Building the 4-H Village with Volunteers

You often hear the phrase “it takes a village to raise a child”, meaning it will take multiple people to provide a safe, healthy environment for youth to grow and flourish. River Valley 4-H is no different, it takes a village to provide opportunities for our youth to thrive and develop life skills through our organization. 4-H adult volunteers are the foundation for building this village.

Research from Harvard titled “Volunteering is good for your health”, explains that volunteerism does not just strengthen our local communities, but enriches the lives of adult volunteers. Research shows that adults who volunteer for as little as two hours per week are more physically active and lower their risk of early mortality. It provides the opportunity to bond with others, giving adults a sense of purpose and well-being.

Other research shows that volunteering has a tremendous impact on our economy. In 2018, approximately 22 million baby boomers volunteered 2.2 billion hours in the United States, generating 54.3 billion dollars.

Numerous reasons are showing us the benefits of why adults should volunteer, yet the volunteer rate in the United States has been decreasing since 2002 despite a growing population. Our population in the United States is also aging. It is projected that adults 65 and older will increase by nearly 50% in the next 15 years. Now the question will arise, why are people not volunteering? Is the hustle and bustle of the world around us consuming too much of our life? Did COVID-19 highlight health conditions for adults restricting them to volunteer?

In our ever-changing world, we need more volunteers - just as many organizations do, so does 4-H. Many adults throughout the River Valley district have a passion that relates to one of our 47 4-H project areas, such as woodworking, sewing, wildlife, foods and nutrition, etc. By giving just a few hours a week or a couple of days a year, you can share your passion with our youth providing them with skills that will last a lifetime while also improving your community and personal health. Come find your spark in 4-H and help us build the 4-H village.

For more information on ways to volunteer with River Valley 4-H, please contact Macy Hynek at 785-527-5084 or email her at mhynek@ksu.edu.

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