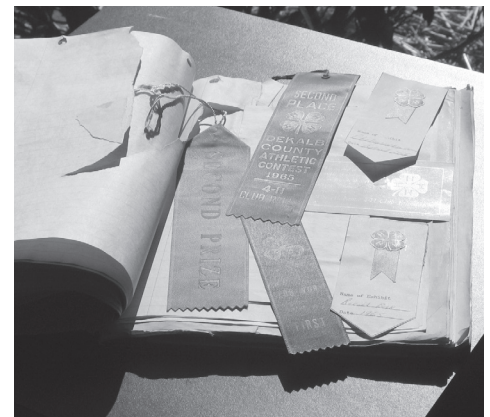




Pathways

T O T H E F U T U R E



4-H Memories

Country music artist Teddy Gentry, left, looks over his free-range chickens on his DeKalb County farm. Pictured above are some of the ribbons Gentry earned as a 4-H'er.

Country Icon Teddy Gentry Honors His Roots of Agriculture; 4-H

Listening to Teddy Gentry talk about his life, it's difficult to determine which he loves more, farming or music. One thing is for sure, the longtime bass player for the country music group Alabama has remained true to traditional values, including 4-H.

Gentry, a multiplatinum award winning artist who, along with other Alabama members, was recently inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame, is more comfortable talking about agriculture and 4-H. He may have traveled the world performing sell-out concerts and writing multiple awarding winning songs, but Alabama is truly his home.

Gentry's lifelong love of agriculture was something he learned as a youngster, instilled by family and 4-H. As a 4-H'er from fourth through eighth grade, Gentry was involved in several

programs including photography, land judging and public speaking.

"I was always interested in trying something new. I enjoyed every phase of 4-H," he says. "Land judging, photography or just anything outside.

"I loved photography. I bought one of those little bitty cheap cameras for \$4 or \$5 and took pictures of everything, from a cotton plant to a bush in the yard."

Gentry also fondly remembers Bob Spear, the Alabama Cooperative Extension System agent in DeKalb County who coordinated 4-H programs. "In the eighth grade, Bob Spear had this award called the 'I Dare You' award and it was basically 'I dare you to become all you can,'" Gentry says. "It was an inspirational award and it was the first time I'd ever won anything in my life."

Gentry's love for 4-H is apparent, so much so that his 4-H record book is on display at Alabama's museum in downtown Fort Payne. It includes his awards, photographs, pins and other memorabilia of his years as a 4-H'er.

"Never underestimate what it means to a kid who has nothing to receive an award," Gentry says. "To be recognized, to get a pat on the back or to be encouraged by someone is important to a kid. Nothing is more rewarding than seeing a kid growing by doing something good. That's what 4-H did for me."

Gentry owns Bent Tree Farms in DeKalb County, which includes 60 acres that was his grandfather's farm. Gentry bought the land with his first profits from his music career. His farm

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Five 4-H'ers Selected to Attend National 4-H Conference

Five Alabama 4-H'ers have been chosen as delegates to National 4-H Conference, the U.S. secretary of agriculture's premier youth development opportunity to engage youth in developing recommendations for the 4-H Youth Development Program.

This year's event, "Connect 4-H — Let's Get Together," will bring together youth, volunteer leaders, and state and county Extension staff members from across the United States, the U.S. territories and the Canadian provinces.

The conference, set for March 25 to 30 in Washington D.C., is a working conference in which youth and adults -- at the invitation of the secretary of agriculture -- assist in the development of recommendations to help guide 4-H Youth Development programs nationally and in their communities.

The 4-H'ers representing Alabama are James Cooper, Macon County; Deborah Garrett and Katie Harbour, both

from Shelby County; Cameron Mulvaney, Lee County; and Ryan Sprinkle, Fayette County. In all, more than 300 youth and adults will participate in the tradition, which began in 1927.

"The 4-H'ers selected to attend this year's conference are some of the brightest youth in our state," says Lamar Nichols, state 4-H program director. "The selection process was difficult because so many of our youngsters could have been selected.

"Those chosen put a lot of effort into their applications, and their selection is a reflection of their dedication and commitment to making the best better," Nichols says.

The delegates, who were chosen by a committee of four professionals, will be accompanied by 4-H Regional Extension Agent Nancy Alexander to the National 4-H Center in Chevy Chase, Md.

