

PUBLIC SPEAKING

For the past 6 years, 4-H has been part of my everyday life. Starting in Mr. Julian's 5th grade class at OCES I knew 4-H was for me. All of the fun activities and the community service planned each month sounded great, but I have to admit I was very skeptical about speaking in front of my class.

As a couple of years passed still taking part regularly in community service such as Road Clean Up and Cooking with Care, I began to take leadership roles like being president of 4-H for my 7th grade class. In my role as president, I began learning public speaking skills as I spoke in front of my class at our monthly meetings. I also got the opportunity to meet many new people from other schools during the county 4-H events. After building self confidence in public speaking I participated in my first District Project Achievement in 8th grade. While preparing myself for District Project Achievement, practicing my "Conditioning for Tennis" speech and presentation in front of my friends, family, and my county agents was necessary. Taking part in Junior District Project Achievement two years ago opened doors to great opportunities in the future for me. After completing competition and winning 1st place in my category I thought back to the real reason I won. My public speaking abilities were increasing greatly because of the opportunities 4-H allowed me to have through team building and learning with kids my age all over the Northeast District of Georgia.

The next year, in 9th grade as a senior 4-H'er many chances such as going to the capitol and meeting the governor, making friendships with kids my age from around the state, and getting to spend weekends throughout the year at Rock Eagle with all my friends were given to me. To build my public speaking skills for the past 2 summers I have taught 2 cake decorating classes, a summer safety class, and helped as a teen leader with many other classes for 5th and 6th grade students. To end the school year of 2010-2011 I participated in my 2nd District Project Achievement with the project of Distractions while Driving. At the end of the competition I received 2nd place which took me to State Congress in July of 2011. Improving my speech and presentation was necessary but also speaking in front of a wide range of audiences greatly helped. As I went to State Congress, being a freshman, I felt as if I was prepared more because of the chances I received leading up to this big moment. After doing a scored interview over a portfolio containing information about my project work, other community service and 4-H activities I had participated in that particular year and doing my presentation against other winners in the state, I received 1st place. I do believe that without 4-H encouraging me every year to be the best and make the best better, I would not have Mastered at State Congress in the Safety project or be the leader and person I am today.

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