

4-H'ers, Leaders Talk About Their Work In Poland

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LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.)

— With time and patience, the people of Poland will have the 4-H leaders they need to continue to make 4-H work in their country, according to Connie Rutt, Quarryville, a volunteer 4-H club leader.

Recently, a Lancaster County 4-H delegation returned from a three-week exchange trip to the Leszno area of west central Poland. The group, consisting of 4-H'ers and leaders, spoke about the trip on Tuesday at the Farm and Home Center during a news conference.

What the 4-H leaders and ambassadors found is that, for a people struggling with democracy, the seed has been sown for 4-H to grow.

Rutt and Lancaster County extension agent Glenn Shirk, with Glenn's wife Carol Lee, accompanied Kim McLaughlin, 4-H'er from Quarryville and Eric Wenger, 4-H'er from Manheim, on the exchange trip. Shirk said that the trip was part of an ongoing program to provide international experience and cultural exchange for 4-H'ers.

Rutt said that the 4-H program was set up there about three years

ago by the Michigan 4-H. Several programs were put in place in Poland by various Pennsylvania 4-H groups since.

Shirk said that the group visited Leszno, an area in west central Poland. The area is similar to that of the midwestern U.S. Shirk said he was pleased with the visit and found the Polish people very hospitable.

Eric Wenger, 18, son of Nelson and Alma Wenger, Manheim, said that he stayed with a family that maintained a hog farm, which totaled about 180 hectares (about 450 acres). At the time, he was helping two Polish brothers, aged 16 and 17, and a sister, age 5, helped with the straw harvest. They all were very kind to Eric and introduced him to the Polish way of life.

At the same time, the family was extremely interested in things American.

"They were very interested in America, especially Hollywood and music," said Eric. He said they had some very good American music at their "discos," but he also experienced some traditional Polish entertainment and food. Eric said he was impressed by the the Polish cities, by "how beautiful and clean and safe they are." Always, the Polish people were

"very generous and respectful."

Many of the Polish students study different languages, particularly German, English, and Russian. The younger people understand more English, since traditionally Russian was the more common second language until the fall of communism. Rutt said that the Polish-English translation book "came in handy all the time" for the group.

Eric, a Penn State 4-H ambassador and Manheim Central High School senior, said the Poland 4-H'ers had some public speaking experience, but never tried impromptu speaking. "That was a first for nearly everyone," he said.

Rutt said that many of the 4-H'ers and Polish families have the perception that all American 4-H'ers have vacation homes in Florida. She had to explain that Florida would have to be a big place to accommodate everyone with homes.

Rutt said that the group ate various traditional Polish foods and cabbage "in every form possible."

Kim McLaughlin, 16, daughter of Ralph and Vonnie McLaughlin, Quarryville, visited a Polish horse farm. She took horse riding lessons, something she had never

done. "To me, it was an adventure," she said.

"They were very, very generous to me," said Kim. "They made sure I felt at home." She said he felt very close to the family "and it was hard to say goodbye."

Kim said she was impressed with their efforts after World War II and the fall of communism to restore the architecture to its original design. She equated her trip with a voyage "into history" and liked to imagine what the place was like when it was first built. "American is a fairly new country.

We have nothing old like they do there."

Kim, a junior at Solanco, said the people of Poland "are the nicest people that I have ever met."

Rutt, 4-H leader, said this is her third trip to Poland. "The Polish people are very excited about the future, about the youth and the possibilities." Now, if only the Polish people can make time away from the constant struggle to "get a job, hold a job," said Rutt, and devote precious energies, 4-H clubs in Poland can grow and prosper.

Food Safety Applies To Backyard Grilling

UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre Co.) — You've made it through the entire summer barbecue season without incident. Congratulations. There's still Labor Day, however, and a Penn State food safety expert counsels caution when grilling up a feast for friends and relatives.

"Illnesses from undercooked foods and improper food handling skyrocket during barbecue season," says Stephen Knabel, assistant professor of food science in Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences.

Such food-borne illnesses as campylobacteriosis, giardiasis, salmonellosis and shigellosis strike most frequently during the summer season — particularly in children under 4 years old.

Symptoms of such illnesses include stomach pain, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, headaches and fever. Healthy adults often weather the sicknesses in a day or two. However, young children, senior citizens, pregnant women, and people with impaired immune systems can die if not treated immediately.

Knabel suggests a few simple guidelines to make sure your holiday weekend doesn't include a trip to the emergency room.

—Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold. "Leave meats and other food in the refrigerator or

cooler until you are ready to grill them," Knabel says.

—Cook hamburgers and other ground meat until the center is no longer pink and the juices run clear.

—Marinate raw fish, meat or poultry in a glass dish in the refrigerator. Do not use the marinade as a basting sauce or dip if raw meat has been placed in it.

—Pre-cooking meat in the microwave or range is a time-saver, but make sure the meat goes directly from the oven or microwave onto the grill. Do not let partially cooked meat sit out on the counter.

—Charcoal should burn for 30 minutes before cooking. The coals should have a light ash coating for best results.

—Always make an exploratory cut into meats to check doneness.

—Use a meat thermometer for large cuts of meat. Roasts should reach 145 degrees Fahrenheit for medium rare and 160 degrees F for medium. Whole poultry should reach 180 degrees.

—Do not put cooked food on plates that have held raw meat. "Any containers, cutting boards or utensils used to prepare raw meat for the grill should be washed before being used again. Also, wash your hands in soapy water before and after handling meat," Knabel said.



Even though Poland is struggling with democracy, the seed has been sown for 4-H to grow. Connie Rutt, far right and Lancaster County extension agent Glenn Shirk, far left, accompanied Kim McLaughlin, 4-H'er from Quarryville, second from left and Eric Wenger, 4-H'er from Manheim, on the exchange trip. On the table are gifts from the Polish host families. Shirk said that the trip was part of an ongoing program to provide international experience and cultural exchange for 4-H'ers.

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