

Section 1

Stephanie Klein is an important piece of the success of Lake County 4-H, serving as the 4-H Program Associate with unmatched dedication and passion. Her impact extends far beyond her official responsibilities, as she continuously goes above and beyond to ensure the program thrives. In her role, Stephanie plays a pivotal part in managing the Lake County 4-H Horse Program, overseeing seven clubs and 20 volunteers, and providing mentorship and leadership that contribute to the program's continued growth. Her guidance has helped Lake County 4-H youth achieve state-level first-place wins in horse judging and hippology, reinforcing her ability to foster excellence in youth development. Stephanie is also the driving force behind 4-H Online, ensuring that membership, registrations, and event coordination run smoothly. She tracks and manages volunteers, overseeing the background screening process and ensuring compliance with county and state 4-H policies. Her attention to detail and organizational expertise help maintain a strong and engaged volunteer network, a key component of the program's success. Beyond these responsibilities, Stephanie is instrumental in managing bookings for the Lake County 4-H Association, ensuring that facilities and resources are available to support educational events, club meetings, and youth programs. Her ability to coordinate 4-H events efficiently allows for seamless programming and an enhanced experience for both youth and adult participants.

Section 2

Stephanie Klein has played a pivotal role in the growth and success of the Lake County 4-H program. Through her leadership and collaboration with the 4-H Agent, the program has expanded to over 1,700 members, with school outreach programs reaching more than 6,000 students annually. Stephanie's ability to manage operations, streamline enrollment, and maintain strong family engagement has been crucial to the program's success.

Stephanie brings valuable experience from her time as a 4-H mom and volunteer, particularly in equine and livestock programs. As manager of the 4-H Horse Program, she oversees seven clubs and 20 volunteers, providing quality mentorship and hands-on experiences. Her leadership has contributed to increased participation, with 46 youth and over 60 horses registered for the 2024–2025 year, and has helped youth achieve state-level wins in horse judging and hippology. Additionally, she is a huge help during the Area East Horse Show as well as the Florida 4-H Horse Show. She has watched several of her 4-H horse members go to nationals to compete in public speaking or hippology. Her influence also extends to large livestock programming and the development of the Lake County Fair Horse Show.

As a manager of over 80 volunteers, Stephanie ensures the 4-H program remains organized and compliant, overseeing background screenings, training, and certifications. She also handles 4-H Online operations, making the program more accessible for families and staff. Beyond traditional 4-H programming, Stephanie has expanded learning opportunities by co-leading initiatives such as cooking programs, Bug Camp, and skill-building clinics, giving youth exposure to new skills and career paths.

Stephanie has also fostered a sense of community within the large and diverse Lake County 4-H program. Through her leadership, mentorship, and team-building initiatives, she has created an environment where youth feel supported, empowered, and valued. Her dedication to youth development, volunteer coordination, and program expansion has made Lake County 4-H a model for excellence, preparing youth to be confident, responsible leaders and lifelong learners.

Section 3

Stephanie's journey within the Lake County 4-H program has been marked by significant personal and professional growth, as well as major impacts on the program's development. As the Lake County 4-H Program Associate, she uses her hands-on experience in the equine and livestock fields to provide valuable educational and competitive opportunities for youth. Her contributions have resulted in state-level first-place wins in horse judging and hippology, with 8 youth making it to the Regional Horse Show in Perry, GA, and several youths competing at the National 4-H Roundup in Louisville, KY. Under her attention, she has been able to transform the horse program and provide youth with the opportunities they need to succeed.

Stephanie's attention to detail and organizational skills have been critical in maintaining a well-structured and compliant 4-H program. She oversees over 80 volunteers, ensuring that all necessary background screenings, training, and certifications are kept up to date. Additionally, her efficiency with 4-H Online operations has made the program more accessible, streamlining enrollment processes and allowing families, club leaders, and county staff to engage more effectively. By adhering to policies and best practices, Stephanie has strengthened the program's foundation, ensuring that it remains organized, inclusive, and impactful.

Bio Sketch

Stephanie Klein is a passionate leader in youth development and the backbone of Lake County's 4-H program. Her journey began over a decade ago, volunteering through her daughter's involvement, supporting the Rabbit/Poultry barn at the Lake County Fair, and assisting in the horse program. Starting as a secretary for the Mobile Irrigation Lab, her commitment led her to become the 4-H secretary in 2020 and later a program assistant, managing over 1,200 members and outreach to 6,000 students. Stephanie oversees seven horse clubs and 20 volunteers, mentoring youth to achieve state-level successes and playing a key role in large livestock programming and the Horse Show at the Lake County Fair. Her leadership, mentorship, and innovative spirit have propelled the program's growth, enriching countless youth lives and inspiring future generations of 4-H leaders.



January 29, 2025

Dear FAE4-HA Reviewers,

Stephanie Klein is the backbone of Lake County's 4-H program, embodying dedication and passion for youth development. As a steadfast supporter and innovator, Stephanie's contributions have solidified her as an invaluable asset to the program. I, Dallas Meringolo, proudly recommend Stephanie Klein for the FAE4-HA Program Support Staff of the Year.

Stephanie's 4-H journey began long before her official role, as she actively supported her daughter's participation in Lake County 4-H for over a decade. As a volunteer, she contributed extensively to the Cassia Cowpokes Club, the Rabbit/Poultry Barn at the Lake County Fair, and the horse program. Her transition into an official capacity began as secretary for the Mobile Irrigation Lab, but her heart was always drawn to 4-H. She consistently volunteered her time until officially becoming the 4-H Secretary in 2020, a role that soon evolved into her current position as the 4-H Program Associate in 2022.

