

This week many 4-Hers headed back to school with lots of 4-H memories. This week extension agents had the opportunity to share with community leaders the benefits of being involved in 4-H. The information we shared was based on the Tufts Study which compares youth involved in 4-H for at least two years with their non- 4-H peers. Researchers at Tuft University compared 4-Hers and non- 4-Hers over a 10 year period. It appears that 4-H involvement can make a difference for a life time. US News reported the 4-H with this headline: Study: 4-H Students Make Better Decisions. As a parent, we thought you would appreciate reading about the benefits of 4-H membership.

Young people who participate in programs through 4-H, are less likely to do drugs, drink alcohol, or smoke cigarettes and are more likely to be civically active than kids who don't participate in its programs, according to the study by researchers at Tufts University. The study also reveals that 4-Hers are more likely to perform better in school. Female 4-Hers outperform their peers in science and math plus are more likely to select science and math based careers in life. So as your child heads back to school this week, as a parent you will welcome the foundation of success that 4-H can offer.

Lead researcher Richard Lerner shares the why of 4-H success. 4-H hits on the three components of a successful youth program: It offers mentoring, skill building, and leadership opportunities for students. "There is a positive and sustained relationship between an adult and young person," he says. "It's important that the adult is not only committed and reliably there, but that they also have some skills." The ability of an adult to pass on those life skills is key. Whether a student is learning gardening or public speaking, being able to apply these skills to real-life situations can keep students busy—and away from making bad decisions, Lerner says. "Giving young people a chance to use those skills validates what they've been learning," he adds

The 4-H year will wind down in September. An important final step in the 4-H success story is reflecting or looking back over the progress that occurred during the entire 4-H year. In 4-H language, we say 4-Hers have completed their project and their 4-H year when they have submitted their 4-H records and membership pin applications. Attached to this e-mail is a record form designed for 4-Hers ages 7 and 8 as well as a newly design records form for 4-Hers age nine and older. Both forms may be completed electronically. However, it is acceptable to handwrite answers to the questions, too. What is important is that 4-Hers conclude the 4-H year by completing this final step of the 4-H year.

4-Hers, over age 14, desiring to compete in state competitions are welcome to continue to complete the Kansas Awards Profile for each project. Likewise, younger members wanting to complete a KAP are welcome to do so. These forms may be found on the office website.

To assist families with 4-H record keeping, 3 training sessions have been planned. Training will be offered the evening of September 3. And if there is enough interest, we will offer sessions on September 5 (Labor Day weekend) and again on the evening of September 8. Sessions will be geared to assisting adults 4-H volunteers and parents of younger members understand 4-H record keeping. Additional workshops can be scheduled if there is interest and clubs can set a time for club members to work on records as a group. Contact us to register to attend or to schedule a club based workshop. Tentatively a work shop will be held in Effingham on September 3 and in Atchison on September 5. However, locations are subject to change based on who registers. Register by August 31 to allow us to prepare for the workshops. There is no cost to attend and food will be provided.

Thanks for making it a priority in your family to complete the final step of the 4-H year. Kansas 4-H does expect all 4-Hers to complete project records in which youth are enrolled. After reading the above information, you will understand why we want to ensure the future success of every 4-Her in school this year and throughout life!

Ray and Diane

K-State Research and Extension
Atchison County Office