

4-H teaches kids life skills

With the Decatur County Fair almost here, kids in 4-H are working on their projects which range from building rockets to making clothes to raising live animals.

Although the week long county fair might be when the 4-H kids are most visible, it isn't all they do.

4-H, said Byron Hale, county extension agent, is a year long organization. Each club meets monthly working on different projects. Decatur County, he said, has four groups including Maverick, Star Valley, Sappa Valley and Stick-to-It. In those groups there are 96 kids ranging in age from 7 to 18.

Mr. Hale said the smallest age group is currently the older kids. The largest group, he said, is the 10 to 13 years.

Nationally, 4-H is over 100 years old, he said, but he isn't sure if it goes back that far in the county. Mr. Hale said Decatur County has had a 4-H program since the 1940's.

The youth organization, he said, is a hands on learning and service group. Kids basically learn about different things by doing them. For instance, kids learn about sewing by actually making something.

The groups don't just focus on learning, but on community service. At any given time, said Mr. Hale, throughout the year the clubs are either doing a community service project or planning something.

A lot of the club members, he said, spend time at Cedar Living Center or the Good Samaritan Center.

In March, he said, 4-H Days is held at the grade school. This day focuses on music, public speaking and talent.

The kids have the opportunity to go to camp at the Rock Springs 4-H Center near Junction City in June. The camp, said Mr. Hale, is open to all kids, not just those in the program.

This year, he said, he took 13 kids, with 11 campers and two counselors. Camp counselors have to be 16 or older and both were former campers.

"4-H," said Mr. Hale, "is a great youth development organization to fine hone the five life skills."

Those skills include decision making, having a positive self image, developing an inquiring mind, being able to relate to others and developing a concern for the community.

The program is for the whole family, he said, with mom and dad playing an active role.

The organization also has Day Camps held locally. Mr. Hale said he has one planned from 11:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Monday, July 21 at the 4-H Building at the fairground.

The camp is for kids 7 to 10 and will include lunch, baking a snack, games and crafts. The cost is \$5 a kid.

Anyone can attend the camp by making reservations by Monday by calling 475-8121.

There isn't any membership fee to become a member of 4-H, said Mr. Hale. Occasionally there's a small charge for an activity, to help recoup the cost.

Anyone who wants to join or find out more can call the extension office at 475-8121.



AT THE DEDICATION of the new livestock building during the fair last year Alexis Hissong (right) and Rebecca Helm, both 4-H members and Kayla Zodrow, FFA member, (left) helped serve food during a feed.

— Herald staff photo by Kimberly Davis



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Have fun at the Fair!
Good Luck 4-H'ers

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