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4-H volunteer

Southwest Area 4-H Update

belonging...generosity...independence...mastery



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KMA Radio Features 4H Members

KMA regional radio in Shenandoah started a 4-H America feature to highlight a county's 4-H program for a year up to county fair time. "4-H America is designed to put more focus on what 4-H is about and give young people the opportunity to take ownership of the program," accordingly to Dean Adkins, Ag Services director for KMA radio.

This year Fremont county 4-H members Cindy Walter, Trisha Lightfoot, and Stacy Walter had the wonderful opportunity to be a part of the 4-H America program. Every Friday morning at 6:25 am Cindy, Trish, and Stacy took turns talking about county, area, or state 4-H events and their lives in terms of 4-H. Cindy, as a member of State Council, talked about State Council, the Iowa 4-H Foundation, and Area Council. Trisha is a member of the Iowa 4-H Tech Team and Area Council and shared her experiences.

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Involve Youth in Planning Local 4-H Programs

When you hear the words youth involvement what comes to mind? Youth involvement means that young people participate in responsible, challenging action that meets genuine needs. It includes opportunities for planning and/or decision-making in an activity whose impact or consequence is extended to others.

4-H provides a great opportunity for young people to be involved in decision making and making an impact on those around them. This is more than just raising their hands to vote for something adults have decided upon. 4-H can be most effective at involving young people when adults provide opportunities for youth to:

- Make significant decisions (identifying issues, developing plans of action, and implementing those plans)
- Develop new knowledge and practical skills
- Address real issues and needs of young people
- Explore what they and adults both bring to the table and express what they need and expect from each other
- Feel their ideas are valued and value ideas of adults around them
- Realize their successes and believe they can make a difference
- Reflect and evaluate work

As you plan events for your local 4-H club, think of ways you can plan with youth instead of for youth. A great way to get everyone's input

in your club is to ask all youth to brainstorm 2-3 things they would like to do in the coming year. Have each young person write ideas on post-it notes, then read them aloud so all can hear. After all ideas have been shared, give members 3-4 stickers and have them vote for the top four things they'd like to try as a club. Tally the results and circle the top ideas. Share the ideas the club is going to work on and ask for input in creating a time table of when each activity should be held. Select the activity that is closest on the horizon and begin brainstorming with youth what decisions need to be made in order to accomplish this task. This is a great beginning way to get youth involved in planning and implementing an activity that is important to them.

Youth and Program Planning

"It's the kids club so they do the planning" is how Montgomery County 4-H leader Teresa Russell states how the Sherman Overalls 4-H club get youth involved. At the first meeting of the year, 4-H members are asked to list tours and workshops they'd like to do. All ideas are written down. Members, leaders, and parents then look at schedules and activities. 4-H activities are planned according to the member's free time so attendance at 4-H events is good. Often meetings and workshops are combined, with a recent meeting including a workshop on tin can punching. Members look forward to the fun time they spend together.

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Radio story continued from cover

Stacy talked about Food and Fitness Team Ambassadors and county level activities. The County Youth Coordinator, Rhesa Leiding, did a great job of setting up everything each week with KMA to make sure the program went smoothly.

Of her experience Stacy said, "I felt this was a great way to really reach the people not only in Fremont County but to the KMA listening area. I know for my county the enrollment numbers are decreasing. If families can see how much fun a few kids have been having with 4-H for the past few years, maybe younger and even older kids will start joining this terrific program."

Trisha learned that having a script and being organized helped her gain confidence while talking on the radio. All three young women "hope the next county will have as much fun as we have had this year."

Dean Adkins of KMA Radio indicated the program has been a great success because the young people have been committed to this opportunity. The program will be going for another year so listen at 6:25 a.m. each Friday to 960 KMA to 4-H America and learn more about 4-H opportunities in southwest Iowa.

... and justice for all

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Clarinda Classics and Youth Involvement

At the September meeting when each 4-H family receives the new Pick-a-Project paper, the 4-H members are divided into groups of mixed ages. Each group selects project areas and presents one or two Pick-a-Project charades to the entire group. (How many would depend on the size of the 4-H club and time allowed for this event)

This activity is a lot of fun and helps the 4-H'ers really get into the guide to look at it. Parents join the fun and do their own charades.

At the April meeting the Senior Classics presented 9 mini project area sessions. The 4-H'ers worked alone or in a two-some to present information relating to their favorite project area. They brought samples of what they had done or exhibited including project books relating to the project area or forms that were required with fair exhibits. Project areas featured: Woodworking, Photography, Visual Art, Beef, Communications, Photography, Decorator Showcase, Clothing Selection, and Animal Science with an emphasis on Dog and Rabbit.

All other 4-H'ers and parents rotated every 5 minutes until all the tables were visited. Clarinda Classics club leader, Janelle Stephens commented, "I was amazed at how well the seniors presented their project areas in a very organized, planned, and educational way."



Youth and program story continued from cover

The president and vice president put the years' program together coming up with roll call ideas, pledge leaders, and presentations. Scott Turner, the 4-H club president, commented that they partner a younger member with an older member to help younger members learn what to do at meetings.

Turner said one of their neatest tours involved a visit to the local courthouse where the members learned what people do at the facility. The most interesting part of the tour was learning about the history of the courthouse and Montgomery County.

Russell commented, "We try to listen to all their ideas." And if the club doesn't get one of the activities done, they have a head start on the next program year.