



RAISING LIVESTOCK is popular with 4-H'ers and showing the animals is a big part of the project. Jenna Fortin (at left) showed off her bucket calf and Drew Juenemann, below his pig, (below) during the fair last year.

— Herald staff photos by Kimberly Davis

4-H helps area youth develop many skills

By **STEPHANIE DeCAMP**
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4-H is a staple of growing up in the country, one that has been passed down from generation to generation.

But if you're a newcomer to a town like Oberlin, there are a lot of questions to be asked. And for those who have been here all their lives, a little refresher never hurts.

"4-H is a youth development organization with the same goals as the Scouts," Extension Agent Byron Hale said. "It started as a rural organization to enhance youth development, and has evolved to become a big deal even in some cities."

The 4-H is administered by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture of the United States, according to the Merriam-Webster dictionary. But the actual activities are all about working together as a community. It's for boys and girls ages 7-18, who work up levels one through five based on experience.

"It's based on five life skills," Mr. Hale said. "Building a positive self concept, learning how to relate to others, learning to make decisions, developing an inquiring mind, and developing a concern for the community."

The official 4-H website says that the four Hs stand for "head (managing, thinking), heart (relating, caring), hands (giving, working) and health (being, living)." These two definitions are clarified by the 4-H pledge: "I pledge my head to clearer thinking, my heart to greater loyalty, my hands to larger service, and my health to better living, for my club, my community, my country and my world."

Mr. Hale said that the philosophy is centered around learning by doing everything from cooking and clothing to leadership, citizenship, arts and crafts and photography.

"A lot of the fair exhibits are agricultural based, but we have clothing and photography and woodworking, too. Back in the 1940's and 50's it was really agriculturally based, but not so much now.

"At the fair you'll see high-quality livestock, lots of arts and crafts, good photography, and exceptional woodworking. We'll have a lot of clothing, some of it is made from scratch and others are judged on buymanship. The kids buy it and they're judged on how well they spent their money, how well it fits them and how well it fits in with their wardrobe."



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