



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

What I learned at 4-H

4-H scholarship winners share what 4-H means to them

CALGARY, AB – Nov. 23, 2009 – A panel of four 2009 4-H Alberta scholarship winners shared what 4-H has meant to them and means to them as they move from farms and rural communities to their university years at a forum held at the Calgary AdFarm office last week. This was attended by clients, media and AdFarm employees.

“At AdFarm, our purpose is to be a catalyst for the advancement of agriculture,” says AdFarm’s Kim McConnell, forum moderator. “There is no better way to do that than to hear from those who know firsthand where agriculture and leadership in rural communities is headed. And this was a great opportunity for us as a company to recognize these young people for their contribution to Alberta’s rural communities!”

Attending the forum were Adeleen Bayes (Trochu), Kevin Bolduc (Stavelly), Jason Crebbin (DeWinton) and Emily Wall (Stirling), all either attending the University of Calgary, Mount Royal University or Red Deer College.

While 4-H may be best known for giving members hands-on learning experiences with livestock and other life skill projects, there are many other areas where the organization is having a deep and long-lasting impact. Open to boys and girls between 8 and 21, 4-H has been helping develop well-rounded, responsible and independent youth since 1913.

When asked to single out what the most significant element being in 4-H was, the response was unanimous – public speaking, closely followed by the travel opportunities and chance to meet other 4-H members from across Canada and in the US.

“Without question, learning how to speak in public has been the most valuable thing 4-H taught me,” says Jason Crebbin, who is studying natural sciences at the University of Calgary. “I have no fear of getting up in front of a group and making a presentation.”

According to Adeleen Bayes, who is attending Red Deer College, her nine years in 4-H afforded her the opportunity to travel to places she might never have gone.

“I’ve met members from PEI and from Montana, and I know that whenever I travel through those communities I can reconnect with those people simply because of being in 4-H,” she says.

Along with the opportunities and benefits of 4-H membership, the organization faces similar challenges to agriculture and rural communities.

“The size of clubs fluctuates over the years but overall they are decreasing in size,” says Emily Wall, also a University of Calgary student, who is studying to be veterinarian. “Farms are getting bigger and fewer which means there are fewer kids to join the clubs and the kids that could join are so involved in other activities that they don’t have time to devote to 4-H.”

With the declining numbers to join, what will it take to keep 4-H a strong, vibrant organization?

“We need strong leaders,” maintains Kevin Bolduc, a geomatics engineering student at the University of Calgary. “Our 4-H club members need more opportunities for mentorship, to be able to network with industry sponsors.”

Nevertheless, 4-H continues on, giving young people from both rural and urban communities, the opportunities to learn by doing and those are skills that will take them far and make them attractive employees.

“AdFarm’s support for 4-H is outstanding,” says Bruce Banks, CEO of 4-H Foundation of Alberta. “This event was not only an educational experience for the students; they were able to build relationships that will last them a lifetime.”

4-H scholarships are established by friends of 4-H to provide financial and moral support to our members pursuing post-secondary education. They awarded 103 scholarships this past year and received over 240 applications.

For more information on 4-H Canada, go to www.4-h-canada.ca/

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