



**Applications must be  
received by September  
3rd, 2013.**

## National 4-H Council Youth Trustee Application

APPLICANT INFORMATION			
Last Name: Ullerich	First: Curtis	M.I.: C	Nickname:
Street Address: 2321 Frederiksen Ct.		Apartment/Unit #	
City: Ames	State: IA	County: Story	Zip Code: 50010
Phone: 424-242-2878	E-mail Address: curtisu@iastate.edu		
Gender: Male		Ethnicity (Optional):	
How many years have you participated in 4-H? 14			
Current Age: 22		Birthday (DD/MM/YYYY): 01/19/1991	
Name of Current or Most Recent School: Iowa State University		Class Year: Senior	
EDUCATION			
High School: Atlantic High School		Address: 1201 E 14 <sup>th</sup> St, Atlantic, IA 50022	
From: 8/2005	To: 5/2009	Did you graduate? YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	Degree: Diploma
College: Iowa State University		Address: 100 Enrollment Services Center, Ames, IA 50011	
From: 8/2009	To: 12/2013	Did you graduate? YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Degree: B.S. Computer Engineering (in progress)
Other		Address	
From	To	Did you graduate? YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	Degree
REFERENCES			
<i>Please list three 4-H references (State 4-H Program Leader, County Agent or Volunteer Leader)</i>			
Full Name: Brenda Allen		Relationship: State Council and Collegiate 4-H advisor	
Company: Iowa State University Extension		Phone: (515) 441-0408	
Address: 2212 Windfield Dr., Ames, IA 50010			
Full Name: Susan Oliver		Relationship: County Youth Coordinator, youth-adult partner	
Company: (former) Cass County Extension		Phone: (712) 242-6758	
Address: 410 Glass Street, Oakland, IA 51560			
Full Name: Jay Staker		Relationship: Iowa 4-H Youth Tech Team leader	
Company: Iowa 4-H ESET		Phone: (515) 290-0571	
Address: 721 Crestwood Dr., Huxley, IA 50124			
PROGRAM LEADER NOTIFICATION AND VERIFICATION			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I hereby certify that my program leader is aware of my application and that all information provided is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.			

## **Part Two: ACTION & LEADERSHIP**

It is critical that Youth Trustees have experience and leadership with the following:

- State or National 4-H leadership governance role
- 4-H or non 4-H collegiate activity
- Proven youth-adult partnership

Therefore, please share 3 activities or leadership experiences that you are most proud of through your 4-H career. Please include the name of the 4-H or non 4-H organization you were affiliated with, the type of work or positions, and the length of time involved. You may also use a copy of your resume or 4-H portfolio in place of this section, if it includes relevant activities. Please feel free to attach these experience descriptions instead of using the table provided below.

### ***Iowa State 4-H Council member, 2 years***

I served as a member of the council during my senior year of high school, and returned to serve as a collegiate member for a year during college. As one of 40 youth on the Council, I helped to plan the Iowa 4-H Youth Conference, an event that attracts 1000 senior 4-H'ers to the Iowa State University campus for three days of workshops, service, and fun. As a State Council member, I also served as an ambassador to three counties. I met with their youth councils to inform them of opportunities outside of their counties, provide help with county events, and gather feedback to aid in our planning and programming as a Council.

State 4-H Council also began a very important youth-adult partnership with my then-new County Youth Coordinator. All new members on the Council find an adult partner from their communities to enrich their Council experience. For the year of my Council membership as a 4-H'er and ever since, she and I have worked together to put on many workshops on topics from both our areas of expertise. We partnered on re-authoring our outdated club leadership training, and getting our fledgling social media accounts for the county off the ground. She guided me during many important decisions as I started college, and I was able to help her during her early months in her new position. This was, and continues to be, one of the most rewarding youth-adult partnerships I gained through 4-H.

Meeting with this group of exemplary youth leaders over the course of two years was an experience that pushed me outside of my comfort zone constantly and helped me to grow immensely as a leader and communicator.

### ***Iowa 4-H Youth Tech Team mentor, 2 years***

This group of youth is selected by interview and meets monthly by teleconference or in person to explore technology at all levels, from video/audio editing and photography to website development and game programming. As a software engineer and budding 4-H volunteer, I jumped on the opportunity to work with the team as a freshman in college. In my role as a mentor for the group, I initially helped to guide them during pre-planned workshops and activities. I used my connections through the College of Engineering to locate speakers relevant to their interests.

