

My name is [REDACTED] and I am an eighth year member of Lockwood 4-H. I am seventeen years old and just completed my junior year at King City High school. Every year of my involvement in 4-H has been characterized by a different aspect of 4-H. This year, I noticed that leadership and its development in youth in Monterey County was a personal goal of mine. This goal stemmed from my position of teen leader of the swine project, Lockwood 4-H President and the Monterey County All Star which opened up many new opportunities and made this the most memorable year so far. I'm really looking forward to my last year in both high school and 4-H as I try to maximize my potential. I have already been selected as a 2016-2017 California State Ambassador. I plan to take my accumulation of leadership experience into my future. I am planning on majoring in Business Administration with a concentration of Management.

This year I really cut back my projects to three; bowling, archery and swine. I chose to enroll in bowling because I've always found it interesting. I used to frequent the bowling alley with my grandparents when I was little and I have kept up a continuous interest for the sport. This was the first year that the project was offered and I found it quite interesting. I learned many things ranging from etiquette of the lanes to how they oil the lanes and we even received a tour of the ball retrieval system and the pin re-stacking. It was a fun project that could turn into a great hobby that is fun and physically intensive. This was my second year in the archery project, although non-consecutively, I still remembered the fun of the first time I had taken the project 5 years ago. However, this year I had my own bow. My uncle gave me his bow that he had outgrown along with arrows. I was super excited when I brought it home and go to shoot it. After I'd adjusted the weight and the sights and purchased a new grip for it, I set up the straw bales as my target and got to shooting. Throughout the year, I competed in many mail-in shoots where

you pay the host and in return they send you a target. One of the shoots, hosted by Tulare County Shooting Sports, I ended up placing 2nd in at a distance of 40 yards (only to a kid in my same club). It was a fun project and I definitely plan on taking it again next year. This was my fifth year in the swine project and it was definitely one of the more interesting years. I bought my pig from a first year auction held at the Salinas Valley Fairgrounds from a breeder in Soledad. Right after I brought Jeffrey home, he tried rooting out of his pen. He was one of my most photogenic pigs that I've ever raised. Jeffrey also loved to go on long walks. I have always loved raising pigs and I will continue to until I no longer can.

I highly believe that the main cornerstone that 4-H was founded on in 1913 was to create better leaders for society. This year, my 4-H experience was focused around leadership. Serving as the Lockwood 4-H Club President as well as Monterey County All Star has given me lots of new opportunities. As President, I was in charge of leading the meetings. This was quite a fun experience for me as I love to be able to speak, and hold an audience's attention. This helped me as an All Star as I had the chance to speak and MC at multiple county events such as Achievement Night, Small Animal Field Day and even Fantastic Field Day. I also got to present a workshop at LCORT (Leadership Conference Of Regional Teens) 13 times about how to prepare and do well in an interview. I think this is such an important skill for youth to have because the job market is becoming so competitive, I want to give 4-H'ers the best chance possible. That improved my public speaking and social interaction skills because I talked with so many types of youth delegates that weekend as well as many adults.

This is why 4-H has had so much of an impact on my life; not only has it helped me in terms of networking, but it has helped me build personal confidence and responsibility. By interacting with all age groups of youth and countless adults throughout my years in 4-H, I have

learned something that can get me very far in life; people skills. My ability to communicate with others has been a huge part of my 4-H experience because when I started as a 9 year-old, I was shy and unwilling to talk to anyone that I had not grown up with. However, through presentations and other public speaking opportunities, I have conquered a fear that over 90% of Americans have. I was also selected as the first alternate MC at the National 4-H Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony in October in Maryland.

Through my eight years in 4-H, I have had many feelings about 4-H. From anxiety in my first year, to joy of my first time going to 4-H camp and attending conferences, county events, and fairs, I have enjoyed being a 4-H member. It has opened up so many opportunities for me. I have made lifelong friends in 4-H that I would have otherwise never known, I have experienced both the pleasures and the agonies of raising livestock, toiled for long hours with my record books, but it has all been worth it. This summer, an opportunity arose from the State Ambassador program to travel to Canada. I will be experiencing Canada Club Week which is their version of the California State Leadership Conference.

Although I do not entirely know what my future holds for me, I know that there is no price I can put on what 4-H has done for me. It has fundamentally changed me to become a better person and I am forever thankful to the countless adults and youth that I have worked with and have been a part of my life for.