4-H international exchange program set to restart in 2022

Teens get chance to experience new culture, language

MANHATTAN, Kan. – A Kansas 4-H international exchange program that has been on hold since 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic has been given the go-ahead to restart next summer.

Mary Kay Munson, who helps to coordinate 4-H exchange programs in Kansas, said the States’ 4-H International Exchange program offers a chance to experience cultures in several European, Asian or Latin American countries for 3-8 weeks. She said six Kansas teens have been approved to participate in summer 2022.

“The youth that are selected have an opportunity to understand themselves better,” Munson said. “Because they are away from their normal culture, they have to figure out what their values are and what they want to be as they mature into fully active citizenship. And they have to work on their communication skills whether or not they speak a language other than English.”

Six Kansas 4-H members will be notified in January of the country they will be placed in. Those six, and their country of choice, include:

- Maddie Anderson (Norway).
- Nathan Anderson (Romania).
- Abigail MacGregor (Romania).
- Isaiah Moreno (Japan).
- Kate Rogers (Japan).
- Jayla Wyant (Costa Rica).

Exchange visits in many other countries are available to Kansas youth through other programs that Kansas 4-H supports, including the IFYE Association of the USA.

Munson said the States’ 4-H International Exchange program pairs youth with a host family for 2-3 weeks, except in Japan where the four-week exchange can be combined with a language and culture immersion experience.
“We had planned a new program in Argentina last year, but it was cancelled due to the pandemic,” Munson said. “That was an opportunity where U.S. youth would spend time in a low income area in Cordoba, Argentina; participate in soccer and orchestra; and study Spanish with the Argentine kids.”

The exchange with Argentina is planned to begin in summer, 2022.

“Most countries we interact with have a program similar to 4-H,” Munson said. “So the individuals they interact with are in programs with values similar to Kansas 4-H.”

The Kansas contingent that will go abroad in summer 2022 will be finalized in January, according to Munson. Participating youth will have to complete the full series of vaccinations for COVID-19, as well as receive a negative PCR test within 72 hours of boarding a flight for their destination country.

Munson encouraged all Kansas youth to think well in advance about taking part in an international exchange. Applications for 2023 normally are expected to be due by Nov. 1, 2022.

“For those youth who are thinking of going, but not yet ready to apply, we have a pen pal program that starts in January and goes through the spring,” she said. “Pen pals communicate by email, messaging and frequently by audio and video technology and the Internet.”

In addition, host families for exchange students coming from the partner countries are needed in Kansas. Munson said the deadline to apply to be a host family is March 1.

More information on the States’ 4-H International Exchange program is available online. Interested persons can also contact Munson by email, mkm2@ksu.edu or their local extension agent.

-30-

FOR PRINT PUBLICATIONS: Links used in this story
Kansas 4-H, www.kansas4-h.org


IFYE Association of the USA, https://ifyeusa.org/welcome.html

K-State Research and Extension local offices, https://www.ksre.k-state.edu/about/statewide-locations.html

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