



KENTUCKY COOPERATIVE EXTENSION



UK MARTIN-GATTON COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND ENVIRONMENT
KSU COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, COMMUNITY AND THE SCIENCES



CLOVER CONNECTION

From Kayaks to Counselors: McCracken County Youth Shine at 4-H Camp

This summer, McCracken County celebrated its highest 4-H Camp attendance since 1999—224 participants! Our delegation included 160 campers, 33 teens and counselors-in-training, and 31 adult volunteers. Camp offers 96 hours of meaningful interaction with caring leaders, giving youth a sense of belonging, independence, and opportunities to try new activities like kayaking.

Parents shared glowing feedback:

"My child learned how to paddle a kayak, has better communication skills, and came home uplifted and happy."

"Every single time my child has been asked what his favorite part of 4-H camp was he has said the same answer—the people."

Campers also learned teamwork and leadership skills. Kentucky 4-H Camping's mission is to improve lives through experiential learning, collaboration, and play—and McCracken County youth truly embodied that vision this year!



McCracken County Teen Club Experiences

Disney's Imagination Campus

After a full year of fundraising and planning, 4-H members from McCracken and Crittenden Counties brought imagination to life with an unforgettable trip to Walt Disney World in October during Fall Break! This collaborative adventure included 29 participants—13 from McCracken County (8 youth and 5 adults) and 16 from Crittenden County. While McCracken County participants flew to Florida (which was the first plane ride for several), Crittenden County made the journey an unforgettable road trip!

During the trip, youth explored all four Disney theme parks and participated in two exclusive Disney Imagination Campus workshops:

- The Physics of Disney Parks – where science met thrills as participants discovered the engineering behind attractions.
- Leadership the Disney Way – an interactive session focused on teamwork, communication, and problem-solving through Disney's leadership principles.

How Did McCracken County Youth Qualify?

This trip was a reward experience for highly engaged 4-H members. All McCracken County youth who attended are active participants in our Teen Club and have demonstrated leadership through involvement in various 4-H events, including state-level programs. Their commitment to 4-H and leadership development earned them this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

Agriculture Education at Disney

In addition to leadership and STEM learning, we incorporated agriculture education into the experience with the help of our ANR Agent, Gracey Moffitt. At Epcot, youth explored exhibits and attractions that highlight global agriculture, sustainability, and food production—connecting what they saw to real-world agricultural practices back home.

Looking Ahead

Because of the success of this trip, we hope to plan another Disney Imagination Campus experience in two years! We can't wait to see more youth earn their spot and continue learning in exciting, innovative ways.



Shooting Sports Update

The Shooting Sports program saw exciting growth this year, with five youth competitors advancing to the State Matches—an increase from three participants last season. Each young shooter brought something special to the event. Kenton Nantz earned a trophy in archery, while Isaac Jett achieved his personal best. Parker Thompson not only competed but also took time to mentor younger participants during the Trap Shoot. For Beau Lambert and Braxton Brinly, the State Match marked their first experience at this level of competition.

During the off-season, shotgun team members continue to build their skills by exploring additional disciplines required for Nationals. These sessions are being led by the program's dedicated Level Two coaches, who are helping athletes strengthen their abilities year-round.

The program is also seeking additional coaches across all disciplines, with a particular need in Rifle and Archery. The next training weekend is scheduled for March 27–29 at the West Kentucky 4-H Camp.



Community Events Update

Local 4-H youth have been active in a variety of community events designed to build skills, serve others, and spark new interests.

During the Splash & Serve event, 14 youth came together to support children in foster care by assembling 16 “bags of hope.” Along with their service project, participants enjoyed a creative activity where they tie-dyed T-shirts using water balloons, taking home a colorful reminder of the day.

At Aerospace Camp, two McCracken County youth experienced their first hour of flight in a small aircraft—a milestone that introduced them to the world of aviation. Throughout the camp, they also explored robotics, rockets, and aerodynamics, gaining hands-on exposure to STEM concepts.

Upcoming Events

December 14 – Project Gingerbread with CommUNITY, Paducah

February 7, 14, 21, 28 – Beginner Sewing Club

February 26–28 – Kentucky Volunteer Forum

April 4, 11, 18, 25 – 4-H Sewing Project Days

April 6–11 – Spring Break Career Days, featuring TBD careers at various locations throughout Paducah



Club Updates

Clubs have been active and growing, offering youth a wide range of hands-on learning experiences.

The Jr. STEM and Forensic Files Clubs met throughout the summer months, from June through August. Members explored STEM concepts with the help of guest speakers and interactive activities that kept curiosity high.

Participants in the Airport Design Challenge enjoyed a behind-the-scenes tour of Barkley Regional Airport before working in teams of three to design their own airport layouts in Minecraft.

The Rocket Club has launched its new season with 20 members, including eight newcomers. Early practice flights show strong potential for another successful run at the National Finals.

Lego Robotics have kicked off their season. Coaches received their materials in early October, and several teams are returning, including two homeschool groups and Morgan Elementary—now with a new coach. McNabb Elementary is joining the program this year with one team. We have also added St. Mary Middle to our team mix. Additional coaches are still needed to support the growing interest.

The International 4-H Club has begun hosting monthly meetings at the McCracken County Library. This summer, the program welcomed four Taiwanese exchange students and their chaperone to 4-H camp. In addition, McCracken County youth JD Harrison spent four weeks in Japan through a cultural exchange experience.

SAVE THE DATE



McCRACKEN COUNTY 4-H COMMUNICATIONS CONTEST

Develop Your Public Speaking Skills!

For youth ages 9-18

MARCH 24, 2026



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