

Siblings Turn Rivalry Into 'Making The Best Better'

LOU ANN GOOD

Lancaster Farming Staff
CLAY (Lancaster Co.)— More than 5.4 million youth celebrate 4-H Conference Week from March 14-21.

The sky is the limit as far as opportunities 4-H'ers can take advantage of doing, but few go as far as Gerald Boyd.

The 18-year-old is the Superior Achievement Award winner. He has been selected as the most outstanding Lancaster County 4-H'er who has best achieved all-around growth in project skills, leadership abilities, improvement in life skills, decision making, citizenship, and participation in club, county, regional, state, and national 4-H events and in school and community service.

The soft-spoken Gerald candidly talks about his beginning years in the 4-H program, and how he weathered bouts of envy and disappointment along the way. It was a maturing process that he believes has well-prepared him for life in the working world.

Gerald seems to shrug off his achievements as inconsequential. Instead, he praises the 4-H program, extension agents that worked with him such as Zoann Parker, Chet Hughes, and Glen Shirk, and his Uncle Darvin Boyd for being a great inspiration and encouragement to him.

Ironically, the fund for the Superior Achievement Award was first established in honor of Gerald's grandparents, Elmer and Pauline Boyd, 14 years ago. His grandfather had been a 4-H leader for 29 years.

Although Gerald doesn't recall much about his grandfather who died when Gerald was a toddler, he does remember his grandmother who shared a lot of family history.

As a shy eight-year-old, Gerald's confidence was greatly boosted when he showed the grand champion junior yearling at the county roundup.

"My dad had given me a really good animal," he said.



Clay View Farm is home for Gerald and Sarah Boyd and the place where they raise dairy, beef, goat, and sheep 4-H projects.

Much to his chagrin, winning didn't come easily the next year. Things became even worse the following year when his little sister started showing hogs in competition. That was the year that Sarah won grand champion hog at four different fairs.

"That is the year that our family found out the way siblings can act when one is winning and the other isn't," Sarah said.

Gerald smiles in retrospect, but admits, "When she was winning I got jealous and I really despised her at times."

But the sibling bickering was shortlived. By the end of the fair season, Gerald realized that when his sister won, he got half of the earnings.

"So we made up and became a team instead of individuals ready to kill each other," Gerald said. "It taught me to learn to share even if it was difficult."

While winning is an objective, Gerald soon decided that other objectives were also important, such as encouraging and helping out other members. "You also feel good about the knowledge that you've gained, which is what matters most, and not the winning," he said.

But that philosophy didn't prevent Gerald from winning. Trophies, ribbons, and banners fill his bedroom and a portion of the downstairs family room. Again and again, Gerald showed champion hogs, dairy animals, sheep, and last year, goats.

Throughout the years, the siblings spurred on each other with friendly competition. Each worked individually on their project books by trying to outdo each other. Then they critiqued each other's book.

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Surrounded with trophies and ribbons Gerald gives his sister Sarah a hug. They candidly share how sibling jealousy turned into love and respect for each other. "We bonded together to make the motto 'Make the best Better,'" Sarah said. "We stuck together." This is only a small portion of the many trophies and ribbons Gerald has earned.



While winning is an objective, Gerald stresses that encouraging and helping out other members is rewarding. "You also feel good about the knowledge that you've gained, which is what matters most, and not the winning," he said.



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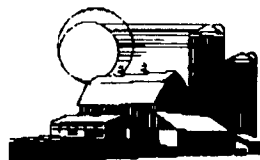
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