

4-H Story

By Kaitlyn Martin

Valencia County

4-H Senior Story Winner

Hello, my name is Kaitlyn Martin. I am in the ninth grade and am a member of the Rocky Mountain Clovers 4-H Club in Valencia County. This was my 3rd year in 4-H and I have really enjoyed it.

This 4-H year was probably my busiest by far. I was elected club president in November, and that same month I was also elected county council parliamentarian. Serving in both of these offices was a great honor along with being a lot of fun.

I also was, for a short time, county ambassador. I had been elected to this office the previous 4-H year, but my term happened to overlap my council term; so I was both a council officer and an ambassador for a period of about three months. During this time as an ambassador, I was asked to go with some of my fellow ambassadors and give a presentation for our county commissioners about 4-H and what it does for the community.

I was really nervous at first, thinking I might mess up in front of all these people and make a complete fool out of myself. So while we were waiting for our turn to go in front of the commissioners, I was in the back staring at my little piece of paper memorizing details of every word. I really don't remember walking up to the front, or even saying a "Good morning" to all of them, but I guess I did because next thing I knew, I was sitting down in the front row watching my friend Dusti give her part of the presentation. Then all of a sudden, I was standing up where Dusti had been, talking like I had done this my entire life. I don't really remember what I said, but I do remember them all smiling at me as I sat down and I was suddenly able to breathe.

Looking back, I can laugh because now I love getting up in front of groups and am at ease talking to them. At the commissioner's presentation, I think I realized that all these people who were great public speakers started from exactly where I had been: nervous and afraid. But with practice, it becomes easier and easier. Sure, I still get a little nervous when I see a group of people sitting down just waiting for ME to talk to them. But, when I see even ONE of them smiling at me (most of the time, it's my mother ☺... what in the world would I do without her?), I begin to relax.

When my term ended for ambassador, I traveled to numerous places as a council officer, such as Novice Fun Fest, the New Member Orientation and things like that. What was also a lot of fun was that I presented awards at the county level. (It's so neat to see people's faces when I announce that they won and they realize that all their hard work paid off.) Also, it was Valencia County's turn to host the 2006 NW District Contests, so I participated on the planning committee for District Contest, as well as presented awards at the event.

During one of the District Contest committee meetings I was asked to write a short play for the entertainment. The theme was "Follow the Cloverleaf Road" (based on the *Wizard of Oz*), so I wrote up an act for each of the council officers. It was really neat because instead of the Wizard of Oz, we had the "Wizard of 4-H." Instead of Glenda the Good Witch, we had a State Fair Queen (I got to play that role. ☺). It was so much fun for us and the audience. We did have a few funny parts in it that weren't planned ahead of time. (But such is the life of show biz, right? ☺)

Along with all of this excitement I met so many new people from all over the state. I didn't attend State Conference this year because I had a chance to be a part of a national team for my air rifle.

But you know, even with as much as I did this year, I learned that you can't do everything (such as State Conference). I also learned that you can do *a lot*.

I think that is the greatest thing about 4-H. Without this program, I would still be afraid to speak in front of groups. I would still be sitting in my room watching TV on a Saturday, instead of playing outside with my animals. And most importantly of all, I wouldn't be nearly as close to my family.

Thank you, 4-H.