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## Glenview Clovers take to farm life

Submitted By: Heather Leszczewicz | Staff Writer

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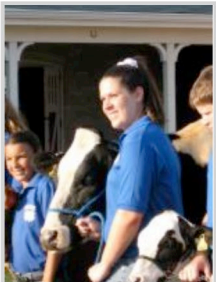
It took some pushing and pulling to get Allie to move.

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The group of Clovers gather for a group shot.

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Timothy Campbell, 12, of Northfield walks Joshua around the farm.

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Stephanie Slivka, 16, of Glenview poses with the other dairy calf handlers.

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Gemma Abbott, 7, of Northbrook, reads off her script as her brother Nick, 10 and Bella, 10, hold onto their sheep Willy.

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Olivia Rowlands, 15, of Glenview leads Luna back to the barn.

When it came to practicing her walk, Allie would not be *mooooooved*. The *little* calf dug in her hooves while 13-year-old Cody Slivka and 9-year-old Cassidy Price pushed and pulled. Allie soon relented, allowing her young handlers to show her off to a small audience.

Cody and Cassidy, two members of the 4-H club the Glenview Clovers, were prepping for the Lake County Fair on June 26. The club focuses on leadership and responsibility and is based at Wagner Farm in Glenview. Club members have the chance to raise farm animals to show at the fair during the last week of July each year.

This year there are 44 youths participating at the fair, but whether they are grooming cattle or walking sheep, the experience the participants get will help them beyond the show ring.

"It's the kind of a club where kids from the suburbs and city can have a farm experience," said 16-year-old Stephanie Slivka, a first-year club member.

The Glenview native acknowledges that 4-H isn't the type of club a teenager from the suburbs typically joins.

"All of my friends think it's so funny I own a cow," she said. "Kids think it's hilarious since I live in the North Shore."

Glenview Clovers leader and Wagner Farm Director Todd Price said he was somewhat wary when the club started six years ago. He wasn't sure if the North Shore kids would be able to cut it, but he admits he was proven wrong from the start.

"I was a 10-year 4-H'er and it was the highlight of summer in Iowa for me," he said. "I wanted to give the kids [here] a chance and it took, it took really well."

The club has 44 youth members, two leaders and a group of parent volunteers. The kids share in the care and upkeep of five calves, six pigs and 12 sheep that are kept at the farm.

Price said that being part of the club is hard work, but the kids are up to the task. Originally he didn't think they'd able deal with some of the responsibilities, but now the kids muck stalls, carry water and aren't afraid to get dirty.

Stephanie said club members do chores around the farm, take care of the animals, participate in leadership activities and work on projects during the summer months.

Olivia Rowlands, 15, of Glenview has been part of the club for six years. In past years, she's worked with chickens and sheep. For the last four years she has been caring for the dairy cows. This year she's working with a calf named Luna.

And, though Rowlands said she loves working with the animals, she doesn't particularly like cleaning the stalls and getting water.

The work is time consuming and has it's moments, but she wouldn't trade the experience.

"You learn the importance of perseverance being here and seeing the outcome," she said.

Rowlands isn't the only member whose love of working with animals drew them to the club. Timothy Campbell, 12, of Northfield, and Cari Schuette, 11, of Wilmette, both profess to be animal lovers.

In his second year of membership, Campbell has been working with Joshua the lamb. While only in her first year Schuette is working with the pigs. Their chores include feeding their animals, making sure the water is full and walking them around the pen.

While the kids take care of the animals, Price said this isn't a club just for kids. There's a commitment for the parents too.

Marlene Balling of Glenview comes to the farm with daughter Alexandra, who works with the sheep.

"It's a learning experience for both of us," she said. "I'm definitely supportive of her and encourage her."

Julie Tracy, another Clovers leader, said the club is amazingly fun and everyone works to the best of his or her abilities although sometimes it's "organized chaos." But she believes all the club members get so much from being in the club.

Price agrees. He said the club members are learning how to work with one another and are becoming more informed about the agricultural process.

"We're not going to raise any farmers, but they will be better informed consumers," he said.

And, by late July, all the time, care and effort the members have put in throughout the summer will show at the main event of the summer, the Lake County Fair July 22-25. The calves, which are on loan from [Golden Oaks Farm](#) in Wauconda, will get shown and rather than hitting the auction block to become a steak on someone's plate, they will go back to the farm after the show. The sheep and pigs may not be as lucky as they will be auctioned off at the fair.

Even so, for the kids there are more important reasons to participate than just showing at the fair, and for Stephanie Slivka friendship and fun are at the top of list.

"It's fun. You do this for the fun of it. You learn a lot," she said. "Now some of my best friends are in the club. You spend your entire summer with them on the farm and you're always together."

Want to learn how you can participate in the Glenview Clovers next year or visit the Clovers' animals before the fair? Stop by Wagner Farm, 1510 Wagner Road in Glenview. Anyone interested must be between the ages of 8 and 18. The club begins meetings during the winter months and the animals come to the farm in spring.