

## My 4-H Story

I love learning new things and 4H is a good fit for me. My brothers were in 4H and I couldn't wait until I was old enough to join them. I wanted to start doing some of the stuff they were doing like raising a pig and riding a horse. I wanted to have fun and be with my animals and talk with my friends.

At my first meeting when we were suppose to introduce ourselves I would not stand up. I held onto my mom's hand and she had to say my name for me. Over the years I have come a long way now and now I am the Sargent of Arms and lead the pledge before every meeting. My 4H story is long. 4H is helping me in so many areas. I have animal projects, community service and now leadership experience. I have been on the board for a few years and now I am attending leadership conferences.

My first big project was the horse project. I had a horse named Levi that was a 20 yr old quarter horse I bought from another 4H'er. So Levi knew the fairgrounds and knew what to do better than me. I had a lot of fun riding Levi. Thank you Levi!

My biggest project is the market rabbit project. I have a whole stall full of rabbits. I first bought a breeding trio - two does and a buck. They are Californians and are bred for meat. I soon started adding to my rabbitry. Over the last four years I have won either Grand Champion or Reserve Champion every year. But I do love this project even without the winning. I have learned to breed, tattoo, take care of babies, cut teeth, and how to handle a variety of diseases. I have learned so much through this project and now I like to share it with others in my project and at the fair.

I have been in the market steer project for a few years now. I like this project too because the animal is so big. But they are so gentle too. I have learned to show, groom, wash, walk and halter break a steer. It is a big project because you have them for almost a year. So it take a lot to be in this project.

A few years ago I raised a lamb and before that I raise pigs for the fair. I have also raised guinea pigs, chickens, ducks and dairy goats. I am lucky that we have a farm and have the room to try different things. I have grown up exploring and raising animals.

Now that I am older I am starting to understand that 4H has more to offer. I have been in the Presentation Project for three years now. At first I was just in the skit. But now I am doing presentations too. This project makes me get up and talk in front of a group. I practice my presentations in front of classes at my school too.

Community service has always been a part of our 4H experience. Each year I participate in a variety of 4H community service projects. Our club participates in California Coastal Clean-up, Trick or Treat So Others Can Eat, Operation Gratitude, making cards for the troops, making dinner for homeless and showing our animal projects at different community events.

This year one unique community service we did was making shoe pieces for Soles of Hope. Our sewing project did this together. We brought old jeans and old plastic milk containers. Then we cut the jeans into pieces with a pattern and cut the milk container too. Then we had six pieces of jeans along with one piece of plastic and clipped them together with the size shoe it is. The pieces are mailed to Africa where the pieces are sewn together with the plastic as the heel of the shoe. We each donated \$10 to Soles of

Hope to pay the women who sew them together. It was a very unique community service. It taught us about jiggers that the kids can get in their feet if they are not covered. It also taught us that not everyone in the world lives like us.

I am also more interested in Leadership. I attended the Teen Involvement Conference in January and will attend the State Leadership Conference in July. I hope to be more involved in Leadership in the future. I like learning this through 4H because 4H gives you a chance to be a leader. Sometimes in school it must be voted on and people who are popular win. In 4H I can be a leader if I want to try.

4H has helped me grow less shy and quiet. It has helped me with confidence. It makes me interesting. I have a lot of 4H stories to tell. And it gives me a group of friends just like me. I am lucky to be in 4H.