



100 E. Tyler St., Suite 300  
Athens, TX 75751  
Phone: 903-675-6130  
Fax: 903-677-7222

<http://henderson-co.tamu.edu>



---

September 23, 2016

*Clover Connection*

By: Kate Pittack  
Extension 4-H Agent

Today's article comes from the 4-H Today Blog, courtesy of Jennifer Sirangelo, President and CEO of National 4-H Council. Jennifer is a believer in young people and their capacity to change the world. She helps lead the National 4-H Council in its mission to increase investment and participation in high quality 4-H positive youth development programs for millions of young people around the world...

If you've been on social media recently you might have seen friends and family sharing their first jobs with the hashtag #firstsevenjobs. Thousands of people have been using it to share details of their very first jobs, and there are some great ones. For example, actor and former California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger revealed he was once an ice cream scooper!

Part of the reason that these tweets are so popular is that they make today's leaders seem so accessible. They remind us that we all started small and learned as we went. It shows that True Leaders aren't born: They're grown. That's an idea at the heart of 4-H's *Grow True Leaders* Campaign. No one is born a CEO or a governor—they grow into it. In 4-H, we give young people the leadership skills they need to grow.

If the #firstsevenjobs hashtag shows us anything, it's that first jobs often aren't glamorous. But they're so important for learning the fundamentals, like being honest in your work and being responsible. Those two qualities will be the basis of every great career, and you can learn them in the simplest of places. Take my first job, as a babysitter. I learned responsibility quickly because I was responsible for kids' lives. (I also learned that when I earned a credential—my mom made me get a babysitting certification every year—I could charge a little more for my services.)

Then I was a waitress where I learned to report my tips honestly at the end of the day so that I could be taxed on that income. That was the year that my mom made me fill out my first tax form by myself. I was sixteen!

When you're young you can also learn by watching your leaders. I worked as a wedding decorator—I can still make an arch out of helium-filled balloons—and later as a photo assistant. In both of those jobs, I was working for entrepreneurs and saw how hard they worked and how driven they were. It was a great lesson. In many jobs I worked for dynamic leaders that I was drawn to, and I wanted to be like them. In other jobs I had bad bosses, and I learned what I didn't want to be, which was equally as valuable.

4-H offers young people all sorts of ways to learn these skills. We teach leadership in formal ways to the young people we hire as interns, camp counselors and junior leaders, and to the officers at 4-H clubs who learn to sit at the table and work with adults in a leadership setting. We also help kids learn these skills in informal ways, whether it's by asking them to mentor someone younger, or asking them to speak publically to share a skill they've recently mastered. These things seem simple, but as the hashtag proves, they're the beginnings of much bigger things.

No matter what activity you're doing this summer, I hope all young people stop and take a moment to look at your leader and see what you can learn from him or her. You can learn from every leader you have, good or bad. And all of those things you see and hear and do this summer will be a part of the foundation that will launch you to a career one day. And soon enough you'll be reflecting in your own #firstsevenjobs. (<https://4-h.org/about/blog/why-your-firstsevenjobs-can-teach-you-so-much-about-leadership/>)

*Kate Pittack is the Henderson County Extension Agent – 4-H & Youth Development for Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. Contact her at: [kate.pittack@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:kate.pittack@ag.tamu.edu) & visit our webpage at <http://henderson.agrilife.org>*