

Pennsylvania 4-H'ers Develop Leadership Skills At Four-Day Conference

BY MARY MAXWELL
Centre County Correspondent
UNIVERSITY PARK — 4-H teenagers at last week's Pennsylvania 4-H Leadership Congress developed skills that will expand their leadership roles in local county councils. Groups of 15 to 18 year olds met regularly during the four-day conference to learn journalism, photography or public speaking skills.

Those in the Teen Leader Congress prepared a newspaper similar to the newspapers local 4-H

councils publish for 4-H leaders and members. This group, under an editor they elected, wrote stories, discussed layout or drew illustrations. Some had the opportunity for the first time to use a computer to transcribe their stories.

Other teens prepared a visual newsletter. In doing so, they practiced their photography skills, learning to take better pictures for their local clubs' scrapbooks, slide shows and hometown newspapers.

The third group, 4-H Ambassadors, attended workshops on

telling the 4-H story through public oral presentations. They will use their speaking skills to promote 4-H in their home communities.

About 600 people attended the Leadership Congress held on the Penn State campus. Most were teenagers between the ages of 13 and 18, but State 4-H staff members, Extension agents, 4-H leaders and Collegiate 4-H club members also attended. Most counties in Pennsylvania were represented.

In addition to the communication

workshops, the older teens could choose workshops in Day Camp Leadership or the 4-H Leadership School. Younger teens (ages 13 to 15) attended workshops on friendships, peer pressure, looking good, and boy-girl relationships. All those participating had time to explore the Penn State campus, as well as attend the 4-H assemblies in Eisenhower Auditorium.

Each workshop group elected members to plan next summer's Leadership Congress. These are: Leadership School - Dan Vand-

zura, Mifflin County, and Margee Wolff, Westmoreland; Day Camp - Mike Reiner, Northumberland, and Tammy Orner, Cumberland; Storytellers - Ann Grubin, Lebanon; Mark Price, Berks; and Janet Carney, Montgomery.

Six younger teens were also elected by the Teen-U-Lead workshop participants to help with next year's planning. They are David Cotner, Union; Juan Figueroa, Lancaster; Tom Swope, Cambria; Bridget Faulkner, Montgomery; Laurie Henry, Erie; and Carolyn Norman, Tioga.

Clover Run Teaches 4-H'ers About Life With A Handicap

BY SALLY BAIR
Lancaster Co. Correspondent

UNIVERSITY PARK — How does it feel to have a physical handicap? Last week 100 of the nearly 600 4-H'ers attending 4-H Leadership Congress at Penn State took the opportunity to develop some insight into functioning with a handicap.

The Clover Run, which has become an institution at Leadership Congress, has always been an early morning physical fitness exercise. This year, the 12 advisors who help plan the program decided to make it an educational opportunity, in addition to the fun.

And so, at 6 a.m. the enthusiastic 4-H'ers, only slightly subdued by the early hour, showed up in a parking lot to follow a four leaf clover course in relay teams. It was not an ordinary relay because each team member had to experience a handicap.

One "leaf" of the race was done riding in a wheelchair, one on crutches, one blindfolded and using a cane and one required pushing a glass of water perched on a wheelchair.

Matthew Vandzura, 19, a 4-H'er from Mifflin County attending as an advisor to the Teen U Lead program, is credited with coming up with the idea. Because he lives in State College, he also arranged for all the props necessary to make the relay successful.

Vandzura said, "We wanted to do something different, and we were pleased. There was a bigger turnout that I expected." He noted that in recent years attendance at the Clover Run had been dropping, but this new idea seemed to spark the 4-H'ers' interest.

