Bob Smith is taking over responsibilities for 4-H Robotics from Dr. Lisa Bouillion Diaz. Bob will be providing regional workshops to leaders to help clubs prepare for robotics competitions. Bob also plans on meeting as many clubs as possible this spring to find out how to better support the diverse interest of youth involved in 4-H Robotics projects through community and SPIN clubs.

Dan Boomgarden will be assuming responsibility for coordinating 4-H statewide events. Initial events will be those previously managed by Deb Stocker and Bill Million. For the past four years Dan has worked for Aumann Auctions as a project manager for national auctions which included national marketing campaigns, and production of videos for web and television.

The 5th Annual State 4-H Robotics Competition will be held April 20, 2013 on the UIUC campus. This event is free to all 4-H members, ages 9-14. Details are on the Illinois State 4-H website in the events section. 

http://web.extension.illinois.edu/state4h/events/4hroboticschallenge2013.cfm

Questions? Contact Bob Smith, rasmth@illinois.edu, 217-300-7199.

Dates have been set for this year’s 4-H Great Debate for May 17 & 18, 2013 in the Illinois House of Representatives, Illinois State Capital, Springfield, Illinois. The Great Debate is open to high school 4-H teens, ages 14-18 and provides an opportunity to debate mock bills in the Illinois House of Representatives.

Teens sign up for a mock bill and research that bill prior to the conference. Once at the conference, each participant works in a group to make final preparations for the debate of their bill. Youth may also run for the office of Speaker of the House or Clerk of the House. Participants learn about the legislative process and how Illinois government works while debating in the House Chambers. Registration will open on March 15th. Our website will be updated at that time with the 2013 information.

http://web.extension.illinois.edu/state4h/events/greatdebate.cfm

April marks “Month of the Military Child”, a time to honor youth impacted by deployment. In celebration, the 4-H Youth Development program (an active partner of Illinois Operation: Military Kids), invites you to join us for “Purple Up! For Military Kids”. Register at: http://bit.ly/PurpleUp.

We are encouraging every Illinoisan to wear purple on Monday, April 15th as a visible way to show support and thank military children for their strength and sacrifices. Purple is the color that symbolizes all branches of the military, as it is the combination of Army green, Coast Guard blue, Air Force blue, Marine red and Navy blue.

During the Month of the Military Child will be the annual showing of the Telluride MountainFilm on Tour – Champaign/Urbana. This is a showing of films focused on adventure, nature, and powerful ideas. This year, Illinois Military Teen Council members will have some of their work highlighted and proceeds from ticket sales benefit Operation: Military Kids. If interested in attending this festival, tickets are available at Champaign Surplus or at http://bit.ly/CUmountainfilm.

The viewing of the MountainFilm on Tour will be held on Tuesday, April 9th at 7:00 p.m. It will be held at the Art Theater, 126 West Church Street, in Champaign.

Additional information can be found at www.champaignsurplus.com.
Is your community interested in showing recognition of military children beyond wearing purple on April 15th? You can post a Wall of Heroes in your community where your 4-H club meets, at your library, school, or small business.

This unique wall of honor allows children to post a photo of their Service member and themselves, with space for writing the child’s first name and their relationship to the Service member. This honors not only our military, but their children as well.

When registering for “Purple Up! For Military Kids”, there is also the option to request a free Wall of Heroes banner and receive the photo mount template for the wall. *If you view this newsletter after April but would like to post a Wall of Heroes, you may still request this resource at http://bit.ly/WallOfHeroes.*

Registration for the 2013 Illini Summer Academies is now open! ISA is scheduled for June 23-26, 2013 on the University of Illinois Champaign/Urbana campus. Confirmed academies for this year include: Aerospace Engineering, Art & Design, Creative Writing, Crop Sciences, Electrical & Computer Engineering, Landscape Architecture, Leadership, Molecular & Cellular Biology, Natural Resources & Environmental Sciences, and Veterinary Sciences.

ISA is open to any Illinois high school student, ages 14-18 by September 1, 2013 and offers youth a chance to explore college life, check out the University of Illinois, and get hands-on experience in classes and labs of a specific college department. Visit our website to register and to see detailed information for this year’s academies.

http://web.extension.illinois.edu/state4h/events/summeracademies.cfm

We are currently recruiting for two youth leadership opportunities on the state level: Illinois Farm Bureau Youth Education Committee and Illinois State 4-H Youth Leadership Team. For the Youth Education Committee, details and applications will be available by mid-April. Deadline is June 15. Go to: http://web.extension.illinois.edu/state4h/members/leadership_ifbye.cfm.

More information on YLT and the application can be found at: http://web.extension.illinois.edu/state4h/members/leadership_sylt.cfm. Applications will be due June 15 or August 1 depending on interview dates.

Many Illinois counties are targeting Growing and Accessing Adequate Food to Prevent Hunger this year and 4-H clubs are encouraged to join the effort. 4-H clubs may apply for funding through the Feeding and Growing Our Communities program sponsored by the Howard G. Buffett Foundation. Successful applications will detail how the club will heighten awareness of and identify solutions for alleviating hunger within their communities. 4-H members are encouraged to ask farmers to submit an Invest an Acre pledge to provide financial support for the Feeding America Food Bank serving their community. Illinois’ goal is to engage 500 youth and 100 adult volunteers through 10,000 hours of service as they become part of the solution for reducing hunger. Please contact your local extension office to see if your county is programming in this important endeavor.

The Illinois Leader is your publication. Submit story ideas and comments to: Illinois Leader, Deb Stocker, dstocker@illinois.edu, 301 N. Country Fair Dr., Suite E, Champaign, IL 61821, (217) 333-0910, www.4-h.illinois.edu.