

As part of a 4-H member's record book, a 4-H story is required.

Judges pick winners in each of the junior, intermediate and senior levels. Last week, the newspaper printed the junior winner. This week, reprinted below, are the junior and senior 4-H stories from Michaela Ketter and Paula Leibbrandt.

***By Michaela Ketter***

***Intermediate winner***

My name is Michaela Ketter and I will be a freshman this fall at the Chase County High School. My parents are Mike Ketter and Tonja Ketter. I have a younger sister, MaKenna. My hobbies include sports, text messaging, hanging out with my friends and babysitting.

I joined 4-H five years ago because I love to work with cattle and children and felt like 4-H would be very helpful to me. I would like to pursue a career in animal science, possibly become a vet tech and a chiropractor for animals.

My main focus for 2008 was to raise two 4-H steers from start to finish on my own. With help from my Mom the task began the first of April when my Dad moved to Texas. I was able to find a small feedlot just east of town owned by Greg Hayes.

After doing some research and having some help from my Dad, I came up with a feeding plan of action for my steer Pedro and my sister's steer Dudley. I feed the steers 50 pounds of grain, two cups of top dress and 1/2 a bale of hay each night. I didn't change their feeding schedule or rations all summer long and both steers did well.

I didn't lead my steers as much this year. After talking with Justin Tracy, I discovered that they behave better if you tie them up and mess with them that way. By the time fair rolled around, both steers looked great and behaved really well. I had several local farmers/ranchers compliment me on my work which gave me a huge boost in confidence.

I'm also very pleased to say that I helped my Mom overcome her fear of cattle. I was able to get her to help me groom the steers and she even lead one.

My 4-H experience thus far has been very good. I enjoy learning new things about the projects that I choose and the experience has brought me closer to people that I don't normally spend much time with. I learned a great deal this year about getting along with others and taking advice.

I look forward to being a member of FFA this year, it will only add to my 4-H experience.

This next year I hope to become involved with the local vet clinic and the vet project. It is my dream to someday become a vet tech and I would also like to pursue animal chiropractic.

I'm looking forward to 2009. It is my goal to travel to more shows with my steer and have an even better year than 2008.

***By Paula Leibbrandt***

***Senior winner***

Looking back, I can't believe I have been a 4-H member for nine years now! Not only has the time gone quickly, but I have had the opportunity to participate in a wide variety of projects. The home living area still proves to be one of my personal favorites.

This year I poured most of my energy into the arts and chose to prepare two very different pictures.

The first was a watercolor of a large sunflower. For some, watercolor may seem like no big deal, but for me it was a challenge. The medium is exciting to work with, but does require some practice. I made some smaller sketches and painted them to practice blending my colors before tackling the large project. I was very happy with the finished project and gave it to my Grandma for her birthday.

My second piece of artwork was my favorite. It was a collage of four clay tiles and formed one complete flower. It took most of my patience and lots of time to complete. I had never worked with sculpting clay and it was really a fun project. I framed the piece and it is proudly hanging on our kitchen wall.

I was very excited when the picture won the Senior Home Living grand champion prize. Both projects qualified for the state fair, however I chose not to send the tile picture due to its fragile nature. I did get a blue on the sunflower watercolor at State Fair and was pleased.

My 4-H highlight this year had to be the Citizenship Washington Focus Trip. We left McCook on a Sunday evening in June and returned about 16 days later. It was a super fantastic experience and the absolute, only drawback was being tired.

We toured Niagra Falls, Chicago, New York and finally Washington D.C. just to name a few. While in Washington D.C., we visited monuments and also concentrated on learning about our government. The time flew by and not only was the trip fun, but meeting new friends from the SW four counties was a highlight too. I would recommend this trip to all young 4-Hers, it truly is a once in a lifetime experience.

I had a super year in 4-H and look forward to next year. 4-H really does offer a whole world of activities and experiences that I will never forget.