As I gained more technical knowledge and workshop experience, I began creating technical learning experiences for the Tech Team. I wrote an implementation of Pong for teaching them about game programming, simulated an iPhone app design experience, and more. Working with the Tech Team has encouraged me to seek out opportunities to get youth excited about engineering and computer science during college. I plan to continue this throughout my adult life. I believe that 4-H is an excellent avenue for this goal.

### ***Iowa State University Collegiate 4-H, 4 years (president, 1 year; events chair, 1 year; public relations chair, 1 semester; webmaster, 1 year)***

At ISU, our Collegiate 4-H club focuses on continuing in the spirit of service instilled in 4-H'ers before college. During my time as president, I focused my goals on creating a stronger community within the club and directing our service efforts on reconnecting with local 4-H youth. I actively experimented with different meeting styles and planning strategies to engage our members and connected our event planning chairs with 4-H leaders and staff in surrounding counties. We were able to redirect nearly all of our service projects to benefit 4-H youth and left the year with clearer goals and a more focused chapter.

### Part Three: NARRATIVE QUESTIONS

To help us learn more about your 4-H background and experiences, please respond to questions below. Each question must be between 200 – 500 words.

#### A. Why are you passionate about 4-H?

First and foremost, I am passionate about 4-H because of the profoundly positive effect it had on my development as a youth. 4-H enabled me to set and reach high goals in education, service, and my budding career as a software engineer. As I progressed through my 4-H career that started in 3rd grade, I grew to appreciate just how impactful 4-H was for the youth and even adult volunteers around me.

I have many reasons that I enthusiastically promote 4-H:

*There is no better time for a person to become empowered than as a youth.*

Beginning this life-changing process early builds stronger people and a stronger society. Teaching critical goal-setting and communication skills early through 4-H sets youth up for a more successful education and life.

*4-H has something for every youth.*

4-H emphasizes core values and skills, allowing youth to explore their interests, being guided by positive adult interactions, and not pigeon-holing them into a specific interest area. Rather than ranking youth against one another, 4-H encourages evaluating youth against their own goals and progress.

*4-H provides growth opportunities for adults through volunteering.*

Even as a 4-H alumnus, I have grown so much through volunteering, mentoring, and judging. Becoming a volunteer enabled me to continue my progression of leadership development that began early in 4-H.

*4-H emanates quality values.*

Though specific programming varies from state to state and even county to county, through my experiences with 4-H in three states, I have never seen negative media about or produced by 4-H. 4-H attracts and produces people with character and strong moral compasses, and includes any youth in its programs. 4-H programs focus simply on making the best better and will never exclude a youth based on some aspect of who he or she is. Given the still-imperfect state of civil rights throughout the world, this is a point that resonates with me.

*4-H prepares youth to be more effective young professionals.*

I believe that the two biggest indicators of success and value to a team are initiative and strong communication. 4-H emphasizes these values from the beginning. Youth active in 4-H have stronger social and professional skills, and the public speaking and interviewing experiences in 4-H give alumni a serious leg up on the competition while looking for internships and jobs.

*4-H uses research-based methods.*

4-H programs are provably effective and will change as the needs of today's youth develop. Professionals in youth development evaluate the offerings of 4-H programs and ensure that the experiences they provide for youth will be positive and beneficial. I respect 4-H greatly for not only being unafraid of change, but actively seeking out ways to modify itself to stay relevant and impactful.

Youth are our future, and 4-H is truly an excellent way to prepare them for happy, productive, and meaningful lives. I am proud to be a 4-H alumnus and volunteer, and collecting these thoughts has been a great reminder of what 4-H means to me.

#### B. What strengths and assets would you bring to the Board of Trustees? How would you add value around the Board table?

*I am intentional in my actions and seek out meaningful, rewarding opportunities.*

I strongly believe in the power of reflection and self-evaluation. This has become paramount as I have risen to the executive board of various campus organizations at Iowa State University. I strive to create lasting advances in organizations to which I belong, leaving behind a more successful group. I believe in the value of tradition insofar as it does not hold back progress. I make sure I understand the purpose and benefit of doing things in a particular way, and take action when I see that a change would benefit the organization. In terms of the Board of Trustees, this means that I will be a careful observer of how the group functions and what we do, but that I won't be afraid to discuss positive changes.

*I bring a variety of perspectives and 4-H experiences to the table.*

In line with 4-H's national STEM objectives, I have years of experience with technology, including youth interactions with technology. I can offer perspectives on teaching youth advanced skills like computer programming and app design, as well as introducing young learners to scientific topics like chemistry, buoyancy, and algorithms. I also understand agricultural and rural youth perspectives, having grown up in the countryside of Iowa and having shown horses in 4-H for ten years. I have experienced 4-H in three states as a volunteer and judge (Iowa, Kansas, and Washington), giving me a broader concept of the national program.

