

My General Story

By Sarah Martin

Valencia County

4-H Junior Essay Winner

Before I joined 4-H, I thought it was just for kids with cows, goats, pigs, etc. I couldn't have been more wrong! When we bought some goats to keep down our weeds, my mom suggested that we join 4-H. We did and when we were signing up for our projects, we saw how many there really were! That was two years ago. I am now a Junior in 4-H and am going to camps like Teen Get-Away and am giving demonstrations on Air Rifle at events like Novice Camp.

This was my first year as a Junior and therefore the first year I had been to Teen Get-Away. Our county had quite a few people attending the camp. We took two cars and both of them were full. We had a blast on the way up telling stories, jokes and talking about our favorite movies. When we got to the camp, we put away our stuff in our cabins. Thankfully, we were there early enough that when we ran into our cabin, we discovered there were enough top bunks for all of us.

After unpacking, a small group and I headed outside to explore. After a while, they called us for orientation and songs. After that, we were separated into groups and headed off to our activities. We only had a little time, so we practiced some of the questions we might be asked for a game they had and then we got ready for the dance. We all had a great time and afterward headed off to our cabins to sleep.

That night it snowed and everyone was up early to go have a snowball fight. The Valencia County group mostly stuck together, but then started pummeling each other. It was a BLAST!

We had a ton of activities that morning and then we had some free time. On our free time, a couple of my friends and I went exploring a little bit in the woods. We found a fresh cougar track and took a ton of pictures.

We had another dance that night and also the TGA Bowl. Our team did really well, but didn't make it into the finals. That night everyone was exhausted. One of the girls in the cabin kept talking and we were all having fun yelling at each other to be quiet. The boys were not too happy with us the next morning!

Then it was time for us to head home. On the way back, we came up with nicknames for each other. I was Mississippi, our friend Tyler was Sid (from the movie *Ice Age*) and my friend Jocelyn was Cougar (since she found the cougar track). We had a ton of fun. I can't wait to go back next year.

Our club did a community service cleanup on Castillo Road and we enjoyed waving at all the cars that passed by. When we were waiting for everyone else, my mom noticed that her windshield was dirty and she didn't have any wiper fluid, so she took a water bottle and told me to turn the wipers on after she squirted the window. I didn't realize that she was standing right where she would get wet. When I turned the wipers on, my mom got soaked! She gave me this look, but I was too busy laughing to notice. Soon she started laughing too.

We did a coat check community service for a children's home called El Ranchito De Los Ninos at one of their fundraisers. It was a western theme so we dressed in jeans and a nice shirt. We had such a good time playing the card games we brought and enjoyed walking around, looking at decorations and all the costumes. We stayed until about midnight and then were able to go home.

A few months later we went to the Valencia County Novice Funfest and put up a few booths. I manned the electricity booth and my sisters manned the baking one. We had fun and helped some of the kids better understand a few things.

Earlier in the year we made some candy cane reindeer and gave them to the Police Department to hand out on their rounds to kids. We had a blast making them. We also made some Valentine hearts a few months later to give to the kindergarteners at Peralta Elementary School. The kids loved them!

I competed in quite a few County Contests. I competed in District in Horse Bowl, Air Rifle, Archery and a few other things. I placed really well and can't wait until next year.

I competed at the State Fair in a lot of indoor exhibits and even spent the night there with my dairy goats. We had so much fun at all the fairs! I can't wait to show next year.

I learned a lot in 4-H this year and am going to try to take a lot more new projects so I can learn even more!