

4-H helps young people grow, build valuable life skills

By Sarah Kirby Transcript Staff Writer | Posted: Saturday, October 3, 2015 10:38 pm

Fifteen year-old Rachel Lewis was not always the outspoken and outgoing teen she is today.

“I was really shy and quiet. I didn’t really want to make new friends. I kind of wanted to hide in the corner,” Lewis said.

Lewis did not stay in the corner for too long, however. When she was seven, the Lexington teen joined her local 4-H chapter as a Cloverbud.

Under the four personal development areas of focus within the organization — head, heart, hands and health — Lewis chose to work on building citizenship and cooking skills.

“I like doing those very much,” Lewis said.

Lewis has perfected the taste and presentation of nutritious meals and volunteers her time helping others. When she’s not making a delicious Indian spice chicken dish or Cowboy Lasagna, the home-schooled high school sophomore is volunteering at the Regional Food Bank or sewing heart-shaped pillows for cancer patients.

Her experience has given her the confidence to grow personally, as well as professionally.

“4-H has really helped me open up and make a lot of new friends that I never thought I could,” Lewis said.

Lewis pushed herself outside her comfort zone further, traveling to Washington D.C. to attend Citizenship Washington Focus, a week-long 4-H citizenship program for youth ages 14-19. In addition to touring



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Jessica Morrow stands with Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin during 4-H Day at the Capitol. Members of 4-H from all over Oklahoma spent the day with legislators and learned about Capitol proceedings.

national monuments and visiting memorials, Lewis participated in workshops that taught how bills were written and vetoed and explained how Congress works when in session.

“It was really cool,” Lewis said. “We got to meet several Oklahoma congressman. We got to meet Rep. Markwayne Mullin and Sen. Jim Inhofe. It was really fun. “

Back home, Lewis was well on her way to revealing her other strengths.

As president, she has led younger members through simple 4-H activities, like identifying leaves and forest animals. The older she is, the more Lewis said she wants to instill knowledge into younger members so they can grow, too.

“This past year I was the president of our 4-H club in Lexington. I got to help all the younger kids and show them what to do in 4-H and how it helps them. It made me realize I love working with little kids so much,” Lewis said.

During a recent trip to Round-up, an annual summer retreat for 4-Hers, Lewis branched out again — this time meeting up with friends she had made across the state, taking workshops. She also spent time thinking about her goals after high-school.

“I’m thinking about becoming a pediatric nurse,” Lewis said.