

NEWS

4-H'ers hit runway at fashion show

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At dress rehearsal for the state 4-H Congress Fashion Revue on Tuesday afternoon, Jenni Upton was instructing about 70 teenagers on how to walk the runway.

"Remember to smile and stay relaxed, don't be stiff," said Upton, a fourth-year animal science major at the University of Florida with 10 years' experience in 4-H. "Gracefully walk, let your arms swing. Don't put them in your pockets."

The 4-H'ers participating in the fashion show at UF's Reitz Union Rion Ballroom were sporting such items as store-bought prom dresses, hand-made, hoop-skirt dresses and medieval apparel.

The fashion show is just one of the many activities of the weeklong 4-H conference, which has brought more than 540 teenagers from 58 Florida counties to Gainesville.

Besides the Fashion Revue, there are demonstrations, guest speakers, workshops and community service projects, and a talent show.

Upton said the fashion show teaches them confidence and responsibility, which will help them succeed in future presentations and interactions with audiences.

Mary Basham, 16, of Broward County said she's a better speaker now and because she's home-schooled, she has made most of her friends through 4-H.

Angi Pasco, 18, of Grandin, about eight miles east of Melrose, said it took her about 60 hours to sew her Civil War-era hoop skirt.

Pasco said she has always been shy.

"4-H has helped me come out of my shell; now I feel like I can talk to anyone," she said.

To be invited to this state conference, 4-H'ers must have succeeded in their county and district competitions, said Kristin Guira, a 4-H public relations coordinator.

Winners were chosen Tuesday night after the show, and some may move on to the national competition.