

Magician Brings Joyful Response From Westmoreland 4-H Leaders

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LATROBE (Westmoreland Co.)- Using storytelling and magic, Jep Hostetler, Columbus, Ohio, brought smiles and laughter to participants at the recent Westmoreland County 4-H kick-off dinner. The dinner, held at the

Blue Angel Restaurant was organized to honor the 274 adult volunteers that lead more than 3000 youth in county 4-H programs last year.

Hostetler, a retired college professor, introduced six principles of life he calls "the Joy Factor" as essential for overcoming life's obstacles. "Joyful people," he said,

"understand that life is a gift; that life is scared;" and that we have to help each other."

To show how ordinary things can be funny, he demonstrated how to turn a terrycloth towel into a cow. And that cow into a chicken!

Drawing on family stories from his youth on an Ohio farm, Hostetler recognized that, at times, life can be difficult. Hostetler is an associate professor emeritus, Dept. of Preventive Medicine, Ohio State University

College of Medicine. He spent nearly thirty years teaching medical students in the fields of anatomy, substance abuse medicine, and medical humanities.

He has authored several books including "Ten things parents should know about drug and alcohol abuse."

Dr. Jep, as his students called him, is a internationally known speaker on humor and health and a world-class magician. In addition, Hostetler's work in alcohol and drug abuse dovetails nicely with a current emphasis on drug abuse prevention in the Westmoreland 4-H program.

Some business reports given during the evening

John Vincze, chair of the Westmoreland County 4-H board of directors highlighted the following county emphases in

1999.

The food and nutrition program has expanded to eight clubs. Completion of the \$180,000 William C. Kelly building at the Westmoreland County fairgrounds. It is now available for year-round

club programming ideas, and leadership skills.

The Westmoreland County 4- program is proud of its leaders' commitment to youth, and is committed to supporting and recognizing the volunteers in their efforts!"

The brochure also notes that a major purpose for 4-H is to teach responsibility and promote character development. Joann also stated that Westmoreland has the second highest rate in the US for students who return to their home county after education

In other business, three people were elected to the 4-H board including Westmoreland County Commissioner Thomas Balya. Commissioner Balya has been a strong supporter of the 4-H youth development program, going so far as to publicly milk goats and judge demonstrations. He was instrumental in obtaining funding for the new 4-H urban youth program.

Glenn Ganassi, Mosshaven Way, Ligonier, is a leader of the Chestnut Ridge 4-H Community Club for 8 years. He serves as shooting sports, computer, and rabbit leader for the club. He served previously on the 4-H board of directors and is co-chair of the cooperative extension executive committee.

Betty Han, Latrobe, is the third elected director. Betty has been a 4-H leader for 26 years with the 4-H Travel-All Exchange Program and is organizational leader of the Blue Ribbon Ag 4-H

Club. Betty is superintendent of the barnyard zoo at the Westmoreland Fair. Betty and her husband Merle run a small farm operation and she is the mother of three children and three grandmothers of five.

Volunteers honored

Adult volunteer leaders at significant milestones were recognized for years of service, including 35 who are concluding their 1st year and Nancy Schaller, Bolivar, a leader who has served for 35 years Westmoreland County Commissioner Scott Conners got sympathetic groans from the crowd when he mentioned "9 long, long days at the fair,"

And he proved his political sensitivity when he said, "I wish I had grown up on a farm and had been mentored by fine people like you."

Conners and Krystal McCracken, Mt Pleasant, a 4-H Travel-All Club member presented certificates to each person at the significant anniversaries as a volunteer



Krystal McCracken, Mt. Pleasant, a 4-H Travel-All Club member presented certificates to adult 4-H leaders honored at the 4-H kick-off dinner. Photo by David Heibert.



Jep (Dr. Jep) Hostetler

programming.

The 4-H scholarship program had it's biggest year, providing a total of \$23,500 in educational support in its 5 years of existence.

Joann Logan, youth extension agent, noted that people in Westmoreland County still don't know about the extensive 4-H program. As part of an effort to raise awareness, the extension service has produced a brochure highlighting the program. In addition to describing the program for youth, the brochure says about adults:

"We care about volunteers. Before becoming a screened leader, adult volunteers receive an in-depth training by the Westmoreland County 4-H staff. Afterwards many opportunities are offered to keep leaders up-to-date on trends including workshops on youth development,

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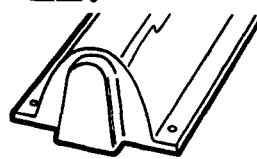
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