



April 13, 2016

## National 4-H Council Names Winner of 'Youth In Action' Award for STEM

### Thaddeus Hughes of Shirley, Illinois Will Receive a Scholarship From HughesNet® and Serve as a 4-H Spokesperson for STEM

CHEVY CHASE, Md., April 13, 2016 /PRNewswire/ -- At its 7<sup>th</sup> annual awards event in Washington, D.C on April 12, National 4-H Council named Thaddeus Hughes, 18, of Shirley, Illinois, the winner of the 2016 Youth In Action Award for Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM). Hughes will receive a \$5,000 scholarship for higher education and \$5,000 for additional STEM programming in McLean County, IL, his home county, from HughesNet®, the nation's #1 satellite Internet service, sponsor of the 2016 Youth In Action Award for STEM.



As a Youth In Action Award winner, Hughes will serve as a spokesperson for 4-H, educating youth and adults about the impact of 4-H STEM programming, discussing his personal story and inspiring youth to pursue education and careers in STEM fields. Thad is joined in his role as a 2016 winner by Jacob Shuman, who won for Agricultural and Animal Sciences; Alexandria "Lexie" Lerblance, who won for Citizenship; and Ruwanthi "Ru" Ekanayake, who won for Healthy Living.

"Out of the hundreds of submissions we received this year, Thad's stood out from the crowd not only for his incredible talents in robotics and engineering, but for his dedication to sharing his passion and skills to make a positive impact in his community," said Jennifer Sirangelo, president & CEO of National 4-H Council. "4-H'ers like Thad show just how much positive impact 4-H youth leaders can have on their communities and the world around them."

Through talks, demonstrations, workshops and interviews, Hughes has engaged more than 6,000 youth in the wonders of science. He has been a mentor for FIRST Lego League and the Illinois State Robotics Competition for four years. Hughes has also served as a mentor for four years and developed an afterschool program through the University of Illinois Cooperative Extension, called Spinning Robots, in which he taught 50 middle schoolers basic circuitry and how to build simple robots. He is currently studying engineering at Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology, one of the nation's top ranked undergraduate schools in engineering.

"We're thrilled to support a young man as talented and ambitious as Thad," said Peter Gulla, senior vice president of marketing, Hughes. "He not only has a bright future ahead of him in the field of engineering, but has already established himself as a leader and a role model for other youth with an interest in STEM. Our goal through our partnership with 4-H is to empower young people like Thad so they can not only change the world, but inspire others to do so as well."

To learn more about Thad Hughes, watch his video here: [www.hughesnet.com/4H](http://www.hughesnet.com/4H).

#### ABOUT YOUTH IN ACTION

The Youth In Action Award, sponsored in part by HughesNet, was started in 2010 to recognize the 4-H'er who had overcome challenges and used the knowledge they gained in 4-H to create a lasting impact in their community. This year marks a change in the program as four Youth In Action pillars were created in Agriculture & Food, Citizenship, Healthy Living and STEM. These four pillars represent the fields in which 4-H youth excel on a national level and align with the mission mandates of National 4-H Council.

To learn more about Youth In Action or to see the other pillar winners from around the country, please visit <http://www.4-h.org/get-involved/sponsor/4-h-legacy-awards-gala/youth-in-action/>.

#### ABOUT 4-H

4-H, the nation's largest youth development organization, grows confident young people who are empowered for life today and prepared for career tomorrow. 4-H programs empower nearly six million young people across the U.S. through

experiences that develop critical life skills. 4-H is the youth development program of our nation's Cooperative Extension System and USDA, and serves every county and parish in the U.S. through a network of 110 public universities and more than 3000 local Extension offices. Globally, 4-H collaborates with independent programs to empower one million youth in 50 countries. The research-backed 4-H experience grows young people who are four times more likely to contribute to their communities; two times more likely to make healthier choices; two times more likely to be civically active; and two times more likely to participate in STEM programs.

Learn more about 4-H at [www.4-H.org](http://www.4-H.org), find us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/4-H](http://www.facebook.com/4-H) and on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/4H>.

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