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For immediate release: September 27, 2010

Southeast Area Says: 4-H is About Making Time

By Jeramy McNeely – Area 4-H Agent

Throughout the year, 4-H agents are always recruiting. Trying to attract new members, volunteers, or even retaining the ones that we have can be a daunting task. And typically the response I get is, “I just don’t have the time”. When people tell me this, trust me, I believe them. In fact I hear that very same phrase come out of my mouth quite often. We are just straight busy. There is barely time in the day to accomplish all the tasks that are required by work, daily household chores, bills to pay, etc. Kids these days have it worse than we do with homework, sports, clubs, and whatever else we try to cram in their day. So the thought of adding another activity like 4-H and making the meetings, community service, and completing projects can give even the sanest parent a headache. I understand completely.

However, if you read through some of the examples above and correlate your schedule to that of your kids’, you begin to see that not a whole lot of the daily schedule involves parents and kids spending a lot of time together. That is what I think makes joining an activity like 4-H such a great decision. It prompts parents and their kids to schedule some time to spend together. It creates a situation in which both parent and child are working towards a goal and along the way picking up the lessons that 4-H is trying to teach. The kids are learning through hands-on, real-world situations side-by-side with their own parents. This approach, to me, beats the lectures that I used to receive that I would have much rather learned by doing 4-H. My poor old man had to constantly preach to me about using common sense, treating others with respect, being responsible, and being civic-minded. In my teenage years, he began to sound like Charlie Brown’s teacher for some reason. But if I would have been applying those lessons he taught me through a hands-on approach in 4-H, it might not have taken so long for things to finally sink in a little. I would also be a better bookkeeper, would have gotten more scholarships, and would have had more money for college.

So as the new 4-H year gets ready to begin, I encourage you to at least look into it. It’s not just about animals. It’s about developing the whole child through a variety of different projects in which both kids and parents can become involved....together. Contact your local extension agent for more information and remember, Colorado State University and 4-H does not discriminate against anyone on the basis of race, color, sex, age, handicap, religion, creed, or national origin.