

### **Janet McIndoe, 4-H Homeschool Parent & Volunteer, Children Andrew and Molly**

Hi Jackie. Let me start by saying how much we enjoyed the whole 4-H experience. It is people like you, other 4-H agents and other families that made it so wonderful. Thank you! The longer we were involved, the bigger the vision. There were always goals and challenges to be met and as a homeschool parent they were invaluable to the growth and maturity of our children. The sky is the limit to what kids can do and learn and because of others that went before us, we saw the potential. 4-H fit nicely into our curriculum and it afforded many learning experiences that included university instruction in the field of horticulture, agriculture, and other areas of interest. Many of these opportunities uncovered talents in our children that were, as of then, undeveloped. That's exciting! Leadership, volunteering, teaching, running for office on the club, state and national level are invaluable experiences available for anyone interested. Friendship with other kids from the local, state and national area were forged and made for unforgettable memories. We especially loved the public speaking and presentations taught through 4-H and the competitions were invaluable and so much fun for the whole family. We all learned through our mistakes and triumphs. The skills learned there paved the way to more self confidence and poise when speaking in a public setting and there were many opportunities to do just that. Many of the tools that were learned in 4-H transferred to college and our kids were prepared in ways that many of their peers were not. In fact, they were asked for help by other students when needed during the course of their college careers. In retrospect, I would do it all over again as a parent and homeschool educator. It's wonderful for the whole family, you can be as involved as you want, but I would encourage anyone to look at the big picture and then go the distance.

### **Andrew McIndoe, 4-H Homeschooled Youth**

Jackie, just now seeing this and I would love to share how 4-H impacted me as a former homeschool student. 4-H was the perfect compliment to our homeschool curriculum - in fact, it was a major part of the curriculum. The community service, leadership, and citizenship emphasis of 4-H set me up for experiences I would not have had otherwise. I use the skills learned in 4-H more than most that I learned in the classroom. Public speaking, delegating, leading meetings, planning conferences, and organizing people are skills I developed first in 4-H. It gave me a bedrock and foundation for the rest of my life. I was better equipped for college and professional life thanks in large part to the opportunities 4-H gave me outside of the home. Homeschooling and 4-H equipped me with better social skills and confidence than the majority of my peers. As an agent, Jackie, you were always looking out for us and opening doors. I met so many great people through 4-H. Some of my favorite memories are from 4-H Congress, Honor Club, the plant sale, presentations, and even record books. I was honored to serve in several leadership positions in 4-H and am convinced that those set me up for success in college and beyond.

### **Molly McIndoe, 4-H Homeschooled Youth**

4-H was a way to be engaged with other kids my age and provided that social environment where I was able to share the same interests and passions that I had with others. I enjoyed many aspects of 4-H, meeting new friends and learning applicable skills that I wouldn't have learned if I wasn't apart of 4-H. By being a member in 4-H, it had a huge impact on my life whether it be through community service or teaching others what I learned from different classes that I was passionate about. I've learned through giving presentations and even winning a gold medal for my age bracket, that anything was possible with the knowledge and help of the 4-H leaders. Those skills have stuck with me today as I have completed two Master's degrees that came with a lot of public speaking requirements. The confidence and knowledge gained through those competitions will last a life time. I recommend homeschool families to participate in 4-H because it can give you the adequate skills to learn more about your passions and how to use them throughout the rest of your life. There are many opportunities for your family to be involved in and learn together that will shape the rest of their lives!

### **Ashley Brooks, A Homeschool 4-H Alum**

I hope all is well! I was actually a 4-Her who was homeschooled and was involved in both a homeschool club and a traditional 4-H club growing up. What attracted my family to 4-H were the credentials of the curriculum. While 4-H curriculum cannot replace all school curriculum, nor do we seek to, understanding the legitimacy of the curriculum with which we work is very helpful to homeschoolers who like to use a wide variety. Knowing that it can supplement the curriculum that they are using is also a great selling point. Homeschoolers value the ability to work autonomously and the fact that they can work at their own speed (often flying through curriculum faster than traditional clubs) and with children of multiple ages at once. Additionally, they are typically very aware of each of their youth's learning style and try very hard to provide each child with the method that works best for them, optimizing their success. They will appreciate 4-H projects, workshops, and curriculum that contribute to a variety of learning styles. Because some families/homeschool groups automatically train older teens to help younger youth, 4-H is an excellent set up that supports and enhances that learning system. While providing a social outlet for homeschoolers as well, I would be careful in terming it that way. Emphasizing that your program promotes developing a sense of community among youth who are working toward common goals and tries to support the concept of community in general is a great way to term it. If they address social interaction with you in particular, then they've opened that door and it's a great opportunity from then on.

I hope this helps! These are just some thoughts from personal experiences. Let me know if I can help further.

Have a great day!  
Ashley

## **Lori Kenney, A Homeschool Mother**

From the parents viewpoint, 4-H is a great asset to any homeschooling program because of the following reasons. I am sure I will miss some!! Sorry...I noticed after I read your email again that you only wanted the parents data.

1. Homeschooling is expensive. The scholarship money that kids earn for projects is awesome! I think for two years, both of my girls did not have to pay much if anything for 4-H Congress because they had earned so much. They may have saved it that first year or two and not spend it...cannot remember the specifics...but anything helps. 4-H does not cost that much to participate in...compared to a lot of other clubs out there.

2. The summer 4-H camp is like 50% off because of donors...at least in Alamance County.

3. Honestly, my kids did not get to do a lot speeches at District because we always had conflicts but they always did them at the County level. Tell them that it really helps when their child takes Public Speaking in college. We were lucky...we also had a Toastmasters club...but not all homeschooling areas have that.

4. They get to do interviews at ARIE. My daughter had to do an interview for her job so she was prepared. Also, she had to do an interview two weeks ago for an academic scholarship. We did not get that anywhere else and we do a lot!

5. The resumes that they put together for ARIE and other things help you recap all of the kids data. The kids are going to do lots of great things but if you don't document it, they get no credit for it. It was very easy for my senior to revise her resume for scholarship applications.

6. The 4-H project record books document...just like above. My senior has applied for a lot of scholarships and all of them ask for major detail on community service. The 4-H project record books saved us. A few of them wanted documentation by year even...we had it!

7. Leadership, leadership, leadership. My girls first Alamance County meeting...they said that there is now way they could ever be president or get up and talk....they both have been officers. It has been great to see them grow so much!

8. The leadership roles that they can do during the summer for the summer shines program builds so much self confidence and they have fun!!

9. There are starting to be more homeschool science programs but it was really hard for me because I knew nothing about that...all of the WHEP, Livestock, etc...really help families struggling to get enough science in.

10. Some clubs do community service...sometimes it is hard to find community service projects.

11. Goal setting. My girls sat down every year and made out goals. They kept reviewing their goals qtrly and they achieved them.

12. The talent show winners can go all of the way to state and perform!!

13. They can win trips!!

I am sure that I missed some.

Have a great day!

Lori

**Selma Rigsbee Barker, Current 4-H Volunteer**

I am still a 4-H leader that home schooled my boys. I let others know what a great advantage 4-H is for us. 4-H enhances what they learn at home. Any child that wants to go to college already has good start on it. 4-H honor club report they do is great for the appl. for college. The leader encourages each child to do a little better without putting a child down. 4-H helps a child to shine in a slow pace.