

Recognizing the Best in County Government Programs!



2013 Achievement Awards

ATTN: 2013 Achievement Awards Program
Virginia Association of Counties
1207 East Main Street, Suite 300
Richmond, Va. 23219-3627

Call for Entries



2013 VACo Achievement Awards

Deadline: June 1, 2013

Application Form

All applications must include the following information. Separate applications must be submitted for each eligible program. **Deadline: June 1, 2013.**

Program Information

Locality Halifax County

Program Title 4-H Junior Summer Camp

Program Category Customer Service

Contact Information

Name Sonya Furgurson

Title 4-H Agent

Department Virginia Cooperative Extension

Complete Mailing Address P.O. Box 757 Halifax, VA 24558

Telephone # (434) 476-2147 Fax # (434) 476-7777

E-mail sonyaf@vt.edu

Signature of county administrator or chief administrative officer

Name James Halasz

Title County Administrator

Signature* *James M. Halasz*

*Entries without this signature will not be accepted.



2013 VACo Achievement Awards

Deadline for Entry: June 1, 2013

Description

The VACo Achievement Awards is a competitive awards program open to local government members of the association. The awards program is held annually to recognize local government programs that exemplify innovation, model practices, partnering or collaboration with other local governments, a private enterprise or state and federal government. Please encourage all county departments to apply!

Eligibility

All local government members of the Virginia Association of Counties, which are in good standing with the association, may participate. There is no limit to the number of applications a county may submit.

All applications must comply with the following standards:

1. The program must have become operational before Jan. 1, 2013, and must be currently operational.
2. Local government officials and/or staff must have played a significant role in developing and implementing the program, with only limited assistance from outside experts and/or consultants.
3. All steps in the application must be completed.
4. Awards will be given to departments or units, not individuals.
5. Programs that have received a previous VACo Achievement Award are ineligible.
6. The program must meet one or more of the criteria outlined below and must be signed by the county administrator or chief administrative official before submission.

Criteria for Selection

The nominated program must meet one or more of the following criteria:

1. Offer an innovative solution to a problem, situation or delivery of services.
2. Promote intergovernmental cooperation and/or cooperation with local, state and federal entities and/or a private enterprise in addressing a problem or situation.
3. Provide a model that other local governments may learn from or implement in their own localities.
4. Programs may be based on programs from another public or private entity but must represent innovative approaches or customization by the local government.

Website

To view past Achievement Awards winners and all the entries from the 2012 competition, visit www.vaco.org/AchievementAwards.html.

Questions?

Contact Gage Harter, VACo's Communications Director, at (804) 343-2502 or gharter@vaco.org. Additional application forms are also available at www.vaco.org.

Categories

Program Categories:

1. Community/Economic Development
2. Customer Service
3. Communications (public relations)
4. Criminal Justice & Public Safety
5. Health/Human Services (youth, elderly and others)
6. Information Technology
7. Parks and Recreation
8. Transportation
9. Organizational Development
10. Environmental
11. Regional Collaboration

Rules

Rules of entry:

1. All entries must be submitted in duplicate. Mail two copies of each entry bound in a notebook or presentation folder. Include the entry form, all appendices and supplemental materials, photographs, DVD, etc. **Additionally, submit one copy in electronic format—PDF or WORD file (e-mail electronic entry to gharter@vaco.org).**
2. Entries must be typed and double-spaced. State the problem, challenge or situation faced by the locality and how the program fulfilled the awards criteria (innovation, partnering or collaboration and a model for other localities). Tell how the program was carried out, including financing and staffing, and the program's results. Be concise and submit no more than eight one-sided typed pages plus photos or supporting materials.
3. Include a short overview of the program (no more than one page double-spaced) that can be used as a quick reference guide for judges. Please include the application form.

Judging

Entries will be judged by a three-member panel selected for their expertise in local government. When there are no selected nominations, no award will be made. One entry will be named "Best Achievement."

