

OPINION

Notes from UW Extension

4-H WORKS TO PREPARE YOUNG ADULTS FOR CAREERS AND FOR LIFE

By Debbie Moellendorf, 4-H Youth Development Educator UW-Extension Lincoln County

Young adults with experience in 4-H often share with me how their involvement in the 4-H program has prepared them for careers and for life.

Many of them report that working on 4-H projects, taking on leadership roles in their clubs and trying new things has made them more self-confident, better organized, more able to follow through on commitments and more successful.

They believe they learned more than just job skills. They say they also learned attitudes and behaviors – responsibility, timeliness, respect for others, optimism and other positive attributes – that will make them more successful in the world of work.

Each year, we ask 4-H members who are graduating from high school to reflect on their experiences in 4-H as they look towards their future aspirations. We then share this information in our 4-H newsletter along with their photo in recognition of all that they have accomplished in and how they have contributed to the 4-H program. Here are a few highlights from this year's class in response to the question, "In five years, what will you look back on in 4-H and be glad you did?"

"I participated in the county events such as Music Festival, Drama and Communication Contest." Brenda Krueger, member of the Merrill Busy Bees 4-H Club

"Leadership, responsibility, respect, hard work and the value of a dollar are a few lessons I have learned over the years through my projects. I know I can apply these valuable assets anywhere in my future to be successful." Marcus Reinhardt, member of the Corning All Stars 4-H Club

"Being around animals in 4-H and living on a farm has put me on the path to become a veterinarian. I hope to come back to this area one day and help care for the animals of future 4-H kids." Michaela Albert, member of the Bits 'N' Bridles 4-H Club

"The experience I've had over the past 10 years with the Busy Bees 4-H group have helped me to grow as a person. Demonstrating leadership skills, creativity, custom work, fantastic community involvement and being a part of such a great group of kids have been irreplaceable. I encourage all children to join. There is something for everyone in 4-H." Austin Willis, member of the Merrill Busy Bees 4-H Club

"My experiences with my projects have taught me many life lessons. Responsibility, respect, hard work, leadership and the value of a dollar are just a few of those lessons. These are valuable assets I can apply anywhere in my future." Mathew Reinhardt, member of the Corning All Stars 4-H Club

"Showing beef because maybe someday I will want to raise beef cows or have a feed lot." Noah Lassa, member of the Corning All Stars 4-H Club

"In five years, I will look back and be glad I served as an officer and role model in my club, which has shown the younger members in my club what to do in that position and how to be fair. My club consists mostly of younger members and I believe that it has greatly benefitted them to have older role models to depend on." Emily Schmidt, member of the Barnes Creek Buccaneers 4-H Club

"I will be extremely thankful that I was a Lincoln County 4-H Ambassador. The ambassadors opened many doors for me to develop my leadership and organizational skills. They also helped me become aware of the many activities and trips 4-H has to offer. Finally, I will also be glad that I was a camp counselor because it helped me discover what career I would like to pursue out of high school as a Special Education teacher." Megan Spreeman, member of the Corning All Stars 4-H Club

"Being in 4-H has provided many opportunities to do community service. I really think that is an important thing to do and I definitely plan to continue to serve my community in the future." Jared Wardall, member of the Barnes Creek Buccaneers 4-H Club

"Everything with showing animals and making lasting friends. It has given me a great opportunity to be outgoing and responsible which are essential skills." Mary Beth Groth, member of the Corning All Stars 4-H Club

"I will look back and see the ways 4-H prepared me for real life. The experiences I got through 4-H are invaluable. 4-H was a fantastic way for me to work with a variety of other people. The friendships that I made because of 4-H will extend long after I graduate from the program." Kelsey Schoeppler, member of the Pesobic Pathfinders

I want to wish all of the graduating seniors much success in their future endeavors. I look forward to hearing about your accomplishments.

If you are interested in learning more about 4-H or want to get involved in Lincoln County 4-H, please contact Amanda Kostman or myself at the UW-Extension office at (715) 539-1072 or visit our website at <http://lincoln.uwex.edu/> or subscribe to the Lincoln County 4-H Blog <http://fyi.uwex.edu/lincolncounty4h/> for up to the minute 4-H news. Wisconsin 4-H Youth Development is a program of the University of Wisconsin-Extension, Cooperative Extension in partnership with local, state and federal government in each Wisconsin county.