

Healthy Georgia Connections

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NEWS YOU CAN USE FROM **UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA** COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

EXTENSION FEATURE

Georgia 4-H alumni reflect on participation and show lifelong impact

Kevan Lamm, *assistant professor, Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education and Communication*



A recent survey of nearly 500 alumni from the UGA Extension 4-H program shared their insights regarding their experiences and impacts on their life using both quantitative and qualitative data collection.

Overall, respondents showed a very high degree of satisfaction and loyalty to the program and the vast majority — 95.6% — indicated that they had definitely used information they learned in 4-H.

Alumni indicated they had participated in local 4-H club programs most frequently, followed by 4-H summer camps.

Individuals were also asked to summarize their 4-H experience in one sentence. Sample statements included responses like, “4-H absolutely changed my life. If it were not for this amazing organization, I really do feel I would not be the same person I am today”; “Growing up in a small town in rural south Georgia, 4-H gave me opportunities to grow and lead and make lifelong friendships and some of my fondest memories with youth from across the state”; and “I learned leadership, public speaking and life skills I still use in my life every day — from how to write a speech to how to write a thank-you note.”

Lastly, individuals were asked to indicate the amount of influence 4-H had on preparing them for their career. The majority — nearly three-quarters — indicated that 4-H either had “a great deal of influence” or “a lot of influence” on their career preparation.

The results of the survey indicate that the Georgia 4-H program is doing a great job of providing meaningful learning and growth opportunities for program participants. Across several measures, the results indicate that individuals found participation to be worthwhile, an opportunity to apply what they learned, and a platform to prepare for their career.

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AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES**Great Georgia Pollinator Census returns this August**

Josh Paine, *marketing professional, College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences*



Students and families are encouraged to participate in the second annual Great Georgia Pollinator Census, which will be held by UGA Extension August 21–22.

About 4,500 participants documented more than 131,000 insect sightings as part of the inaugural census in 2019, and more than 100 events related to the project took place around the state.

This year's count may look a bit different with social distancing recommendations in place, but organizers are encouraging participants to plan on counting pollinators at home, whether solo or with their families.

Census takers are asked to count pollinators on a favorite pollinator plant with abundant insect activity for 15 minutes for each of the two days using the provided observation sheet.

“The goals of the project are to gather data on pollinator insect populations, foster pollinator habitats and increase

entomological literacy about these insects,” said Becky Griffin, UGA Extension school garden and pollinator census coordinator. She modeled the program on the Great Backyard Bird Count, a citizen science program run by Cornell University that asks people to count the birds they see in their backyard.

If you can't tell a honey bee from a bumble bee, don't worry. An “Insect Counting and Identification Guide” on the homepage of the [census website](#) provides detailed instructions and photo examples for classification, which is helpful, since there are more than 500 bee species reported in the state. Insects are categorized into one of eight categories during the observation period:

- Bumble bees
- Carpenter bees
- Small bees
- Honey bees
- Wasps
- Flies
- Butterflies and moths
- Other insects

Those interested in counting should visit [ggapc.org](#) to sign up and subscribe to the monthly newsletter about pollinator gardening and insect identification.

The project's Facebook group, Georgia Pollinator Census, has grown to nearly 1,500 members and includes many educational resources including videos and files available for teachers to use in the classroom like “Honey Bee Roles.”

“Schools doing STEAM projects are also welcome, and the census can be administered remotely for teachers whose schools are meeting virtually,” explained Griffin. An educator page, including lesson plans for download, is also available at [ggapc.org](#).

For more information, including publications about recommended plants to attract pollinators, visit [t.uga.edu/6cm](#).

FAMILY & CONSUMER SCIENCES**Practicing with masks before school starts can help kids with new rules**

Cal Powell, director of communications, College of Family and Consumer Sciences

If you're anxious about your child wearing a face covering this fall, you're not alone.

As school districts across the state mandate the wearing of face coverings to help prevent the spread of COVID-19, parents should prepare their children now for that unique reality, said Diane Bales, a child development specialist at UGA.

Explaining to your child the rationale behind the mask requirement is a good place to start. "A lot of kids are unfortunately going to need to wear a mask for the better part of the day," said Bales, associate professor in the UGA College of Family and Consumer Sciences and UGA Extension human development specialist. "It's useful to help kids understand why it's important to wear a mask, that you're doing this to help other people."

Bales also recommends parents practice putting on and wearing masks with their kids before in-person classes resume. "I'd start with 10 to 15 minutes a day and see if you can build up a little," she said. "Start with wearing it for a very short period of time and work up to a longer time. If kids are old enough, help them understand why it's important — that it's not that their parents are just being mean."

She also urged parents to experiment with different styles of face coverings to find the right fit. "It's important to get kids to buy in, so help them pick out a style or color they like," Bales said. "There are lots of different styles, fabrics and shapes, things that are going to fit different people."

Bales noted that Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines recommend a few exceptions to the mask mandates. Children under the age of 2 or anyone who has trouble breathing, is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance should not wear cloth face coverings.