"National 4-H Conference is a working conference and much of the

work begins before the delegates arrive," says Alexander. "Delegates have to prepare themselves for roundtable discussions on a variety of issues related to 4-H in Alabama, so it requires that they know information about their local 4-H program, as well as those around the state."

This year, the Town Hall meeting for 4-H'ers will be on the essential elements needed in 4-H programs, and delegates will be assigned to roundtable discussion meetings to focus on specific issues facing 4-H nationally. Those recommendations will be shared with the secretary of agriculture, national Extension program leaders and others who determine 4-H programs.

As part of the conference, 4-H'ers will learn about the work of National 4-H headquarters and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and share their personal experiences with members of Congress from their home state during Capitol Hill Day.

Alabama 4-H'ers Attend National 4-H Congress

Twelve Alabama 4-H'ers attended the 2005 National 4-H Congress in Atlanta, attending leadership workshops, participating in service projects and interacting with other 4-H'ers from around the United States.

The Alabama group, which included four Extension personnel and two adult volunteers, joined more than 1,200 delegates from the United States and its territories at the 5-day congress.

Representing Alabama were Cameron Mulvaney, Della Stabler and Jarrett Moore, all from Lee County; Erica Lewis from Coffee County; Mary Potts from Fayette County; Janna Ford and Katie Harbour, both from Shelby County; Kimberly Lynn McGraw from Mobile County; Rebecca Morrison from Tuscaloosa County; Emma Cooper from Limestone County; Brittany Stockton from Elmore County; and Scott Sexton from Pike County.

Adult 4-H volunteers Steve and Deborah Stabler from Lee County and Alabama Cooperative Extension System regional agents Shannon Andress, Tammy DeBenedetto and James

Shropshire and Extension associate director Lamar Nichols, accompanied the 4-H'ers on the trip.

Several Alabama 4-H'ers served on national 4-H committees this year. Cameron Mulvaney was a youth delegate advisor, Mary Potts was a flag bearer and Casey East, now a member of Collegiate 4-H, was on the National Congress design team.

"The Alabama delegates have years of outstanding 4-H citizenship, leadership and 4-H experience," says Nichols. "Alabama 4-H is proud that we were represented by such outstanding youth.

"4-H is so much more than winning trips and contests; it's more about the experiences and life skills they gain through meaningful project work."

National 4-H Congress, a 4-H tradition for 84 years, was originally designed to recognize state and national winners. This year's event recognized excellence and provided an outstanding educational opportunity for 4-H youth.



Talking Up 4-H

4-H'er Ryan Sprinkle recently taped a public service announcement to run on radio stations statewide, reminding Alabamians to support 4-H through the state's Income Tax Check-off program. Sprinkle, this year's State Council president, knows how much gifts to 4-H supports for Alabama's youth and wanted to do his part to ask residents to join in. To support 4-H, check Line 31K on individual tax forms. For more information, call (334) 844-2247.



New 4-H Program Just Move Alabama to Help State's Youth

A newly created education program developed by a team of Alabama Cooperative Extension System experts will have a strong impact on the lives of Alabama 4-Hers – making their bodies and minds healthier.

The program, Just Move Alabama, was developed to teach youth the importance of exercise, healthy eating and to accept all body types.

“Alabama 4-H is committed to providing youth with the skills and knowledge needed to live lives that are physically and emotionally healthy,” says Molly Gregg, Extension 4-H and youth development specialist.

The Just Move Alabama program will focus on three specific healthy lifestyle principles: increasing physical activity of youth; teaching youth to make healthier nutritional choices; and to appreciate and value all body types.

The program will be incorporated into all 4-H programs and activities and was recently taught to 4-H regional Extension Agents and all Extension employees with 4-H assignments.

One goal of the program is to include 10 minutes of physical activity into every 4-Her's activity, with a goal of working up to 60 minutes daily.

To assist volunteer leaders, three kits have been created: Jumping for Health; Frisbee, Fun and Food; and Volleying Vitals and Vittles. These kits each use a physical activity – jump rope, Frisbee and volley ball – as part of the lesson on nutrition and food safety or body image, Gregg says.

In addition, a deck of cards, designed for preschool through third grade, is included in the kits. The Just Move Alabama Card Deck will feature a 10-minute activity and a fun fact on one side, and a nutritious recipe, nutrition facts label and food safety or fun fact on the other. A second deck is currently being created for use by fourth- through eighth-grade students and will be available this spring.