Stephanie's impact on the growth and success of Lake County 4-H is remarkable. With her support and collaboration with the 4-H Agent, the program has grown to over 1,700 members and now reaches more than 6,000 students through school outreach programs. Her responsibilities are diverse and critical: managing accounts, coordinating 4-H Online operations, and overseeing both the horse and large livestock programs. In her role with the horse program, Stephanie manages seven clubs and 20 volunteers, mentoring youth and fostering success. Her leadership has contributed to numerous accomplishments, including state first-place wins in horse judging and hippology. Through clinics and hands-on experiences, she provides opportunities for participants to develop skills while ensuring holistic growth. Her work has directly resulted in increased participation, with 46 youth and over 60 horses currently registered in the 2025–2026 4-H year.

Beyond the horse program, Stephanie's contributions extend to large livestock programming, where she leverages her personal experience raising swine and cattle. She played a key role in developing the Horse Show at the Lake County Fair, an event that continues to thrive under her guidance. Additionally, Stephanie collaborates with the Family and Consumer Science Agent on cooking programs and co-leads the popular Bug Camp alongside the 4-H and Commercial Horticulture Agent. Stephanie embodies the values of leadership, mentorship, and community engagement that define 4-H. Her ability to connect with volunteers, club leaders, and stakeholders has enhanced Lake County 4-H's community involvement and reputation. Her innovative mindset ensures continuous improvement, positioning the program as a leader in youth development.



As Interim CED, I have personally witnessed Stephanie's ability to seamlessly bridge the roles of UF/IFAS Extension and Lake County Government. Her commitment to compliance, financial management, and volunteer coordination—including managing over 80 volunteers and ensuring background screenings—keeps the program running smoothly. Stephanie's humor, warmth, and willingness to go above and beyond make her an essential member of the team.

Stephanie's journey from volunteer to Program Assistant is a testament to the power of passion and perseverance. Her unwavering dedication has propelled Lake County 4-H to unprecedented heights, fostering leadership and enriching countless lives. Stephanie's legacy will continue to inspire future generations, shaping leaders and changemakers for years to come.

Sincerely,

Dallas Meringolo

UF/IFAS Extension

Lake County

Interim County Extension Director

Extension Agent II

4-H Youth Development



To Whom it may concern,

January 29, 2025

I am honored to recommend **Stephanie Klein** for the **Program Support Staff of the Year Award**. As the Co-Chair of the Lake County 4-H Association and a Co-Leader of a Lake County 4-H Club, I have had the privilege of working with and observing Stephanie's extraordinary contributions to our program and community.

Stephanie exudes dedication, passion, and leadership. Stephanie started as a volunteer with Cassia Cowpokes more than a decade ago; her involvement initially stemmed from supporting her daughter's participation in 4-H (Which seems to be a theme amongst many of our 4-H leaders). In 2020, her commitment evolved further when she became the 4-H secretary. Her talent and drive were quickly recognized, leading to her appointment as a **Lake County 4-H Program Associate** by the County Extension Director and County Manager. This role solidified her integral contributions to the program's continued success.

Stephanie's responsibilities are wide-ranging and essential. She oversees the Lake County 4-H Online systems, manages program accounts, and coordinates key initiatives such as horse and extensive livestock programming. Stephanie serves as the Program Assistant for the horse program, supporting all the horse clubs and mentoring volunteers while guiding youth members engaged in horse projects, including organizing and running the **Horse skill-a-thon**, an excellent method to check the youth on what they know about horses. She also significantly contributes to large livestock programs, leveraging her experience raising swine and cattle to enrich educational activities like the **Lake County Fair skill-a-thon**.

Stephanie's impact on the growth and success of the Lake County 4-H program is both profound and enduring. Her exceptional communication skills and mastery of policies and procedures create a structured yet welcoming environment for youth and volunteers. Under her guidance, participants have achieved remarkable successes, including **state-level victories in horse judging and hippology competitions**.

Moreover, Stephanie's ability to forge meaningful connections with volunteers, club leaders, and community partners has fostered greater engagement and expanded the program's outreach efforts. Her efforts have strengthened the program and enriched the broader community by inspiring collective support and collaboration.

Stephanie's dedication extends far beyond her professional duties. She volunteers her time to support the program, mentoring youth and assisting volunteers with selflessness and enthusiasm. Her attention to detail and organizational prowess ensure seamless program operations, reflecting her exceptional commitment to excellence.

In every way, Stephanie Klein embodies the spirit of the **Program Support Staff of the Year Award**. Her steadfast dedication to youth development, leadership and mentorship, and

tireless commitment to enhancing the program make her an outstanding and deserving candidate. Her efforts have left an indelible mark on the Lake County 4-H community and will continue to inspire future generations of 4-H members, volunteers, and leaders.

Stephanie Klein has contributed to expanding and evolving several programs within Lake County 4-H, such as launching an exciting cooking camp initiative and ambitiously doubling the size and scope of the horse program to reach new heights.

She has also been partnering with the Lake County Fair to create and implement a new division within our county fair venue, which will include a horse show.

Thank you for considering Stephanie Klein for this distinguished honor. Please contact me if you require additional information or would like to discuss her qualifications further.

Sincerely,

Orin R. Owen

Orin.owen@gmail.com

(352) 516-3072