



# NEW 4-H LEADERS HANDBOOK TOPICS

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## WHAT IS 4-H?

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**4-H is a youth development program of the Texas Agricultural Extension Service. It focuses on the needs, concerns and interests of young people. Its aim is to help youth gain a positive self-concept, rational social behavior, knowledge and problem-solving capabilities. Young people between the ages of 9 and 19 from all ethnic, or cultural groups, regardless of geographic location may participate.**

**Through planned individual projects, meetings, group activities and participation in different events, members develop new skills, learn cooperation, develop leadership abilities, improve their citizenship and have fun.**

**A 4-H member is any youth who enrolls and participates in a planned sequence of learning experiences. Members are guided by Extension staff members or trained volunteer leaders.**

**The minimum criteria for membership includes participating in six or more learning activities 20 to 60 minutes long. The length of the learning event should be adapted to the attention span appropriate to the age of youth involved, and can take place once a week or when appropriate. Youth participation is the key to 4-H. The learning by doing model of education works best when young people are fully involved. The greater the involvement, the greater the educational benefit.**

## WHAT ARE PARTICIPATION AVENUES IN 4-H?

**Youth can participate in 4-H programs in numerous ways. Several avenues of participation are available to promote youth participation in 4-H:**

### 1. 4-H CLUBS

**An organized group, meeting at regularly scheduled times with one or more volunteer leaders and elected youth officers. 4-H clubs normally meet on a 9 to 12**

month basis with one or more meetings per month. Several types of clubs can be organized:

a. **Community or neighborhood clubs** consist of members who live in reasonable proximity to each other. These clubs often offer a wide variety of 4-H projects to the participating members.

b. **Project clubs** are organized around a common interest in a particular project or group of projects. Project clubs can be organized to learn about gardening, agriculture, animal husbandry, astronomy and other areas of interest to youth.

c. **School clubs** are organized in community schools. Project activities are usually conducted outside of school hours and can be organized around one single project for all or several members. These clubs are usually led by teachers or other volunteers.

## **2. SHORT-TERM GROUPS**

4-H members work on short term projects that are completed in six or more meetings. Each group works on a specific topic or project. Groups work under the supervision of an adult volunteer or teen leader. Currently, two major types of short-term groups are recognized in this category:

a. **School curriculum enrichment:** through cooperative arrangements between schools and the Texas Agricultural Extension Service, school teachers present Extension-developed learning materials in the classroom. These educational experiences are designed to enhance the educational programs of the schools.

b. **Special interest projects:** usually these groups organize for the duration of the project instruction under the leadership of adult or teen volunteers. Groups can have a formal structure or not. At the end of each program, youth are invited to become involved in either additional special interest projects or organized clubs. An example in this category is the Expanded Nutrition Program for Youth. In this program, youth groups receive instruction on food and good nutrition practices using special educational resources.

## **3. 4-H CLOVER KIDS FOR YOUTH UNDER 9**

This program is affiliated to 4-H and is specially designed for youth ages five to eight. A "4-H Clover Kids" group can be organized within a regular 4-H club.

## **4. 4-H ACTIVITIES**

Many types of activities and projects are available to 4-H members. Every 4-H member is expected to complete at least one Extension sponsored project every year. In addition to project activity, 4-H youth are expected to participate in club

organization and management, community service projects and leadership development. Many young people attend leadership programs, competitive or educational events, and camp programs as part of their 4-H experience.

## **WHO SPONSORS 4-H?**

4-H is sponsored jointly by the Texas Agricultural Extension Service, The Texas A&M University System, Extension Service of the United States Department of Agriculture, (USDA) and county commissioner's courts. Many private donors also provide either financial or in-kind program support.

Volunteer leaders are the cornerstone of the 4-H program in the community. They conduct educational activities with youth and serve in other specialized roles. Orientation and assistance with the total 4-H program is provided by county Extension Agents in each county. State and area 4-H and youth specialists support County Extension Agents with materials as well as technical and management assistance.

## **THE ORGANIZATION**

Local 4-H members, parents and volunteer 4-H leaders determine objectives and establish annual goals for their 4-H club or group. These goals are normally established on the basis of those goals identified for the 4-H program at the county level. Most counties have a 4-H subcommittee concerned with overall planning, program direction and support for Extension 4-H and youth work. The subcommittee's work is coordinated by the Extension agent in the county.

Many counties also have a county adult leaders association which serves primarily as a vehicle for providing leader training and support of the 4-H program. Furthermore, many counties have a county 4-H council composed of one or more representatives of each 4-H club or group in the county to enhance county-wide coordination and participation in planning and conducting 4-H activities.

## **4-H EMBLEM AND COLORS**

The 4-H club emblem is a four-leaf clover with the letter "H" on each leaf. The four "H's" stand for head, heart, hands and health. Leaves of the clover are green and the "H's" are white. The white is for purity. Green is nature's most common color and is symbolic of youth, life and growth.



