

Anyone who has ever witnessed a relay race will agree that the most pivotal moment is the passing of the baton. One stumble or drop of the baton can mean winning or losing the race. A similar passing of the baton has taken place in the Coosa County 4-H Program. Like other counties all across the state we have made the move from agent delivered programs to volunteer delivered programs. This past year, in Coosa County, seven leaders were recruited to be volunteer leaders for various afterschool/special interest clubs.

Jim Arnold is a retired engineer who led the Science and Technology Club. He called the County Extension Office and volunteered to lead a club after he read a news article by Roger Vines, County Extension Coordinator, seeking volunteers for a science club. His club had programs on rocketry, electricity and more. Another volunteer was Dr. Doug McGinty, who is a retired field biology professor from Huntingdon College. He led his Natural Resources Club with demonstrations on owls, bluebirds, animal bones and other interesting topics. Dr. Doug McConnell assumed the role of club leader and team coach for the 4-H Forestry Club. Doug is a consulting forester and trained his club members in tree identification, tree measurements, and general forestry knowledge and skills. His junior forestry team attended the state forestry competition and finished fourth.

Club leader T.J. Stroud was recruited to lead a 4-H Chef Club. She drew from her experience in running a small sandwich/lunch shop to show her 4-H members how to cook cookies, pizza, French fries, cupcakes and other goodies. Volunteer Sheldon Hutcherson was recruited to lead a Small Animals Club. He used some of his own small animals such as rabbits and chickens to teach the club members some very interesting programs. A sixth club was organized by Kim Eason as a club for home schoolers. They had programs on a variety of 4-H projects and topics. The seventh club was led by Shelley Wood, who is a biology teacher at a junior college. She taught the club members about wildlife habitat, wildlife foods, and wildlife identification. She carried her club to the state wildlife competition where they earned first place in the junior division.

Each of these clubs are true volunteer led programs. The clubs met after school on a monthly basis throughout the school year for programs and training. All the clubs, except for the Homeschoolers Club, met at the Coosa County 4-H Club House, which is a joint project of the County Extension Office and the local Board of Education to provide a meeting site for 4-H Clubs.