



Focus on 4-H

The Drayton Valley Omniplex was hopping July 3-5, as more than 200 Alberta 4-H members and their families flooded the grounds for the Northwest region’s 9th Annual Focus on 4-H weekend. Programmed to “non-stop regional show” mode, Focus participants set up and took part in events ranging from life skills workshops and tractor races to livestock shows and a “grease the pig” competition.

“The best of 4-H was present at this year’s Northwest regional show, Focus on 4-H,” commented Velma Collins, treasurer-secretary of the Focus planning committee. “This year’s edition of the show saw an increase in participation in nearly every event, as well as participation in new events that far surpassed the goals originally set by the committee.”



The mainstay Focus events were represented by the horse, beef, canine and sheep shows. All of these events tested the delegates’ skills, as the livestock judges unanimously remarked that the competition level was extraordinary.

Judging from this year’s show, 2009 appears to be the year of the life skills project. Focus put a unique spin on member’s traditional displays of their project work. In addition to the return of the project’s bench show, the Life Skills and Other Animals’ committee put on a series of “drop-in” sessions where anyone could visit, pay for their supplies and receive instruction in skills including pencil sketching, painting and barn board branding. At the end of the session, the participant got to take home their new piece of art.



Also new to Focus this year was the “Tasty Delight” session, where participants created edible art in the form of hedgehogs, which were made from almonds, and veggie flower pots that

consisted of peppers, cucumbers, and celery. At the end of the event, the drop-in sessions raised over \$300 and were deemed a “total and absolute success.”

4-H members spent the remainder of the weekend running between the special events such as a judging competition, a dance, lip sync, numerous costume classes and the Iron Man Decathlon, where members challenged their 4-H knowledge and all-purpose skills against the clock.

“Focus on 4-H was just an amazing experience,” Northwest regional Summer Program Assistant Jennifer Taylor enthused. “I have had a great time, and am so happy to have been welcomed into an event so focused on fun and family. The members, parents, volunteers and organizing committee have been incredible, and it shows on the delighted faces of the 4-H members.”

“I can’t wait to come back next year!” exclaimed Jonah Chabaniuk, Focus competitor and recipient of a “Heart and Hustle” award. “This has been so much fun, and I know next year will be even better!”

For more information on the Northwest region or the 4-H program, please visit the 4-H website at www.4h.ab.ca

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