Ways to volunteer with 4-H

Source: Ken Culp III, principal extension specialist

Volunteers are critical to keeping Kentucky 4-H going. They assist by helping us deliver quality programming to local youth, and Extension would struggle without them.

Volunteers serve in many 4-H roles including club leaders, chaperones, teachers, mentors, judges and event planners. While they come from many different backgrounds, they are united by the common desire to help young people achieve their dreams and develop into productive, community-focused adults. In the 2019-2020 program year, Kentucky 4-H had nearly 12,000 volunteers across the state. And we always need more. Here are some ways you can help your local 4-H’ers.

* Help youth develop and master life skills by leading a 4-H project in an area that interests or excites you. 4-H offers a variety of programs for all interests.
* Offer to share your hobby or skill by teaching a workshop at summer camp or special 4-H events.
* Serve as a judge for local speech contests, county fairs and livestock events.
* Manage a 4-H community club by scheduling club meetings, training club officers, recruiting parents to help and serving as the communication link between the club and the extension office.
* Participate in a 4-H International Programs. These programs are a good opportunity to learn more about other cultures and broaden your cultural understanding. Most years, Kentucky 4-H hosts summertime exchanges with young people and adult chaperones from Japan. Some Kentucky 4-H families choose to host a yearlong exchange participant.
* Help with 4-H fundraising. Contact your local county extension office for ways to assist with local fundraising needs and efforts, and the Kentucky 4-H Foundation to offer a hand with statewide fundraising.
* Teach livestock projects. Popular local livestock clubs include ones focused on beef, sheep, swine, dairy, goats, rabbits or country ham. Volunteers may work at livestock shows, events or contests.
* Volunteers also lead horse projects and work at horse shows, clinics, events and contests.
* Serve as a coach for a livestock or horse judging team, a horse hippology team, an avian bowl team or a skill-a-thon team.
* Become a certified shooting sports instructor.

If you are interested in learning more or becoming a 4-H volunteer, contact the (COUNTY NAME) office of the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service.

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