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Animals teach kids life skills

Deadline for participating in Arapahoe County Fair animal project nears

LITTLETON, CO --- What does a pig, rabbit, dog and horse have in common? OK, they're animals but they also play key roles in teaching Arapahoe County's 4-H youth valuable life skills.

4-H caters to both urban and rural families with a plethora of projects to choose. Animal projects include horse, beef, rabbit, dog, sheep, poultry, goat and swine and require youth to own their own animal. Youth, ages 5-18, interested in competing in a 2007 Arapahoe County Fair animal project, must submit their 4-H membership applications by March 1.

Many kids are already working hard in anticipation of this year's Arapahoe County Fair, July 18 – 22, where animal projects are always a big hit. They're learning responsibility, dedication and dependability.

"You don't have to live in rural Colorado to participate in a 4-H animal project," said Shaylen Florez, 4-H program coordinator. "A beef entry might get a little difficult for a child living in the city but a dog or rabbit entry can be just as exciting and educational."

Sky Battles, a 16-year-old 4-H member, enjoys working with her horse Reba. "Through 4-H I've learned you have to put effort into things," said Battles. "Everything won't be handed to you in life."

These hands-on experiences, whether it's raising animals, designing clothing, learning about nutrition, or displaying model cars, is a great way for youth to have fun and learn teamwork, leadership and citizenship.

Youth interested in home economics and general projects (such as cake decorating, clothing, ceramics, dog care, cats, rocketry, bicycle, woodworking, entomology, veterinarian science and many others) have until May 1, 2007 to enroll for the 2007 Arapahoe County Fair.

For more information, call CSU Cooperative Extension 4-H office at 303-730-1920 or visit www.arapahoeextension.org.

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