

Kari Robideau:

Happy national 4-H week from the University of Minnesota Extension Center for Youth Development. My name is Kari Robideau. I'm an extension educator. Joining me today is Mary Jo Lohmeier, a 4-H program coordinator from Hubbard County. Mary Jo, thank you for joining me today.

Mary Jo Lohmeier:

Nice to be here.

Kari Robideau:

Now Mary Jo, in today's podcast in the spirit of celebrating National 4-H Week, we're going to showcase a few of your 4-H youth leaders as they describe what they love about being in 4-H. But before we listen to them, can you tell us a little bit more about these young people?

Mary Jo Lohmeier:

Well, all five of them that you're going to be listening to are members of our ambassador group. I have 23 members of ambassadors this year and this is a group of kids that have chosen to become, I don't know, extra leaders. They are just being taught a lot of leadership skills. And one of our goals this year has been to give them public speaking opportunities because we all know that public speaking is just really important in taking that next step in life. If you can public speak, you can get a lot farther in life. So each of these kids have been practicing public speaking. So I try to find opportunities for them. And one of the opportunities was to do an interview with our local radio station here for National 4-H Week. So these are the five kids that chose to do this one.

Kari Robideau:

Well I'm excited to hear what they have to say. So to those of you listening to this podcast, please enjoy listening to Alison, Alyssa, Daisy, Evan, and Holly as they describe why they love 4-H.

Alison Offerdal:

My name is Alison Offerdal, I am 13 years old and I am in the Stony Lake Beavers 4-H club and I've been in 4-H for eight years. I am a 4-H ambassador this year. This'll be my second year. I show livestock, pigs and sheep mainly. I also show clothing and food preservation. This last year I also entered a quilt which I took a quilting class for, which was offered by 4-H. 4-H is an important part of my life because 4-H friends are a part of our family, so we do a lot together. We all got each other's backs. 4-H has helped me prepare for my life skills, like what I need for later. Public speaking, also. It has also made me learn about hard work and responsibility. Some opportunities 4-H offers is 4-H camp, mystery trips. For ambassadors you can go on a mystery trip. Camping trips. I went to the 4-H camp every year and I went to a camping trip. It was really cold, but it was so much fun. There are many events you can do in 4-H.

Alyssa Miller:

My name is Alyssa Miller. I in 10th grade. I'm 15 years old. I'm part of the Pine Cones club and I've been in 4-H for five years. I'm mostly part of my county's ambassador program as well as this year I was part of the state arts in program in at the state fair. So it's really a lot of community work as well as a lot of fun because a lot of the bonds here are made intimately and you get a lot of experience with youth leadership. I've learned so much from 4-H as well as much as I've had fun. It's a lot of jumping out of your comfort zone and figuring out what you want to do really with your time. So we do a lot of classes

as well as a lot of development in becoming who you want to be. It has influenced my life because it has given me so many opportunities and taught me so many things about who I am and not to look with a judgmental eye. And it's really just a great program for youth.

Daisy Sharp:

I'm Daisy Sharp. I'm a junior in high school. I'm 16 years old. I'm also a member of the Green Valley Live Wires and a Hubbard County ambassador. I've been in 4-H for about six years. I'm involved in the ambassador program that teaches you how to be a young leader and it teaches you leadership skills. I'm also the vice president of my club. Being in 4-H is like having a second family that will always be there when you need them. You get to learn so much as a 4-Her and you never know you're learning.

Daisy Sharp:

4-H is important to me for many reasons. One reason is all the opportunities you get to have, such as going to camp or being a camp counselor, which is a multi-county event so you can make friends from other counties. I've learned so much about being a leader. We have also learned about like public speaking, which is an important skill to have. There are opportunities that teach you how to be a better leader. There's camp yellow, blue, state ambassadors, county ambassadors. We also offer classes like arts and crafts, photography, welding, and metal works and wood shop and other arts classes. I've taken advantage of the ambassador program and many of our classes that are more arts related in some building and photography. It really just depends on what you're all interested in.

Evan Boge:

My name is Evan Boge. I'm a senior at Park Rapids High School. I am part of the 4-H Hubbard County Riders and I've been in 4-H for 11 years. So I'm involved in a lot of different things in 4-H. A part of the equestrian drill team, Hubbard County 4-H ambassador program, state photography, project development committee, and 4-H camp counselor. My model that I came up with 4-H is 4-H is family. 4-H is important to me because of the people involved and what we can accomplish not only as individuals, but as a county. In 4-H I've learned how to be a leader and a great role model to our youth who will be in the same position as I will be someday. 4-H has taught me to become a great leader for our youth, mostly through our ambassador program. Our motto for ambassadors is "Today's youth, tomorrow's leaders."

Evan Boge:

It's crazy to think that our generation is going to be the leaders of tomorrow. 4-H has so many opportunities. It's really up to you to take advantage of them. I'm part of, like I said, the ambassador program. I'm a second year camp counselor. I served one year as the club secretary and two years as club president. I am a part of the horse project development committee and also the state photography project development committee. 4-H can also offer things like at state fair they do encampment and also a chance to compete or enter in projects at the state fair. Next year I plan on applying to be a state ambassador, so taking the ambassador at the county level and amping it up a bit at the state fair.

Holly Packman:

My name is Holly Packman. I'm 16 and I'm a junior. I'm in the Hubbard County 4-H Fighters and this will be my fourth year in 4-H. I'm very involved with the horse program, the shooting sports program, and the ambassador programs. 4-H has given me and showed me somewhere I belong. Being a 4-Her is amazing and you get to meet so many awesome people and be a part of this wonderful program. 4-H

has showed me true friendships and how to work hard and has helped me achieve my goals. 4-H is important in my life because it's one of the things I can count on and look forward to. It's made me into the person I am today and reaching and striving for my goals. It's kept me out of trouble and given me something to do and look forward to in the summer.

Holly Packman:

4-H offers some pretty great things. They have an amazing ambassador program, which is a youth leadership club that helps our program coordinator out as well as go on trips. I've been in the ambi program, which is the ambassador program, for three years. And you can also help and take care of or take some animals slash products down to the state and compete, which is one of the highlights for me.

Kari Robideau:

Mary Jo, I can tell by listening to those that you have a great group of youth leaders there.

Mary Jo Lohmeier:

I love my youth leaders. They're just huge, great bunch of kids. We just really enjoy them.

Kari Robideau:

Well and obviously they have a great leader who is giving them opportunities to public speak and for our opportunity to listen to why 4-H is such a great program and why it's so important for young people to be involved in. After all, 4-H is the nation's largest youth development and empowerment organization that, as you heard from those young people, it cultivates confidence and kids who tackle issues that matter the most in their communities right now. In the United States, 4-H programs empower 6 million young people through the 110 land grant universities and cooperative extensions in more than 3,000 local extension offices. Thank you again to Hubbard County youth leaders and to Mary Jo Lohmeier for letting us listen in on why 4-H is important right there in Hubbard County, Minnesota.

Kari Robideau:

If you'd like to learn more about the 4-H program, please visit us at www.extension.umn.edu/youth. And there you will find information on how to join our 4-U program, what we have going on in Minnesota, but you'll also see information about training and events that we have to offer you and your organization to help you consider ways that you can implement positive youth development in your work. This is Kari Robideau from the university of Minnesota Extension Center for Youth Development. Happy National 4-H Week, everyone. And please tune in again soon.