

Firstly, I want to thank you all for having me here tonight, I cannot understate how honored I am to be receiving the 4-H Key Award this year, and even more importantly, how honored I feel to be supported throughout my entire development, by such an astounding organization.

Believe it or not, going into grade school I was diagnosed with a speech delay. This delay made it hard to make friends and hard to participate in class; needless to say, struggling to communicate was very discouraging to me. While I did eventually overcome the impediment, what I hadn't overcome was the embarrassing reluctance to talk in front of my peers.

It was because of this nervousness, this distress brought by public speaking, that I became well acquainted with the 4-H organization.

4-H became my avenue to try, to fail, but to never be discouraged. I participated in activities like poultry showing and family learning days; I attended camp at Upham Woods and I became an officer in my club. And soon, I wasn't only attending events, I was leading them.

I've taught STEM classes to 4-H youth, I've served as a junior volunteer at our county fair, and I've even been fortunate enough to serve as a National Spokesperson for the Tech Changemakers organization.

4-H enabled me to go from a reluctant participant to an outstanding leader. I went from barely talking to groups of three, to speaking at the National 4-H Congress in front of an audience of over 750.

It is this amazing organization that I have to thank for my continued success in high school. Successes like receiving the national 4-H & Invisalign Community service award— for my work as a compassionate entrepreneur, who has provided thousands of dollars worth of fresh food to his local food pantry.

I can safely say, that it is this organization that has thoroughly prepared me to excel in my college education and beyond— thank you.