Kansas 4-H launches video series to prep volunteers

Online training is free, helps to engage youth, says state official

MANHATTAN, Kan. – A Kansas 4-H official says the state’s largest youth organization has set the stage for another successful year with a series of videos aimed to train an army of volunteers.

Shane Potter, a 4-H youth development specialist, said the videos – stored online and free to view – are intended to “help keep youth engaged” in many of the approximately three dozen projects that youth participate in each year.

“When we put this video series together, we wanted it to serve as a starting point for those who volunteer for their local 4-H clubs,” Potter said.

He added that the videos teach skills that volunteers can use when guiding youth through such areas as public speaking, STEM lessons, family and consumer sciences, animal sciences, service learning and more.

The videos were first offered in September and continue through the middle of October, but will be archived for viewing anytime.

“We offered the lessons virtually, so we were able to include experts from many states…Missouri, Michigan, Nebraska and all around Kansas,” Potter said. “They were able to provide their particular expertise so that when volunteers go back to work with youth, they have the best content we could find to help them engage youth in their projects.”

In Kansas, approximately 5,000 adults and 5,500 youth volunteer for 4-H programs, according to data from the Kansas 4-H youth development office. In 2019, more than 17,000 Kansas youth were enrolled as club members and took part in at least one 4-H project.

“This year, we are looking at how we can help youth find that ‘spark,’” Potter said. “In the videos, we focused on looking at those activities that could help youth have a spark so that they fully engage in that content area.”
As an example, Potter noted a textiles lessons that incorporated the science involved in designing clothes.

“We had a speaker who wrote a national curriculum about how they’re applying scientific principles into their everyday decisions in creating textiles,” he said. “They were able to talk about the functional properties of textiles and the fabrics that they are using.”

Those interested in volunteering for a local 4-H program are encouraged to visit the K-State Research and Extension office in their county. More information also is available on the website for the Kansas 4-H youth development program.

FOR PRINT PUBLICATIONS: Links used in this story
Videos: 4-H Volunteer Project Leaders, www.kansas4-h.org/volunteers/project-leaders/index.html

Kansas 4-H statistics, www.kansas4-h.org/about/statistics/index.html

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

Kansas 4-H youth development, www.kansas4-h.org

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