

15-18



“Why 4-H Will Help Me in My Future”

Most people, by the time they are adults, go to some kind of class to learn leadership techniques and how to manage people. Although these are good things to have under your belt, leadership is best learned through experience.

Courses cannot teach in a year what being responsible of a group can in just one or two days. Being in 4-H for most of my life has taught me leadership skills. I don't think I would have the same confidence in myself if it were not for this program. I know that later on in life, I will need to take on tasks where management skills are necessary. I am glad I've acquired these skills now instead of trying to “wing it” later. 4-H presents many challenges throughout the years, but I recall one specific instance that I feel tested me the most.

It started out as a normal horse camp. I came a day early as a counselor and settled my horse and I in. The next day, the campers came. They unloaded their tack and took care of their horses. There was no riding or activity scheduled so it was a pretty easy day, considering what was to follow! Usually, most campers are pretty good at tacking up their horses, getting on and riding. As counselors, we

just supervise in case there is a problem. But this year was different. This year, a camper came who seemed like she had never even seen a horse. She had no idea which way was up on a halter, let alone ride a horse independently! The other counselors and I were a bit intimidated by our dilemma, but we stepped up to the plate anyway. All week, we helped her learn to ride from square one. We dealt with the horse's rude ground manners and encouraged her to get back on when she was scared. By the end of the week, she was able to go in a class at the fun show. She was proud of herself and so was I. I was also proud of myself for being able to handle a difficult situation properly all week.

Because of 4-H, I was able to do more than I thought I was capable of. I am more responsible. I am a better problem solver. I am more confident in my abilities to lead and am able help those who need it. I didn't need a class to learn these things – they are part of the 4-H program!