

'Just' a farm kid is a job prospect extraordinaire

While attending a job fair last week where Taylor Newspapers manned a booth, I met lots of job seekers.

Some brought resumes. Others just moseyed by, picked up the free stuff on our table and asked a few questions.

But one young woman created a memory for me.

She was a senior in high school, seeking summer employment before starting to a community college in the fall.

"Are you hiring?" she asked.

We said probably not, but we're always looking for good resources, such as part-time photographers and writers.

"We'd be happy to take your resume," I told her.

Then she said something that stuck with me. "I'm afraid my resume wouldn't be too impressive," she said. "I've spent all my life working on my parents' farm. I go to school in the daytime and do chores morning and night."

Whoa.

I told her to go home and create a resume, and write down exactly what she had told me.

As a farm girl, one who has driven a tractor since she was 12, one who has cleaned out barns, scooped grain until her back ached, fed chickens, pigs, cattle and goats --- this girl knows the meaning of work.

She knows about dependability and getting jobs done on time. The morning school bus won't wait until a farm kid finishes those chores. They'll be done on time or the young student will miss that all-important ride.

A young person who has put up hay, helped her dad and mother in the farrowing house or candled eggs has something more than words to jot on a resume.

Farm kids don't need to take art appreciation classes in school. They witness picturesque landscapes, sunrises and changes in seasons as they grow up.

They ride horses, drive four-wheelers and neatly stack big bales at the edge of meadows.

They fish in their ponds, learn to handle firearms and shoot deer, rabbits and turkeys.

They work as a family in the garden, raising, harvesting and canning their own vegetables.

Farm kids learn to keep good records on their livestock. When they raise and sell a 4-H calf, they can calculate the profit gained after deducting feed, vet medicines and other costs.

They typically know how to stand on their own two feet and give project talks, or give oral reasons for judging a class of lambs or swine.

Many of them earn leadership roles in church, 4-H or FFA, so they can moderate a meeting to perfection using Roberts Rules of Order.

They learn early in life the tactics of conservation --- how to keep topsoil from washing into Oklahoma; how to plant wind barriers and how to recognize grass-cheating weeds that need sprayed.

Any farm kid can handle a paint brush, spade a garden, pull worms from tomato plants, gather hen eggs, mow grass, groom animals and take one grain of wheat, bite down on it and determine if it's time to start the combine.

And, this girl thinks her resume might be lackluster?

Oh, I don't think so.

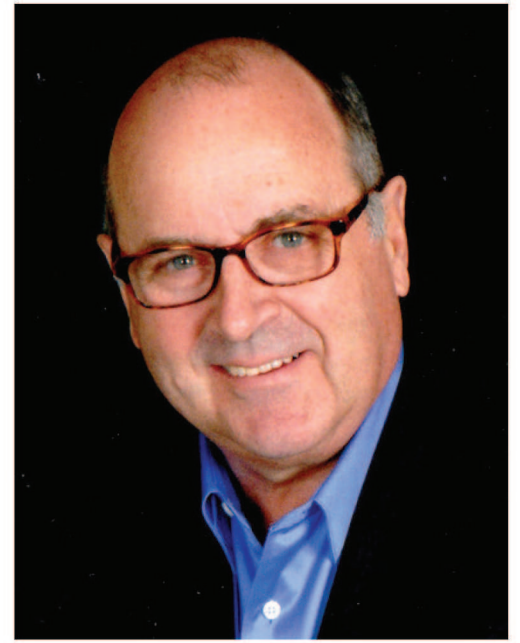
Put her to work in a hardware store, newspaper office or grocery store, and she will enter the front door looking for things to do.

It's that way with kids who grow up as farm and ranch kids.

Their resume is written on their foreheads and in their hearts.

They should never apologize.

Never.



By Rudy Taylor
TAYLOR NEWSPAPERS

Rudy Taylor is publisher of three weekly newspapers in southeast Kansas. He also takes pride in being a young farmer during his teenage years and a proud member of FFA.



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