

Texas 4-H GLOBE program provides local, state, and international experiences for 4-H youth. Activities aim to open youth's eyes to cultural awareness, hunger, food security, and poverty while challenging youth to take humanitarian action.

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COLLEGE STATION -- Texas 4-H has announced the schedule for the 2024-2025 offering of the highly successful citizenship and leadership program, GLOBE - Global Leadership Opportunities Beyond Education. GLOBE is a comprehensive, multi-faceted citizenship and leadership program for 4-H members in grades 7-11. New this year, youth may choose their level of participation.

“The program is designed to engage intermediate and senior 4-H youth to look at their own communities through the eyes of people experiencing hunger and poverty and be inspired to take humanitarian action,” said Dr. Darlene Locke, Associate Professor and Extension Specialist, College Station. “As they begin to understand the perspectives of other cultures, they are more likely to have increased respect for those who are different from them.”

The program was initiated in June 2016 with 27 4-H members. The first two cohort groups traveled to Heifer Ranch in Arkansas for a poverty simulation experience and then traveled to Costa Rica for an immersive experience exploring Central America. In 2020, Heifer International closed the Arkansas facility so Tier I, the poverty simulation experience, now takes place at the Global Communities of the Texas 4-H Center in Brownwood. Locke said the 2024-2025 program will consist of four tiered activities and that youth may choose their level of participation, based on interests, schedules, and/or resources.

The 2024-2025 schedule includes Tier I at the Texas 4-H Center in Brownwood, October 18-20, 2024. Known as the Global Community experience, youth are exposed to the cultures of developing communities such as Guatemala, Tibet, a Refugee encampment, and Thailand. The group studies food security and the challenges communities face to provide adequate resources. Using problem-solving and teambuilding skills in an overnight poverty simulation, the cohort is tasked with preparing their own dinner and breakfast.

“By participating in daily life activities such as preparing meals and doing chores, the goal is to inspire participants to take action in their own life that will positively impact the environment and the world,” Locke explained. Tier I participants will spend the first night in 4-H Center dormitories, the second night is spent in the Global Community.

Tier II begins October 21 and runs through June 30, 2025 and continues to explore the topics of culture, food security, poverty, and sustainable agriculture through a webinar series. A second aspect of Tier II is for youth to develop and use their leadership skills as they make two community presentations about their GLOBE experience. Youth demonstrate their leadership skills when identifying a need within their local community and coordinating a service-learning project aimed at that need.

Tier III is a Day of Service and will occur January 18, 2025 at Makawa Farms, the Houston ISD Food and Agriculture Literacy program. The Farm empowers students and the community with the knowledge to make informed food choices. The focus is on understanding the impact of food choices on health, the community, and the environment. 4-H members will volunteer alongside community members to complete various gardening chores.

Tier IV, June 21-27, the group will travel to San Jose, Costa Rica. During this week-long experience, youth will tour several agricultural, cultural, and environmental sites to gain a first-hand experience of the community. One of the favorite activities are the service projects with the local community near the program headquarters. 4-H members also interact with 'Ticos' during a shared dance activity. Costa Rica's rich ecotourism areas are also explored. Group accommodations include hotels and the Texas A&M Soltis Center. Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service personnel chaperone all program activities.

GLOBE provides youth with the opportunity to step out of their comfort zone and really discuss important social issues. Through the webinar series and workbook assignments, youth explore the topics of culture, food security, poverty, and sustainable agriculture. Youth are challenged to think beyond themselves to how they can make a true difference in their own community. They are required to put their knowledge and leadership skills into use when they coordinate and conduct a service-learning project that address an identified need in their community.

Recognizing that youth have many opportunities and may not be able to participate in all GLOBE activities, the 2024-2025 program allows youth to choose their level of participation. Tier I is required as the foundation of the program, but if a youth knows they would not be able to travel to Costa Rica for a week, they have the option of only doing those Tiers that are of interest. However, to participate in the Costa Rica experience, a youth must complete Tiers I-III.

GLOBE has successfully provided engaging and immersive experiences for 4-H members since its inception in 2016. Upon completion of the program, participants responded that they would be more understanding of social differences of people, and that they planned to share what they learned with others in order to foster citizenship. One youth participant, Payne Gessner, stated, "I learned that everywhere in the world there is diversity, but if you put your mind to doing something, it can be done."

Youth participants also said that because of their GLOBE experience they now understand the impact that can be made on a society through philanthropy, and in turn would be able to identify and put on a service-learning program in their own communities.

For more information on the GLOBE program, contact Locke at 979-314-8141, darlene.locke@ag.tamu.edu