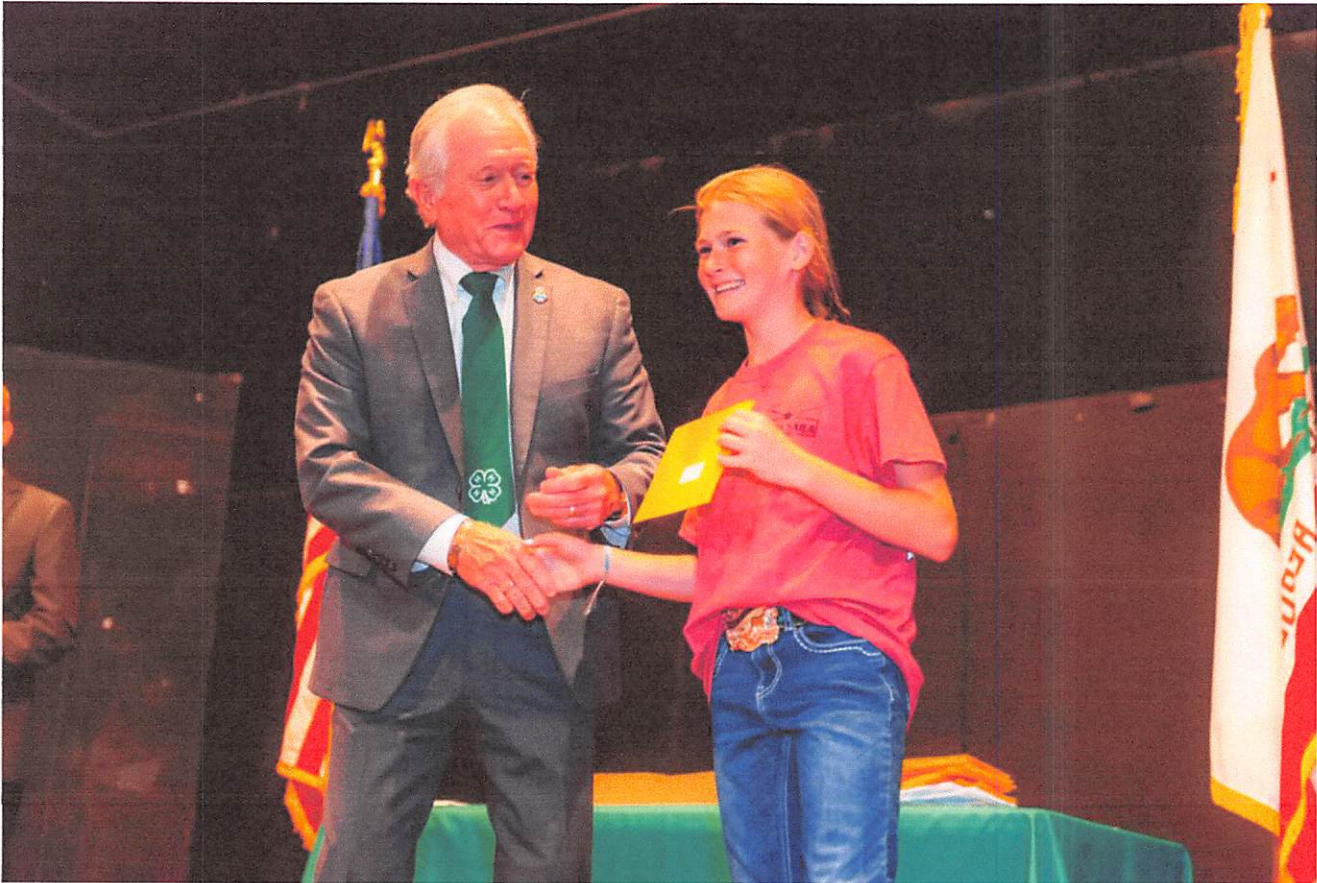


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County 4-H achievements celebrated

By VINCENT OSUNA, Staff Writer 10 hrs ago



District 3 Supervisor Michael Kelley presents an achievement award to Mckinzie Toth of Verde 4-H during the annual 4-Achievement Night Dinner on Thursday at the Casa De Mañana building in Imperial. PHOTO VINCENT OSUNA

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IMPERIAL — Imperial County 4-H held 28 percent of the State Advisory positions, two of seven state ambassador positions and received a National Youth in Action Agricultural Pillar Honorable Mention for its very own Rose Fiorenza this past year, so a celebration was inevitable.

These and other accomplishments within the county 4-H program's 2018-19 year were celebrated Thursday night during the annual 4-H Achievement Night Dinner.

Community members, proud parents and members from the 15 local 4-H clubs combined for an estimated 500-person crowd in the Casa De Mañana building at the Imperial Valley Expo. They applauded project accomplishments, Star awards, scholarship awardees and senior achievements.

County 4-H Program Coordinator Shanna Abatti said that while a few clubs host their own end-of-the-year parties, none have a set event where they celebrate their accomplishments from the previous year.

“This is an opportunity to bring all the clubs together and celebrate as a county,” she said. “The root purpose is to recognize each individual youth with awards for their projects.”

An Achievement Night event has been held every year since the first 4-H club was chartered in Imperial County more than a century ago.

However, the support received from the community has upped the caliber of the event especially within the past five years, Abatti said.

“It used to just be awards and deserts and cookies,” she said. “Now it’s become a premier event to recognize and thank not only our youth, but also our community for their impact on the program.”

This was the first year the event presented certificates to 15 community guests, including Michael Kelley, County Board of Supervisors District 3; Richard Acosta, vice president of the IV Expo Fair Board, and Geoffrey Holbrook, I.V. Expo Fair Board director, who either have significantly contributed to or supported the 4-H program.

Thanks to the community’s support, local 4-H members this past year were able to embark on trips across the United States for civic engagement and advanced leadership opportunities, as well win three national competitions.

Seth Hilfiker, Audrey Rose Abatti, Keeley Poloni and Hannah Cartee placed 11th in the nation during the 2018 National Livestock Skill-a-thon in Kentucky.

The trio of Hannah Cartee, Sarah Grizzle and Audrey Rose Abatti finished as the 2019 Grand Champion National Western Stock Show and Wood Judging Team.

In the 59th National 4-H Wool Judging Contest, the team of Hannah Cartee, Sarah Grizzle, Audrey Rose Abatti and Kennedy Pecthl won the title of 2019 Reserve Champion National Wool Judging Team.

“We truly are a force to be reckoned with,” Shanna Abatti said.

During Thursday’s ceremony, the 4-H clubs of Holtville, McCabe, Magnolia, Verde and Star Route were presented a Gold Seal award, which signifies that a club exceeded the minimum club charter expectations.

The event concluded with farewell speeches from the outgoing 2018-19 All-Star Youth: Jacob Sanchez, Kailah Alvarez, Hayden Hulsey and Philip Minnik.