07TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

National Volunteer Week Salutes 4-H Volunteers in Stoddard County

Stoddard County, Missouri - Each year, thousands of volunteers in Missouri donate their time and energy to make their communities a better place to live. These volunteers will be among the millions across the country who will be spotlighted during the 43rd anniversary of National Volunteer Week, April 23-29, 2017.

Research conducted by the Corporation for National and Community Service found that in 26.5% of adult Americans (64.5 million) volunteered 7.9 billion hours of service worth \$175 billion in 2014. In Missouri, approximately 1.45 million volunteers of all types contributed 151.6 million hours of service. The 32.3 volunteer hours per resident ranks Missouri 15th among the 50 states and Washington, D.C.

One group that relies heavily on volunteers is the University of Missouri Extension 4-H Program. In 2017 over 7,000 youth and adults volunteered in some capacity with Missouri 4-H. In Stoddard County, 32 volunteers, both youth and adult, will serve as club leaders, project leaders, committee members, and in advisory capacities for the 4-H Youth Development Program.

“In Stoddard County the number of volunteers has grown over the last few years and more 4-H clubs have started as a result. With more volunteers, 4-H is able to reach more youth in the county. This helps youth to be more active outside of school and they are able to learn life skills that will last them a lifetime, says Stephanie Milner, 4-H Youth Specialist.”

Volunteers spend numerous hours working on tasks, such as helping organize an event at the county fair, helping a child with a 4-H project, or leading a project to serve the community.

“As a parent that grew up in 4-H I wanted my children to also experience 4-H. Being in 4-H teaches leadership, citizenship, and you have a chance to go to various activities. 4-H is not just about agriculture; but you can learn about drones, robotics, STEM, and cooking; ‘Rodeo Clown’ is even a project now!” Robinn Daves-Huey, Star Banner 4-H Club Leader

4-H Program volunteers are just one group of volunteers who are instrumental in carrying out the mission of the University of Missouri Extension. Volunteers are involved in every aspect of the Extension Service, including determining the needs of the local residents, planning and implementing programs to address these needs, securing resources, and evaluating programs.

An example of these volunteers is the Stoddard County Extension Council. The 12-member board, which consists of appointed county citizens, works with the county Extension staff to plan and oversee Extension activities.

“Having been given the opportunity to work with the 4-h faculty, staff, and volunteers for many years now, I have acquired a deep appreciation for the quality of the 4-H program and the opportunities presented to youth in our community. The local youth who have gone through this program have grown into responsible, caring citizens who go on to become volunteers and leaders in the community and continue their appreciation of lessons and skills learned by paying it forward to the next generation with the gifting of their time, talents, and abilities.” Lesa Morrison, County Office Support Staff

The work of Extension volunteers is continuous. Every day volunteers lend a helping hand to make Extension programs more beneficial to the residents of Stoddard County. Those interested in joining the team of Extension Volunteers are invited to contact the Stoddard County Extension Office at 573-568-3344, stoddardco@missouri.edu, or email elderra@missouri.edu.

Submitted by: Rachel Elder, 4-H Youth Program Assistant

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Missouri Youth Catch the Wave of Leadership at Teen Conference

APRIL 04TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Missouri Youth Catch the Wave of Leadership at Teen Conference

Columbia, Missouri - Butler and Stoddard County 4-H'ers discovered last weekend that energy abounds when 366 people gather to help 11-13 year old students build leadership skills.

"I had an absolute blast," said professional speaker Camille Yameen, who spoke at the MU Extension 4-H Teen Conference. "Nothing is more inspiring for me than seeing youth excited about their own leadership potential."

Attending the two-day Teen Conference were Blaine Birdsong, Jo Schalk, Emily Johns and Braxton Huey. These young delegates joined youth from 66 other counties to build leadership, gain new skills, and learn ways they can help their community.

"Leadership skills are a solid foundation for success, even for careers that haven't been invented yet," said Bradd Anderson, State 4-H Youth Development Specialist for MU Extension who coordinates the event. "Teen Conference brings the thrill of independence in a safe, warm, and inclusive atmosphere, and there's a confidence that comes from

that.” The daytime schedule included festivities at the Columbia Expo Center and educational workshops on the MU campus, planned and led by the older teens of Missouri’s State 4-H Council. Workshops included making chew toys for homeless pets from discarded t-shirts, learning about the strengths of different personality types, and mastering new dance moves. Evening events included a dance, movie, and the opportunity to become “soil sleuths” through the 2017 National 4-H Ag Innovators Healthy Soils CSI project, sponsored by National 4-H Council and Monsanto. These sleuths studied soil composition, investigated the impact of tilling on the larger soil ecosystem and built scale model no-till planters to find solutions for keeping good soils from going bad.

Teen Conference is planned each year by the State 4-H Council, a group of 38 older teens who serve as ambassadors for the organization and play leadership roles throughout the event. “4-H offers young people a positive life trajectory that includes role models, citizenship, and lifelong learning,” said 4-H Youth Development Specialist, Stephanie Milner. “As Teen Conference delegates see these positive older teens in active leadership roles, they realize that they can be leaders too.” Several adults noted enthusiasm for the youth-led component of Teen Conference. ”The students were energetic, eager to learn and loved participating in the program,” said Yameen. “With leaders like the ones in Missouri 4-H, the future is most definitely bright.”

Missouri 4-H is open to all children ages 5-18. For more information, visit <http://4h.missouri.edu> or contact your local MU Extension Center at 573-686-8064 or 6573-568-3344.

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Local Students Earn Awards at State Competition

APRIL 03RD 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Local Students Earn Awards at State Competition

Sikeston, Missouri - The Health Occupation students from Sikeston Career and Technology Center recently competed in the State HOSA competition at Rolla, Missouri.

