

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

YOUR TRUSTED PARTNER...YESTERDAY, TODAY AND TOMORROW

As Cooperative Extension marks 100 years of working for Wisconsin, Grant County Extension will showcase its own work through a series of bi-weekly articles. Today we'll take a look at the work of the Grant County 4-H program. 4-H is an educational youth organization that belongs to the members, their families, and other interested adults who serve as volunteer leaders. Professional leadership is provided by faculty and staff of the University of Wisconsin-Extension, namely Betsy Olson, 4-H Youth Development Agent and Cathy McPhail, Youth Assistant. In 2011, 553 young people in Grant County participated in 4-H: a community of young people across America who are learning leadership, citizenship and life skills with the guidance of 248 certified volunteers as well as Betsy Olson and Cathy McPhail.

The purpose of 4-H is to provide real-life experiences for youth through a fun and practical, learn-by-doing, educational program. In Grant County, this happens through the work of our 21 4-H clubs scattered around the county. 4-H clubs do community service projects, educational programming like safety presentations or demonstrations on craft or mechanical projects, and recreation like bowling or sledding. In 4-H clubs youth find a place to belong, become independent by learning leadership skills, give back to their community, and master new skills.

4-H members in Grant County also participate in county events. Some of the activities provided annually for 4-H members and families are 4-H Family Project Day, the Speaking and Demonstration Contest, the Music Contest, 4-H Summer Camp, Clothing Revue, and many project workshops. In 2011, over 350 people attended 4-H

Family Project Day at the Lancaster Youth & Ag Center. This event provides youth a chance to complete four fun projects and take them home. Projects range from bird houses and electromagnets to scrapbook pages and table runners. 4-H summer camp brings in over 50 youth each year between 3rd and 8th grade to Camp Upham Woods in the Wisconsin Dells. 4-H Camp teaches independence and provides activities that focus on the power of the natural world. The Camp is staffed almost entirely by volunteers and provides a great leadership experience for high school students.

Each year we strive to provide new opportunities to 4-H members in Grant County. Recently 4-H Robotics has become an ongoing project learning opportunity. With the help of two great volunteers in Platteville, Grant County 4-H has taken on the First Lego League Challenge. In November, ten 4-H members from around the county compete against teams from around the state with a robot they have been programming since September to accomplish tasks like pushing a ball or pulling a lever. The team also does a presentation on a pertinent scientific topic like medical technology.

4-H also collaborates with Platteville's Project Lead the Way program to provide a summer week long program that promotes learning in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math entitled the 4-H Gateway Academy. This summer's Academy will be June 18-21st at Platteville High School.

The opportunities available to youth in Grant County 4-H provide a wide variety of skills. There are opportunities to learn about woodworking at the Woodworking Project Workshop on April 21. Opportunities to show your musical or artistic talents at the Vocal, Instrumental, Dance, Drawing and Painting Contest on May 6th. A chance to take on some outdoor adventures on June 21st at Outdoor Adventure Day at Wylusing

Park. The list goes on and on. Thanks to active volunteers and parents in 4-H is a strong and growing organization in Grant County.

For more information about the Grant County 4-H program contact the Extension Office at 723-2125 or grant.uwex.edu

#