*I believe in proposing solutions, as opposed to stating problems.*

Finding problems can only take an organization so far. Instead, I try to solve issues and look to the future through setting goals.

*I have strong communication skills in a variety of formats.*

I know how to make my opinion known concisely and respectfully in group setting. I can communicate a message to audiences of all sizes and ages. Given my background in software, I learned to be effective in many forms of electronic communication and running meetings through the web: Conference calls, video calls, chat rooms, collaborative documents, and more.

*I follow through and make progress by setting goals.*

Nobody benefits from a group member that doesn't contribute or, worse yet, makes promises and doesn't follow through. Having seen such situations in a variety of clubs and project teams, I have become committed to making clear statements about my goals and plans for achieving them. When given a task, I set out an action plan for completing it, recognize early if it will be realistic or difficult to complete, and communicate progress back to the group often.

Perhaps most importantly, I am committed to 4-H long-term. In March I will begin my relationship with 4-H in a fourth state as I move to California to start my career as a software engineer with Google. I plan to stay as active in 4-H there as I am today and would love help grow 4-H as a Youth Trustee.

**C. Describe your national platform if you were to be elected as a Youth Trustee to National 4-H Council's Board.**

I am lucky to have been a 4-H member in a state with a dedicated 4-H Foundation and in a county with a 4-H Endowment Committee, both of which funded many great opportunities for my peers and me during my youth. One model program in particular that Iowa has is *4-H'ers for 4-H*, an annual campaign in which 4-H clubs raise funds for the Iowa 4-H Foundation by means of their choosing. The youth of the Iowa State 4-H Council supports this program through fundraising and promotion as well. I would like to support programs like this in other states because it gives youth clearer perspective on the many 4-H opportunities they already enjoy and enables them to feel more invested in their own successes through 4-H.

As mentioned in other responses, I am a big proponent of STEM initiatives and of encouraging youth to engage in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. I also have a strong background in music and music technology and have seen the many benefits reaped from the intersection of these interests. As such, I include the arts in this, resulting in STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics). In line with the national 4-H science initiative, I want to bolster the Council's support of STEAM education for 4-H youth.

4-H provides excellent national opportunities for youth: I have personally attended National 4-H Congress. Most 4-H'ers I encounter don't know much about these programs and don't have an appreciation of the life-changing experiences they can facilitate. While I have personally promoted these at the local level, I want to help promote programs like National 4-H Congress, National 4-H Conference, IFYE, and Citizenship Washington Focus better to all 4-H youth.

While interning at Garmin and Microsoft I made sure to devote part of my summer to working with 4-H youth and volunteering in general. I created 4-H workshops based on computer science and recruited my fellow interns to help facilitate. I was astounded by the responses I got from my call for volunteers. Many large companies have extensive support for employee volunteers, and I think that 4-H has great potential to tap these underutilized resources in the form of technical volunteers. Having experienced technical 4-H projects from both the youth and volunteer perspectives, I know that having a caring adult with technical knowledge help over the course of a year-long project or more is one of the best ways to ensure that youth are able to fully explore these interests outside the classroom. I want to help 4-H recruit long-term technical volunteers from the tens-of-thousands of engineers in the workforce today by leveraging existing volunteer networks.

**D. Please rank your level of experience with social media from 1-5 (5 = very experienced) and describe a time when you've used social media as a marketing tool to promote an activity, project or 4-H experience.**

I would rank my level of experience as a 4. I have experience with running social media accounts for organizations and to promote events, but I have not had the opportunity to use paid marketing and traffic growth features.

I served as the social media director for my county fair for a year, during the time when I was a junior member on the county Fair Board. Facebook and Twitter were very new for our program at the time, so my goal was to broaden our reach by making our social media output both useful and frequent. I decided that it would be helpful to tweet updates about important points in the fair schedule to remind fairgoers to attend. Knowing that I had other responsibilities at the fair that would demand my time, I used SocialOomph to schedule topical tweets just prior to big events during the fair. I followed these posts up with specific messages about current happenings as I had time. This provided traffic for our followers even when I was too busy to send manual updates.

The same year, I created a photo contest run through our Facebook fan page. The goal was to collect quality, diverse photos of what was happening during the fair in addition to promoting our social media accounts in general. I set up an online form that would allow anonymous users to upload as many photos as they wanted into our Dropbox account, optionally tagged with their name. Out of the named submissions, on the last day of the fair, we selected the best photo and awarded the recipient with a fun prize. We posted submitted photos periodically during the fair to promote the contest and events simultaneously.