A sophomore at Penn State studying wildlife science, Vand-

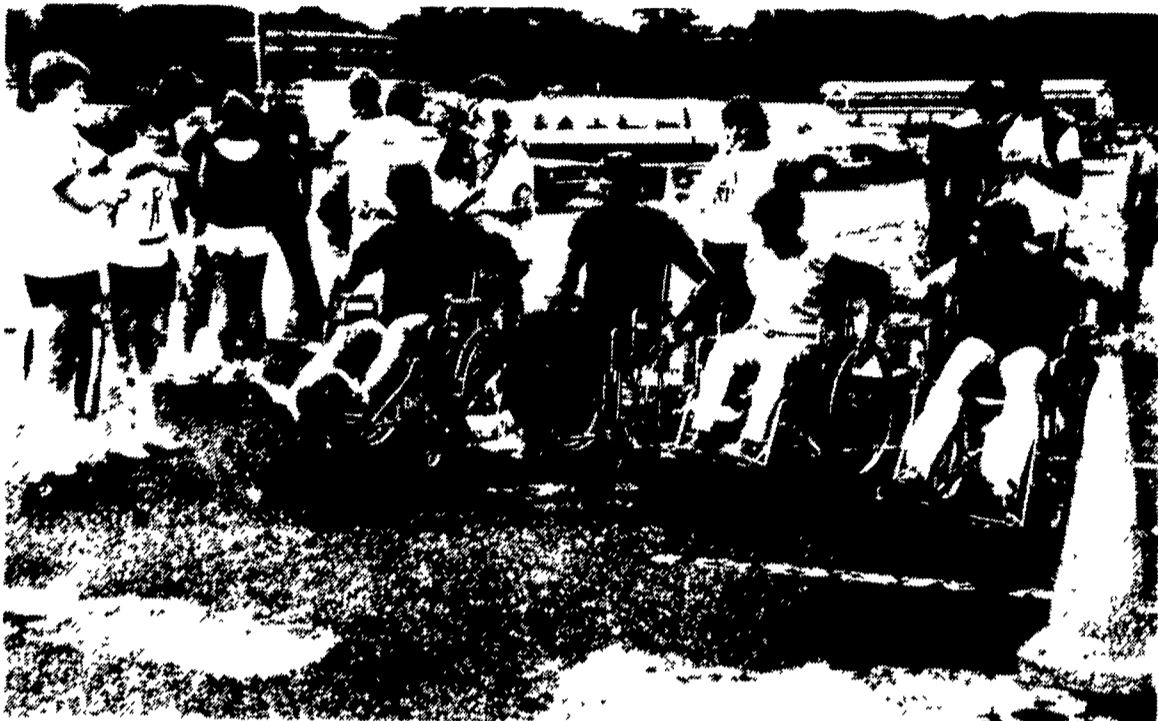
zura said most 4-H'ers learned that "it wasn't as easy as they thought it would be." In addition to learning what it feels like to have a handicap, Vandzura said the 4-H'ers also "learned how to help people who are handicapped." In preparing for the relay he said he learned that very independent people sometimes have the most trouble adapting to a handicap because they cannot learn to rely even slightly on others.

Although it took scores of phone calls to gather the eight wheelchairs, four pairs of crutches and other materials necessary for a successful race, Vandzura said he found the State College health care services eager to help. If one agency could not help, they often referred him to another.

Even the state highway department got in on the act by donating the cones which were used as markers for the four leaf clover course. The facilities department at the University donated colored pinnys for teams to use.

A real plus for the group was having Kay Marshall, a member of the State College Sight Loss Support Group, on hand to work with those going through the blindfolded part of the course. Marshall, herself visually handicapped, talked with the 4-H'ers and helped them understand the proper use of the cane. Vandzura said he was unable to find an agency willing to give him canes used by the blind, but he called on his 4-H ingenuity and improvised with livestock showing canes, which served the purpose well.

He noted that most of the group found that working blindfolded was the largest handicap. In order to get the 4-H'ers through the course marked by two sets of orange highway cones, someone served as



Learning the challenges of coping with handicaps, these 4-H'ers were part of relay teams competing at Leadership Congress. Powering a wheelchair proved to be more difficult than expected.

a coach, walking with them and talking to them as they went, offering advice and encouragement.

Vandzura said the venture was a success simply by dramatizing the plight of the handicapped, and

making 4-H'ers more aware of the problems handicapped individuals face.



Kay Marshall, right, brought her personal experiences to the Clover Run and helped the 4-H'ers use the canes properly. A member of the Sight Loss Support Group, Kay chats here with Matthew Vandzura, a 4-H'er from Mifflin County who organized the event.



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