

WTNS Radio OSU Extension Update for February 14, 2022
Healthy People. Healthy Finances. Healthy Relationships.

On today's OSU Extension update for Healthy People, Healthy Finances, & Healthy Relationships we'll talk about youth development, and as always look at some upcoming programs from OSU Extension.

Last week I had the privilege of speaking to a group of talented 4-H educators from across Ohio. My topic was the importance of using local media sources like newspaper and radio to share youth development education. The more I thought about it, the more I knew that youth development needed to be our topic today.

We hear about the importance of economic development and community development, even green space development. These are certainly each important. Yet, one development that is overlooked and undervalued is youth development.

As you think back to your growing up years, let's say ages 10-17, what kinds of memories do you have? Did you have some positive adults in your life that spoke encouraging words to you or helped teach you practical skills? Were you able to gain confidence by trying new things? For some kids, this was being involved in sports like baseball or soccer. For some it was music or dance lessons. For some it was learning to trap or hunt. And for some, it was being a part of 4-H.

4-H has a long history here in Coshocton County. And thousands of people in our community have been connected to this organization as members or volunteers or through in-school enrichment programs. Some of the most meaningful 4-H history is personal. Just like Scouts, FFA, and other organizations, there is a special bond across generations of participants. Youth may not complete the same projects or travel to the same places, but they share one important experience- personal growth.

Those opportunities of getting a taste of responsibility and then desiring to take on more. Of overcoming fears like speaking in front of people or of spending a week at camp without their family. Of viewing the community as an opportunity for service, not a source for a handout. Research of 4-H members shows that they are four times as likely to give back to their communities compared to their peers.

Any girl who completed a 4-H sewing project with her mother has stories to tell. Even the frustrations, arguments, and tears are memories I still treasure of my mom. Now I am bonding with my children as they explore the world through 4-H. My son is preparing right now for our third season of kidding. Our first two does born on our farm will have their own baby goats in the next couple of weeks. In summer's heat or winter's cold, he is learning to provide quality care for animals.

Not everything goes as we would hope. But these many microcosm experiences through 4-H, when added together over their growing up years, are molding them into resilient adolescents. This is the stuff that life is made of.

Do we want youth to become caring, competent, and contributing adults? That doesn't just happen. We as adults must guide and model this behavior. This starts with parents, but we know not all children have this environment in their homes. So, like other youth organizations, 4-H makes the effort to bridge the gaps and create opportunities for positive learning experiences.

If you have a heart for seeing young people grow, there are many opportunities to volunteer with 4-H. Economic and community development will never be successful without youth development. It takes many years to see the results of faithfully and strategically investing in the lives of the young people in our community. But oh, it is worth it.

Here is a quote from Christine Gregoire, "It is up to us to live up to the legacy that was left for us, and to leave a legacy that is worthy of our children and of future generations."

And now let's look at some upcoming programs from OSU Extension. Have you ever thought about making food in your home to sell directly from your home or maybe at the Farmers Market or another retail location? I will be teaching a Cottage Foods Rules and Labeling class on March 15 from 6:30-8:00 pm. You can find details about this program and future programs related to financial wellness, food preservation, diabetes, and more at our website coshocton.osu.edu.

In closing, at OSU Extension, we are proud to work for Coshocton County to help educate and improve our families, farms, and businesses. Please feel free to contact OSU Extension for more information at 740-622-2265 or visit our website at coshocton.osu.edu. Happy Valentine's Day and make it a healthy day!