The Community Awareness team placed 1st and the Health Education team placed 2nd.

Both teams won scholarships from Johnson and Johnson Corp and will advance to the Nationals at Disney in Orlando Florida this June.

The students are pictured above from left to right: Hana Razor, Karleigh Jenkins, Lauren Housman, Hallie Kimball, and Allison Sneed.

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Candidate Ben Worley for Dexter School Board

MARCH 31ST 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Candidate Ben Worley for Dexter School Board

Dexter, Missouri - There are five candidates for three positions in the 2017 Dexter School Board election to be held on April 4, 2017. A bio was submitted on each candidate. Below is the bio for Mr. Ben Worley.

Occupation: Financial Advisor, Edward Jones Investments

Personal Education History: Dexter High School (1994), Murray State University (1998, B.S. – Finance), AAMS designation from the College of Financial Planning.

Community Service Activities/Affiliations: Current member and past President of the Dexter Chamber of Commerce, Logistics Chairman for the Stoddard County Relay for Life, Trustee and Deacon at Liberty Hill General Baptist Church and former Chairman of the Church's finance/budget committee, member of the Dexter Community Tourism Advisory Committee. Former board member of the Stoddard County Transit Service and the Dexter Parks and Recreation Advisory Board.

Why do you want to serve as a school board member?

It is my desire to serve as a school board member to give back to the institution and community that had a profound effect on the person I am today. The majority of my immediate family members are graduates of the Dexter school system and now our

daughter, Emma attends fifth grade at Central Elementary. I feel we have a strong school district with caring and professional educators and staff that offers our students many opportunities. My goal if elected to the Dexter School Board would be to work in a positive manner with other board members, school staff and the community in general to ensure that no matter a student’s ability, we are always improving the opportunity we offer each of them to be successful in life after their high school career.

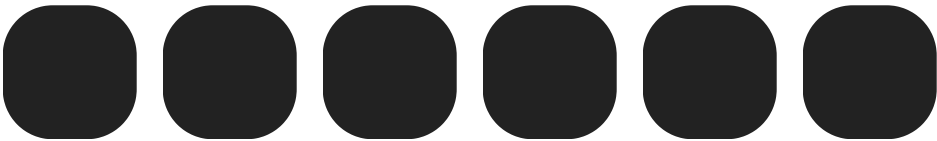
What qualities will you bring to the school board that will benefit the students and staff of the Dexter Public Schools?

I feel that I have a good ability to work with others in achieving goals that are important to the entire group. I have had the privilege to serve on a number of boards and committees in which numerous fiscal, budgetary, policy and staffing decisions had to be made each year. I also feel the experience I have gained through my professional career would serve as a benefit in how the Board of Education makes ongoing decisions for our district in allocating resources in the most effective way to positively impact our students, staff and the Dexter community in general.

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Candidate Jason Comfort for Dexter School Board

MARCH 30TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

Candidate Jason Comfort for Dexter School Board

Dexter, Missouri - There are five candidates for three positions in the 2017 Dexter School Board election to be held on April 4, 2017. A bio was submitted on each candidate. Below is the bio for Mr. Jason Comfort.

Occupation: Countywide Insurance – Insurance Producer; Pallet Recycling, LLC

Family Members: Cristi, Maci (7th grade), Cali (3rd grade), and Jase (pre-k)

Personal Education History: **Dexter High School class of 1996;** Three Rivers Community College; Southeast Missouri State University

Community Service Activities/Affiliations: First Baptist Church of Dexter, Past President of Dexter Chamber of Commerce, Past President of Hidden Trails Country Club, Past Board Member of Dexter Bearcat Booster Club, Past Board Member of the Missouri Association of Insurance Agents, 19 years of service Dexter Little League Football, 15+ years radio broadcast Dexter Bearcat Football

Why do you want to serve as a school board member?

I Love the Dexter Bearcats! I am extremely passionate about all things related to the Dexter Bearcats. I was blessed with many great mentors throughout my life who exemplified what it meant to be a Dexter Bearcat. I watched them serve this community in a selfless manner while working tirelessly to positively impact our students. Since the first day I came home from college, I have been vigorously working to mirror their example and sought different ways that I could positively impact and improve our community and our schools. I have worked diligently to discover new ways to better our students experience both in the classroom and in a wide variety of extra-curricular activities. I have always had a strong belief that “Attitude Reflects Leadership.” I want to continue my efforts to provide leadership and elevate my position in this great community so that I can play an even larger role in raising the Dexter school system to a higher level

of excellence and achievements.

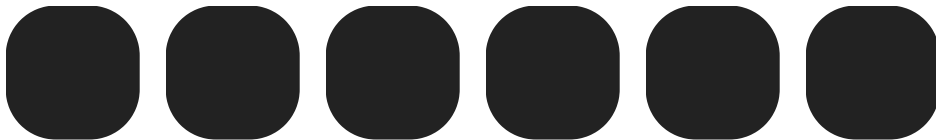
What qualities will you bring to the school board that will benefit the students and staff of Dexter Public Schools?

1. Common-sense leadership
2. Strong interpersonal skills to work within a board effectively
3. Passion for excellence in our school and community
4. An understanding of the role of a school board member and the school board as a whole
5. Ability to communicate the board's vision and mission and serve as a bridge between the school and community
6. Commitment to positively impact our students in every vote I cast
7. Willingness and commitment to vote in the minority, if I believe that is what is right! However, if I am on the losing side of a vote, we are still one board, one team, one school, one community and I will support the decision that was passed by the majority.
8. Willingness to listen and learn from all stakeholders before making decisions

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