A team of Extension employees created the program as a way to fight Alabama's growing population of obese youth. “Obesity and adult onset diabetes have their origins in such

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REAs Teach by Learning

4-H regional Extension agents from across the state had fun jumping rope and playing volley ball at a recent meeting. They played these games to learn how to teach Just Move Alabama, which encourages healthy lifestyle choices. In the photo at top, Lamar Nichols, state 4-H program director (white ball cap) and Kenneth Gamble, 4-H REA, get the ropes going for 4-H REA Wendy Padgett (white jumpsuit). In the photo above, 4-H REAs Susan Thompson, left, and Nancy Alexander practice their volleyball technique.



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Sharing the Warmth

Amy Burgess, second from left, Denise Legvold, third from left and Betty Gottler, fourth from left, display some of the coats donated by Alabama 4-H with several Mississippi State University Extension colleagues.

Alabama 4-H Warms Hearts and Bodies of Fellow Gulf Coast 4-H'ers

As cold weather settled in late last year, Extension professionals in Mississippi spread the word to their colleagues of the need for coats and warm clothing for the thousands of Mississippi youngsters whose lives had been torn apart by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

Alabama 4-H Regional Extension Agent Betty Gottler was just one who heard the message, but knew it was a need she and others could help meet. While Gottler serves five counties in north Alabama, she is a native of Baldwin County, and she remembered the generosity shown to Alabama 4-H'ers in the wake of Hurricane Ivan in 2004.

"I knew that if a couple of folks would take the lead on seeing that the donations got to Mississippi, Alabama 4-H'ers and others would open their hearts," says Gottler.

Gottler teamed up with fellow regional Extension agent, Denise Legvold, and Amy Burgess, a 4-H agent assistant who works in Marshall and Dekalb counties, and they embarked on a plan.

Burgess contacted her local leaders and says the message spread rapidly. "It went from e-mails to a radio station finding out about the drive and it grew from there. It was great, especially at Christmas time, to give our 4-H'ers a tangible way they could help other young people. You could just see the pride on their faces as they brought in what they collected."

"We made arrangements to meet colleagues from central and south Alabama at the 4-H Center in Columbiana with their donations," says Gottler.

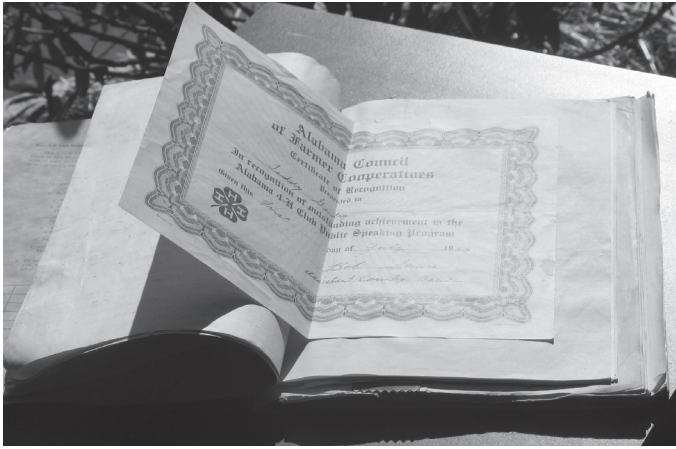
In a matter of days, Alabama 4-H'ers, their families and others had collected three carloads of coats and other apparel. "Our final tally was 162 coats; 252 pairs of gloves; 147 hats; 38 scarves; 400 pieces of warm clothing, such as sweaters and sweatshirts; 70 pieces of thermal underwear; 340 pairs of socks; 42 pairs of pajamas; 38 pairs of slippers; and 23 blankets," says Gottler.

"Contributions came from 16 counties as well as from Extension professionals at both Alabama A&M and Auburn universities and the Alabama 4-H Center. Several counties donated the money they would have used for office Christmas parties to Operation 4-H Relief."

Gottler, Burgess and Legvold made the trip to Starkville in mid-December with three packed vehicles. "It's hard to describe how full your heart feels when you begin unloading things that so many of us take for granted -- a warm coat, a new

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Icon Honors His Roots continued from page 1

produces grass-fed, free-range beef, pigs and chickens. He's committed to traditional farming methods and hasn't used any pesticides, man-made fertilizers or any other chemical products on his farm in more than 5 years.

