

Tired of sports, everyday practices, expenses of uniforms and shoes, travel expenses??? Then check out your local 4-H organization through your Twin Creeks Extension District office located in Norton, Oberlin, Hoxie and Hill City! Open your options for youth involvement in expanding their minds and alternate activities with lifelong 'learning by doing' experiences!

Don't get me wrong – I love sports to the point that I played basketball in high school and Junior College and I have the damaged knees to prove it today! Sports activities are great team builders and have the ability to push your child to make improvements for success. But we all know that we don't produce a lot of pro athletes in western Kansas, so look at some options for your child and provide them with experiences that will benefit them throughout their lifetime.

Following are some highlights of activities covering an array of topics that will happen in the next few months that just might be of interest to your child.

Favorite Food Show: This event was just held in Norton and will occur in Hill City in February. 4-H members have the opportunity to select a recipe, create a complete menu around their recipe and select an appropriate table setting. This might not sound like much, but these 4-H members must know the nutritional value of their food dish, cost to prepare the dish, healthy aspects and set an attractive table correctly. You might not think that setting a table correctly is important, but youth have expressed their appreciation for the knowledge that they have gained from this event. Invitations to formal dinners leaves these participants 'in the know' when faced with trying to figure out which fork or spoon to use as well as table etiquette.

Citizenship in Action: Interested in politics? This event takes youth to our Capitol in Topeka where they select a hot topic, write a bill, defend the bill in the House and Senate Chambers, and vote. Youth are expected to practice speaking etiquette and respect for other speakers when addressing their arguments for or against their bill. Business attire is worn by all participants that creates a professional working environment while in Topeka. Participants have an opportunity to visit with their Senators and Representatives and are always given an open door to contact them with any concerns.

Ambassador Training: Ready to build some leadership skills? Then this is the event for your youth! A beginner tract and advanced tract are provided to fill the needs of all in attendance. "Wild About Leadership" is the theme chosen by our Kansas 4-H Ambassador Action Team consisting of youth and adult mentors. Action team members plan and facilitate this event for youth across the state of Kansas held at Rock Springs 4-H Center. Participants will learn about themselves by participating in "True Colors" to determine their personality style, take home ideas to practice their leadership skills at a local level, and go home excited and rejuvenated after listening to our motivational speaker, Bill Cordes. Mr. Cordes is the creator of YOGOWYPI – You Only Get Out What You Put In! Contact your local Extension office for more details!

Project Workshops: Workshops for several project areas are in the planning stages. Girls – need a little help in discovering the perfect clothing style for your body shape, perfect hair style and makeup for your face shape, and what is the best color for your skin tone? Participants will go home excited to take another look at their current wardrobe and will take part in a color analysis activity to determine the color shades for them. Watch for details coming soon.

Bread Sculpting, Woodworking and animal related workshops are also in the planning stages.

Parents – venture out from the normal school and sport activities and get your child involved in a lifelong learning experience by enrolling them in your local 4-H organization. They will develop Confidence, Competence, Character, Connection and Caring which leads to Contribution within their local community! These five C's of Positive Youth Development carry throughout adulthood.

Contact Twin Creeks Extension District about getting involved in your local 4-H Program. Membership is open to youth from ages 7 to 18 as of January 1, 2019. Youth 5 and 6 years old as of January 1, 2019 are eligible for participation as a Cloverbud member. Contact your local Extension office for more information about joining the 4-H program. Norton (785-877-5755), Decatur (785-475-8121), Sheridan (785-675-3268) or Graham (785) 421-3411.