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# 4-H vet camp gives kids a glimpse into veterinary science

By Tracy Courage

U of A System Division of Agriculture

**Fast facts:**

* 4-H Vet Camp introduces Faulkner County youth to veterinary profession
* Young vets learn animal first-aid
* 4-H offers year-round STEM activities for youth

(485 words)

(Newsrooms, with art at <https://flic.kr/s/aHsmX3MMkP>)

CONWAY, Ark. – Faulkner County youth got a peek inside the veterinary medicine profession recently at Faulkner County 4-H Vet Camp.

About 20 students, ranging in age from 6 to 14, attended the camp Oct. 30 at the Faulkner County Extension office in Conway where they learned about careers in veterinary medicine and tried hands-on activities related to animal care.

Dr. Paul Jenkins, a veterinarian from Vilonia, taught the youth some basics in wound care, including how to suture a wound and administer shots. Participants also assembled animal first-aid kits with items supplied by the Arkansas 4-H Foundation, and learned how to best use those supplies, which included gauze, tape, cotton swabs, gloves, tweezers, antibiotic ointment, soap, alcohol wipes, soap, saline solution and hydrogen peroxide.

Arkansas 4-H held the camp as National STEM/STEAM Day, which falls on Nov. 8 this year, approaches. The organization also offers year-round STEM opportunities for youth to explore science, technology, engineering, art and math through fun, hands-on activities and projects.

“We plan programs for youth to have a wide array of experiences in hopes they find inspiration and passion for knowledge they will carry over into their academics and possibly their careers,” Faulkner County 4-H Agent Kami Green said. “We had a lot of interest in our vet camp.”

Animal science, particularly veterinary medicine, is important for the agricultural industry in Arkansas.

Many of the elementary-aged participants attended the camp because they love caring for animals they raise or have as pets and wanted to know more. Older participants, like 14-year-old Natalie Hoffman of Damascus, are already considering careers in animal science.

“I have always wanted to be a veterinarian,” said Hoffman, who helps care for her family’s cattle, chickens, cats and dog. “I think I’ve known since I was 2.”

Haven Register, 9, of Conway, said she takes care of her pet rabbit Nibbles and is considering a career as a veterinarian. She loves science and has been studying the immune system as part of her fourth-grade homeschool studies. On Oct. 30, she had a chance to learn suturing basics. Using forceps and tweezers, she carefully tied knots as Jenkins had instructed.

Jenkins, who has two children in 4-H, volunteers his time with 4-H clubs as well as with area schools. He explained what it takes to be a veterinarian or vet tech and urged the youth to develop good academic habits if they want to be veterinarians.

“Going to veterinary school is very competitive,” he told them. “You have to learn to study hard now, so you’ll be ready.”

There are 28 accredited veterinary schools in the United States, and females make up 80 percent of the student population, Jenkins said. Girls also accounted for most of the 4-H Vet Camp attendees.

To learn about 4-H programs in your county, visit <https://4h.uada.edu> or contact your local Cooperative Extension Service agent or visit [www.uaex.uada.edu](https://nam12.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.uaex.uada.edu%2F&data=04%7C01%7Ctcourage%40uada.edu%7C170545727fd44acc98d908d99b073c73%7C174d954f585e40c3ae1c01ada5f26723%7C0%7C0%7C637711277640586371%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=Pp1u7Q2qwimIhqyT9rCK9vQpgF0I1e2y71wye6ejVWQ%3D&reserved=0). Follow us on Twitter at @AR\_Extension.

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