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Tennessee 4-H: Encourage, Empower, and Embrace

Encourage, Empower, and Embrace. I remember observing this prompt, attempting to conjure a story, or perhaps a time where I had embodied this sentiment. But then, I realized something! "That's exactly what 4-H did for me!" I recalled the meetings I had attended, serving as President, Vice President, or simply a happy member of the club. But I knew, even then, I'd have to learn to live by the principles contained within the 4-H Pledge every day. As I considered the prompt, I thought about how this message was appropriate to our present circumstances. I also pondered how this could be a blueprint for the future. But how can we accomplish that?

First, how can we encourage those around us and even encourage ourselves? 4-H allows us to explore our capabilities and the possibilities they open for our future. But even with the prospects these things open, it's inevitable to feel down now and again. But knowing that, once the various slumps of life are overcome, there's a program which allows the exploration of new passions and blossoming of creativity is essential. The joy one feels when accomplishing these tasks is important to the encouragement of our youth. I am supremely grateful for these projects 4-H offers.

Secondly, while it's worth noting the empowerment one feels at the completion of one of the tasks, the quality of learning ought not be ignored. For instance, the computers and technology project allowed me to experiment with web development. This gave my hobbyist tinkering a purpose. Learning is unfortunately depicted as boring in popular media, and almost perceived as a chore. However, 4-H reminds us: we'll all be learning for the rest of our lives. This is something to celebrate! Empowerment is the word I most deeply identify with within the motto this essay centers around. I hope this is evident in everything I do.

Finally, an important aspect of this prompt is embraced. I do feel that 4-H has done this for me. The project areas have opened doors and elucidated things which were previously unknown, such as photography. In my opinion, embracing learning and new experiences is how we can grow and develop. I truly feel that thousands, even the classmates I interact with daily, have flourished by embracing 4-H.

In short, "Encourage, Empower, and Embrace" is a near-perfect summation of the role 4-H plays in the lives of so many. The encouragement felt when completing the aforesaid tasks is palpable. The empowerment and learning are so essential to all who have participated. The embracing of creativity and differences teaches valuable lessons. The culmination of these points presents one issue: can we do this outside 4-H? The answer is yes! Going forth with the principles laid out within the motto, we truly can pledge ourselves to clearer thinking, greater loyalty, larger service, and better living. These things shall be done for our clubs, for our communities, for our country, and, most importantly, for our world.