

The new 4-H year has started and now is a great time to join 4-H. In simplest terms, 4-H is a fun, learn-by-doing educational program for young people ages 5-18. It is the youth development program of the North Dakota State University Extension Service and is available in every county in North Dakota. 4-H is a great way for youth to develop communication skills, meet new friends, make healthy decisions as a family, learn to work with others, work within a community, and so much more!

The purpose of 4-H membership is to give youth an opportunity to learn through hands-on, learn-by-doing techniques. 4-H members learn about leadership, community service, and an endless variety of projects areas. A few of the project areas include: horticulture, rockets, animal science, quilting, baking, welding, 4-H science, woodworking, outdoor skills, crop production, fiber arts, drawing and painting and many more. Our vision for North Dakota is for 4-H members to become positive, productive citizens and catalysts for effective change to meet the needs of a diverse and changing society. In fact, research has shown that youth who participate in 4-H are four times more likely to make contributions to their communities, are two times more likely to be civically active, are two times more likely to make healthier choices and are two times more likely to participate in Science, Engineering and Computer Technology programs during out-of-school time.

The expectations for 4-H membership are a balance between 4-H project work, involvement in the 4-H club, participation in 4-H activities and events, and working toward improving one's personal growth. 4-H members can be involved in many different activities and events on local and state levels. Parental Involvement is vital to a 4-H member's success. Support from parents keep youth interested, enthusiastic and active in the 4-H program. The 4-H program is very flexible, meaning that what you put into it is what you will get out of it.

A 4-H club is made up of 5 or more youth from 3 or more families. Clubs normally meet about once a month. The 4-H meeting is balanced between business, educational programs and recreation. 4-H meetings normally do not last over one to one and a half hours, with the time fairly equally divided among the three parts. To locate a club nearest you, contact the Extension office.

For more information, contact the Extension office at 701-524-2253, e-mail alicia.harstad@ndsu.edu or "Like" us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/steelecountyextension. NDSU is an equal opportunity institution.