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PVAMU 4-H Youth Leadership Lab Puts Agricultural Careers in the Spotlight

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PRAIRIE VIEW, Texas--Youth, ages 13 to 18, traveled from 18 Texas counties to Prairie View A&M University to participate in a two and a half day 4-H Youth Leadership Laboratory where they got a taste of college life and learned about a multitude of careers that can be pursued in the agricultural, human and food sciences. The College of Agriculture and Human Sciences' Cooperative Extension Program hosted the event that was held June 16-18.

"One of our primary 4-H events that we conduct annually on campus is the Career Awareness & Youth Leadership Laboratory," said Gail Long, program specialist – 4-H & Youth and chair of this year's Youth Lab committee. "This educational activity gives young people a chance to get hands-on experience in workshops,

enhances their leadership skills, reinforces the importance of obtaining a college degree and gives them a jump in knowing the types of jobs they can apply to after graduating with a degree in agriculture or human sciences."

During the first day's activities, representatives from the university spoke to the participants about the transition from high school to college, careers in agriculture, doing what it takes to make the top salary upon graduating from college and the importance of the field of agriculture.

"There are two things that everyone does daily, both of which are dependent on agriculture—you have to eat and you have to get dressed," said LaVaughn Mosley, recruiter in the College of Agriculture and Human Sciences (CAHS). "Our food sources come from seeds that are planted to yield fruits and vegetables and animals that are raised on farms. Our clothing consists of various materials such as cotton, mohair, wool and silk, which also come from plants and animals."

The main focus of the Youth Lab occurred on the second day, where the youth attended career workshops. Topics included DNA Technology, Floral Design and Decorating, Using GPS and GIS, Geocaching using GPS technology to plot land and do surveys, Earning and Investing Your Own Money, and Developing PowerPoint Presentations that Pop.

Other workshops held were Workforce Preparation, Examining the Caloric Cost of Food, Photojournalism, Entrepreneurial Gardening, Fashion Careers and Diversity.

"Participating in the workshops was fun," said Shandace Monroe, a Harris County youth. "There are many careers that you can go into in the field of agriculture and human sciences where you can get a top salary if you apply yourself."

"I really enjoyed the college atmosphere and experience staying on campus," said Lawren Meadows from Harris County. "I didn't know there were so many careers that agriculture offered."

Throughout the event, the youth showcased their talents in presiding over all of the general sessions, introducing speakers, leading the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance and 4-H Motto and Pledge and taking leadership roles in the Youth Lab Awards Banquet.

"The awards banquet is one of the major highlights of the 4-H Career Awareness & Youth Leadership Laboratory," said Freddie L. Richards, dean of the College of Agriculture and Human Sciences and administrator of the Cooperative Extension Program.

Keynote speaker at this year's awards banquet was Andre Johnson, a motivational speaker and business empowerment coach, who is president and CEO of Speaking Muscles Academy and Institute.

"In order to be successful you must live by the three R's of success--Reputation, Reliability, and Relationships" said Johnson. "Be outstanding at what you do, know that you can be counted on to deliver and be powerful in your relationships."

Miss Prairie View A&M University 2009-2010, Chelsee Hill, also shared some inspiring comments with the youth at the banquet. "To have a goal you first have to start by having an idea, a plan, a dream. Along your way to achieve your goals you will also need to take action."

"The Youth Lab banquet is the forum where we reward young people for their academic and leadership achievements. We also recognize our volunteer leaders who play a major role in our Extension county programs helping to recruit youth for our 4-H events," Richards said.

"Every year for the past 10 years, the San Antonio Livestock Exposition (S.A.L.E.), Inc. has awarded scholarships to youth who have done well academically in high school, and we certainly appreciate their continued support" said Long. "We also received a donation in the amount of \$10,000 from the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo to support the Youth Lab."

Representatives from S.A.L.E. attending the awards banquet presented two \$10,000 scholarships to deserving youth who will attend Prairie View A&M University.

Tony Magaro, chairman of the scholarship committee, Jackie Van De Walle, assistant vice president and Scereta Rodriguez, scholarship coordinator, presented scholarships to Kenton Cody Archie, a graduate of Huntsville High School in Huntsville, Texas, and Erica Hutchinson, a graduate of Thurgood Marshall High School in Missouri City, Texas.

Kenton and Erica will attend Prairie View A&M starting the 2009 fall semester. Kenton plans to major in Agriculture, with an emphasis in Agricultural Economics and Erica plans to major in Biology, with an emphasis in Pre-Veterinary Medicine.

Other award winners recognized at the banquet include:

Outstanding Youth Leadership Award (Recognized for outstanding service in their county 4-H clubs)

Roshunda Wilson – Marion County, Jefferson, Texas/County Council President and past president of the 4-H Club Unlimited

Milton Hamilton – Bexar County, San Antonio, Texas/President of the Dover 4-H Club and Vice President of the City Wide Youth Entrepreneurship 4-H Club

Outstanding Volunteer Service Award (Recognized for outstanding support to the 4-H program)

Dorothy Chavez – Webb County, Laredo, Texas

Friend of Extension Award (Recognized for volunteering and supporting the Cooperative Extension Program)

Dr. Woodrow Jones – Harris County, Houston, Texas/Coordinator of Project RESPECT and the 4-H community service learning projects at Wheatley High School and the YES Academy

"All of our award winners are to be commended for their service to 4-H and youth," said Long.

The last day of the Career Awareness & Youth Leadership Laboratory featured an educational and informative session called "Teens and the Law", presented by Retired Police Sergeant Bill Davis of Beaumont, Texas.

For more information about the Career Awareness & Youth Leadership Laboratory contact Gail Long at (936) 261-5119, glong@ag.tamu.edu or visit <http://pvcep.pvamu.edu>.

Written by: Gloria J. Mosby, program director – Communications Cooperative Extension Program

* Above photo caption: Lawren Meadows, (left), and Shandace Monroe, from Harris County, design a floral arrangement in the Youth Lab Floral Design workshop.



Scott Horner, extension research specialist, center, tells youth the techniques to use in locating items with the handheld Global Positioning System.

Photo credit: Gloria J. Mosby



Awards banquet, keynote speaker, Andre Johnson, is animated as he addresses audience.

Photo credit: Gloria J. Mosby

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