

WHAT IS MOTIVATING YOU TO RUN FOR A STATE OFFICER POSITION?



Candidates for Reporter

Katie Ross – Duval

Through the years, people have told me I am a natural leader. I often find myself taking charge of situations, and when there are decisions to be made, I help guide others to reach a consensus. Although this has always been a skill of mine, 4-H has helped me to grow and polish my talent. I have learned a great deal about leadership through 4-H. In addition, I have served as an officer for all of my clubs each year since becoming a member at the age of 10. As soon as I was old enough to join my county's Teen Leadership Council, I was elected an officer at that level. And the moment I was eligible to do so I applied for, and was appointed to, the Florida 4-H Executive Board. Very early in my 4-H journey, I found out about the State Council. From that moment on, I decided I wanted to become an officer. It has been a dream of mine from the beginning, and is the next step I am eager to take! I believe one of the greatest, if not the greatest, benefit of 4-H is having a place where you belong. It's simple human nature to want to belong to something. Belonging feels good, like you have a purpose. And chances are, if you ask a 4-H member if they feel that way, they would say yes. Many 4-Hers participate at the county level. Others the district level. Some participate at the state level. And a few are active at all three. But these three levels share one major thing in common: belonging. Being a member of a club, a district council, Executive Board, or anything in between feels amazing. Because it provides a sense of community. But many youth struggle with participating in anything higher than county level events. Did you know, less than 1.6% of Florida 4-H members currently engage in state level activities? State events are a great way to meet people and make new friends. But unless you are a Senior, there are very few state level opportunities. Seniors have state competitions, Executive Board, 4-H Legislature, and 4-H University. Intermediates do not advance to the state level for many competitions, and only have the iLead event. Juniors have even less opportunities. One major part of my platform is State Socials. A social would be held quarterly over Zoom. Each session would focus on one of four Hs, and have breakout rooms for the different 4-H levels. With these online events, 4-Hers of all age groups would be able to make friends from across the state, creating a sense of belonging from an early age. Of course, there are many more ways to benefit from 4-H. In addition to finding somewhere I belong, I have been exposed to a wide variety of learning experiences, developed essential life skills, made many close friends, and discovered the importance of service. But that is just the tip of the iceberg. According to a study conducted by Tufts University, 4-H members report better grades, higher levels of academic competence, and an elevated level of engagement at school. They are also nearly two times as likely to plan to go to college, and more likely to pursue careers in science, engineering, and computer technology. There are no limits to the benefits 4-H offers. I would love to help more youth discover the opportunities offered, by spreading the word about 4-H through my Member Magazines and Takeover Tuesdays. Above all, I want to help other people grow. If I was elected Reporter, not only would it further my personal development, it would allow me to achieve my goals of assisting others. That is why I am so motivated to run for state office.

Hannah Varnadoe – Marion

I have seen my friends and role models run and serve as state officers, they have inspired me to run and want to become a state officer. They have given me opportunity's to serve and shadow them to see what they do first hand. I want to give other youth that same opportunity I was given at their age. I also have seen first hand what they do at executive board weekends and at many state events. I hope to learn and grow with the other officers as a team.

Summer Wayne – St. Lucie

I love 4-H. Put simply, that is my motivation to run for state office. I want to bring that love for 4-H to as many people as possible. From a young age, I have been influenced by several (now alumni 4-Hers) like Lily Crawford, and Brooke Adams, who were making waves within our county and even statewide 4-H through their passions and goals. After seeing everything they were doing, and what I would eventually get the opportunity to do, I immediately decided I wanted to become more involved. These youth were bringing 4-H to young members like me and people of all ages. Not only were they bringing 4-H, but they also brought an increased engagement within our community and an awareness of what was possible. At one point, I walked up to my county professional with a picture of the then-state officers at SRTLC and asked how I could get there myself. My county professional, now retired, gave me the resources and tools I needed to get there, which was the start of my 4-H leadership journey. It gave me something to strive for and people to look up to and idolize. Something I find myself saying often is, "That was when it changed for me; from being in 4-H to being involved in 4-H". These people, without knowing, completely changed my perspective on not only 4-H but on my life. I want nothing more than to be that for other people. That is my motivation: to not only be more for myself, and do more than I thought I could, but bring this passion to more people. 4-H truly changes lives, but to do so, it must be brought about in such a way that it is inspiring. I strongly believe that as a state officer, I will have a much better opportunity to bring this to more people; but also, to learn how to do so in that 'inspiring' way. I am a positive person, with positive goals, and a positive outlook on the things around me. The hands of those pushing me have led me to where I am today. The health of those supporting me has helped me in my times of need. The head and intelligence of those guiding me have led me to face tough decisions. All of those that have been a part of my journey have made my heart full of hope and ambition, and motivation to do more and be more. One day I will be that part of someone's journey, I may already be, but I want to be a part of as many as possible. Being a state officer is an opportunity in itself, one that comes with so many as it progresses, but the biggest opportunity (in my opinion) for a state officer is that opportunity to encourage and inspire. My motivation is to be that person who can encourage and inspire in a way that will make them reach for more.

Musiq Williams – Palm Beach

My motivation for running for a state officer position is knowing the positive difference I can make in someone else's 4-H experience. When I first joined 4-H, I was so nervous and intimidated. Attending my first event, I was scared that I would not fit in or that I would not make any friends. But then, I met the state president and vice president. They made me feel so comfortable and introduced me to the many agents, fellow 4-H members, and camps in 4-H. Meeting them, talking to them, and then experiencing a state 4-H event is what encouraged me to run for office today. I want to be that welcoming hand and guidance to the younger members of the state and new members of 4-H to make them feel comfortable and accepted as those former state council members did for me.