

Let me introduce myself. I'm Brandon Alberson; and I'm proud to be your new Extension 4-H Agent for Tate County. My B.S. and M.S. degrees are from Mississippi State University in the field of Agriculture Information Science. Through membership, volunteerism, and ultimately as a career path, I've been involved with 4-H for more than 18 years. For the last 5 years I've served as the 4-H Agent in Benton County. As a member of 4-H, I chose to participate in the livestock project I showed on local, state, regional and national levels. 4-H, for me, was an environment where I could grow in the areas that interested me because of the enthusiastic staff and volunteers that were willing to lend their time and expertise. I'm now excited to have the privilege of giving back to the organization that gave so much to me. Let me tell you a little bit about 4-H:

4-H is the youth component of the Mississippi State University Extension Service. Its purpose is to help youth become productive, responsible adults through the development of positive self-concepts, effective interpersonal relationships, and practical life skills. Youth ages 8-18 can be active members of 4-H club programs. Special programs are available for youth beginning in kindergarten. In addition to camps, special interest programs, project clubs, and community clubs, the 4-H school-enrichment program is another way to teach life skills to youth. The 4-H program values its relationship with Mississippi's schools and welcomes the opportunity to provide educationally sound, research-based, action-oriented curricula for use in classrooms. 4-H is operated by volunteers, under the supervision of Extension staff.

Within the 4-H program, our mission is clear: to create a supportive environment for diverse youth to reach their fullest potential. In support of this mission, we commit to provide community-focused experiential learning, develop skills that benefit youth throughout life, foster leadership and volunteerism in youth, build partnerships for programming and funding, and strengthen families and communities. Achievement of this mission will result in capable, competent, and caring citizens.

Anyone can join 4-H. Membership is as easy as contacting your local Extension office or a 4-H volunteer leader. You may join an existing club, start a new club, or even participate as an individual member. There are no state or national membership fees associated with 4-H membership. Members usually pay for the cost of their project materials and activities. Some clubs have financial sponsors and others hold fundraisers approved by their county Extension office to pay for club expenses.

I am looking forward to assisting Tate County with your 4-H programs and projects. I encourage each of you to check out what we have to offer. If you think you might be interested, or if you have more questions, please feel free to contact me at the Tate County branch of the Mississippi State University Extension Service at 662-562-4274 or visit us at http://msucares.com/counties/tate_69/4h.html.

Brandon Alberson
Extension 4-H Agent

