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## How 4-H Has Shaped My Life: College Admission Essay Sample

When I went to my first 4-H meeting back in 4th grade I was in awe of the incredibly poised officers running the meeting, passing their microphone among themselves as they addressed nearly one hundred members and their parents. Sometime in the middle of it all, I turned to my mom and asked intently, "How do I get to be one of those people up at the front table?" The board member that I admired most was Leslie Godfrey, a college freshman and leader of my Beginning 4-H project. Her hat was so heavy with medals and pins that she needed bobby pins to keep it on her head! I knew that someday I wanted to be a leader just like Leslie.

I have come a long way from that small and intimidated 4th grader at the back of the room. I have participated in multitudes of projects, done hundreds of hours of community service, gone to countless events, and even held many positions -- including club President -- that landed me a seat at the front table. This year I was selected as our county's "All Star", a great honor as well as a job which involves planning and leading many county wide events. Also this year, I finally became the leader of my very own Beginning 4-H project. I hope that the fourth graders I teach look up to me in the same way that I looked up to Leslie.

One of my favorite projects, Roots and Shoots, is a youth environmental program founded by the animal behavioralist Jane Goodall. Shortly after forming our Roots and Shoots Project, we met Dr. Sakai, who let us help him with a very unique project: tagging and tracking monarch butterflies.

One of the most common questions I am asked is "Why in the world would you want to tag a monarch butterfly?" The answer is simple; we tag to track, and track to save. The main threat to monarchs is the destruction of habitat. If we track where the butterflies are migrating to, then we can protect the groves and areas they stay in. The monarch tags we use are only a little sticker. They are placed as close to the base of the wing as possible to make them easier to fly with. After the butterfly is tagged, you cup it in your hands and blow on it to warm it up, and then let it fly! My friend Kate likes to say that it's bad morning breath, not warmth that makes the butterflies fly away.

After Kate and I attended two Roots and Shoots North American Youth Conferences, where we were honored to meet with Dr. Goodall and tell her about our work with the Monarchs, we came home inspired to create a citywide Monarch Festival, which was held in January 2004. We had booths, games, and entertainment to teach people about the amazing monarch butterflies and

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to encourage them to plant milkweed to help sustain the butterfly population. Over 2,000 people attended the first event, and the revenue was sufficient to fund the Second Annual Monarch Festival in 2005.

As much as I love monarchs, though, the community activity that I am most proud of has been my role as the youth coordinator and spokesperson for Trick Or Treat So Others Can Eat, a county-wide can drive that collects food for the hungry and homeless around Ventura County. Volunteers dress up and go trick-or-treating for cans to donate to a local food bank. As the youth coordinator, I recruited volunteers, spoke to youth groups, led training seminars, and was even interviewed on the radio and in our local newspaper. Much of my job revolved around securing community partnerships with clubs and businesses such as Cumulus Media and advertising our cause. And on Halloween night, the project came to fruition. Kids all around Ventura County went trick-or-treating; but instead of asking for candy, they were asking for canned food. Overall, the project collected 6,325 pounds of food, all of which went to local families.

Some of my most memorable experiences in 4-H include my three summers spent as a camp counselor. We counselors had an extensive job description: not only did we make sure that nothing appalling happened to the campers but we also organized the camp from the ground up, working for hours throughout the year to plan for the weeklong event. Once inside the majestic halls of Camp Condor, one hundred kids were ours for a week, and that experience has been integral in my development as a leader. Taking part in leadership has been an important aspect of my life. Besides being a 4-H counselor, I have been a member of my school's ASB for three years and also the Teen Leader of multiple 4-H groups. I was so proud when members of the 4H Public Speaking project I led won gold medals at the state 4H speaking competition. It was a great feeling when one of the budding seamstresses in my quilting project sewed a straight line or won a medal at the county fair. However, my favorite leadership activity was leading sessions at 4-H camp like the outdoor cooking session, where I quickly realized that a nine-year-old's idea of a roasted marshmallow is something akin to what volcanologists call a "bread-bomb lava".

4-H has given me the opportunity to come a long way from being that little girl sitting in the audience, dreaming of being one of the leaders sitting at "the big table." I have become more outgoing, involved and have significantly broadened by interests and skills. As 4-H members we are actively helping make the world a better place for both communities and the environment. I have learned through my involvement in 4-H that one person really can make a difference, and I am planning to continue my involvement for my entire life.

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