

## Keeping the clover in bloom

4-H youth across the nation blossom because of volunteers. Growing clovers in Grimes County is continually nourished by the relentless energy and devotion of “Ms. Ann”.

Ann Mitchell has given of herself and her time as a volunteer in Grimes County 4-H for more than 20 years, guiding 4-H’ers through animal projects, clothing and textile projects, food and nutrition projects, and “even a little photography”.



“Whatever the kids want to do, I make it happen,” Ann said. “If I can’t do it, I always try to locate somebody else who can!”

The seed of servitude was planted years ago when so many volunteers poured into her daughter’s personal development as a 4-H member. Ann says that’s the reason she felt the pull to give back in any way possible.

“What motivates me is looking back on when my daughter was in 4-H and how it helped her grow into a better person and just do well,” Ann said. “I feel like if I can stay in there and push somebody else’s kid like that, they can get the same things she got out of it.”

Ann was recognized for her years of service with the Salute to Excellence award at the State 4-H Roundup in June 2018, but greater than the personal recognition, she said “it felt just really outstanding because somebody else thought I did a good job with the kids.”

Those volunteers that made such a mark on her daughter’s life have since left the 4-H playing field, so Ann stepped up to bat to be “in the ballpark with them.”

“I do take time out of my schedule and just make it happen because somebody did it for my child when she was there,” Ann said. “If I can keep pushing that while I’ve got breath, I’m going to do that because somebody did it for us.”



4-H volunteers don’t pour into programs for personal gain or hopes of recognition. Ann feels like she’s “done something special” when her 4-H’ers come back and simply say “thank you”.

“Just when kids say thank you – that’s my favorite part about it all because I know that I’ve touched somebody,” Ann said. “When they come back and say ‘will you help me with something’, that just gives me joy.”



With an open phone line 24/7 and a promise to “call you back anytime, day or night”, Grimes County 4-H’ers know they can count on Ms. Ann to simply be there, no questions asked.

“Ms. Ann is just always there; I always see her,” Grimes county Charming and Sewing Club member Heaven Paulhill said. “Other volunteers might have something else going on, but Ms. Ann is always going to be there. You can never get away from her!”

Heaven followed in her sister’s footsteps, but not before being kickstarted by the exceptional volunteer, Ms. Ann, who’s guidance over the past two years has helped Heaven “grow into a better person” and “become more social”.

“Ms. Ann basically dragged me into 4-H,” Heaven said. “If you ever need her, she’s always willing to help. She’ll just pop up at any moment.”

With a bright green fire burning under her shoes like none other, 4-H volunteerism doesn’t end with just Ms. Ann, and she’s ready to help build up the next generation of leaders.

“Come on! It’s not hard to do, you just have to give up a couple of hours a month and teach the kids,” Ann said. “I will show you the way! I got all the information. You can stay right beside me.”



For more information on joining the 4-H family of selfless service and endless growth, reach out to your County Extension Office or visit [texas4-h.tamu.edu](http://texas4-h.tamu.edu).