



KI4DS: Perspective of An Amazing Young Ham

Mikaila Williams @ Dayton on the 'Importance of Kids in Amateur Radio'

By Carole Perry WB2MGP

Every year the caliber of the young presenters at the Dayton Youth Forum continues to impress me. This year, there were three young ladies — in addition to the boys — speaking at the Dayton Hamvention®.

Since I've already had the pleasure of speaking with 9-year-old Mikaila Williams, KI4DS, **Photo A**, who holds an Extra Class ticket, I will give you a brief profile of this talented girl who has worked very hard to give an inspirational speech to the non-ham kids in the audience.

We talked via a teleconference call when she did her "dress rehearsal" in February at the Lake Monroe Amateur Radio Society, **Photos B and C**.

Mikaila is not only the youngest member of LMARS <<http://www.lmars.org/>>, but also belongs to the Disney Emergency Radio Services (DEARS), the Osceola Emergency Radio Services, the Mid-Florida Region American Red Cross Disaster Services and the Youth Program.

Mikaila was first introduced to amateur radio when she watched her mom, Jennifer Moody, KJ4UZN, and her stepfather, Ron Fetters, AJ4YK, doing practice exercises for disaster readiness in their community in Florida.

In March 2011, when the earthquake and tsunami devastated the people of Japan, she read about the heroic efforts of ama-



Photo A. Mikaila Williams, KI4DS, made the pages of the *Orlando Sentinel* and in an online video post by MyCentralFLNews in 2011 when she was 8-year-old. She was one of the featured speakers at the Dayton Youth Forum at Hara Arena. (Internet screen grab)



Photo B. During a meeting of the Lake Monroe Amateur Radio Society (LMARS) in February, KI4DS put on a dress rehearsal of the presentation she would give in May as part of the Dayton Youth Forum at Hara Arena. "The members of LMARS arranged for a teleconference call with me in New York (during dress rehearsal) so I could wish Mikaila well," *Hams With Class* columnist Carole Perry, WB2MGP, said. "And to thank them for all the support they have given this talented young lady." (Courtesy of AJ4YK)

teur radio operators who saved so many lives with their radio communications skills. This motivated Mikaila to get licensed, **Photo D.**

She put a “lot of hard work and studying” into passing her FCC license exams one month apart from each other, until she got her Extra Class. Mikaila tells me that she met with seasoned amateur radio operators at each exam who gave her confidence and support. Even the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is supportive of her being trained to assist in the event of an emergency. She is now working on FEMA courses to be fully trained and ready.



Photo C. Mikaila Williams, KI4DS, amazed the LMARS group with her pre-Dayton presentation. The group was instrumental in helping raise funds to support Mikaila and her dad’s trip to the Dayton Hamvention®. (Courtesy of AJ4YK)



Photo D. When she was KK4BFK, Mikaila took part in 2011 ARRL Field Day. Among the organizations to which she belongs is Disney Emergency Radio Services (DEARS), Osceola Emergency Radio Services, the Mid-Florida Region American Red Cross Disaster Services and the Youth Program. (Internet screen grab)

Stepfather Ron Fetters, a former firefighter who responded to the Oklahoma City bombing and to Ground Zero in New York City, has assisted Mikaila who has held several technician and general instructional courses. She has helped 50 people — many who are three times her age — get their amateur radio license.

Mikaila tells me she taught their friend Adam Kraus, KI4MLQ, the elements of amateur radio so he could pass and get his Extra Class ticket. She has reached out to many people both inside and out of amateur radio, **Photo E.**

The LMARS group, which I have known for many years due to its excellent outreach programs for young people and education, is helping to assist this exceptional young lady and her dad to be able to get to the Dayton Hamvention® by raising funds for them.

I am also told the QCWA (Quarter Century Wireless Association) — another organization that shows support for young people — has matched the funds so far. Every year, I am impressed by the help and support that many of my young presenters receive from local amateur radio clubs and various ham organizations. This is the ham tradition of “making things happen.”

The topic of Mikaila’s Dayton presentation was “A 9-Year-Old’s View on the Importance of Kids in Amateur Radio.” She spoke about the limitations kids may think they will have, and how they can get the most out of this hobby and service.

You can find out more about Mikaila Williams on *YouTube* under KK4BFK — her previous callsign. She is a wonderful example of the kind of youngster, that if we’re all really very lucky, will be the future of amateur radio.



Photo E. Seventy-four-year-old Gladene Morris received help and encouragement from 9-year-old Mikaila during a stay in the hospital. Gladene is among many people to whom KI4DS has reached out to. (Courtesy of WB2MGP)