

SUCCESS STORIES

UAF Cooperative Extension Service

Pandemic inspires creative approaches to youth programming on the Kenai Peninsula

Issue

All 4-H face-to-face programming came to an abrupt halt with the COVID-19 shutdown. The 4-H slogan is Learn by Doing. Not being able to “do” made it challenging to learn!

Response

Kenai Peninsula District 4-H rolled out a six-week 4-H On series days after the shutdown. The series included simple, fun activity ideas for 4-H'ers to work on at home, helping them stay connected to their peers, projects, leaders and to their 4-H learning. Daily prompts were given in areas such as public speaking, creative writing, painting, photography, sculpting and healthy living.

After the initial two weeks, the series extended into April and included weekly Livestock Learning Hour workshops during which 4-H youth shared information with one another on how to feed, care for and show animals they've raised as 4-H projects. There were classes on poultry, rabbits, sheep and cattle. The finale of the Livestock Learning Hour series was a virtual yak tour at Sunny Hill Ranch in Montana Creek, where youth and leaders learned about yaks and met the herd.

Results

The 4-H On series engaged 15-30 youth and 4-H leaders weekly. Watercolor Wednesday at times included 4-H'ers and leaders from five districts across Alaska, bringing youth together digitally from a geographic span of Fairbanks to Kodiak to Sitka.

While simple in structure, the series paved the way for continued virtual learning in the district, such as Zoom workshops and at-home activity kits. The success of the series encouraged the district's program coordinator, volunteers and 4-H'ers to continue thinking creatively, which enabled them to deliver hybrid events, including a drive-through plant



From left, Kenai Peninsula 4-H'ers Jaleen Gattenby, Jewel Meadows and Ndea Rollins auction off Jewel's pen of market rabbits at the Junior Market Livestock Drive-in Auction, with auctioneer Rayne Reynolds.

sale, a virtual state competition, a drive-in livestock auction, national online competitions and a drive-up awards program. Rising to the challenge of having to switch programs over to new methods of learning has enabled Kenai Peninsula 4-H to continue to 4-H On, and has given them opportunities to continue to “Learn by Doing.”

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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