"I believe we destroyed the food quality value about 40 years ago when we went to faster production," he says. "It changed the fat in food. The free-range chicken eggs I sell have half the cholesterol in them than those sold in grocery stores, and I can't keep them in stock.

"What we put in our bodies is more than just something to fill our belly – it is fuel for our mind, heart and nervous system," Gentry says. "We strip the nutritional value out of most of our food.

"Our grandparents ate all the things they say now are bad for you – beef, yard eggs, pork and butter. You've got to look at how those animals were raised, on the farm with natural feed," Gentry says.

While selling directly to restaurants and suppliers across the United States is a large part of his business, Gentry recently opened a retail store in Fort Payne where he sells his products – Burt's Grass Fed Beef, Burt's Free Range Eggs – along with other naturally grown items.

Burt's Grass Fed Beef, named after Gentry's grandfather, is from his own composite breed – South Poll, developed over many years to produce lean, tender meat. "My wife and I were sitting at the dinner table one night and decided if we were going to have a quality beef program, we were going to have to come up with something that was heat tolerant," he says.

Gentry spent years cross-breeding several varieties of cattle, including Red Angus, Senepol, Barzona, Herefords, and even imported a breed from St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands, to develop South Poll. "They eat well, are very gentle and very fertile," Gentry says, and they are tolerant of Alabama's heat. "We're doing well, and we have a big demand for the females."

Gentry is knowledgeable about sustainable agriculture, working with a dozen or more universities across the United States to partner on numerous research activities. His operation is so sophisticated that he owns his own machinery, which measures the amount of force it takes to cut a 1-inch piece of meat, allowing him to rank tenderness in the meat. "We rank our tenderness according to real data," he says.

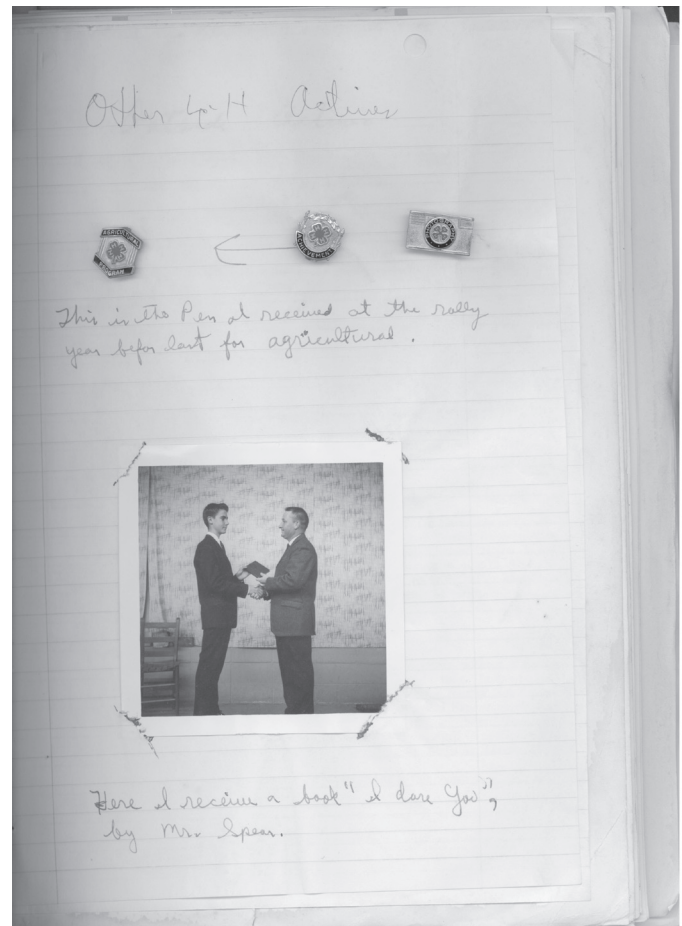
"We put a barcode on every package of meat, which can trace which steer it came from so we can look at the total pounds of meat per steer and categorize them," Gentry adds. "We're producing the best piece of meat on the market today because it's a combination of genetics, management and aging."

Of music, which brought him fame and fortune, Gentry says it has filled a niche in his life. "Music can be very uplifting, spiritual and rewarding.

"The best part of it, at least for me, is the creative process," says Gentry. "It's the creative part of life that gets me going, whether it's working with creating a breed of cattle that works here in the South or a hit song. I have to dig deep – it's my nature and it's what gets me up every morning."

