

USU Extension 4-H Youth Participate in Maker Faire

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Utah State

University Extension 4-H youth recently travelled to San Mateo, Calif., to participate in the Bay Area Maker Faire, a festival of invention, creativity and resourcefulness.

Youth from Cache, Washington, Utah and Salt Lake counties joined makers from all over the world to learn about electronics, physics, engineering, crafting and more through interactive displays and innovative demonstrations.

The Washington County 4-H members led a workshop that involved teaching other attendees how to sew and solder shoes that light up. The Blinky Shoe project was developed to help joggers who run early in the morning and late at night.

“This was an opportunity for them to really be creative,” said Paul Hill, USU Extension 4-H agent from Washington County. “They came up with the idea for the project themselves and put their skills to good use. I think seeing others learn from their project was really rewarding for them.”

The 4-H groups received funding from Cognizant, a global leader in business and technology services, as a part of their “Making the Future” initiative. This initiative was created to unleash the passion of young people in science, technology, engineering and math by creating fun, hands-on learning opportunities. The program was first introduced in Utah in 2012 as one of only 10 pilot programs in the country.

The “Making the Future” program is part of a larger “maker movement” that is taking place in the country that emphasizes the making and doing aspects of life in an

attempt to bring back the creative skills that often get lost with large-scale production and manufacturing.

“Innovation used to only happen in the labs of big companies,” Hill said. “Now, everyone has access to the tools of innovation. It’s a global movement that shows youth the big picture and prepares them to attack problems on a local level.”

For more information about 4-H programs, visit utah4h.org. To get involved in the 4-H Maker Movement programs by joining a club or signing up for a camp, visit cachemakers.org or tinyurl.com/WashingtonCountyMakers.

Photo: Washington County 4-H member Shakell Peacock demonstrates how to sew a pair of light up shoes to a workshop attendee.

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