Award Presentation

Award plaques will be presented at VACo's Annual Business Meeting on Nov. 12, 2013, in Bath County. The winning entries will be featured in a booklet that will be distributed during VACo's Annual Conference, and winners will receive a special ribbon to be worn on their nametags. Winners will be recognized on the VACo website and in a news release sent to statewide media. VACo staff members also attend Board of Supervisors meetings to present awards.

Deadline

All entries must be postmarked no later than June 1, 2013, and mailed to VACo Achievement Awards, 1207 East Main St., Suite 300, Richmond, Va., 23219-3627. Entries will not be returned.

4-H Junior Camp: Soaring to New Heights – Overview

Never in the history of Virginia 4-H Camping has a summer residential junior camp been cancelled...until July 1, 2012. On Friday, June 29, 2012 Virginia was hit with a derecho, a large fast moving band of severe thunderstorms. This system caused considerable damage across several states eventually leaving over 1 million residents and businesses in Virginia without power, including the W.E. Skelton 4-H Educational Center on Smith Mountain Lake. This resulted in the cancellation of Halifax County's 4-H Junior Summer Camp for 2012.

Soon after the cancellation announcement, the Halifax County 4-H Agent began preparations for a one-day camp entitled Soaring to New Heights. Quickly citizens of Halifax County stepped forward to offer their assistance in many ways. Giving the youth some type of camping experience was beginning to look like a real option. With only five weeks left before school started, time was of the essence. Since the 4-H Center was booked for the summer, Staunton River State Park was chosen for the location.

Seventy campers arrived at the state park where they were greeted by camp summer staff who led them in camp songs and chants. They were then led to their classes by their pack leaders, trained teen volunteers. After lunch, campers participated in free rec., swim, and tie-dyeing followed by a program on military families. After dinner, campers participated in camp relay competitions by packs. The day concluded with a traditional camp fire led by camp staff.

What started out as a disheartening situation turned into an exceptional experience for both the youth as well as the adults. Each person walked away with a rekindled sense of altruism. Even though camp was met with obstacles, leaders of the youth in Halifax County, including the teens, were determined to be unstoppable. They chose to Soar to New Heights with 4-H.

2013 VACo Achievement Award Nomination – 4-H Junior Camp: Soaring to New Heights

The Problem/Need for the Program

The mission of 4-H is to develop youth and adults working with those youth to realize their full potential becoming effective, contributing citizens through participation in research-based, informal, hands-on educational experiences. 4-H Residential Summer Junior Camp has been an intricate part of the 4-H tradition in Halifax County for many years. Through this experience youth have the opportunity to learn and have fun in a safe environment while surrounded by caring adults. The two primary benefits to camping include cooperative group living and experiential learning. Annually 26,000 children in Virginia participate in a camping program. Feedback from campers shows that they learn to make new friends, develop new skills, and become more independent. Results from parent/guardian surveys show that campers increase in self-responsibility, initiative, and willingness to share. The impacts are far reaching.

On Friday, June 29, 2012 a derecho tore through several states leaving over one million Virginia residences and businesses without power, including the W.E. Skelton 4-H Educational Center in Wirtz, Virginia. The Halifax, Franklin, Danville City camping cluster were scheduled to arrive on Monday, July 1, 2012. By mid-day Sunday it was realized that camp would have to be cancelled. Families were individually called by the Extension Agents in each locality. Within a few days' time a plan had been worked out between the Virginia Cooperative Extension – Halifax Office and the financial office at Virginia Tech to fully reimburse camp fees. Parents had full refunds in their hands within two weeks of the cancellation of camp. Since the Halifax Office had already paid the 4-H center its fees and had not yet been reimbursed, the office's operating budget ran in the red for three weeks with Virginia Tech taking temporary fiscal

responsibility until fees were reimbursed from the center. This is one example of selfless customer service provided citizens of Halifax County.

Description of Program

This angry act of nature robbed 112 participants of the experience of 4-H Summer Camp. Once the financial part of having to cancel camp was completed, the 2012 summer camp was put in the past. The new focus became creating an abbreviated version of camp for the youth in Halifax County. It quickly became obvious that there were enough people and organizations on board to be successful, plans were laid for a 12 hour one-day 4-H summer camp.