To learn more about Gentry's farm, go to www.benttreefarms.com.

4-H is one of several defining factors in Gentry's life that has made him who he is today. He believes the diverse programs offered through 4-H are reasons it remains strong. 4-H encourages creativity, provides hands-on learning and develops life skills that young people can use, whether they are interested in making music or raising livestock. "There is something to attract all kids," Gentry says. "All kids are not alike and don't respond the same way. But each child can be successful in his or her own way."



Gentry's Memorabilia

Pictured top left and above are items that are a part of Gentry's 4-H record book. At top is a certificate Gentry received, and above is a photograph in Gentry's record book of Gentry as a teenager receiving the "I Dare You" award from agent Bob Spear. Also pictured are some of the 4-H pins Gentry earned.



Just Move continued from page 3

factors as sugared beverage consumption, long hours of television viewing and reduced physical activity,” Gregg says.

The program was written by 4-H regional Extension agents Denise Legvold, Ruth Sarro and Joann Wissinger, and Gregg. They partnered with Extension human nutrition, diet and health experts Kajuandra Harris-Huntley, Cheryl Vasse and Jean Weese; and Mary Lucile Jordan, Etowah County Extension coordinator, to develop the curriculum. In addition, two Auburn University faculty members -- Sheri J. Brock and Jeanine Fittipaldi-Wert with the Department of Health and Human Performance -- also collaborated on the program.

In addition to being used by all 4-H programs, the Just Move Alabama program materials will be made available statewide, and any youth organization can contact county Extension offices to find out how they can have access to the materials.

“Just Move Alabama is for all youth in the state of Alabama,” says Legvold. “It may be delivered in a variety of ways, including in-school clubs, school enrichment, special interest clubs, after-school programs, home-schooled youth, community clubs, local, regional, state, and national events and activities.”



Agents Get Moving!

In the top photo, 4-H REA Denise Legvold, left, teaches the Just Move curriculum to other REAs. Above, agents watch 4-H REA Wendy Padgett jump.



Hale County Winners

Hale County's winning team, left to right are Johnny Gladney, regional Extension animal science agent; Andrew Burroughs; Daniel Foree; Jedediah Burroughs; and Michael Martin.

Hale County 4-H'ers Take Third at National Meats Judging Contest

Hale County's 4-H meats judging team won third place at the American Royal National 4-H Meats Judging and Identification Contest at Kansas State University.

Andrew Burroughs, a student at Hale County High School, was the contest's High Individual Overall and received a \$1,000 scholarship from the Saddle and Sirloin Club of Kansas City. He also received plaques for being High Individual Overall in Reasons, Retail Judging and Meats Identification.

His brother, Jedediah Burroughs, placed Third High Individual Overall and received a \$500 scholarship from the Saddle and Sirloin Club of Kansas City. Jedediah placed fourth in Retail Judging and fifth in Reasons.

The other members of the team were Daniel Foree and Michael Martin. The four won the right to represent Alabama at the American Royal Contest by placing second at Alabama's State 4-H Meats Contest.

Johnny Gladney, a regional animal science agent with the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, coached the team.

2nd Annual Golf Classic Set for June

The 2nd annual Alabama 4-H Golf Classic will be Thursday, June 8, at FarmLinks Golf Club in Sylacauga, Ala., and golfers are signing up for another great event.

Proceeds from the classic benefit the more than 100,000 Alabama 4-H'ers statewide.

4-H teaches youngsters aged 9 to 19 leadership, citizenship and life skills through the four H's – Head, Heart, Hands and Health. The mission of 4-H is to serve all youth, especially those in urban and rural areas who are at a disadvantage because of life's circumstances. In all subject areas, 4-H instructs youth in the character values needed to be productive citizens. Alabama 4-H also teaches leadership skills through its commitment to positive youth development.

To register and reserve your spot, contact the 4-H Foundation Development office at (334) 844-2247, or go online to www.aces.edu and look for the Golf Classic logo.



Winners at the 2005 National Egg and Poultry Association included, from left: Trey Miller, Anna Adcock, Erin Hardin, Michelle Burns, Matthew Gates and James Cooper.

Alabama 4-H'ers Place at National Egg and Poultry Conference

For the sixth consecutive year, Alabama 4-H'ers placed at the 2005 National Egg and Poultry Conference, competing in Chicken Que, Turkey Que, Egg Demonstration and Avian Bowl.

