



May 1, 2020

Dear Snohomish County 4-H Community,

It is with a very heavy heart that I pass on to you this announcement from the Evergreen State Fairgrounds:

Monroe, Wash., May 1, 2020 – Today, Snohomish County announced the cancellation of the Evergreen State Fair, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Fair officials consulted with the Snohomish Health District and county leaders before making this decision. This is the first time that the Fair has been canceled since WWII. The Fair was also canceled for three years during the Spanish Flu pandemic of 1918-1920.

Please visit [The Evergreen State Fairgrounds website](#) for the full press release.

I am afraid that anything I say from this point forward will be of little comfort, but I have been so encouraged by my conversations with our Fairgrounds manager and staff. They have me looking forward to an innovative and exciting way that our youth can still display all their hard work. Some aspects of the 4-H displays will be moved to the virtual realm, and we are brainstorming and planning various ways that our youth can physically display as well. We will begin the process of developing plans that will 1) keep our youth, volunteers, families, and the community safe, 2) allow youth to participate in the most meaningful way possible under the circumstances, and 3) leverage technology to provide both pre-recorded and live virtual participation options. We have great minds in our volunteer base, we have great minds in our youth, and we have great minds in our county. Between us all, I think we can come up with great and innovative solutions that will serve as meaningful alternatives to the Fair experience we all know and love.

I want to take this time to thank our amazing Evergreen State Fairgrounds staff and leadership. This had to be one of the most difficult decisions to make. I am thankful for how they have stepped up to protect our youth and our community. I am impressed by how quickly they have pivoted to conversations about moving forward and helping our 4-H youth get the best experience that is safely possible. Their energy truly shows the love and care that they have for our youth and community. I can't thank them enough for their concern, their diligence, and how they have kept our health and safety front and center. I thank them, from the bottom of my heart.

I know this is not the news anyone was hoping to hear, and I encourage you to take a few days to process what this means for you, your club, and your program. But please, give yourself that time before you decide that it's, "Fair as we know it, or no Fair at all." This is an opportunity for us to step up and show that we love our community enough to sacrifice, AND we are innovative enough to push forward. This is a chance for our youth to step up with some amazing ideas that I guarantee I would never have thought of. This is a chance to do some good. I challenge you all to see this as an opportunity to provide your community in crisis with a chance to see that our future is in our youth, and our youth are nothing short of amazing. Now is not the time to give up, throw in the towel, or move on. We need to take the time we need, allow ourselves to be sad, and then we will get to work.

I look forward to working with you.

Ashley Hall | 4-H Assistant Professor

And the Snohomish County 4-H Team

Beth Wangen | Volunteer Development Coordinator

Kim Marie Baker | 4-H Program Coordinator

Kristi Boyd | 4-H Administrative Assistant