Explanation about difference between project and exhibit

4-H projects are tools for teaching young people skills by developing their interests in certain areas. Through setting goals for learning about a project area, planning and carrying out these goals and reflecting on and keeping records about the project area, youth gain skills that help them become contributing members of their community.

For example, let's suppose a 4-Her wants to learn about growing vegetables. He might set a goal to plan, plant, maintain and harvest a salsa garden; then make and can his own salsa. As you can see, this is a long-term project with many opportunities for learning.

- Plan and prepare the garden (Planning/Organizing)
- Plant the garden (Wise Use of Resources)
- Maintain the garden (Marketable Skills)
- Harvest the garden (Marketable Skills)
- Research salsa-making (Learning to Learn)
- Gain assistance in canning salsa (Cooperation)
- Prepare salsa for exhibition (Self-Motivation)
- Participate in conference judging at the county fair (Communication)
- Keep records on the experience (Keeping Records)
- Share his salsa with others (Concern for Others)

You'll notice that the exhibition of the salsa is only one step in this learning process. Hence, the **4-H project** is the entire learning experience. The **4-H exhibit** is just the portion of the project that a 4-Her brings to the county fair. This is a subtle but important difference. Sometimes people think that exhibition at the county fair is the purpose of 4-H. As you can see by this example, those people are missing most of the story. It is the learning experience that makes 4-H what it is – not just the exhibit. In fact, a 4-Her doesn't need to bring an exhibit to fair at all to gain the life skills that make 4-H a quality experience for youth.