

Meet Alex, our new pen pal correspondent. Alex is an eighth grader from Colorado. This month, Alex corresponds with Aubrey, who is also from Colorado. The two talked about rabbits and other pets, sports, and living in a small town.

Dear Aubrey,

My name is Alex. I'm 13 years old and in the eighth grade. I live in Golden, Colorado. I heard that you have rabbits. I'm so excited to know why you decided to have rabbits as pets. How many do you have? It seems like a lot of work.

I haven't had many pets in my life. When I was younger I had a dog. He was huge, so it was hard for me to take him on walks. He wanted to drag me everywhere. It was nice to cuddle him, though.

Last year, I got a green tree frog for my birthday. I named him Pickles. We had to collect a lot of things to make his habitat livable. He's very tiny and likes to hide.

I'd love to hear about your hometown and what you enjoy doing.

Sincerely,
Alex

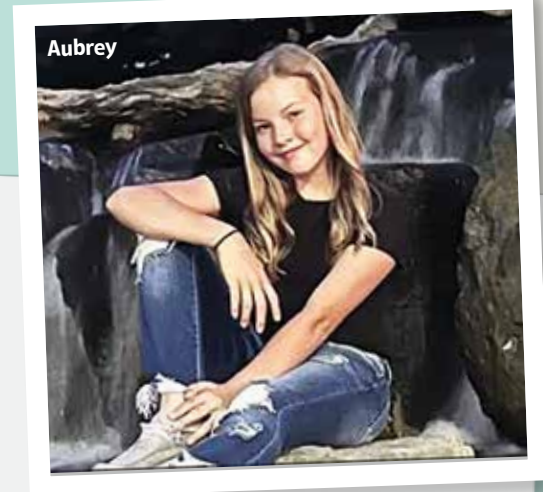
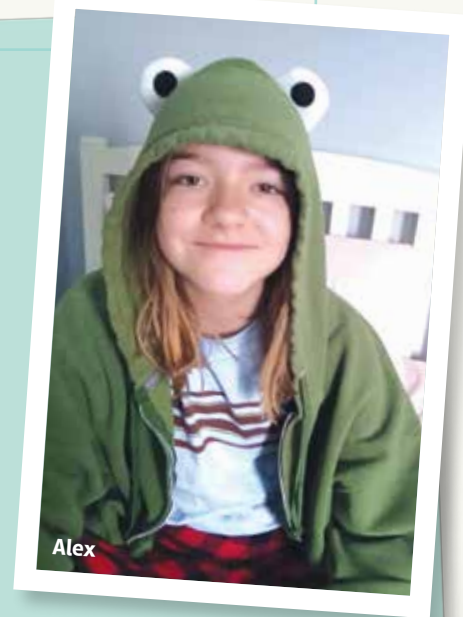


Hi, Alex!

My name is Aubrey. I'm 12 years old and in seventh grade. I live in a small town in northeastern Colorado called Holyoke. We only have about 2,500 people and one stoplight in the entire town.

I have a lot of backyard pets that relate to my 4-H projects. Last year was my first year raising rabbits, so I started with two. They aren't very hard to take care of. One tricky thing was practicing showmanship with my very energetic rabbit.

I also have lots of chickens and three goats as 4-H projects. Angel is a Silkie breed chicken. She is super fluffy. My other chicken is Goldie. She's a big, white Brahma. My goats are named Snickers, Maple, and Dixie. They are Nigerian dwarf goats. I also have a dog and a potbelly pig named Festus.



All of these animals and my other 4-H projects keep me pretty busy, but I also participate in quite a few sports. I do softball, track, volleyball, basketball, and cheerleading.

