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National Volunteer Week Salutes 4-H Volunteers in Stoddard County

APRIL 07TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

National Volunteer Week Salutes 4-H Volunteers in Stoddard County Stoddard County, Missouri: Each year, thousands of volunteers in Missouri donate their time and energy to make their communities a better place to live. These volunteers will be among the millions across the country who will be spotlighted during the 43rd anniversary of National Volunteer Week, April 23-29, 2017.

Research conducted by the Corporation for National and Community Service found that in 26.5% of adult Americans (64.5 million) volunteered 7.9 billion hours of service worth \$175 billion in 2014. In Missouri, approximately 1.45 million volunteers of all types contributed 151.6 million hours of service. The 32.3 volunteer hours per resident ranks Missouri 15th among the 50 states and Washington, D.C.

One group that relies heavily on volunteers is the University of Missouri Extension 4-H Program. In 2017 over 7,000 youth and adults volunteered in some capacity with Missouri 4-H. In Stoddard County, 32 volunteers, both youth and adult, will serve as club leaders, project leaders, committee members, and in advisory capacities for the 4-H Youth Development Program.

“In Stoddard County the number of volunteers has grown over the last few years and more 4-H clubs have started as a result. With more volunteers, 4-H is able to reach more youth in the county. This helps youth to be more active outside of school and they are able to learn life skills that will last them a lifetime, says Stephanie Milner, 4-H Youth

Specialist.”

Volunteers spend numerous hours working on tasks, such as helping organize an event at the county fair, helping a child with a 4-H project, or leading a project to serve the community.

“As a parent that grew up in 4-H I wanted my children to also experience 4-H. Being in 4-H teaches leadership, citizenship, and you have a chance to go to various activities. 4-H is not just about agriculture; but you can learn about drones, robotics, STEM, and cooking; ‘Rodeo Clown’ is even a project now!” Robinn Daves-Huey, Star Banner 4-H Club Leader

4-H Program volunteers are just one group of volunteers who are instrumental in carrying out the mission of the University of Missouri Extension. Volunteers are involved in every aspect of the Extension Service, including determining the needs of the local residents, planning and implementing programs to address these needs, securing resources, and evaluating programs.

An example of these volunteers is the Stoddard County Extension Council. The 12-member board, which consists of appointed county citizens, works with the county Extension staff to plan and oversee Extension activities.

“Having been given the opportunity to work with the 4-h faculty, staff, and volunteers for many years now, I have acquired a deep appreciation for the quality of the 4-H program and the opportunities presented to youth in our community. The local youth who have gone through this program have grown into responsible, caring citizens who go on to become volunteers and leaders in the community and continue their appreciation of lessons and skills learned by paying it forward to the next generation with the gifting of their time, talents, and abilities.” Lesa Morrison, County Office Support Staff

The work of Extension volunteers is continuous. Every day volunteers lend a helping hand to make Extension programs more beneficial to the residents of Stoddard County. Those interested in joining the team of Extension Volunteers are invited to contact the Stoddard County Extension Office at 573-568-3344, stoddardco@missouri.edu, or email elderra@missouri.edu .

Submitted by: Rachel Elder, 4-H Youth Program Assistant

LAST UPDATED ON APRIL 07TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

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