

The year without a summer: 4-H projects in a pandemic

A MA 4-H creative writing and arts competition.

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: MARCH 1, 2021

In 1816, the Northern Hemisphere experienced a year where summer never really came. From China to Canada it got cold; the ground froze in June and the crops never came in. Life was strange and hard and scary for millions of people — but even from the worst times comes beauty. The color of the air from volcanic ash made blazing sunsets that inspired painters; the lack of oats for horses led to the invention of the bicycle. And the ensuing bad weather made a group of poets and writers stay inside to write ghost stories — which resulted in both *Frankenstein* and *Dracula*.

In 2020, many of us too saw a year where summer didn't seem like summer. No horse shows, no club meetings, no 4-H Fairs; like our ancestors, we too stayed home. And also like our ancestors, we too looked for ways to occupy ourselves; we taught our dogs new tricks, we learned to sew masks for our community, we attended virtual symposiums and classes. We worked on our projects — individually but never alone — and wrote our records to show off what we'd done to the 4-H community we love.

And now that an equally strange fall and winter have arrived, it's time to share. "The Year Without a Summer: 4-H Projects in a Pandemic" is Massachusetts 4-H's first literary magazine. An outgrowth of Mass4-H's Spinning Stories pilot program, we want to hear about how you and your project have spent the season. We are looking for *Poetry* (no more than 50 lines), *Short Stories* (no more than 1000 words), and *Artwork* that tells a story about this summer from your project's perspective.

Submissions are open to all Massachusetts 4-Hers, Cloverbuds to Seniors. All submissions will be published, but a winner will be selected from the below categories to introduce their section and have their pieces read by a 4-H storyteller. Everyone who submits will receive a copy of the printed journal, with extras available to purchase!

THE DEADLINE IS **MARCH 1ST**. IF YOU'D LIKE FEEDBACK ON YOUR PIECE BEFORE FINAL SUBMISSION, PLEASE GET IT TO US BY **FEBRUARY 1ST**. WINNERS WILL BE ANNOUNCED AT THE 2021 STATE VISUAL PRESENTATIONS!

4 Categories

All open to: Cloverbud, Junior, Senior

Writing

1

Poetry
No more than 50 lines

2

Short Story
No more than 1000 words

Artwork

3

Photography

Tells a story about this summer from your project's perspective.

4

Any other medium

Questions? Want to submit early? All contacts and entries to:
angelica@umext.umass.edu