

Helping Hands for Wildfire Recovery

Submitted By: Charlene Miller, Director/4-H Youth Agent, KSRE/Butler County

“.....I pledge my heart to greater loyalty, my hands to large service for my club, my community, my county and my world.....I believe in the future of ag....I believe in leadership from ourselves....I believe that American agriculture can and will hold true to the best traditions of our national life and that I can exert an influence in my home and community, which will stand solid for my part in that inspiring task.”

The weekend of March 25th, the 4-H moto and FFA Creed were prevalent and integrated well as youth from Butler County 4-H, Bluestem FFA and Flinthills FFA teamed up and headed west to Ashland, KS. The damage and devastation from the Starbucks Fire was huge and recovery will be ongoing for years. When the fires settled, Charlene Miller, Butler County 4-H Youth Agent teamed up with Skyler Myrick Flinthills FFA Advisor, along with Kasie Kieffer and Barb McCaffree Bluestem FFA Advisors to gather donations and put together a work team to take to Clark County.

Upon arriving in Ashland, the teams went to the Ashland Christian Camp which served as our housing and base camp until we left. We were greeted by wonderfully kind volunteer coordinators who ran the check in and volunteers like a well-oiled machine. Tears were shed by some as we arrived with a semi loaded with equipment and fencing supplies, 4 other vehicles loaded with a tractor, bob cat, ATV's, welding material and more fencing supplies. Our teams were quickly placed with multiple families and we were off to their property to begin work and do what we could in the short amount of time we were there.

While we were there, one of your youth helped unload square bales of hay at a local ranch while the remainder of our 40 plus member team helped with approximately 20 miles of fence. Those 20 miles included anything from building new fence to cleaning up the fire ravaged fence. The clean-up meant that our workers took clips off posts, pulled posts, rolled the burnt wire, along with gathering up and loading all those items onto trailers. Building new fence, meant drilling holes for and concreting in pipe corners and braces, stringing new wire, and setting new fence posts....all having to meet the Government specifications for those hoping to receive some support back for the huge financial losses they incurred. When you look at what we accomplished Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning, we know it's only a drop in the bucket compared to the big picture. But our youth learned and witnessed firsthand in disasters like this, every bit helps and begins to set the course for the next group of volunteers coming in.

Our hearts and hands reached out to help others, two of the very things that make our world we live in so great. We shared laughter and tears, listened to their stories, built new friendships, and no doubt left a piece of our heart with them. We met amazing volunteer coordinators and families that opened their hands and hearts and welcomed us, complete strangers, into their lives to help them as much as we could.

(Look for a full story in an upcoming addition of the Butler County Times Gazette.)



We Pledged Our Hearts and Hands,
We Believe in the Future of Ag, Leadership and Ourselves.
We Came Together as 4-H & FFA to Help the Clark County Community.
Butler County 4-H, Bluestem FFA & Flinthills FFA



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