The two primary obstacles to overcome were finding a location and finding enough adult volunteers. The first location considered was the W.E. Skelton 4-H Educational Center. Since this is their busiest season of the year, they were booked solid with the first available real option being a weekend camp after school started. It was the same situation at the next closest center, Holiday Lake 4-H Center. The best option was to keep it local. Staunton River State Park was a large enough venue for a large group and offered the best camping atmosphere. The manager and staff were extremely helpful and accommodating. Since the day camp would take place during their busy season, they had summer staff who could help with teaching classes.

The second large obstacle was finding enough volunteers to manage a large number of campers ages 9-13. The difficulty was that most of the adults volunteers registered to assist with the week long summer camp were school teachers who returned to work the week of the day camp. Master Gardeners and Extension colleagues quickly stepped up to the challenge and volunteered their time to teach a class and supervise the youth. Additionally, the local National Guard and the 4-H Program Director for Operation Military Kids also were willing to

collaborate to plan part of the days' events incorporating citizenship. Unfortunately, the National Guard's involvement was blocked by red tape at a higher level. As a precaution, one nurse and one EMT volunteered the entire day to handle emergencies. Transportation was provided by Halifax County Public Schools.

Because of the large venue for this day camp, campers were put into packs which were associated with a theme rather than individual children signing up for various classes. For example, the Bobcats all took canoeing, fishing, and Miracle Growers classes. The classes that the Master Gardeners taught included: Miracle Growers, Fishing, and Hypertufa. The Extension faculty and staff taught: Geocaching, Archery, Cupcake Decorating, Dance, Staying Alive (outdoor survival), Photography, and Goods from the Woods. A representative from Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries taught a water quality monitoring class (Critter Catching) and led a shoreline liter pick-up. The Halifax Soil and Water Conservation Specialist and their Educational Specialist taught a Virginia natural resources class.

Throughout the day youth were encouraged to display positive character traits related to citizenship. Teen counselors were given Character Counts! citizenship bandanas to distribute as they witnessed campers following rules, showing respect for authority, being a good neighbor, protecting the environment and such behaviors. Meals were provided by the volunteers for the local USDA summer feeding site. However, the timeline was ending, so the lead volunteer's church donated the food. Immediately after lunch the youth participated in a nutrition lesson which focused on the effects of healthy eating habits.

The afternoon events began with free recreation, swimming, and tie-dying. Then each camper went through mock military stations and boot camp led by the 4-H Program Director for

Operation Military Kids. After dinner campers participated in relays and camp games. Then the teen counselors performed on the outdoor stage providing camp style entertainment. The evening concluded with a tradition campfire led by camp staff from both the WE Skelton 4-H Educational Center and the Holiday Lake 4-H Center. Youth sang their favorite camp songs on the bus ride back to the Halifax County High School to meet their parents.

The Results/Success of the Program

In the end, seventy youth ages 9-13 enjoyed a fun filled educational outdoor experience. One parent sent the 4-H Agent an e-mail thanking her for organizing the event on such short notice and crediting the day camp for her interest in agricultural sciences. Youth and parents alike have been requesting a similar day camp for summer of 2013, even as recent as the end of May. Parents also expressed gratitude in allowing the registered residential camper sign-up a few days ahead of the general public. Parents also were appreciative of having two locations for camper drop-off and pick-up.

Twenty-seven teen and adult volunteers assisted with the event not including the staff from the state park. One of the Master Gardeners explained later that even though she was “allergic to kids” she had a great time and enjoyed being around the children the entire day. Another volunteer paid a visit to the Virginia Cooperative Extension – Halifax Office after the camp and thanked the staff for the experience and expressed that he was highly impressed with the level of organization and participation in the event.

The level of customer service provided to the citizens of Halifax County was exemplary. Both the youth and their parents were accommodated to the best possible degree under the circumstances of the situation. The camp experience made a positive impact on our community.

Budget

Participant fee \$35.00
Paid Participants = 54
Total \$1,890.00

Staunton River State Park	\$254.48
Bus Drivers	\$200.00
Supplies	\$268.14
Tie-dye supplies	\$757.86
CC! Bandanas	\$159.00
Total	\$1,639.48

Difference - \$250.52 Will be used for future day camps or scholarships for campers.

