

News Column for use week of 1/17/2022  
Macy Hynek, 4-H Youth Development Extension Agent  
River Valley Extension District  
1/13/2022

### **River Valley 4-H – Future with STEM**

River Valley 4-H STEM is expanding quickly after rebuilding our program. The benefits provided by STEM go beyond learning science, technology, engineering, and math. It develops life skills in our youth, such as problem-solving, critical thinking, and innovation through a fun exploratory educational learning environment. River Valley 4-H believes in the youth within our community, that they have a real impact to improve the world around us. *4-H empowers young people with skills to lead for a lifetime.*

In Spring 2021 we shifted our focus to improving our STEM program. We started by developing a district-wide robotic team to bring these benefits locally, to our 4-H'ers. The STEM program quickly grew to become one of the largest project areas in the district. In a short 10 months, we have held numerous interest nights, advanced nights, and finally our first ever district-wide competition.

On Sunday, January 9<sup>th</sup>, we held our first district-wide competition in Clyde, Kansas. Our 4-H youth programmed and engineered their robot prior to coming to the “Hungry Robo” challenge course. The course was designed off the 1978 game Hungry Hungry Hippos. We had 22 youth from four counties compete in two divisions. After two and a half hours and ten rounds of battling it out, one Senior team and one Intermediate team stood victorious.

As the STEM project continues to flourish, we have big plans coming. We are looking to broaden our horizons, by offering educational opportunities in 3-D printing, coding, and circuits. For more information, contact Macy Hynek at (785) 527-5084 or at [mhynek@ksu.edu](mailto:mhynek@ksu.edu).

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