4-H ambassadors serve as leaders, role models in their community

Longtime member focuses on making positive impact on youth

By Annika Wiebers, K-State Research and Extension news service

MANHATTAN, Kan. – To be an ambassador is to represent a specific group or organization to the public, but for the hundreds of 4-H ambassadors across Kansas, it means much more than that.

Kyanna Lankton, a Coffey County 4-H ambassador said group members “serve as youth leaders and help organize many different events through the 4-H year. We work to reach out to the community to promote the 4-H program, and perform community service projects.”

This year, she notes, the Coffey County group hosted a contest to see which 4-H club could collect the most baby items, then donated the items to those in need.

“Serving the community,” Lankton said, “is something that 4-H takes very seriously, and I think it has made Coffey County 4-H and the community better to see the ambassadors doing good deeds.”

According to Lankton, 4-H ambassadors promote and support their local 4-H program through such activities as 4-H Days, TV or radio appearances, community service projects, organizing and executing the awards ceremony at the fair, and announcing during the end of year banquet.

“Every year, the ambassadors host a fun event to kick off the county fair,” Lankton said. “Previously we have hosted barnyard Olympics, but this year we hosted a kickoff party with yard games and lemonade for socializing.”

Because the job of 4-H Ambassador is no easy task, members are usually older 4-Hers and a vigorous application process is required before being appointed.

“The Coffey County ambassador program is made up of high school aged 4-H members,” Lankton said. “To become an ambassador, you must turn in a resume, answer questions regarding the program, and go through an interview process.”
In addition to the impacts they make on their community, 4-H ambassadors also have the opportunity to grow their own skills and gain real world experience.

“My time as an ambassador has made me a better leader and communicator,” Lankton said. “I have learned to communicate with (local) extension agents, my fellow ambassadors, volunteers, and youth in 4-H. I have become a better leader by learning to work as a team with my ambassadors and communicating with them.”

Perhaps the most important expectation of a 4-H Ambassador? According to Lankton, it’s to serve as a role model for other 4-H members.

“I think having leaders to look up to that aren’t adults and realizing that youth can be leaders has made an impact on Coffey County,” Lankton said. “I can remember looking up to the ambassadors when I was a young 4-Her, and I hope that I have made that same impact on some of today’s youth too.”

More information on opportunities available through Kansas 4-H is available at local extension offices in Kansas.

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