

Extension Corner

Written by Kindra Plumb
Tuesday, 15 May 2012 21:09 -

4-H: positive youth development



High school and college graduation season is upon us once again. Announcements seem to be filling up my family's mailbox, with each one proudly showcasing this momentous occasion in each individual's life.

Phillips County 4-H has three members graduating from high school this year and beginning their next phase in life. While this is a very exciting, and somewhat scary, new journey for these individuals, the skills and experiences gained while participating in 4-H will no doubt serve as a foundation for these young adults as they prepare for their next step in life.

4-H teaches numerous life skills through participation in various 4-H projects, club and community activities, contests and many other areas of 4-H. The structured learning, encouragement and adult mentoring that young people receive through their participation in 4-H plays a vital role in helping them achieve future life successes.

In-depth studies have been ongoing about the role 4-H plays in developing young members into successful, contributing members of society.

One particular study, the 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development, conducted by Tufts University, has surveyed more than 7,000 adolescents from diverse backgrounds across 44 U.S. states. This study discovered that when compared to other youth, young people involved in 4-H:

—have higher educational achievement and motivation for future education.

—are more civically active and make more civic contributions to their communities.

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According to this same study, 4-H members choose to lead healthier lifestyles. Young people in 4-H were shown to have had significantly lower drug, alcohol and cigarette use than non-4-H peers. The study also concluded that 4-H members are 2.3 times more likely to exercise and be physically active.

The advantages of 4-H participation also include higher educational achievement and higher motivation for future education. Young people in 4-H:

—report better grades, higher levels of academic competence and an elevated level of engagement at school.

—are nearly two times more likely to plan to go to college.

—are more likely to pursue future courses or a career in science, engineering or computer technology. The study also indicated that girls in 4-H are two times more likely to pursue science careers over their peers.

The Phillips County Extension Office and all of Phillips County 4-H would like to extend our best wishes to 4-H graduates KrisAnna Ham, Alyssa Roll and Mariah Struckmeyer. We hope you take all you've learned in your years of 4-H and apply this knowledge to your future endeavors. Congratulations to you all!

For questions, call the Phillips County Extension Office at 970-854-3616.

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