High school grad reflects on Kansas 4-H career

Easter plans to continue commitment to leadership, service

MANHATTAN, Kan. – During a decade-long career in the Kansas 4-H Youth Development program, Adelaide Easter has explored 26 project areas, exhibited at her local fair, and held every office in her local club.

So what does the college freshman-to-be have planned now?

“I plan to double major in bakery science and food science, with a double minor in business and leadership,” said Easter, a May graduate of Sacred Heart Junior/Senior High School in Salina, and a member of the Sunny Valley 4-H Club in the Central Kansas Extension District.

Quite ambitious, it seems, but for Easter, her college plans reflect the path she forged as a member of the Kansas 4-H program.

“4-H exposed me to all of these different career pathways and I found that I was really interested in bakery science and food science,” she said.

“Later, when I was older, after going to (local) fairs and conferences where I learned a lot of tips on how to grow as a baker, I went to Discovery Days (held each May on the Kansas State University campus) where I attended a class with a bakery science instructor and got exposed to what bakery science is. Before then, I had no idea that was even a career that you could pursue later in life.”

Easter described herself as “a shy girl” early in her 4-H career. “My mom had to drag me to my first 4-H meetings; I didn't want anything to do with it,” she said. “But I slowly broke out of my shell and decided I wanted to become a leader.”

“Fast forward to now and I am the state president of the Kansas 4-H Youth Leadership Council have been on my district council and have held all of the offices in my club. I have been a leader in many areas of 4-H.”
Easter will attend Kansas State University in the fall. She said her involvement in 4-H and its historic connection to the university helps to smooth the transition. “I've been able to grow a connection with one of the bakery science instructors there, and I just found out that he's going to be my academic advisor and will help me put together my class schedule.”

“I've been able to have a relationship with him because I've seen him the last 5 or 6 years at (Discovery Days) classes. He has kids in 4-H, as well, so he knows how much 4-H impacts us as we get older.”

Easter notes her life won’t slow down as she transitions out of the Kansas 4-H program.

“I still plan to be involved in leadership activities in college, as well as citizenship and doing my part of civic engagement in my community,” she said. “And I still want to be involved in music theatre as well as many other projects, because I love all the things I do, whether it is space technology, photography, horticulture or others.

“I love growing in all of these aspects and I still plan to do that as I get older.”

Easter encourages teens to stay involved in 4-H, saying high school is a busy time but – including 4-H – has lasting benefits to develop leadership skills, make connections and explore project areas that can help teens find a career pathway.

The Kansas 4-H program offers more than three dozen project areas for youth to participate in. More information on opportunities offered is available at local extension offices in Kansas.

This summer marks Easter’s final year in the youth development program, and her last time showing at the county fair.

“I'm very sad that this will be my last fair,” she said, “but I am excited for the next chapter of my life.”

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FOR PRINT PUBLICATIONS: Links used in this article
Kansas 4-H Youth Development, www.kansas4-h.org

Kansas 4-H projects listing, www.kansas4-h.org/projects

K-State Research and Extension statewide offices, www.ksre.k-state.edu/about/statewide-locations.html

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