

Teaching Life Skills

Through 4-H Leathercraft

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SITUATION



In 2018, nearly half of youth enrolled in De Baca County 4-H signed up for the Leathercraft project.

Critical thinking, goal setting, planning and organizing, responsibility, and leadership are valuable skills needed in today's youth. All of which are life skills addressed through 4-H programs such as leathercraft.



Youth who participate in such 4-H programs, with a caring adult, are four times more likely to make contributions back to their community.

NMSU EXTENSION RESPONSE

Workshops are designed to assist youth in developing knowledge and skills needed in order to be successful with their project. Workshops held from spring through summer allow youth to receive guidance with the items they plan to exhibit in the fair. Youth continue to utilize what they have learned at home by making items for themselves, family, and friends. The life skills they learn here transfer into other aspects of their life as well, including school.

In six years enrollment has grown from one youth to currently twenty-nine. Funding was found to purchase the stamping tools needed, and granite pieces (the tooling surface required) were donated. To complete a project taught in a leathercraft workshop, costs range from \$5-\$20, versus paying \$15-\$100 for a kit in the store.

IMPACTS AND RESULTS

- 65% of enrolled youth entered their projects in the fair. 100% successfully placed in the top 5 with at least one item. 75% of the items sent to a regional or state fair placed in the top 5.
- 100% of beginning leather crafters showed an improvement in stamping.
- 100% of returning leather crafters improved skills in tooling, pattern design, or finishing.

I learned the names of the 5 basic tools and what each tool is used for. I also learned two different ways to stitch items together. I accomplished making a dog collar, knife pouch, coin purse, and key chain. I feel like I can make my own items now because of the skills I learned.—beginning leather crafter

I have learned so much from going to leathercraft workshops, from the correct flow of flowers, to how to fix problems that might occur during the project! I have learned new ways to case the leather, new antiquing techniques, and painting.—returning leather crafter