

Alaska's 4-H Military Clubs

Fort Wainwright

The Fort Wainwright Child, Youth and School Services (CYSS) 4-H Gardening Club produced several award-winning flowers and vegetables this year. The successful garden project allowed more than 30 children to learn and explore the process involved in gardening, from planting seeds to harvesting crops and flowers. The real reward came when the club took some of their best flowers to the Tanana Valley State Fair and brought home the 4-H Grand Champion Award for Division II Plant Science for their rose entry. The club also received many ribbons for their other entries.



Mission and Goals

Alaska's 4-H military youth and leaders had an exciting and productive year. Leaders focused on tracking military families participating in 4-H and enhancing statewide 4-H military project clubs. We now have more than 1,000 youth participating in on-installation 4-H clubs that range from cooking, sewing and photography to fishing, dance and robotics.

Candi Dierenfield, Alaska 4-H Military Liaison

Joint Base Elmendorf/ Richardson (JBER)

Joint Base Elmendorf/Richardson 4-H clubs were very busy this year, appealing to many different interests and covering many life skills with clubs such as the Leaders/Media (service learning) Club, the Chef Mates Nutrition and Cooking Club, Two Rivers Homework Club, Sew-So-Sew Club, Fine Arts and Crafts Club and Science Club.



Youth members of the Fine Arts and Crafts Club learned by doing and worked with a variety of media — such as yarn, recycled materials and stamps — that offered challenges and opportunities to explore and create works of art. This particular club had several 4-H entries in the

Alaska State Fair, and many of the club's youth entered projects in a local art show and several sent pieces to a regional show out of state; one piece moved on to the national competition! The club also participated in a service learning project that sponsored a fine arts show and donated clothes and arts and crafts supplies to teens in need.



The sewing club, Sew-So-Sew, uses sewing machines to build self-esteem as youth watch their creative ideas become a reality in an environment where club members naturally teach other members new skills. The club extended into summer this year and held a successful summer sewing camp. Sew-So-Sew was also heavily involved in service learning and created handmade scarves to be sent to service members overseas.

Chef Mates Cooking and Nutrition Club focused on international foods this year and cooked their way around the world using the 4-H Food, Culture and Reading curriculum. Club members experimented with foods that they may not normally eat and learned to enjoy new foods! They also focused on the nutrition side of cooking and how to recognize healthy foods through experiential, edible activities with guidance from a nutritionist from the Cooperative Extension Service. Club members generously participated in community service by providing treats for single service members.

“Learning While Playing” is the Fort Richardson’s LEGO/Minecraft Club’s motto. Club members put their problem-solving skills to the test as they worked with both LEGO and Minecraft. Both areas encourage youth to be creative and also help them develop dexterity, math and pattern skills by manipulating LEGOs and developing virtual strategy using Minecraft. Members were also involved in service learning activities, such as spending the summer sorting the club’s millions of LEGO pieces and helping out with the center’s community clothes drive.



The Leadership/Media Club allowed youth to experience real-life leadership opportunities as they became contributors and developed personal commitments to their community and larger world. The club won a Linking Hearts Merit Award for the scarves they knitted and donated to the Special Olympics.

The Two Rivers Homework Club offered activities to help its members become more proficient in basic educational disciplines by applying learning to everyday situations and using technology to optimize success at school and improve their employability. Some of the club's focus this year was on life skills such as time management, organization and wise management of resources.



The Illa Stitches Club started the year with a willingness to serve as they set their goal to make hat and scarf sets for homeless teens in the community. To meet their service goal, members learned basic sewing skills and went to work. Club members also worked on several self-selected projects throughout the year. Both the service project and individual projects gave

club members a broader sense of who they are as individuals and taught them how to work together as a team.

This year, Illa's School Age Program Fishing Club was introduced to the fundamental skills necessary to safely and effectively participate in the age-old pastime. Club members learned not only about fishing, but also about bear safety, conservation, ecosystems and patience. When not out on the banks of a local river or lake, the classroom was the place to be to learn about the salmon's life cycle, anatomy and the important part



they play in Alaska's ecosystem. Other club activities included interactive fishing games, casting lessons and competitions, knot tying and fishing excursions. Every fishing excursion had an underlying service learning project. Club members learned to "take out more than you bring in" when visiting lakes and streams and picked up fishing tackle and trash left by other visitors.



Eielson Air Force Base

Eielson Youth Programs kept busy this year with 4-H Art, Sewing, International Dance, Hand Bell, Flying High, Imagination Station and Passport Around the World clubs. All club members found that they really did learn best by doing as they participated in the fun and educational activities that the variety of clubs had to offer.

Imagination Station is a drawing club that allows enthusiastic members to use their imagination and put new skills to the test as they put some of their favorite, as well as self-made, characters on paper.

The Passport Around the World Club introduced members to the rest of the world through cooking, art, music and language. Youth were introduced to different cultural traditions as they made Scandinavian troll toes, German rice pudding and Danish dumplings.

The Hand Bell Club learned how to read music and play new songs, which they performed at a concert for parents and other youth at the School Age Center.

Members of the Flying High Club participated in flying projects and activities that enhanced their knowledge and interest in flight. Youth learned about lift, air currents, weightlessness and rain and how these all can affect flying conditions.

Youth expressed themselves and became physically fit while learning about dance around the world as members of the International Dance Club. Club members learned the importance and purpose of different types of dance and were introduced to international choreography.

The Sewing Club was busy with service projects this year. Members made an American flag quilt from t-shirts to be mailed in a Christmas care package and pillowcases for children with cancer and wrote letters to accompany these generous contributions to their community.



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Fort Greeley

Members of Fort Greeley Youth Services Community Club proved that they are well-rounded, with many purposeful projects this year. The ongoing fitness and sports program encouraged youth to explore various individual and team sports through activities such as swimming, hiking, dance and yoga. Youth also learned about the food and nutrition aspect of being physically fit, including smart food selection and purchases, understanding nutrition labels and handling food safely.



An additional project provided members another opportunity to delve into photography with a 30-day photography challenge. During the 30-day period, youth learned about photography basics such as lighting, landscapes and portraits, exposure and more. The youth presented what they learned with a photographic story. Their photos were also entered into the Boys and Girls Clubs of America's Image Makers Photo Contest.

The Youth Services Community Club would not be complete without a center pet. The club researched pets and decided that a guinea pig would be the perfect fit because of its low maintenance and cost. The ongoing project involved cleaning the pet's living space, feeding and providing it water, and measuring its growth. Club members enthusiastically took turns caring for the pet in their own home on the weekends.



Another ongoing endeavor was the club's gardening project, which included four phases: planting flower and vegetable seeds, transplanting the seeds into the community garden plot, maintaining the garden during the summer months and preparing the plot for the winter months.

Club members wanted to incorporate a service project into their year's activity plan and proposed a citizenship and civic education project. Members assisted with the donation of clothing, books and toys for children relocating to their community in Alaska from Puerto Rico.

The Communications and Expressive Arts Project encouraged members to express their creativity through journaling and photography to produce scrapbooks, yearbooks and newsletters for their center.

Visit Extension military 4-H programs on the web at www.uaf.edu/ces/4h

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