

News Column for Use Week of 1/7/19  
Monica Thayer, Extension Agent: 4-H Youth Development  
River Valley Extension District  
1/3/19

### **4-H is a Gift of Experience**

Over the holiday season, you may have read about the push to give children a gift of an experience instead of something materialistic. While I realize the holiday season is over, I encourage you to still consider an experience that will forever shape your child's life and just maybe, that materialistic gift can be helpful. Start 2019 off on the right foot. Now is a perfect time to enroll your children in 4-H.

4-H is a research-based organization which teaches youth life skills through a variety of experiences and content areas. Materialistic gifts can be the wrong size, break, or lose a child's attention within moments of being opened. 4-H can't be set upon a shelf. 4-H is all about interactions, and it engages children in many different learning opportunities creating growth and development within the child.

Like I referenced earlier, some of those materialistic gifts may be helpful through the 4-H experience. Youth choose projects, or content areas, to focus on through the learning process. Maybe your child received gifts of a camera, wood burning kit, clothing, telescope, dog, or more! We have a 4-H project for all these gifts, as well as most others.

Don't let the materialistic and inherent gifts of your child sit on a shelf. Give them the opportunity and experience to grow and develop those skills through 4-H. Whether it is a tangible skill, such as the ability to wire electronics, which could lead to a career, or a relational skill, such as problem solving, 4-H is the place to learn and strengthen a child's ability in a variety of ways.

As we kick off the New Year, take the opportunity to see what 4-H could offer your child. Give your child the experience of 4-H. Contact your local K-State Research and Extension Office to learn more about the gifts offered through 4-H. In the River Valley District, contact Monica at 785-527-5084 or [mthayer@ksu.edu](mailto:mthayer@ksu.edu).