

# *Meet the Future*

Jenilee Godsey, Youth Agriculture

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## **“Long-Term Relationship Opportunities in 4-H”**

Here is an article I would like to share with you written by fellow K-State Research and Extension Agent, Michelle Beran, from the Midway Extension District. Having just wrapped-up county fair season across the district and looking straight into the eyes of a new 4-H year, I felt this was a great opportunity to highlight the volunteer opportunities involved with the 4-H program.

A credit card company ran a series of commercials for a few years that listed the cost of several activities and ended with the related experience as ‘priceless.’

4-H Youth Development could not function without volunteers. We often think of the county fair as the culmination of 4-H projects, and volunteers are certainly visible serving as superintendents, setting up and cleaning up, distributing flyers and much more.

Volunteers also serve extremely important roles as club and project leaders. A club or project leader has a day-to-day impact on youth by teaching life skills, setting examples and helping them practice responsibility and communication.

Volunteers are also needed for short-term commitments such as helping with the style revue or club days. Another option is assisting with a Special Interest (SPIN) Club, which are six hours of instruction over several days or weeks.

Program Development Committees are made up of six volunteers from each county who provide ideas and an understanding of the needs of each county for youth development.

As with most youth organizations, 4-H has specific requirements to be a registered volunteer. The goal of 4-H Youth Development is to provide positive learning experiences with positive relationships in a positive environment.

Across the Midway District (Ellsworth and Russell counties), more than 120 individuals are registered 4-H volunteers, which means that they have completed an application, an online orientation, successfully passed two background checks and received approval by the Midway District Extension board.

As a volunteer, you can reinforce the Kansas 4-H mission which states: “With unique strategies and opportunities, Kansas 4-H Youth Development engages youth in reaching their full potential through partnerships with caring adults.” One of the ‘Essential Elements of 4-H’ is belonging and research shows that it is important for youth to have opportunities for long-term relationships with adults other than their parents.

Would you like to give back to your community and have a positive impact on youth development?

4-H Youth Development volunteers, no matter the size of your contribution of time and talents, are priceless!

It's not for the money,  
It's not for the fame,  
It's not for only personal gain,  
It's not for the love of fellow man,  
It's just to lend a helping hand,  
It's just to give a little of self  
That's something you can't buy with wealth,  
It's not for medals worn with pride,  
But it's the feeling deep inside,  
It's that reward deep in your heart,  
It's that feeling you've been a part,  
Of helping others far and near,  
That makes you a volunteer!

-Author Unknown

This is an article written by Michelle Beran with Kansas State University Research and Extension in the Midway District.

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