

Kari Robideau:

Hello, this is Kari Robideau. Thank you for tuning in to the University of Minnesota Extension Center for Youth Development podcast series. Now, in our last podcast, which was episode 15, we showcased a series of funny 4-H fair stories from the perspectives of our staff, since we're in the thick of County fairs here in Minnesota.

Kari Robideau:

Today's podcast continues our fair theme, but this time my colleagues highlight youth experience and as it relates to their shining star moments. Please enjoy 4-H fair stories shining stars presented by 4-H staff from the Center for Youth Development. Katie Becker, Melissa Persing, Lisa Bauer, Kelsey Wolf and Rebecca Rasmussen.

Rebecca Rasmussen:

Hi. I'm Rebecca Rasmussen, the 4-H program coordinator for Itasca County and my shining star moment happened with the youth horse program in Itasca County that headed down to the 4-H state horse show. In our county, we have kind of an unspoken tradition where our older youth show up down at the state horse show from time to time and just help out the younger, newer members that haven't been through the state horse show before.

Rebecca Rasmussen:

So last year, we had a sister actually book an airplane flight from Montana and fly in to surprise her little sister and teammates for the state horse show. And it was just quite an experience to watch that sister who had grown up in 4-H from second grade all the way through grade 13, show up to mentor those younger kids.

Rebecca Rasmussen:

So that's the end of my story.

Melissa Persing:

My name is Melissa Persing and I'm an extension educator with the University of Minnesota and I worked with 4-H for 25 years in Traverse County as the 4-H program director. And so I was asked to think of a shining star moment of a 4-Her. And when I think about this, I think about a young woman who as a child, she was in our Cloverbud program, an afterschool program in a very small rural private school.

Melissa Persing:

And the first year that I worked with that afterschool program, she didn't even speak. She'd smile politely, nodded her head maybe, but that was the communication, the extent of our communication together. But after the second and third year, she warmed up and in the third year she even spoke short sentences with me to answer questions.

Melissa Persing:

As she grew, she joined a 4-H club and I watched her every year at judging interviews at the fair and she had very brief conferences. Again, smiling, spoke politely to the judge, but was very brief in her answers. But she really shined in livestock and as she grew she started with the beef project and as she was older

she was bringing market steers. I remember one year especially this beautiful black Angus market steer and that year she got the high bid at the auction. It was quite a bit higher than the other 4-Hers that were in part of the auction.

Melissa Persing:

And that fall, an interesting thing happened. At the livestock committee meeting, she brought up that she thought that we should have maximum bids so the money being spent by businesses could be distributed in a more fair and equitable way to all of the 4-Hers rather than one person getting a huge bid. Well, she was the person that had the huge bid, but ethically, that wasn't sitting well with her.

Melissa Persing:

The committee listened to her. The committee was made of youth and adults making decisions about the livestock program and the way she told her story, they felt compelled to make that change to have maximum bids and the result that she had hoped for did actually happen, that there were more equitable bids.

Melissa Persing:

This young woman was also an excellent student in school and as she got older she took Spanish and even went to Costa Rica on a school Spanish immersion trip.

Melissa Persing:

In her records later that year, she reflected on her experience in 4-H and how the experience had made that trip possible for her. 4-H had given her the confidence and courage to take that trip.

Melissa Persing:

As a child, she reflected that she started too bashful to speak and then she grew to be able to speak to a judge and to tell her story and then she had voice, a concern, in a committee meeting and her idea was acted upon by the other adults and youth in the meeting. So she felt the confidence and the courage to travel to another country. 4-H truly helped her to be a shining star.

Lisa Kasson-Bauer:

I'm Lisa Kasson-Bauer and I am a program coordinator from Clay County and one of my favorite stories about how bridge can change a person's life is this young man who was one of our first members of the Sea Perch team and he came a long way in his ability to come over his shyness and his ability to speak in front of a lot of people.

Lisa Kasson-Bauer:

When we first started out, he was painfully shy and getting to know the other boys was difficult. Then after we built our first Sea Perch with him, that group of boys went on to teach other boys in another town and so he was kind of forced to do some one on one teaching and that worked pretty well for them.

Lisa Kasson-Bauer:

And then we were asked, well, then we did a program at the County fair and I remember that first year he came with a written script that he'd written and read it and the other boys were kind of

disappointed. They didn't think that was really fair that he got to have a script, but for him that was really great that he was able to make himself do that.

Lisa Kasson-Bauer:

Eventually, we ended up giving lots of presentations at County fair, several times at the State Fair, in front of the County commissioners, and I guess the moment I remember the most is when he, when questions were asked at the end, he took the microphone and answered a question all on his own volition.

