4-H Achievement Program helps youth strive for excellence

Source: Kim Leger, Kentucky 4-H youth development specialist

4-H encourages young people to set and achieve their goals. To that end, Kentucky 4-H created the Achievement Program to reward ambitious and accomplished young people throughout the state. In the highly competitive program, young people receive recognition and prizes for their accomplishments in 4-H and their community.

Recognition is given based on points attained through Kentucky 4-H and includes the county levels of Clover Level 1, Clover Level 2, Clover Level 3 and statewide levels of Bronze, Silver, Gold and Emerald. 4-H’ers can start accumulating points as soon as they join 4-H at 9 years of age, in the following areas: leadership, civic engagement, communication and marketing, community action, and involvement and participation. They can accumulate points throughout their 4-H career.

Clover Levels 1, 2 and 3 focus on a 4-H’ers participation in 4-H projects, programs, activities and events, and leadership and citizenship experiences. To reach these milestones, the participant must attain at least 25, 50 and 75 points, respectively in the Achievement Program. Competitive medal levels of Bronze, Silver, Gold and Emerald are cumulative of a 4-Her’s participation in the program and strive to recognize the best young leaders in Kentucky 4-H through interviews and scoring processes.

Bronze Level candidates accumulate 100 points through their 4-H work, participation and leadership and are evaluated by their district. Each district awards only 15 Bronze Level Medals every year.

The Silver Level offers an opportunity for youth to expand their involvement into the areas of leadership and communications, while earning a minimum of 150 cumulative points in the program. In addition to this extensive work, each district can only nominate 15 applicants. Those applications are evaluated at the state level with only a maximum of 60 medalists each year.

To reach the Gold Level, participants must not only achieve 200 cumulative points in their 4-H career, each youth must pass a rigorous district and state evaluation and interview on the state level. The interview accounts for 60%, and application is 40% of their overall score. Only 30 Kentucky youth are selected each year. As a part of the Gold Level award, each honoree receives a partial scholarship to attend National 4-H Congress Conference, in Atlanta.

Once 4-H’ers reach the Gold Level, they can apply for the Emerald award. It is the highest level in the Achievement Program. Of the applicants, 20 youth are invited to interview and present a cover letter and resume for the Emerald Award. Only four young people receive this honor each year.

County deadlines are approaching for participation in the Achievement Program. For more information, contact your (COUNTY NAME) office of the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service.

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