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4-H Memories

Every 4-H showman dreams of their backdrop picture, every 4-H static exhibitor imagines their project showcased at the state fair, and every shooting sports competitor pictures the big trophy in their hands, but looking back on my time as a 4-H member these are not the moments that I remember the most. Although these moments are huge and it is these moments that drive 4-H members to work hard on their exhibits, the memories that lead up to these moments are what will live with former members forever. Memories can not be labeled with a price tag, but I think that 4-H memories would cost more if they could be. Memories that are filled with friends, family, self-confidence, failure, success, hard work, and laughter can only be described with 4-H.

When looking back onto my time as a 4-H member, all of my memories have my friends and family with me. Friends that are met through 4-H have a special bond that is almost indescribable and it seems that those that hold those bonds with other 4-H members are the only ones lucky enough to understand. These friendships hold no boundaries and are mixed across ages, genders, social classes, schools, projects exhibited, and species shown, but 4-H seems to bring them together. Looking at my time in 4-H, I was lucky enough to meet a pig showman who is four years younger than me when I first started showing. We spent every year at different 4-H events together and every hour during fair with each other making memories that will be with us forever. She has become a part of my family and I truly owe our friendship to 4-H. Just as 4-H holds many memories with friends, families spend hours together through 4-H making memories along the way. Small memories like my dad and I always drinking a purple Powerade while clipping goats, watching Grown Ups with my mom while making art projects, and comparing ribbons after fair with my sisters are some that I will never forget. My family were the ones who introduced 4-H to me, and it quickly became a family affair, and just as I hold memories with my family, other 4-H families hold countless different memories with each other as well.

4-H memories go beyond who is around while making them, they also include the way 4-H members feel during these times. 4-H includes failures and hard work, but also successes which bring different emotions with each occasion. I remember the first time I decided to make a rocket for the county fair, and during the first launch it blew up while in the air and although I was disappointed, I learned a lot about small details when making a project like that. This memory turned into a lesson that has stuck with me for over ten years. 4-H memories include a lot of hard work and although in the

moment the work is not fun, when 4-H members see success they know the hard work was worth it. I showed goats, one of the most stubborn species, throughout my years in 4-H and there was always one goat that would not cooperate while walking each year. It would take hours of pushing and pulling during the summer to train, but I knew it would eventually be worth it. When the stubborn goat would walk around effortlessly at the state fair, the feeling of success and the relief of hard work paying off are memories that are unforgettable for me.

4-H means something different for everyone involved, but it is certain that everyone makes memories through 4-H. Right now is a great time to enroll youth in 4-H to start making these cherishable memories! Contact the Buffalo County Extension Office with any questions or how to get involved.

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