

News Article
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4-H Flag Heads Into Space Aboard Shuttle Endeavor

WASHINGTON, July 16, 2009 - The National 4-H flag was carried into Space aboard the Space Shuttle Endeavour yesterday as part of the STS-127 mission. The flag, featuring the familiar 4-H clover, was originally scheduled to head into space earlier this year, but was delayed a record five times before finally lifting off this week.

"The inclusion of the 4-H flag on this mission reflects the commitment 4-H has to building young leaders in science, engineering and technology," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. "As the global economy expands, these leaders will strengthen the United States' global competitiveness and leadership in these fields."

4-H promotes positive youth development, facilitates learning and engages youth in the work of the land-grant universities and USDA to enhance their quality of life. Nearly 7 million youth, ages 5-19, participate in 4-H youth development experiences in all 50 states, territories and military installations worldwide.

Azeem Ahmed, 17, who is an avid space enthusiast and 4-H member from Alabama and President of the Alabama 4-H Council, made the original request to NASA to have the flag flown with a future space shuttle mission. "4-H is more than green and white - it is a collage," Ahmed said. "It is agriculture and it's also healthy living, leadership and citizenship and science, engineering and technology. Science, engineering and technology is one of the missions of 4-H, and by flying a 4-H flag into space, I hope we shine a new light on 4-H."

Ahmed has been a 4-H member for seven years. He has participated in a variety of leadership and science, engineer and technology programs on the state and national level and wants people to see 4-H as he and thousands of other youth do.

The 4-H Youth Development Program began at the start of the 20th century to help rural youth gain technical and leadership skills. More than 100 years later, the organization continues to promote positive youth development in the areas of citizenship; healthy living and science; engineering; and technology. According to a two-year study in New York, young people who participate in 4-H clubs do better in school; are more motivated to help others; develop skills in leadership, public speaking, self-esteem, communication and planning; and make lasting friendships.

Coosa County 4-H will be starting up soon. We are always looking to involve more youth and adult volunteers. Anyone who would like to find out more about the 4-H Club Program should contact the Coosa County Extension Office at 377-4713 or our Regional 4-H Agent, Lee Wideman at 205-394-2482.