

4-H Youth Leader Speaks With President Obama

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Jacob Jensen, Utah State University Extension 4-H ambassador and Salt Lake County resident, had the opportunity of a lifetime on Monday, April 13, to speak with President Barack Obama in the White House Oval Office. U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack joined Jensen and seven other 4-H youth who were chosen to meet the president and receive a formal thank you for making a difference in their local communities.

According to the White House Rural Council website, the 4-H youth were chosen to meet President Obama because, "Each one of them had an inspiring story about how they are opening up new doors for kids in their hometowns, and how this work is building stronger communities where they can learn, play and grow."

Jensen said it was an incredible experience to shake President Obama's hand and have an opportunity to talk with him.

"I enjoyed sharing details with the president about the Utah 4-H Donated Meat program, my Healthy Lifestyles state ambassador project and my 4-H club's local vegetable donations to the Utah Food Bank," he said.

Jensen has been involved with the Utah 4-H Donated Meat Program, a community service project that has donated 905,000 pounds of meat to the Utah Food Bank over the last nine years. Youth and community businesses and organizations work together to provide high-quality meats that supplement the diets of the 444,000 Utahns who face hunger. The annual program started in 2005 with the Farmington 4-H Sheep Club and donations are

projected to reach more than one million pounds of meat in 2015.

"The significance of this program cannot be overestimated," said Ginette Bott, Utah Food Bank chief development officer. "Not only do the clients receive rarely available, highly nutritious meat products, but Utah Food Bank especially takes pride in the fact that many counties statewide are having a direct impact on our mission of 'Fighting Hunger Statewide.'"

Jensen has been involved in several 4-H service projects the past 15 years. He has participated in the 4-H Junior Master Gardener Program and donated thousands of pounds of fresh vegetables from his personal garden to the Utah Food Bank.

"Of all the many different opportunities to serve, child hunger and poverty are the areas where I felt like I could have the most impact." Jensen said. "This is where I felt like I could make a difference. As Dr. Seuss says, 'Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not.'"

Jensen feels an urgency to help others lead healthy lifestyles. More than 160 local youth were educated about nutrition, mental health, substance abuse and physical fitness as part of his 4-H state ambassador project. Jensen took the initiative to market his project to community sponsors whose involvement will allow continued support to youth in need.

Jensen's projects go hand in hand with goals of the White House Rural Council, which is chaired by Vilsack.

According to the council's website, "The council is taking on rural child poverty as a top priority and [plans to leverage federal resources and partner with others](#) to help these families succeed. We will be working directly with kids and families to help them create more opportunities for themselves, their communities and their future."

Kevin Kesler, USU Extension 4-H director, is pleased with the opportunity that Utah 4-H has given Jensen and the manner in which he represents the state.

"We are very proud of the amazing leadership and citizenship skills our Utah youth possess," said Kesler. "Jacob was able to showcase to the president of the United States just a few of the great service projects he and Utah 4-H youth are involved in. His experience exemplifies how 4-H is growing responsible citizens and future leaders."

PHOTO ATTACHED: Salt Lake County resident Jacob Jensen, third from the left

CAPTION: President Obama Speaks with USU Extension 4-H Youth Leader

PHOTO RETRIEVED FROM:

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/photos-and-video/photogallery/april-2015-photo-day>

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