

A Community of Youth Learning Leadership, Citizenship and Life Skills

One of every 10 Missourians between the ages of 5 and 18 participated in a Missouri 4-H program in 2008.

The 4-H Youth Development program in the Ralls/Marion County area involves nearly 1,500 youth in the 4-H Club program and through various 4-H affiliated short term community and in-school programs.

Ongoing participation in extracurricular activities, such as 4-H, can lead to long-term payoffs. Regardless of family background, studies find that teens who consistently participate in extracurricular activities from eighth through 12th grade are 70 percent more likely to attend college. The College Board's Trends in Higher Education Series highlights benefits to individuals and society when young people attend and complete college. For example, over their lifetime, college graduates will earn an average of \$2.5 million, or \$1 million more than peers with only a high school education.

Communities reap long-term benefits by supporting programs like 4-H. Youth engage in the programs are 60% more likely to vote than their non-engaged peers. In addition, 4-H youth are more likely to volunteer and contribute to their communities throughout their lives than youth participating in other youth programs.

A study commissioned by the Ohio State University explored the economic impact of Extension programs and offers one way to measure the impact of 4-H programs. Assuming that a 4-H experience motivates just 10 percent of Missouri's 100,700 4-H members to receive a bachelor's degree, 10,070 degrees would be earned. The College Board study suggests that this would mean an additional \$19,100 in earnings per year for those with a degree. Increased annual earnings for just this group would be nearly \$201.4 million!

4-H Clubs are available to all youth, aged 5-18. If you would like to learn more about the 4-H Youth Development Program and the youth related services that are available to all citizens, schools and civic organizations, contact the Marion County Extension Center in Palmyra, at 573/769-2177.

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