



4-H and My Future

“What do you want to be when you grow up?” As a kid you hear this question from friends and family more times than you care to count. Ever since I was little I have always said a Veterinarian. But as you mature the question morphs into: “what are you doing to prepare for your future?” Most teenagers would reply that they study hard or hone in on their football or basketball skills in hopes of a scholarship. I get some interesting looks when my answer to their question is studying hard and participating in my favorite activity: 4-H.

One of the ways 4-H will help me in the future is that it has challenged me in more ways than I ever could have by myself. 4-H has helped me to get out of my comfort zone and try new things. I have gone to five 4-H teen conferences in Columbus to learn all the information I can to make myself a more rounded person. I have taken projects that have had nothing to do with Veterinary Medicine, including sewing and smoking. This helped to give me giving me new perspective and a desire to expand my horizons, something I never would have done on my own. It has pushed me to be the best in Veterinary Science those years, which led to State Fair three times and one outstanding of the day. Project judging has given me valuable experience sharing my opinions and ideas with adults and interacting with peers. I have also worked with various animals in 4-H, which also gave me helpful experience for my future goal of going to Veterinary School.

As I participated in these projects, I have fine-tuned my communication skills in countless project judging, Junior Princess, and project reimbursement interviews. This has helped me gain mentors, friends, and communicating better with adults. During this

process I have met judges and other people with timeless experience who enjoy passing their knowledge on. One of these mentors is my horse's DVM Doug Hasbrouck. I have job shadowed him and have received invaluable hands-on experience including wrapping tails to open sutures for birth and examining stallion sperm potency for artificial inseminations. 4-H has also given me endless amounts of experience working with and showing certain animals too. I own and have shown, rabbits, chickens, and horses for eight years. Competing in showman of showman twice, and winning small animal showman has expanded my animal showing experiences though. I have now worked with and shown, cavies (guinea pigs), ducks, geese, hogs, and steer, which is invaluable hands-on experience that will help me on collage resumes, that I never would have had without 4-H. This amazing program has also given me the opportunity to step into important leadership roles, beneficial to my future too.

I have participated in Junior Fairboard, with peers that help organize child activities for our fair. I have served as a health and safety officer in my poultry 4-H club, and have given demonstrations on the effects of smoking and pushed my club to make healthier choices each day. I have taught new group members how to show their poultry correctly and have learned to be a good role model to them. I have been asked to participate in the new Vision Screening program for preschoolers to catch eye problems before they deteriorate. All these valuable leadership and hands-on experiences have given me a great head start to an animal-oriented future.

I would not be who I am today without 4-H, this program has given me invaluable experience for my future in Veterinary Medicine and has helped me to become a well-rounded person. It has challenged me to be the best person I can be. It has given me

countless mentors and friends that want me to succeed and are helping me towards my goals. My future dreams are a lot closer than I ever thought possible because of 4-H.