

# Award Winner is a Dog's Best Friend

By Lori Froehlich-Schwab

Each year, Klickitat PUD presents the Power of Youth Award to a member of the Klickitat County 4-H Program. The award is based on the young person's community involvement, volunteer activities and leadership skills.

This year, Mikaylee Balcom of the Friends 4-Ever 4-H Club is the recipient. She was selected after a review of her 4-H achievements, project record book and an interview by a committee of adults chosen by the leader's council. She has been active in the dog project and youth leadership in her club.

Mikaylee has been part of 4-H for 10 years. By age 8, she already looked forward to 4-H club meetings.

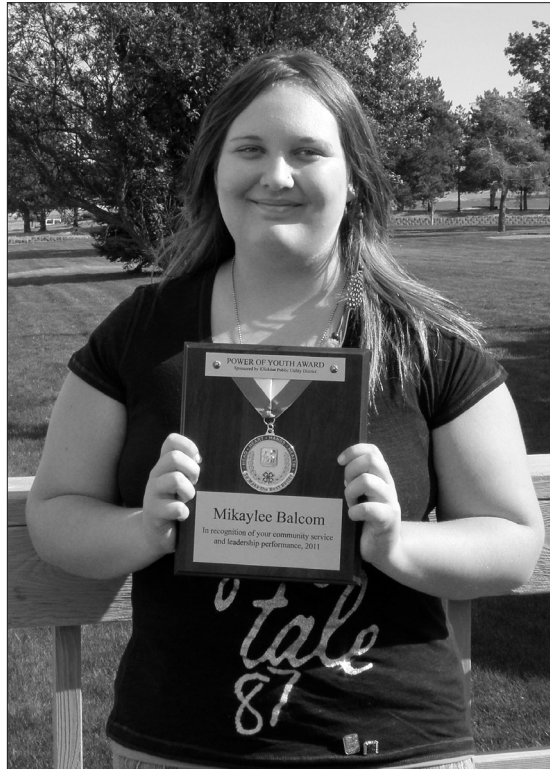
Her main project was showing her Great Pyrenees dogs at local fairs and at the state fair in Puyallup. She received the champion showman ribbon seven times and the high-point trophy.

In addition to showing, Mikaylee also participated in demonstration, a 4-H event that requires participants to explain their project while showing judges a topic of her choice.

Mikaylee was instrumental in starting a fundraiser called the 4-H Cares Dog Walk in Goldendale. She designed the walk to benefit people who were affected by the tornados in Joplin, Missouri. Mikaylee said she came up with the idea after thinking about all of the support sent to Japan after the recent tsunami and thought it would be a good idea to do more to help folks in the Midwest.

Because of her efforts in organizing, planning and promoting, and her own participation, \$403.81 was raised in donations. The funds were sent to the Missouri State 4-H Foundation for the 4-H Kids Helping Kids Program, designated for providing focused relief to 4-H families affected by the tornado disaster.

Mikaylee's leadership abilities have grown throughout her 4-H career due, in part, to the skills and training she has received through 4-H. She has held office in her club for eight years, with two years as president. She was senior class secretary at Goldendale High School. She said learning parliamentary procedures was one of the biggest benefits of holding office, and she knows those skills will



Left, Mikaylee Balcom of Goldendale is this year's winner of the Klickitat PUD Power of Youth Award for her participation in 4-H, volunteer activities and leadership skills.

Below, Mikaylee with her dog, Gunny. She showed Great Pyrenees as part of her 4-H activities.

continue to benefit her.

Throughout high school, Mikaylee was involved in FFA, competing at state and nationals. She also played tennis and ran for the cross country team.

After graduating from high school in June 2011, Mikaylee joined the Job Corps and is waiting for an arrival date, when she will move to the Sedro Wooley Cascades Campus. Her future plans include becoming a medical lab technician and starting her own 4-H club.

"My mom started the club I've been in, and I would love to carry on the tradition," Mikaylee says. "4-H helped shape me into who I am today, and passing that along to others is important to me."

Congratulations on this well-deserved Power of Youth Award, and best of luck to Mikaylee on her future. Keep up the great leadership and service to the community! ■

