

News Column for Use the Week of February 17, 2025
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The Importance of Career and Educational Exploration and Real-World Preparedness

In today's society, there is a push for youth to be prepared for the real-world by developing life skills and exploring career and educational opportunities at younger and younger ages.

Youth are encouraged to start exploring careers that they may have an interest in at earlier stages of their lives. They are exposed to different careers in many unique ways to help them realize the avenues that they can go down. With new technology and our ever-changing world, there are more and more new opportunities emerging. Allowing youth to learn more about career opportunities at younger ages allows them to find their niche, prepare them for the future, and find opportunities that they might not have known about.

Along with career exploration, there is a large push for youth to further their education beyond a high school degree. While the status quo used to be attending a 4-year university, that is not necessarily the case nowadays. Several careers only require an education from a technical school or a community college. Some youth may choose to go straight into the workforce, and we value that as well! Whether youth decide to go to a 4-year university, a community college, or a technical college, education is seen as a valuable asset in the real-world and we want to encourage youth to further their education in the way that best suits them. We want our youth to be successful members of our communities, no matter the educational or career path that they choose.

Whichever path these youth choose to go down; they will all have new responsibilities that they need to be prepared for. Whether that is taking care of their car, learning to shop on a budget, or even knowing how to wash their clothes, these are all skills that they will need to master, and things that aren't always seen as the most important skills to teach.

Youth involved in River Valley 4-H will have the opportunity to participate in an event known as NCK Lead that covers the topics of career exploration, further education, and life skills. Targeted to youth in middle school and high school, 4-H members will have the opportunity to visit a community college within the River Valley District and have hands-on learning experiences geared toward careers they may have an interest in from the instructors of Cloud County Community College. Youth will be immersed in learning in the technical portion of the school that includes simulations and hands-on experiences in several different career areas. They will also learn some of the real-world skills that they will need to thrive in the "real world."

NCK Lead will take place on March 29, 2025. For more information about how to register, contact your local River Valley District Extension Office. Belleville at 785-527-5084, Clay Center at 785-632-5335, Concordia at 785-243-5335, and Washington at 785-325-2121.

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