



2016 4-H Youth in Action Pillar Winner Bios

Jacob Shuman, 16, Ohio

Agricultural and Animal Sciences Winner

Video Story: [Jacob's Hometown Video](#)



Bio: Jacob Shuman became an advocate for bees through Ohio State University Cooperative Extension after finding out that Ross County was one of the unhealthiest counties in Ohio. In response to these findings he developed Teens Educating Adults and Children about Honey Bees (TEACH B) program. Through the TEACH B program, Shuman leads live bee education, demonstrations and lessons on the importance of bees to agriculture and the economy. He is an Ohio State ambassador and the recipient of the National 4-H Council Merck Youth Agriculture Advocacy Award, and he has the honor of being recognized by Ohio Senator Bob Peterson for his work in environmental sciences.

Alexandria “Lexie” Lerblance, 17, Oklahoma

Citizenship Pillar Winner

Video Story: [Lexie's Hometown Video](#)



Bio: Alexandria “Lexie” Lerblance is the co-founder of the Teresa Lane Compton (TLC) Memorial Wig Closet. The appointment-only closet is named after her grandmother, a hairstylist who recently died of breast cancer. The wig closet provides free high-quality wigs, head coverings, bras and prosthesis to cancer patients going through treatments. Lerblance has had the opportunity to spread the word about cancer awareness through various speaking engagements including the Pink Ribbon Luncheon and the Federal Board of Education. Utilizing the leadership skills she has gained through Oklahoma State University Cooperative Extension, the TLC Wig Closet has raised over \$15,000 in donations.

Ruwanthi “Ru” Ekanayake, 18, California

Healthy Living Pillar Winner, Sponsored by Molina

Video Story: [Ru's Hometown Video](#)



Bio: Ruwanthi “Ru” Ekanayake launched the first-ever 4-H Healthy Living blog, allowing 4-H'ers to share their stories, build bridges and create national discussions about health. She also organized a successful Healthy Living Summit across nine counties in California through the University of California Cooperative Extension, which led to more youth starting local healthy living programs including farm-to-table gardening and cyber-safety programs. As a member of the National 4-H Healthy Living Ambassador Team, she is committed to helping people live their best lives by advocating a more holistic approach to healthy living that includes healthy nutritional habits as well as mental and emotional well being.

Thaddeus Hughes, 18, Illinois

STEM Pillar Winner, Sponsored by HughesNet

Video Story: [Thaddeus' Hometown Video](#)



Bio: Through talks, demonstrations, workshops and interviews, Thaddeus Hughes has engaged more than 6,000 youth in the wonders of science. He has been a mentor for FIRST Lego League and the Illinois State Robotics Competition for four years. As a mentor, Thad has been responsible for organizing and demonstrating new technologies and the engineering process. Simultaneously, he developed an afterschool program through the University of Illinois Cooperative Extension called Spinning Robots in which he taught 50 middle schoolers basic circuitry and how to build simple robots. He is currently studying engineering at Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology, the top school in the nation for engineering