4H rallies for Summer Day Camp

4-H offers a dynamic opportunity for youth to gain new skill sets such as leadership, independence and a sense of generosity. Camp is one of the best avenues for "Making the Best, Better".

On Sunday evening July 1, many youth received a sad call from the Halifax County 4-H office. Due to a power outage at the W.E. Skelton 4-H Educational Center 4-H junior camp had to be cancelled.

There were many disappointed youth in Halifax and Franklin counties as well as Danville.

However, everyone understood that it had to be done for the safety and welfare of the children. Once full refunds were issued 4-H Agent, Sonya Furgurson, began working on a plan that would allow her 4-H'ers to experience some form of summer camp.

The work has paid off. Thanks to the generosity of the citizens in our area 4-H'ers ages 9-13 will be Soaring to New Heights at Staunton River State Park while participating in a patriotic themed one-day camp to be held Tuesday, Aug. 14.

Volunteers from the community came forward



to offer their support by teaching classes such as geocaching, stewardship, hypertufas, archery, canoeing, and much more.

Each of the teachers will embed citizenship and stewardship into the programming. In the afternoon campers will swim, have a free recreation time,

tie-dye pillowcases, and have a mock deployment with the Virginia National Guard and Operation: Military Kids.

The evening will close with a traditional 4-H campfire.

Lunch and dinner for the youth will be provided by the USDA Summer Feed-

ing Program and Operation New Vision.

Transportation will be provided from the Halifax County High School. Buses will leave the Halifax County High School bus parking lot at 8 a.m. and return at 9:30 p.m.

The cost for this camp is \$35. Registration is under

way through Aug. 9 for youth ages 9-13.

Halifax County 4-H Agent, Sonya Furgurson would like to thank the citizens of our great county for stepping up to the plate by volunteering time and donating resources to ensure our youth are able to experience camp this summer.

For more information e-mail Furgurson at sonyaf@vt.edu or call the Halifax County VCE office at (434) 476-2147.

Applications and additional paperwork can be sent electronically. Please send request to sonyaf@vt.edu or cantrelj@vt.edu.

Registration

(4-H camp registration for youth ages 9-13)

Complete all lines of this registration form and return with your check or money order for \$35 made payable to Virginia Cooperative Extension-Halifax County ("No Cash Accepted"). Mail to: Virginia Cooperative Extension, P.O. Box 757, Halifax, VA 24558. (\$50 fee for returned checks.) Camp space is limited and filled on a first come, first served basis. Our office will accept applications for those who had registered for summer camp first; now until July 27. Open registration is July 30-August 9.

Camper Name: _____

Boy Girl

Transportation: HCHS
 SRSP district office

Mailing Address: _____
_____, VA. _____

Date of Birth: _____

School: _____ Grade: _____

Parent/Guardian: _____

Military Relation: _____

Home Phone: _____

Work Phone: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

About 4-H:

4-H is a youth development program focused on strengthening a sense of belonging, independence, mastery, and generosity among our children. The goal is to help them realize their full potential by becoming effective, contributing citizens through participation in research-based, informal, hands-on educational experiences.

Our camping partners:

- * Staunton River State Park
- * DCR - Stewardship Virginia
- * Virginia National Guard
- * Operation: Military Kids (OMK)
- * USDA Operation New Vision
- * Holiday Lake 4-H Center
- * VCE - Mecklenburg

Scholarship money available for youth of military service members.

Virginia Cooperative Extension programs and employment are open to all, regardless of race, color, age, veteran status, national origin, disability, or political affiliation. An equal opportunity/affirmative action employer.

If you are a person with a disability and require certain accommodations, aids, or services to attend this camp, please indicate your need.

Soaring to New Heights

*4-H Junior Day Camp
at Staunton River
State Park
Tuesday, August 14, 2012*



Sonya Furgurson,
Extension Agent -
Halifax County 4-H
sonyaf@vt.edu
(434) 476-2147

Packs:

Campers will be assigned to a pack for the day. Please order the packs according to preference, making 1 your first choice. Assignments will be on a first come first served basis and classes are subject to change.

