



Besting the Fear of Public Speaking through  
the 4-H Tropicana Speech Contest  
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Would you rather give a public presentation or go to the dentist and have a tooth pulled out? This is the question that was asked during a number of school public speaking workshops this spring. Not surprisingly, many of these youth chose a trip to the dentist over the public speech. The 4-H Tropicana Public Speaking Program helps youth conquer their fears of public speaking. The program is sponsored by Tropicana and administered through the 4-H Youth Development Program, Citrus County Extension, and the University of Florida/IFAS.

Over 3400 youth in 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade in Elementary Schools and 6<sup>th</sup> graders in Middle Schools participated in this Citrus County wide public speaking program. Participants start by each writing and delivering a two to three minute speech, on a topic of their choice, in their classroom. Classroom winners progress to the school contest, and the first and second place school winners are invited to the County Contest. The talent shown by these young orators at the County level was impressive as usual.

The Elementary school county wide winner, again this year, was Drew Omelian of Rock Rusher Elementary School. His speech title this time was “The Curse” in which he gave detailed proof that his family was cursed on their fishing trips. Chances are very good if you went on a fishing trip with Drew’s family you’d find yourself either flung overboard or pierced with all manner of hooks or lures.

The Middle school county winner was Ethan Kennedy of Citrus Springs Middle School with his speech, “What It’s Like Being a TK.” In his speech, Ethan chronicled the many misconceptions people have about how great it would be to be a teacher’s kid (TK). From the rigors of being a perpetual errand boy to the lack of there ever being any doughnuts in the teacher lounge, Ethan shattered any idea that being a teacher kid was any fun at all.

Each of these youth took home a first place plaque and a full paid scholarship to attend a week at 4-H Summer camp in June. But more than that, they are able to walk away with a sense of accomplishment.

The 4-H Youth Development Program staff, Ginny Celano, Program Secretary and Amy Duncan, 4-H Agent, coordinated the speech contest and couldn’t have done it without the help of many others. Appreciation and thanks are deserved by the people that assisted in providing this high impact program to the youth of our community. These folks include the many judges, Jennifer Hetland the Program Specialist for Elementary Language Arts and Social Studies, Citrus County School Curriculum Specialists, Teachers, and the participants’ parents.

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working days prior to the program so that proper consideration may be given to the request. Please call (352) 527-5700. For the hearing impaired, please contact the Florida Relay Center Service at 1-800-955-8771.



The 6<sup>th</sup> Grade 4-H Tropicana Public Speaking County Contest participants:

Back Row (left to right): Ethan Kennedy, Jake Salute, Fallon Crowell, Ally Thomasson

Middle Row: Kayla Dumon, Kaitlin Parrow, Alex Calderone, Austin Danna

Front Row: Audrey Overhuals, Jillian Ring, Destiny Maisel, Margan Eden



6<sup>th</sup> grade 4-H Tropicana Public Speaking County Contest winners (left to right):

First place: Ethan Kennedy, Citrus Springs Middle School, "What It's Like Being a TK"

Second place: Fallon Crowell, Citrus Springs Middle School, "The 411 on False Advertisements"

Third place: Jake Salute, Crystal River Middle School, "The Power of a Single Word"

Honorable Mention: Austin Danna, Lecanto Middle School, "the Devil That Lives With Me"



The 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Grade 4-H Tropicana Public Speaking County Contest Winners (left to right): Top Row: Makenna Campbell, Hailey Taylor, Allyssa Rhoads, Gregory Brown, Drew Omelian, Hurley Campbell, Next Row: Tara Velez, Peyton Burdette, Wesley Heinz, Nicolas Farmer, Peyton Vilardi, Dennis Nguyen, Brendan Deidrich, Second from Bottom row: Lexi Cyr, Grace Tyler, Elizabeth Saint, Asha Lee, Leya Alvarez, Bottom row: Jacob Hensley, Lindsay Spaight, Isaac Miele, Morgan trotter, Katie Kackey, Elly Huecker, Jillian Felton, Kaitlin Zoucha.



The 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Grade 4-H Tropicana Public Speaking County Contest Winners (left to right):

First Place: Drew Omelian, Rock Crusher Elementary School, "The Curse"

Second Place: Dennis Nguyen, Homosassa Elementary School, "My Fearsome Phobia"

Third Place: Morgan Trotter, Homosassa Elementary, "Oil Spill"

Honorable Mention: Jillian Felton, Inverness Primary, "Autism"