



# Pathways

T O T H E F U T U R E

## Alabama 4-H Announces \$8 Million Fund-Raising Campaign

Alabama 4-H has launched an \$8 million capital campaign to expand programs and activities currently offered to Alabama youngsters.

The Alabama 4-H Club Foundation board of directors, led by Progressive Farmer Editor and Vice President Jack Odle, announced that gifts totaling \$4 million have already been received to benefit 4-H'ers statewide.

"We are extremely grateful to the many companies, individuals and foundations that have made contributions thus far to Alabama 4-H," said Odle. "They know, as I do, that 4-H makes a life-changing, positive impact on the life of a child. I know the importance of 4-H because it helped shape me as a child."

To date, major support for the campaign has come from all members of the foundation board of directors, approximately 70 percent of Alabama Cooperative Extension System employees and generous business and industry benefactors.

Early corporate donors include Alabama Electric Cooperative, Alabama Farmers Cooperative, Alabama Forests Foundation, Alabama Power and the Alabama Power Foundation, Alfa and the Alabama Farmers Federation, Auburn Network, Drummond Coal Co., EBSCO, Energen, Progressive Farmer, Southern Progress, SouthTrust, Xerox and Vulcan.

Individual donors include Robert and Charlotte Lowder, William R. Ireland, Don and Sandy Logan, Tom Lowder, Mrs. E.L. Lowder, Jimmy Lowder, Ellis Hall, Pete Turnham and others.

The campaign's goal is to raise \$6 million to construct an Environmental Education Center at the 4-H Youth Development Center in Columbiana in Shelby County. The center offers summer camp activities and other specialized educational camps year-round. The facility is located on 267 acres on Lay Lake in Shelby County and

leased through an agreement with the Alabama Power Company.

The remaining \$2 million is being sought to endow educational programs taught to youngsters statewide.

Campaign Chairman Ed Dickinson, a retired corporate executive with Southern Progress, said, "We are very proud to reach this halfway point because it signals that Alabamians are aware that these children are our future leaders and need our commitment and support."

"Some of our state's most influential citizens, Gov. Bob Riley, Lt. Gov. Lucy Baxley, Alabama Education Association leader Paul Hubbert and U.S. Sen. Jeff Sessions, are Alabama 4-H alumni and we are proud they support 4-H," Dickinson added.

All monies donated to 4-H support youth programs and activities, not administrative expenses or salaries.

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## 4-H Develops Winning Attitude in Journalist/Author Rick Bragg

When 45-year-old Rick Bragg remembers his childhood, he thinks of the many experiences that brought him to where he is today, including his years spent as an Alabama 4-H'er.

The Pulitzer Prize winning journalist and author grew up in rural Calhoun County, Ala., and recently recalled the positive impact 4-H made in his life.

"My 4-H adviser was John B. Sellers," Bragg says. "The thing about Mr. Sellers was that he was a dignified, nice man. I don't remember him saying one cross word when he handled us. We respected him."

Bragg, who worked for newspapers in Alabama and the New York Times, is author of "All Over but the Shoutin'," "Somebody Told Me," "Ava's Man," and "I'm a Soldier, Too: The Jessica Lynch Story." He was awarded a Pulitzer Prize in 1996.

He says 4-H was a great influence on his life. "I speak to a lot of schools and I always tell them the thing to do is not do nothing. Reach. Get involved in something, and in my childhood, 4-H was the only thing we had."

"I tell them 'It doesn't matter if you are born on the end of a dirt road or in a barrio in Puerto Rico or inner-city New Jersey. That doesn't matter.'

"You raise the best goat in 4-H, all of the sudden someone notices that you've won something. You win the public speaking award or any of those things. Winning matters, achieving matters."



Rick Bragg, center, reminisced recently about Alabama 4-H, talking with 4-H alum Matt Goff, left, and current 4-H'er Katlin Mulvaney, right.

continued on page 2

# Thank you, Alabama 4-H donors

The Alabama 4-H Club Foundation, Inc. would like to thank all donors for their commitment to helping Alabama's youngsters, our greatest asset.

The foundation lists its donors alphabetically, rather than by gift level. We believe that each donation will help us achieve our goal of working "For Today and Tomorrow ... Making the Best Better" for the young people of Alabama.

The following list of donors are those who have made contributions to Alabama 4-H during 2003 and 2004. In the event of any errors or omissions on these lists, please contact the foundation office at (334) 844-2298.

On behalf of the nearly 180,000 Alabama 4-H'ers, we say thank you to our donors – individuals, foundations, corporations, organizations and those who have asked to remain anonymous.

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- Alabama Heritage Funeral Home
- Alabama Holstein Association

## Bragg continued

"You have to take a certain amount of responsibility for getting to where you want to be, but it doesn't matter where you start," Bragg said. "If you start further back than someone else, then you have every right in the world to shake your fist in the air and say, 'I started from nothing.' You've got every right in the world to be really proud of making it from a tiny school in Alabama."

Bragg, who became involved in 4-H through school as a fourth-grader, says 4-H was a strong program in Calhoun County.

"We had a real good program run by Mr. Sellers, and I did stuff every summer, and I mean every summer."

The former Calhoun County public speaking winner, Bragg proudly remembers winning the contest. "I had to beat Jimmy Knight. Jimmy just stood up there and read something, and then there was some girl who probably had a big record book and she did hers and I beat both of them.

"I always liked the ribbons and I liked winning," he said. "I never didn't have fun in 4-H. It was the first time I'd ever done anything under any kind of pressure to win."

Another benefit of 4-H, he says, is that it builds confidence. "Country kids were terrified to speak in public," Bragg says. "That is a fact.

"I studied and practiced my speech," he said. "The only place I could practice

was when I was doing pick-and-shovel work for my Uncle Ed.

"I was digging out a storm pit, and I would say 'One of the things I'd like talk to you about is the conservation of our American heritage.' And, my Uncle Ed, who always walked softly for a big man, snuck up behind me and he just said, 'What in the world are you doing?' I said, 'I'm practicing my speech,' and he said, 'That's good because I thought you had lost your mind.'"

Bragg also said 4-H opened doors for him that were not available for someone in a rural area such as Piedmont where he grew up.

"So many things happened because of 4-H," he said. "My first trip out of town was because of 4-H. I went to Birmingham for the first time and I stayed in a building taller than two stories for the first time because of 4-H.

"We were thrilled because we'd never been anywhere. We stayed in the old Jefferson Davis hotel downtown."

Bragg says as he moved into high school, he left 4-H. "In high school I drifted away from 4-H simply because I had to go to work. I worked and went to school and something had to give, and it was 4-H."

Throughout his career as a journalist and today as an author, Bragg says his memories of 4-H are dear to him. "I loved 4-H and I still love it."

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continued on page 4



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continued on page 5

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Semiannually Amount \_\_\_\_\_ Year(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Ongoing \_\_\_\_\_

Quarterly Amount \_\_\_\_\_ Year(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Ongoing \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_ Amount \_\_\_\_\_ Year(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Ongoing \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_, 20 \_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Have a Story Idea?**

Do you have a story idea for Pathways? Do you know a 4-H'er who has achieved an honor and want others across Alabama to know about it? The Alabama 4-H Club Foundation, Inc. is the nonprofit fund-raising arm of Alabama 4-H. The Foundation seeks to recognize youth for their achievements. Send your story ideas to Janet McCoy, Extension development and communications coordinator, at [mccoyj@aces.edu](mailto:mccoyj@aces.edu), or call (334) 844-2298.



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