In Spanish-speaking countries where 4-H programs have been established the organization is known as 4-S. Each letter means (S) Salud, (S) Saber, (S) Sentir and (S) Servir.

## **4-H MOTTO**

**"To Make the Best Better"**

## **4-H PLEDGE**

**"I pledge:**

**My Head to clearer thinking,**

**My Heart to greater loyalty,**

**My Hands to larger service, and**

**My Health to better living,**

**for my club, my community, my country,  
and my world."**

## **4-H PRAYER**

**Help me, O God, to live  
so that the world may be  
a little better because  
Thou didst make me.**



## **4-H VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**

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**Volunteer 4-H leaders are the key to successful 4-H and youth programs. They help young people develop into responsible and productive individuals. Working with youth is exciting and challenging, and it provides personal satisfaction. Young people do not develop their understanding, attitudes and skills overnight. They need and want guidance and encouragement as they strive to discover their own abilities. Because young people are lively and active, 4-H leaders often find use for several different kinds of leadership skills. The Texas 4-H and youth development program has a place for you. You can contribute in many ways. Various volunteer leadership roles are available to you. These leadership opportunities are briefly described below.**

### **CLUB MANAGER**

**The club manager is the organizational leader of a 4-H club or group. He or she provides leadership to the organization and operation of the 4-H club.**

### **ASSISTANT CLUB MANAGER**

**The assistant helps the club manager in needed areas and assumes responsibility for one of the main functions of the club.**

### **COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

**4-H committee chairs coordinate and lead members of different committees organized to conduct 4-H activities.**

### **PROJECT LEADERS**

**The 4-H project leader is responsible for helping youth learn through their active participation in a specific project. They also serve as advisors for new project group members.**

### **4-H ACTIVITY LEADERS**

**4-H activity leaders are responsible for helping youth learn through their active participation in one or more activities available in the 4-H and youth**

development program. For example: recreation, music, method demonstrations, share the fun, exhibitions, field trips, community service, exchange programs, recognition programs and fund raising activities.

#### **PROJECT OR ACTIVITY CHAIRPERSON**

The project or activity chairperson provides overall leadership in a specific project or activity. Their primary role is to help other leaders in a given project or activity, so that they, in turn, can help youth develop abilities in that specific area.

#### **NEW MEMBER AND FAMILY GREETER**

The greeter is responsible for providing orientation to new members and families, encouraging them to participate in the 4-H program during their first year.

#### **4-H YOUTH ADVISOR**

The 4-H youth advisor is an adult that helps youth identify their goals, develop their objectives, plan and carry out a program. The advisor also functions as a facilitator of discussion among the youth.

#### **4-H TEEN LEADERS**

Teen leaders are young people between the ages of 16 and 19 that assume responsibility for working with a group or club under the supervision of an adult advisor.

#### **4-H JUNIOR LEADERS**

Junior leaders are 4-H members that work with adult leaders serving in specific functions in the 4-H club or group.

Once the 4-H program has been organized (with the efforts of adults and volunteers and with support and orientation from Extension personnel) and the youth have become acquainted, annual elections for club officers should be held.

#### **CLUB OFFICERS**

Club officers are responsible for planning, carrying out and evaluating all activities and meetings of the club. Together with the club manager, officers form the executive committee to guide club work every year. The club may have up to eight officers. The offices are: President, First Vice-President in charge of programs, Second Vice-President in charge of recreation, Third Vice-President in charge of membership, Council Delegate, Secretary, Treasurer and Reporter.

Reference: This publication is an edited and updated version of the "Texas 4-H Leaders Handbook".



# UNDERSTANDING YOUTH

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In order to help youth become useful and responsible citizens, one must understand their needs and interests. All youth have needs, desires, interests, values, strengths and weaknesses that affect their behavior. All youth have different personalities, but they are alike in many ways. Certain needs and interests are shared by all youth.

## BASIC NEEDS OF YOUTH

### YOUTH NEED TO BELONG

Youth need to feel accepted, not only by other members, but the leader too. The leader should accept each member as they are and guide them in the best direction. The leader should see that each member gains a place of importance in and with a group and has a feeling of belonging. Youth will continue participating in a group as long as they have friends in it and feel accepted.

### YOUTH WANT TO DEVELOP USEFUL SKILLS

Youth need and want to develop skills. Youth need opportunities to learn how to do things well. Most of all, they want to develop the skills necessary to get along with others. It is very important for youth to feel comfortable in a group.

### YOUTH NEED RECOGNITION

This is an important need in a youngster's life. A spoken "well done" is often sufficient reward. Youth need a great deal of encouragement if they are to maintain their interests. Every youth has an innate desire to serve others and should be given opportunities to provide community service.



## **YOUTH NEED RESPONSIBILITIES IN PROPORTION TO THEIR AGE**

The level of responsibility given to youth is contingent on their age and experience. The younger members have about all they can do at their age level if they learn to be responsible for their project and participate in their club meetings. Adolescents need and like freedom of choice. They have developed to the point where they like to make decisions, not only for themselves, but for the group. With the older adolescents, the leader should act as an advisor, allowing members to assume the major responsibility under his guidance. Leadership jobs offer opportunities for growth and development.

