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Youngsters speak up, speak out, win awards for their efforts in contest



SPECIAL/Nassau County Extension

Twelve Nassau County elementary school students participated in the 2008 Nassau County 4-H/Tropicana Public Speaking Contest April 8 in Callahan.

By My Nassau Sun

CALLAHAN - Twenty-two youth from nine area public and private schools competed April 8 at the Nassau County Multipurpose Building in the countywide 4-H/Tropicana Public Speaking Contest.

Youth competitors did an excellent job calming their nerves and turning on the charm.

Three judges evaluated facial expressions, hand motions and how well the speakers were able to hold the audience's attention.

Participating students qualified by first winning their classroom competitions, and then a schoolwide competition.

The students spoke about a variety of topics, including their heroes, their pets and future job possibilities.

"Everyone can relate to that jittery moment when you first step in front of a crowd. For many young people, this contest is their first experience giving a speech," said Marilyn Norman,

assistant dean for 4-H youth development program at the University of Florida's IFAS. "Whether or not they win, writing and delivering a speech helps youth learn valuable life skills that will benefit them later in life."

A special thank-you to school teachers and parents for assisting in this educational effort, and to the judges who also donate their valuable time and knowledge to our youth.

Get involved

For information about joining or volunteering with Nassau County 4-H, call 879-1019.~~~**Sweet talkers**

2008 Nassau County 4-H/Tropicana Public Speaking Contest winners

Elementary school

First: Mallory McNeese, Callahan Intermediate School

Second: Allison Rodeffer, Emma Love Hardee,

Third: Casee Yarborough, Amelia Island Montessori School

Honorable mention: Emma Hicks, Amelia Island Montessori School

Middle school

First: Gabrielle Douglas, Amelia Island Montessori School

Second: Jenny Strozinsky, Fernandina Beach Middle School

Third: Avery Douglas, Fernandina Beach Middle School

Honorable mention: Jennifer Portillo, Yulee Middle School

First-place winners in both divisions will receive a full scholarship, provided by Tropicana, to Camp Cherry Lake or a Nassau County 4-H day camp.