

# 4-H Youth In Action Award Recognizes Teen Who Inspires Others To Engage In STEM

(NAPSA)—As adults search for ways to inspire American youth to explore STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math), they might want to borrow a page from the book of 18-year-old Illinois 4-H member Thaddeus (Thad) Hughes, who has introduced thousands of young people to science through hands-on programs he contributed to or created to spark their interest.

The National 4-H Council has awarded Thad its 2016 Youth In Action (YIA) STEM Pillar Award (sponsored by HughesNet) for engaging more than 6,000 youth in STEM subjects through demonstrations, workshops, talks and interviews, and as a mentor for the FIRST Lego League and the Illinois State Robotics Competition. Thad's efforts have earned scholarships for him and his 4-H club, helping him to continue his passion for connecting students to STEM while he studies engineering at the Rose Hulman Institute of Technology.

The YIA Awards honor 4-H'ers in four categories—STEM, Citizenship, Agriculture/Animal Science, and Healthy Living—for gaining critical life skills through their 4-H experiences and using those skills to overcome challenges. The STEM Pillar Award is sponsored by HughesNet, which is a partner with 4-H to introduce American youth to hands-on, community-based STEM learning.

YIA honorees epitomize 4-H youth empowerment and leadership. Thad has created learning resources to help younger peers see that they can learn and excel in STEM subjects. He developed an after-school 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.

Thad also created a curriculum to teach middle schoolers princi-



## Thad Hughes Wins Outstanding STEM Pillar Award Sponsored By HughesNet

ples of electricity, from basic circuits to transistors.

"I found that there was one major discouragement among students: 'I don't think I can do that. I don't know the stuff,' " Thad said. "Simply replying 'sure you can' isn't very convincing. I set out to fix this misconception."

4-H and HughesNet share a passion for educating youth to develop into tomorrow's future leaders—a passion that Thad embodies. Their partnership is aimed at inspiring the next generation of scientists, building future leaders and powering our country's competitiveness in the global economy.

"Thad's dedication to sharing his gifts with younger learners is exactly what the U.S. needs to inspire the next generation of peer mentors in STEM," said Peter Gulla, senior vice president marketing, Hughes Network Systems. "It's vital to convince youth that learning science and technology is important. Thad's example delivers that message by empowering youth with encouragement and real opportunities to develop skills."

### Learn More

For more information, visit [www.HughesNet.com/4H](http://www.HughesNet.com/4H).