

WELCOME TO 2026!!

Welcome to 2026, 4-H family! We hope your holiday season gave you the rest, joy, and connection you deserved. Whether you spent it with loved ones, exploring new adventures, or simply enjoying a quiet reset, we hope you returned feeling refreshed and ready for all that's ahead.

As we step into a brand-new year, our 4-H team is excited to welcome you back.

Each year, we're humbled by the passion, creativity, and resilience of the youth, families, and volunteers in our community. You show up, you participate, you grow, and you inspire us. And we want to say thank **you**. Shelby County 4-H is stronger because of **you**, **your** support, **your** energy, and the trust **you** place in our programs.



This year, we're looking forward to deepening our impact across the county. From hands-on learning and leadership opportunities to community projects and county-wide events, we're committed to offering experiences that help every future leader discover their voice, their strengths, and their potential. We can't wait to reconnect, meet new faces, uplift familiar ones, and continue building the supportive, vibrant 4-H community Shelby County is known for!!

Here's to a year of growth, good memories, and meaningful moments together!

With love,

from your 4-H team



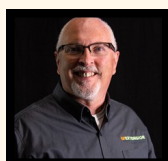
SYDNEY GRAYSON

4-H Agent
sydlgray@utk.edu



KHALAYA COOPER

4-H Administrative Assistant
kcoope53@utk.edu



TIM ROBERTS

Director of Education
trob6@utk.edu



KELLY RAVLIJA

4-H Agent
krav@utk.edu



KYLA SZEMPLINSKI

4-H Agent
kszempli@utk.edu

Last Month's Updates

Lighting Up the Enchanted Forest

Last month, our future leaders came together to decorate the 4-H tree for the Enchanted Forest Festival of Trees. The festival is a cherished event that supports Le Bonheur Children's Hospital. We are always honored to contribute to a tradition that brings joy to families across our community. The tree was on display at the Memphis Museum of Science & History from November 15 – December 28, shining brightly for visitors all season long. A huge thank you to our 4-H youth, leaders, and volunteers who helped make this day truly special!



Farm Ed Day: Connecting Youth to Agriculture

Farm Ed Day was another exciting and impactful annual event for our Shelby County youth! We welcomed 5th graders to the Agricenter for a day dedicated to learning valuable insights into sustainable farming, food production, and the vital role agriculture plays in our daily lives. Through hands-on activities, engaging demonstrations, and interactive lessons, students explored how agriculture connects to the food we eat, the clothes we wear, and the resources we use each day. We want to give a special thank you to EVERYONE who was involved on making this day as awesome and special as it was! To our guest speakers, volunteers, partners, and staff who worked behind the scenes to bring this event to life, your support allowed students to walk away with a greater appreciation for agriculture and its lasting impact on our community.



Upcoming Programs and Contests

Countdown to Junior Camp!



Junior Summer Camp is right around the corner! This week-long adventure is designed for **4th-6th graders** who want to kick off their summer with hands-on learning, outdoor fun, and unforgettable memories at Lone Oaks Farm. **From May 25-29**, youth will explore new hobbies, build friendships, and dive into classic camp experiences that make 4-H summers so special.

This is one of our most anticipated events of the year! Our campers always have a blast, and we're thrilled to welcome a new group of junior 4-H'ers back to Lone Oaks Farm. We can't wait to see the memories they create in 2026!

And we have a gift just for you!

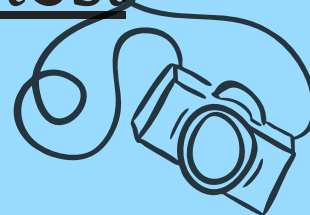
- \$300 to the first 10 people!
- \$350 ends April 13th
- \$375 ends April 20th
- \$400 starting April 27th



Books are open! Scan to register!!

Or tap here!

Photography Contest



It's time for our annual 4-H Photography Art Contest! Youth are invited to showcase their creativity by submitting original photos in six categories: **people, buildings, animals, landscape, and leadership**. This contest is an amazing opportunity for young photographers to develop their skills, express themselves, and capture the world through their own lens.

Selected entries will advance to the regional and state competitions, where their work can shine on an even bigger stage. **To ensure each submission qualifies, be sure to review the official guidelines in the 4-H Yearbook before submitting entries!**

We can't wait to see the talent and imagination our Shelby County youth bring to this year's contest!



BE SURE TO VIEW
THE GUIDELINES
TO ENSURE YOUR
ENTRY QUALIFIES!

2026 Photography Contest

We want to see your amazing photography skills! Submit your work for a chance to advance in the regional and state contest.

Photography Categories include:

1. People
2. Buildings
3. Animals
4. Landscape
5. Leadership

Submit your entries to the extension office or your agent by February 20, 2026!

Ag Day Art Contest - From Soil to Sky: Ag Shapes Our Environment

Agriculture connects every part of our world - from the ground beneath our feet to the open skies above us. This theme invites you to explore how farming, ranching, natural resources, and food production impact our environment, our communities, and our future. Think of the journey: seeds planted in the soil, crops growing toward the sky, animals and ecosystems working together, farmers using technology, and the way agriculture sustains life on Earth. You're encouraged to show this connection in any style, any mood, and from any viewpoint - realistic, abstract, futuristic, or personal.

Be sure to view the guidelines in the Yearbook to ensure your entries qualify!



safety first

Safety day



Last month, we had the joy of hosting Idlewild Elementary's 5th graders for Safety Day! Students spent the day rotating through hands-on sessions covering animal safety, fire safety, chemical safety, and so much more. Our guest presenters brought the lessons to life with demonstrations, real-world examples, and interactive activities that kept everyone engaged from start to finish.

One of the biggest highlights? Meeting our furry friends! The youth had the chance to interact with a gentle poodle and the sweetest bunny—an experience that brought big smiles from the students and the adults. It was a day filled with learning, laughter, and memorable moments, and we're grateful to everyone who made this field trip possible. **If you want a chance for your school to be selected for 2026's Safety Day, reach out to Khalaya at kcoope53@utk.edu!**



Upcoming Programs

- Ghost Riders Horse Club - January 11th led by Agent Kyla Szemplinski
- Honor Club - January 13th led by Agent Kelly Ravlija
- Germantown New Leaf Club - January 14th led by Agent Kyla Szemplinski
- Germantown Farm Park Club - January 15th led by Ms. Susan Tyree: farmpark4h@gmail.com

Let's Keep in Touch!



Scan the QR code



to sign up!

KNOW SOMEONE INTERESTED IN JOINING 4-H?

We'd love for them to join us!

The mission of Shelby Co. 4-H Program is to empower youth to form a sense of purpose through research-based education, life skills, and civic engagement to become leaders of today and tomorrow.

<https://forms.office.com/r/WXmRAGUdBm>

Follow us to get the inside scoop & stay up to date about our upcoming events and clubs!

@shelbycoextension

@UT and TSU Shelby County Extension



Contact us!

📞 901-752-1207

Sydney Grayson

4-H Agent

sydlgray@utk.edu

Kelly Ravlija

4-H Agent

krav@utk.edu

Kyla Szemplinski

4-H Agent

kszempli@utk.edu

Khalaya Cooper

4-H Administrative Assistant

kcoope53@utk.edu

Tim Roberts

Director of Education

tim.roberts@utk.edu