___Squirrel:

Staying alive, outdoor survival
Geocaching, GPS treasure hunt
Hypertufa, create a planter

___Deer:

Goods from the Woods
Staying Alive, outdoor survival
Archery, shoot bow & arrows

___Wolf:

Geocaching, GPS treasure hunt
Archery, shoot bows & arrows
Nature hike,

___Duck:

Shoreline clean-up, stewardship
Critter catching, water quality
Hypertufa, create a planter

___Rabbit:

Cupcake decorating
Dance
Photography, digital camera

___Bobcats:

Canoeing
Fishing
Miracle Growers

Schedule:

We will meet at the Halifax County High School bus parking lot at 7:45 am for check-in and arrive at Staunton River State Park by 8:30. Campers will attend classes according to their packs in the morning. After lunch campers will swim, have a free recreational time, create a tie-dyed item and participate in a mock deployment by the Virginia National Guard. At the conclusion of dinner, campers will participate in 4-H games and relays followed by a campfire. We will depart from Staunton River State Park around 9:00 to be back at HCHS bus parking lot at 9:30.

Transportation:

Transportation will be provided from the HCHS bus parking lot to the park. We will depart at 8:00 am and return at 9:30 pm. For residents who live close to the park, we will have a separate check in/out for you at the park's district office, just outside the gate. This process will only be successful with good communication.

What to Wear:

- Comfortable closed toe shoes (no flip-flops)
- Light weight shirt that covers the shoulders
- Long shorts (no short-shorts)
- Bug spray on shoes & clothing
- Sunscreen

What to Bring:

- Water bottle (labeled w/ name)
- Hat
- Sunglasses
- Bathing suit (tank top must be worn over 2 piece suits)
- Towel
- extra money (optional)
(2012 t-shirts \$10.00 first come)

What NOT to Bring:

- snacks
- over-the-counter medications
- weapons (including pocket knives)
- bug spray & sunscreen (provided)
- cell phones

Note:

Parents, if your child was registered to go to camp July 2-6 you may call the office to verify that nothing has changed on your forms rather than filling out new paperwork.

Soaring to New Heights - 4-H Day Camp
Staunton River State Park
Tuesday, August 14, 2012

7:45	Arrive at HCHS
8:00	Depart for Staunton River State Park (SRSP)
8:30	Gather youth at SRSP District Office
8:45	Bus Tour of park
9:00	4-H songs, chants, etc.
9:30	Class 1
10:25	Class 2
11:20	Class 3
12:15	Lunch
1:00	Nutrition Program
1:30 - 2:30	Swim/Free Rec.
2:30 - 2:45	Change
2:45 - 3:45	Swim/Free Rec.
4:00	National Guard & Operation: Military Kid (OMK)
6:30	Dinner
7:30	Relays/games/teen talent show
8:30	Campfire
9:00	Load Buses
9:30	Return to HCHS



Soaring to New Heights 2012
4-H Day Camp at Staunton River State Park
Tuesday, August 14, 2012



Theme: patriotism. We are going to weave the concepts of citizenship, respect, and stewardship into everything we do. Don't make it complicated; just take advantage of how your topic fits.

Teens: The teens assigned to each pack are highly trained. They are true examples of the 4-H motto, "To Make the Best, Better". They are there learning leadership by taking care of the campers and being great role models. They will help you with whatever you need. Please let me know how they did at the end of the day.

General Assistance: When you are not teaching a class it would be greatly appreciated if you would assist the person who is teaching. They might could use an extra pair of hands.

Bandanas: We have ordered Character Counts! Citizenship bandanas to give to the campers. If you catch a camper showing good citizenship state what they did & make a production of them receiving their bandana.

Medical Assistance: There will be a fourth year nursing student, Whitney Welcher, stationed at the Lake & an EMT, JT Lawhorn, will be at Shelter 1 should you need their help.

Map of Staunton River State Park: I have sketched out a rough (& not to scale) map of SRSP. You may reference it to know where the classes you will be teaching will be held. We will be using picnic shelter 1 for many of our events.