Alabama 4-H'er James Cooper from Macon County was named a national ambassador.

Alabama winners included Erin Hardin from Randolph County, who earned fifth place in Egg Demonstration. She won a silver pin and a \$100 Savings Bond.

Trey Miller from Lawrence County won third place in Turkey Que. His prizes included a gold pin and a \$300 Savings Bond.

Anna Adcock from Randolph County won ninth place, earning a bronze pin and a \$100 Savings Bond in Chicken Que.

Alabama's Avian Bowl team, consisting of Michelle Burns from Fayette County, Corey Rudolph from Lowndes County, Matthew Gates from Pike County and James Cooper from Macon County, won ninth place.

The National 4-H Poultry and Egg Conference recognizes 4-H'ers who have excelled in their state 4-H poultry learning activities. Life skills are also learned through preparation for the various contests.

The 2005 conference included five separate events. In the poultry and egg judging contest, 4-H'ers judged ready-to-cook poultry, live production hens and market eggs. In the chicken and turkey barbecuing contests, 4-H'ers prepared barbecued chicken or turkey and gave oral presentations on the broiler or turkey industries. The egg preparation demonstration involved preparing an egg dish and giving an oral presentation on the nutritional value of eggs. In addition to these events, an avian bowl was conducted. The avian bowl is a round robin in which the contestants are required to answer questions regarding poultry science, poultry production, meat duck, gamebird and waterfowl production, and information about poultry industries.

A workshop on careers in the poultry industry was also held during the conference and 4-H'ers were exposed to hands-on information from industry personnel.

More than 40 businesses, associations and individuals provided funds and resources for the conference, including support from the Alabama Poultry and Egg Association.

Lawrence Appointed to National 4-H Leadership Trust

Beth Atkins Lawrence, assistant to the director-development for the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, has been appointed to the National 4-H Leadership Trust.

The National 4-H Leadership Trust is the deliberative body that crafts and implements a unified voice and a national presence for the stewardship of 4-H youth development as supported by the Cooperative Extension Service and its partners. She represents all state 4-H foundations on the 16-member board.

The trust advances 4-H through its active support of the implementation of the National 4-H Strategic Plan. To that end, the trust addresses emerging issues of importance to the entire 4-H movement and from time to time focuses on advancing special initiatives, such as professional development, youth in governance/civic engagement, youth development research and international programming in 4-H.

Check the Box!

Alabama 4-H is transforming the lives nearly 100,000 young people, and you can help *Make the Best Better!*

The Alabama income tax forms will soon be mailed, and those wishing to support Alabama 4-H can check Line 31K on your individual return to give to 4-H.

In the past two years that Alabama 4-H has participated in the state program, nearly \$20,000 has been given to 4-H.

"Checking the box on your return is a convenient way to support Alabama 4-H," said Beth Lawrence, assistant to the director, development, for the Alabama Cooperative Extension System. "All money supports 4-H programs, helps to purchase awards and ribbons for 4-H'ers and offsets the costs of kids attending camps and district, regional and state programs."

For information on how you can support Alabama 4-H, contact Lawrence at (334) 844-2247.

Alabama 4-H Warms Hearts continued from page 4

pair of pajamas, socks, and you see the relief and appreciation on your colleagues' faces. You could just tell by looking at our Mississippi colleagues how much our effort meant to them and the young people they work with," says Gottler.

Susan Holder, state 4-H leader for Mississippi said that five out of every six children needed a warm coat. "One child commented that his coat was the only new thing he had in his house," she adds.

Gaines Smith, Alabama Cooperative Extension System interim director, said the Alabama efforts to assist Mississippi youth and Extension colleagues exemplify the true meaning of 4-H and Extension. "Since its birth in the early 1900s, Extension has been committed to enabling citizens to improve their lives. Our organization has never lost sight of the importance of helping individuals and that is what makes me proud to be part of Extension in Alabama."



Thank you for your support of the Alabama 4-H Annual Fund!

If you have any questions, please contact Beth Lawrence, Alabama 4-H Club Foundation, Inc.
226 Duncan Hall, Auburn University, AL 36849-5612 Phone: (334) 844-2247 Fax: (334) 844-7201



To help meet Alabama 4-H's needs for this year, enclosed is my gift of:

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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 mccoysl@aces.edu, or call (334) 844-2298.

Beth A. Lawrence, Assistant to the Director

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