Sincerely,
Aubrey



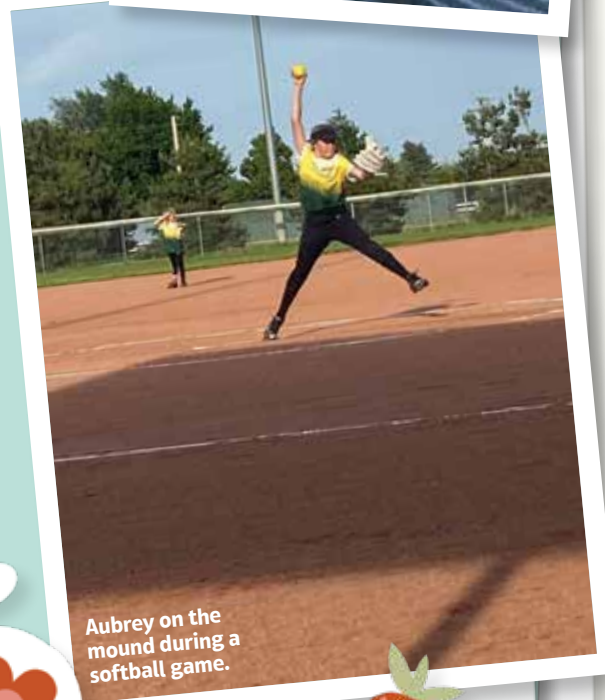
Aubrey cares for one of her rabbits.

Dear Aubrey,

I'm in 4-H too. This was my first year. I did the first year cooking project. I made lots of baked goods. My favorite thing to make is sandwich cookies. I don't have enough space at my house to have animal projects. Why did you choose to raise animals? Which one is the hardest to take care of?

Fall is my favorite season. It's getting cooler and I like to go on walks and see the Aspen trees changing colors here in the mountains. I love the food at this time of year too. My family has a tradition for the first snowfall. We make chili—my favorite—and cinnamon rolls. Does your family have any fall traditions?

Sincerely,
Alex



Aubrey on the mound during a softball game.



Hello, Alex!

Besides animals, I also do model rocketry in 4-H. This was my first year in rocketry. I really loved it, although I've only made two rockets. As a family, we chose to raise animals because I have loved them my whole life. We started raising chickens because one of my parents' friends convinced us to buy baby chicks. After that, we got into goats. Last year, we added rabbits. The hardest animals to take care of are probably the rabbits because we have to work with them so much.

My favorite season is winter, but I love fall too! We have a few traditions. We own a pumpkin patch called Pumpkins and More A-maiz-ing Farm that we run every fall. I have a lot of fun out there going through the corn maze and picking pumpkins.

I can't wait to hear from you again.

Aubrey

Dear Aubrey,

I've heard a lot about Holyoke. My dad lived there as a kid and tells me about growing up in a small town. Your school must be very small. How many kids are in your class? There are 235 kids in mine.

You sound very busy. What's your favorite sport? I love to roller skate. My dad takes me to a skate park almost every weekend. I just started this summer. I'm getting better. When I was younger, I also did Spartan Racing. Have you heard of it?

Sincerely,

Alex

Alex participates in a Spartan Race.



Aubrey and one of her goats



Dear Alex,

That is a lot of kids in one class! We have 41 in our whole 7th grade. In my homeroom there are only about 12 kids.

We have a tiny grade, but it seems like a lot when we are all in one room together.

It is very cool that you roller skate. I have never heard of





Spartan Racing. What is it? I don't know if I can choose my favorite sport. I love all of them. I have played basketball and softball since second grade. This year was my first year in volleyball. I really liked it, and I'm very passionate about it.

Sincerely,
Aubrey



Dear Aubrey,

Wow! You must really love sports. Spartan Races are held outdoors and have lots of obstacles. I had to climb over walls, drag sandbags, crawl in the mud under a cargo net, and swing across monkey bars. In some adult races, grownups even have to jump over fire pits.

I really enjoyed being your pen pal this month. Good luck with all of your projects this year.

Sincerely,
Alex



Aubrey helps out on the family farm.



More than 6 million kids have taken part in 4-H programs.

4-H is a youth organization much like Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts. It began 120 years ago with a focus on agriculture, teaching kids ages 8-18 important skills for living in rural areas through projects like raising animals, cooking, and sewing. It has expanded its offerings to include hundreds of projects such as photography, model rocketry, and robotics.