Class Locations:

Staying Alive -Shelter 1c (J.T. Lawhorn)

Geocaching - Shelter 1b (Leonard Elam)
Hypertufa - Shelter 1 Pop-up tent (Agnes Gregory)
Goods from the Woods - Shelter 1b (Jason Fisher)
Archery - Old Water Treatment Plant (Tyler Creasy & Nick Rynard)
Natural Resources - Shelter 1c (Bruce Pearce)
Shoreline Clean-up - Shelter 1 picnic table (Bonnie Phillips)
Critter Catching - Shelter 1 picnic table (Bonnie Phillips)
Cupcake decorating - Shelter 1a (Juliane Thurston)
Photography - Shelter 1a (Sarah Inge)
Dance - Shelter 1a (Megan Fincher)
Canoeing - Lake (SRSP interpreter & Teresa Ranson)
Fishing - Lake (Bill Cornell & VDGIF volunteers)
Miracle Growers - (Kathy Cornell)

Pack Lists:

Squirrel -

1. Hypertufa
2. Staying Alive
3. Geocaching

Deer -

1. Goods from the Woods
2. Archery
3. Staying Alive

Wolf -

1. Natural Resources
2. Geocaching
3. Archery

Duck -

1. Shoreline pick-up
2. Critter Catching
3. Hypertufa

Rabbit -

1. Dance
2. Photography
3. Cupcake Decorating

Bobcats -

1. Canoeing
2. Fishing
3. Miracle Growers

Fox - (if we have too many Bobcats)

1. Miracle Growers
2. Canoeing
3. Fishing

Thank you! You all are awesome! I appreciate your support so very much! It is great to know that you value our youth as much as I do.



Tie-dying is fun!



Letters to Soldiers



Mock Boot Camp



Making hypertufa pots



Soaring to New Heights Campers & Teens

Furgurson, Sonya

From: Charles Parker <gidoc73@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 04, 2012 12:32 PM
To: Furgurson, Sonya
Subject: Thank you

Dear Sonya,

Thank you so much for organizing the day camp at Staunton River Park this summer. My daughter, Hannah, thoroughly enjoyed the camp and I'm sure will want to participate in 4H activities in the future. She is most excited about Agriculture Sciences at the Middle School and part of that interest may be due to day camp. Again thank you for your hard work organizing the event on short notice and offering a great experience for our kids,

Charles Parker

opinion

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2012 A4

Thank you!

To the editor:

I am so proud to be a member of the Halifax County family. A little over a year ago I left the Halifax County Public Schools and began serving our community as the local Extension Agent for 4-H Youth Development.

I truly had no idea what the path ahead of me would bring. Things have certainly not always been easy, but that's okay. It has been through those tough times that I have seen both our community and our youth shine.

I have yet to be faced with a need for our program that hasn't been met by someone in our community, and I am so appreciative.

Adult volunteers have shared experiences such as when attempting to pay for an item for a 4-H club they heard a voice from somewhere in the store shout, "I'll donate it to 4-H."

The strongest example of this support happened this summer when 4-H camp was cancelled. Never in the history of Virginia 4-H had this happened. The kids, both young and old, were beyond disappointed.

However, within a couple of days there seemed to be a county wide call to action. People from all over offered their assistance to make some form of camp happen for our 4-H'ers.

There is no way I could have pulled off an event such as the one-day camp at Staunton River State Park without such strong community support. Thank you so very much.

I would also like to express my appreciation to the families in our community. Parenting is not an easy task. But obviously there are folks out there who are doing it right because we have some awesome kids in Halifax County. They are enthusiastic, love learning and great citizens.

I have no doubt that I am exactly where I am supposed to be, supporting the growth of leadership among our youth.

If you have a young person in your life, I strongly encourage you to investigate the opportunities 4-H has to offer.

Adults, I encourage you to consider becoming a formal role model by volunteering to become a 4-H adult leader. There is no better investment for our future than putting time into our children.

Sincerely,
Sonya Furgurson
Halifax Co. 4-H Agent

please see LETTERS, page A5