**E. Communication is a critical skill our Trustees must exemplify. Please share two experiences that best demonstrate how you communicate your opinions with others in a group setting.**

Last year, I was one of three evaluators on a panel interviewing youth candidates for a national 4-H opportunity. Being the newest evaluator in this group, I took the chance to ask the general opinion of the other two judges on our array of candidates. I noticed from their comments that we disagreed by a fair margin on two candidates, resulting in different final choices. We include multiple evaluators on a panel in order to benefit from a breadth of perspectives and ensure fairness in selection of awardees. Knowing this, I sought to quickly understand their motivation for their own selections, to determine the difference in our evaluations. After brief discussion, we pinpointed the issue to a difference between valuing the potential to contribute to the experience versus previous merits of the candidates. This understanding allowed me to give more pointed reasons behind my opinions and helped us to come to a consensus on which we all agreed in the end. This process took only a few minutes, but taking a moment to think beyond the face of the facts helped to make the difference.

In a very different setting, I was in a teleconference over Adobe Connect with a group of Extension staff, volunteers, and youth having a discussion about the future of the Iowa 4-H Youth Tech Team. Because of funding and changing technical interests of youth since the founding of the program we were restructuring and creating a new future for the program. As a 4-H member and a current volunteer, I had unique insight into the situation. As STEM education is an area about which I care deeply, I took the time before the meeting to outline my ideas about where the program could go and formulate some potential goals for both the near and distant future of the Tech Team, rather than taking the risk of leaving something important unsaid by being unprepared. Adobe Connect provides both audio and chat-room style discussion formats. It can be difficult to maintain group focus in this setting and keep a single stream of conversation running. To keep my thoughts clear for others, especially when posing questions to the group, I prefer to type up a short statement and send it all at once to avoid fragmenting it with others' messages or dealing with audio reception problems with the other participants' hardware. When serving as the moderator for all or part of a conversation, however, using a mic is almost always the best option for quick reaction to the current discussion. Using text also has the benefit of easier record keeping, especially when attempting to avoid possible ambiguity in notes after the discussion. Organizing my thoughts clearly beforehand and practicing with the medium of communication enabled me to share my thoughts more clearly and effectively with the group.

**F. Describe in detail your public speaking experience, including any formal speaking or media training.**

I have been engaged in public speaking since giving my first 4-H club presentation in third grade. Since then, I have given dozens of presentations on myriad topics at the local and state level. I have given many speeches, both extemporaneous and prepared, and had the opportunity to be on both sides of the mic during many media interviews for radio and newspapers.

One of my high school jobs was as a weekend morning host on a local radio station. I performed two newscasts per shift, and many more slots of announcements live on air. I had to carefully manage the length and content of my news and announcement segments and fluidly move between many different topics.

During the summer of 2010 I co-managed 4-H TV at the Iowa State Fair. This program gave youth learning opportunities in both the communication and technical aspects of event coverage by leading video interviews and preparing segments for 4-H events at the fair. I taught videography basics, interviewing strategies, and editing skills related to event coverage, as well as made a plan to document all 4-H events at the Fair.

I have authored and facilitated several workshops for youth of all ages on technical and general topics. I often don't have an appropriate test group for trying these experiences out before going live with my final audience, so I have grown accustomed to both careful planning and fast thinking to respond to anomalies during presentations. Through these workshops, I have learned how to communicate technical subjects with very young audiences.

I run a volunteer swing band and manage all public relations and media for the group. I have written eight press releases and given several radio and print interviews about the band's events since its founding in 2010. I serve as the emcee for the group during all events, for a typical crowd of 100.

#### **Part Four: LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION**

Please submit two letters of recommendation 1) an adult leader (State 4-H Program Leader, County Agent, or Volunteer Leader) and 2) from a youth leader/peer. Letter is not to exceed more than one page. Please describe the applicant's:

- Experience leading his/her peers
- Experience working in partnership with adults to complete a project
- General leadership style and skills they possess that would make them a valuable Youth Trustee
- Any other relevant information that you believe is important to consider in the selection

#### **Supporting Documentation**

- If any supporting documentation includes online materials such as videos, blog posts, websites, etc. please include the link here (see "Guidelines" section for printed material submission information):

Please visit <http://www.curtisullerich.com/youth-trustee.html> for a concise set of links to additional relevant information about my involvement and background.

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