Lisa Kasson-Bauer:

So that was one of my most favorite moments, being a program coordinator and his mother always gives credit to 4-H for helping him come out of his shell and get over his shyness. And that's my shining star story.

Katie Becker:

Hi, I'm Katie Becker. I'm the 4-H program coordinator in Clearwater County and one of the experiences that I've experienced over the last year is having the opportunity to travel down to the Minnesota State Fair.

Katie Becker:

And this past year, I actually had the opportunity to be there during the beef show and one of my 4-Hers, it was his first time showing at the beef show and he was super excited and waiting for his class and just all of us were kind of hanging out together as a county and pretty soon a 4-Her from a different county walks by and makes a comment to this individual if he's headed to the show ring, the Coliseum, for his show and he kind of had that deer in headlight look where it was, I'm up next.

Katie Becker:

So then all of the 4-Hers from our county really pulled together to help this individual and while this individual is getting his show shirt on, another 4-Her was putting his back tag on, another 4-Her was combing the beef animal, getting it ready for show. Another one was working on the top line. And so, it was really neat to get to see all of our 4-Hers from our county to pull together to help this one individual to have a really great first year experience at the Minnesota State Fair.

Katie Becker:

Recently, this 4-Her has come to me and made comments about, well, jokingly, made comments about how he's learned so much through this experience and he will always make sure he's on time and look at the schedule and see where he's at because sometimes those shows that we think are going to take a half hour to 45 minutes may only take 10 minutes. So it's really important that looking over the show schedule and making sure you're ready to go at any moment.

Katie Becker:

So that is my story of a Clearwater County 4-Her shining at the Minnesota State Fair.

Kelsey Wolf:

I'm Kelsey Wolf. I'm a 4-H program coordinator in East Ottertail County and the story I wanted to share today is just about one of our 4-Hers who over the last year has really shown in our county and it's been exciting to see because he is actually a new 4-Her as well. He wasn't involved in 4-H prior to about a year and a half ago, which is about the same time that I started in 4-H as well, which is kind of interesting to see his journey kind of go along with my own journey.

Kelsey Wolf:

And so he was kind of roped in by another program coordinator to help with an afterschool program when he wasn't even in 4-H but we needed some more youth leaders and she saw in him that this might be something he'd be good at, knew he had younger siblings. And so before even being a 4-Her, he started helping out in an afterschool science program and it was my first afterschool program with 4-H too and so it was fun for the two of us to kind of team up and be a little bit confused and lost sometimes together.

Kelsey Wolf:

But he did a really great job with the kids and throughout the course of, I think it was a six week program, getting to see how much he became more comfortable with himself and we even asked him, would you like to lead this activity for the whole class? And at first he'd kind of say, no. I'm good, I'll kind of hang back here. But by the end, he was running some different stations with the kids and really just changing a lot, even in those six weeks.

Kelsey Wolf:

And so since that time, he is himself now become a 4-Her, and I did a club visit with his club a few months ago to go and help with some parliamentary procedure things. And they have younger clubs, there's only a couple of team leaders in that club. And so some of the, the understanding parliamentary procedures can be a little bit tricky for those younger first, second, third graders.

Kelsey Wolf:

And so the activity we were doing was sorting different kind of steps to parliamentary procedure out. And so he right away said, y'all, I'll work with these guys here and so he sat with the kids and he didn't just sort it all out himself. He had them read through it and he helped them with words they had trouble with and then when they got done he said, well, which one do you think you got? Which one do you think it is you guys? And then if they had it wrong, he said, well, let's look at some of the other options.

Kelsey Wolf:

And so, and he's going into 10th grade, I believe, this coming fall. So that was just really great to see that he right away said, yep, I'll take on that leadership position and how well he was working with the kids.

Kelsey Wolf:

And it's really great too because now he is also taking, this summer, his very first trip to the State Fair, as well with one of his animals that he showed at the fair. So that's just one example of a shining moment we had here in East Ottertail County and thanks for letting me share that story.

Kari Robideau:

Well, I thank you Kelsey, Katie, Melissa, Lisa and Rebecca for sharing one of your stories about a shining star youth from your program. I hope these stories brought a smile to your face and maybe even a goosebump or two as you listened to the awesome impacts 4-H and specifically fair moments can have on young people.

Kari Robideau:

That will wrap up this podcast, but please check us out on the web, www.extension.umn.edu/youth where you'll learn more about our 4-H program, in addition to research, training, and events that we offer.

Kari Robideau:

You may also find a conversation to join on our youth development insight blog. This is Kari Robideau encouraging all of you to get out there and watch 4-H youth shine at a fair this summer and please tune in again soon.