



Illinois Extension
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Kristi Smith transitions from 4-H volunteer to staff

Kristi Smith has been part of the 4-H program long before becoming the Peoria 4-H program coordinator. She spent ten years involved as a member of the Laura Winners 4-H club and then during her teen years 4-H Federation. Upon her graduation from 4-H, she immediately became a volunteer as the 4-H Livestock Judging coach in Peoria County. Now, she is excited to join the 4-H team at University of Illinois Extension.

"4-H was my 'sport' and summer was my season," explained Kristi. "I have shown pigs since I could walk and I looked forward to the day I could join 4-H."

While the swine project was Kristi's focus, she made it her personal mission to try as many projects as she could. Off the top of her head, she came up with 27 different projects she did throughout her 4-H career. "Many of the hobbies and activities I enjoy today started during my 4-H career," she mentioned. "And some of the projects taught me that they are not really my thing....like cats and entomology. But it was fun to try them and now one of my goals is to pass on that excitement to try new things to our Peoria 4-H members."

"I would like each member to try one new thing each year, it could be going to Federation or participating in the Barnyard Games or trying a new project. Trying new things is how we find our passions in life," Kristi commented. "Making new friends in 4-H is also a really important memory for me that I want to pass on to my 4-Hers. Expanding your network of friends is something that you have no idea where it will take you as an adult. The 4-H bond is strong."

Kristi grew up on her family farm in rural Princeville and attended Black Hawk College, East Campus in Kewanee. After graduation, she attended Iowa State University, where she received her bachelor's in Animal Science. Kristi was involved with the Livestock Judging teams at both institutions.

Following college, she worked in the livestock industry for Niman Ranch and Team Purebred. But even with her skills and passion for livestock, Kristi is motivated to let everyone know that 4-H is for everyone....not just "farm kids."

"I would love to see more members that love 4-H as much as I do," she stated. "One of my favorite things every year at the 4-H Show was when everyone would pitch in to clean up the livestock barn after the auction. You would think everyone would hate it. We were sad that the fair was over, but it was also one of the most fun things that we did. It was messy and everyone was slap-happy. There are so many memories from 4-H that I have loved!"

"Kristi's 4-H background and passion for the program is a tremendous asset," stated Earl Allen, county director for Fulton-Mason-Peoria-Tazewell Unit. "We are proud to welcome her to the team."



Kristi Smith is the new Peoria 4-H program coordinator. She has been a Peoria 4-H member and volunteer and is excited to now call it her career.

Anita Wilkinson
Communications Coordinator
aswilkin@illinois.edu

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, CONSUMER AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES
University of Illinois—US Dept. of Agriculture—Local Extension Councils Cooperating

University of Illinois Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment. Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the US Department of Agriculture by the Director, Cooperative Extension Service, and University of Illinois.