



Kids' Community

Working Out Youth Obesity With 4-H

(NAPSA)—Weighing more than 200 pounds at age 12, Rachael Lambin, a 4-Her from Garnerville, Nev., was determined to make a change. Rachael learned about nutrition, lost 50 pounds with diet and exercise, and created a 4-H program called HOPE.

HOPE, Helping Obese People through Education, reaches out to other youths coping with obesity. “I started HOPE to educate people about obesity and how it contributes to health problems. I felt terrible about myself—I was not respected and didn’t feel how a normal kid should feel,” said Rachael, now 15, “I see other kids who are how I was a few years ago and I want to help.”

Rachael started gaining weight in elementary school. Mandatory snack periods offered only junk food, gym class was held just twice a week and recess didn’t provide any chance for physical activity. Her exercise-induced asthma made it even harder to be active. Rachael’s self-esteem dropped so much that she began home-schooling rather than face the teasing from kids at school.

Through a 4-H project, Rachael learned that she could take care of herself through diet, exercise and rethinking the way she approached food. She found out that even mild obesity increases a person’s risk of having diabetes, heart disease, respiratory disorders and other medical conditions. When she saw that more than nine million children and adolescents are obese in America today, she started HOPE.

Through HOPE, Rachael gives workshops on nutrition and self-esteem and holds exercise clinics. She teaches youths healthy habits with charts, demonstrates exercises



4-Her Rachael Lambin works to educate others about healthy lifestyles.

and brings in a personal trainer to measure weight and body fat. Youths are encouraged to teach their families what they’ve learned, or return with their parents and siblings to learn together. HOPE is held at health clubs, school gyms and community health fairs.

Rachael has helped hundreds of youths embrace healthier lifestyles and has also started a program that helps kids with asthma.

“I learned that just because you have asthma or another type of illness, doesn’t mean that you have to be overweight,” reported Rachael. “Now I am 50 pounds lighter and am continuing to lose weight and get fit. I believe in myself and I want to show others like me that they can do it too!”

4-H is a community of young people across America who are learning leadership, citizenship and life skills. Learn how you too can get fit and healthy with 4-H at www.4husa.org.