Children with severe asthma or sensory issues also are likely to have problems with face coverings, Bales said. "In those cases, there are other alternatives," she said. "In some countries, kids are wearing face shields instead of masks. They may look funny to some, but they don't press against the face and they do provide some kind of protection."

Bales also pointed out the importance of keeping face coverings sanitized and reminding kids to keep their hands away from their face. "The younger they are, the more difficult that's going to be," she said. "The reality is it's only going to be effective if you keep it in place and don't touch it all the time."

Between mask wearing, social distancing and increased hand washing, Bales said that it's important that parents reassure their children that it's normal to experience a range of emotions as they face so many unknowns. "School is guaranteed to not look like it did last year, and that's anxiety provoking," Bales said. "It's important to prepare kids without overwhelming them, and remind them that the goal for all of these new rules is to keep everybody healthy."

4-H YOUTH**Supporting youth mental health and wellbeing**

Courtney Still Brown, *Extension 4-H specialist, College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences*

COVID-19 has impacted the lives of young people in many ways, and mental health is no exception.

A recent survey commissioned by the National 4-H Council and conducted by the Harris Poll found that 7 in 10 teens are struggling with their mental health in the wake of COVID-19. More than half of the teens surveyed indicated that the pandemic has increased their feelings of loneliness.

To help youth cope with stress, the National Council for Behavioral Health recommends maintaining a routine, staying physically active, and limiting time spent watching or reading news and using social media.

Instead, encourage youth to express or channel their feelings through creative outlets. For younger children, this could be done through drawings or short stories. Journaling, playing music or creating art can be good outlets for older youth. It can also be helpful for youth to stay connected to others and talk about feelings or anxiety with those they trust.

Set the foundation for a good routine with good sleep. Middle and high schoolers need about eight to 10 hours of sleep per night. Parents should model good nutrition, physical, and social activities in behavior and language. Avoid using food as a reward or physical activity as a punishment.

While many of the usual programs, sports or clubs that youth participate in right now may look different, the social and emotional support that these activities and relationships provide are still important. Encourage youth in your family to participate in activities they are interested in, even if they are remote or different than normal.

Your local 4-H program is also a great place to get or stay involved. For information on the current status of programs in your area, contact your local UGA Extension office by visiting extension.uga.edu/county-offices.

**Mental health resources**

MentalHealth.gov: This federal organization provides strategies for talking about mental health with children and youth at www.mentalhealth.gov/talk/parents-caregivers.

Mental Health America of Georgia: Find resources and information available throughout the state of Georgia at www.mhageorgia.org/covid19.

Mental Health First Aid: For resources to help people care for their own and their loved ones' mental health, visit www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/2020/03/how-to-bethedifference-for-people-with-mental-health-concerns-during-covid-19. Find resources to help teens cope during COVID-19 at www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/2020/04/tips-to-help-teens-cope-during-covid-19.

Georgia Crisis and Access Line (GCAL): For immediate access to routine or crisis services, call GCAL at 1-800-715-4225. GCAL is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. GCAL can also help you to access a state-funded provider in your area for non-emergencies. Georgia youth can access GCAL's services via text and chat through an app called My GCAL. The app allows youth to call, text or chat with GCAL at any time. For more information, visit www.georgiacollaborative.com/providers/georgia-crisis-and-access-line-gcal.

NATIONAL HELP LINES:

Disaster Distress Helpline (SAMSHA) at 800-985-5990

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800-273-8255

Text MHFA to 741741 to talk to a Crisis Text Line counselor

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In addition to the overall results, individuals' supplied statements also offer personal insights about the program's impact, for example, "Coming from a very underprivileged part of Georgia, 4-H became a home where leaders who seemed like superheroes showed me how incredible the world can be when you are kind to others, educated about important topics and reach for your wildest dreams."

The relationship between 4-H and career preparation cannot be understated. With more than 70% of individuals indicating the strong relationship between 4-H and career preparedness, this is a very noteworthy finding. When coupled with the satisfaction and loyalty alumni feel towards the Georgia 4-H program, there is a strong indication that Georgia 4-H is the embodiment of the 4-H motto, "To make the best better."



Elements of State 4-H Congress continued online, new Master 4-H'ers announced

This year, Georgia 4-H moved State Congress into the online Georgia 4-H 2020 State Achievement Series. The five-day series included the campaigns and election of new state officers and announcements of winners in Georgia 4-H Leadership in Action and Project Achievement. To view the full online series, visit youtube.com/Georgia4H.

EXTENSION PUBLICATIONS

Eviction Resource Guide

Many renters are facing the risk of eviction due to COVID-19 impacts. This publication provides information about resources that can help households dealing with housing insecurity: uga.edu/5cd

LOOKING ^{TO BUY} LOCAL? Let Us Connect You!



AG PRODUCTS CONNECTION

In collaboration with Georgia Grown and other industry partners, UGA Extension is using its network of county offices to connect agricultural producers with consumers looking for fresh, Georgia-grown products. Visit uga.edu/5UB for more.



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