

TEXAS A&M AGRI LIFE EXTENSION

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Clover Connection

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What do you get when you have 14 eager 4-H members, around 150 granny smith apples, 15 pounds of flour and 10 pounds of sugar? A fun (but a little messy) learning experience! When I started planning for our foods and nutrition workshop, I thought it would be a great experience for youth to learn how to make a pie completely from scratch.

I used to make apple pies with my mom frequently when I was young. Fast forward 20 plus years later, I found myself in my kitchen making a “practice pie” to make sure I could still do it! As I stood in my kitchen peeling apples, I quickly realized that proper knife skills are a must when preparing for a pie.

I’m happy to report that my “practice pie” turned out great. With that task accomplished, I created my “lesson plan” for the day with my 14 participants. I’m happy to report that everyone got their apples peeled and sliced without requiring major medical attention, and we had 14 fantastic looking pies! Everyone learned a lot (and that pie crust doesn’t just come already in the pie pan).

Hands-on learning experiences with peers and adult volunteers really do make a difference in the lives of youth; some of my most memorable times growing up involved a 4-H project or event. The 4-H program utilizes an experiential learning model. Experiential learning takes place when a youth is involved in an activity, looks back at it critically, determines what was useful or important to remember, and uses this information to perform another activity.

I think that all of our 4-H members here in Henderson County do some pretty awesome things in our program. I like to brag on them and their accomplishments, not only in our program but also in their school and community activities. There was a research study done on 4-H and positive youth development (Tufts University, 2013) and they found that 4-H members are:

- Four times more likely to make contributions to their communities
- Two times more likely to be civically active
- Two times more likely to make healthier choices
- Two times more likely to participate in science, engineering and computer technology programs during out-of-school time

It's never too late to get involved in the 4-H program! We take enrollments year-round (for both youth members and adult volunteers). If you would like more information on how to join please contact me at kate.pittack@ag.tamu.edu or give me a call at 903.675.6130.

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