Bull’s-eye!
4-H sharp shooters hit target with service, tourney

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ASHEBORO — They shoot guns for trophies, but the service they provide for others is reward in itself.

The Randolph 4-H Super Sharp Shooting Stars recently competed in regional competition against teams from 19 other counties. Sixteen of the 25 enrolled members qualified for the State Shooting Sports Tournament on Sept. 23 at Millstone Creek 4-H Camp at Ellerbe.

The team practices year-round at Shady Knoll Game

BOW AND ARROW PRACTICE — Sharp shooting includes archery competition. Some of the Super Sharp Shooting Stars will compete with bows at the state tourney.

Bird Farm, Kildee Farm or Carolina Guns and Gear. But they do much more than just shoot at targets.

Michelle Haithcock, one of several parents involved with the team, said the youth also provide community service.

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“They work with the (Asheboro) Kiwanis Pancanke Day and they gave supplies and gifts for Universal Health Care,” said Haithcock. “They place flags at Randolph Memorial Park on Memorial Day and cleaned up a disabled veteran’s yard.

“We want them to know there’s more to community service that picking up trash,” Haithcock said. “It’s to do something nice for someone else.”

Haithcock was joined by several members of the team at Carolina Guns and Gear for an interview. Also on hand were parents, Pam Hopkins, Missy Barker and Elizabeth Harwell.

Participating with the Super Sharp Shooting Stars allows the youth, ages 9 to 19, to meet new friends, learn social skills, gain respect for elders and, for some, to come out of their shells, Haithcock said.

“It’s enlightening for kids and opens their eyes to others’ needs. They’ve worked really hard to get where they are,” she said of their shooting skills. “They get along and support each other and encourage other teams. They’re representing Randolph County and 4-H very well.”

Several of the team members talked about what the club means to them, including Lydia Key, a 10th grader at Providence Grove High School.

“It’s introduced me to a lot of new stuff and new people,” she said. “Now I take hunter safety at school and I have the club to thank.”

Garrett Haithcock, a ninth grader at Providence Grove, said he also takes hunter safety. “I like 4-H,” he said. “It helps me practice with guns and helped me go to camp.”

Nicholas Watson, a junior at Providence Grove, said the club has “helped me get better — sharpen my pencil — and to pick up the places I’m lacking. I’ve been taught things I didn’t know to be more accurate. The amazing coaches are always there. I have a lot of fun and really enjoy it.”

Luke Barker, an eighth grade homeroom student, said the main focus of 4-H was community service.

“We helped a veteran with stage 4 cancer,” he said. They also learn gun safety and “the coaches and parents are always there with their time and effort.”

Spencer Davis, a seventh grader at Southwestern Randolph Middle School, said, “4-H helped me grow better and be more disciplined. When you do something wrong, they tell you what you did and how to do it better. If the parents take time for you, you should take time for them. And the competition is fun and I meet a lot of new people.”

Nicholas Suits, a ninth grader at Randolph Early College High School, said, “It’s helped me come out of the shell. I was shy and wouldn’t talk to anybody. We help people through community service, like the Christmas Angel Tree at Universal. We get things on a list to give to them. We helped a disabled veteran clean his yard, and his trees were cut. That made me feel very good.”

Sal Gutierrez, manager of Carolina Guns and Gear, said his business “wants to help youth have a place to shoot safely, learn their Second Amendment rights and have an archery range. We want to provide as much support as possible.”

Carolina Guns and Gear also donates items for raffles to raise money for the club.

“We do what we can to encourage gun safety and responsibility,” said Gutierrez.

Harwell added that the club helps Carolina Guns and Gear “with events they do. He does the same for us.”

Sponsors of the Randolph County 4-H Super Sharp Shooting Stars, along with Carolina Guns and Gear, Shady Knoll Game, Bird Farm and Kildee Farm, are Interior Enterprises, Modern Woodmen and the National Rifle Association.