## **YOUTH NEED AFFECTION AND LOVE**

This is as essential to personality development as is milk to the growing infant. Youth need to know that they are wanted and loved despite their shortcomings. In personality development, the leader must function for the group as a whole and for the individual. Balance is the key word. Youth growing in a balanced way are happy and comfortable. Leaders must have a great interest in the individual and be guided by keen insight and understanding of youth's problems.

## **SUGGESTIONS FOR LEADERS**

Developmental stages of 4-H age youth have been broken down into the following age groups: 9 to 11, 12 to 14 and 15-19. The suggestions given for each of these groups below are to help leaders work more effectively with youth:

### **AGES 9 to 11**

#### **A. Physical Development**

- 1. Provide active tasks. These are important to the physical development of this age group.**
- 2. Design individual and group activities. Select activities that develop an understanding and appreciation of a growing and changing body.**

#### **B. Mental Development**

- 1. Plan meetings with a maximum of 30 minutes of mental activities and provide variety.**
- 2. Identify short-term projects that can be accomplished in about six to eight meetings.**
- 3. Explain the "whys" of projects or activities as well as the "hows" to satisfy curiosity.**

- 4. Promote independence and individuality by planning activities that permit youth to work independently of parents and other adults.**
- 5. Provide questions that will lead to self-evaluation.**
- 6. Suggest reading materials at fourth-, fifth- and sixth-grade levels to encourage continued development of reading skills.**

#### **C. Social Development**

- 1. Design project and group activities that will develop peer-group participation and relationships.**
- 2. Note that small groups of 10 to 12 youth of the same sex are usually best with this age group.**
- 3. Suggest choices for social activities that require group decision making.**
- 4. Plan programs that include parents, leaders and youth in open interaction.**

#### **D. Emotional Development**

- 1. To insure success and enhance feelings of competence, confidence and self-esteem, provide projects and activities that are within the capabilities of the members.**
- 2. Promote competitive events with clear rules and regulations. Avoid rigorous competition.**
- 3. Plan projects and group activities in which all members can participate and feel accepted.**
- 4. Provide opportunities for "safe" decision making, that is, where the consequences of errors in judgement or reasoning are neither serious nor cause for embarrassment.**

#### **E. Vocational Development**

- 1. Provide a variety of activities that help youth explore their capacities and talents.**
- 2. Suggest work-place visits that are related to the project. Allow participants to see what workers do.**
- 3. List careers related to the project or activity and suggest ways they can**

be explored.

## **AGES 12-14**

### **A. Physical Development**

- 1. Plan competitive activities that do not pit males against females. Females are more physically mature than boys at this age.**
- 2. Projects should be action-oriented.**
- 3. Identify project activities that develop skill coordination and enhance the individual's understanding and appreciation of a growing and changing body. Avoid physical activities that emphasize awkwardness.**
- 4. Design health and grooming activities that help youth acquire poise and self-confidence and develop self-esteem.**

### **B. Mental Development**

- 1. Provide more opportunities for 4-H members to determine and set their own goals.**
- 2. Provide support when youth need it and request it.**
- 3. To develop problem-solving capabilities, provide experiences involving complex ideas and relationships.**

### **C. Social Development**

- 1. Plan projects so that participants can elect whether or not those activities should be coeducational. Note that boys and girls may differ sharply in social development and their desire to be involved in coeducational activities.**
- 2. Provide opportunities and ideas for group and/or self-determined projects.**
- 3. Suggest opportunities and activities for democratic group decision making.**
- 4. Plan social experiences that enhance self confidence in peer group relationships.**

### **D. Emotional Development**

- 1. To continue building self-concept, suggest project activities that assure an adequate level of success.**
- 2. Prepare opportunities that permit youth to discuss the physical development of their bodies as a natural and normal process.**
- 3. Provide opportunities for discussion of human sexuality to ease anxiety associated with a developing body and self-image.**

#### **E. Vocational Development**

- 1. Suggest ways to explore project areas based on personal interests.**
- 2. Provide opportunities to discuss the personal meaning of work.**
- 3. Identify the potential for part-time jobs associated with the project.**

### **Age 15 to 19**

#### **A. Physical Development**

- 1. Suggest varied physical activities to meet diverse interest and maturity levels.**
- 2. Design activities which strengthen male and female roles.**
- 3. Focus some activities on the physical self to help youth accept who they are.**

#### **B. Mental Development**

- 1. Allow youth to set their own goals, make their own plans, implement them and evaluate their results.**
- 2. Promote opportunities for youth to discuss topics they like and encourage them to express their values.**
- 3. To develop creativity and gain new experiences, suggest opportunities to try something new, different and unknown.**

#### **C. Social Development**

- 1. Develop opportunities for youth to perform adult social roles and functions in community agencies and institutions.**
- 2. Provide opportunities for youth and parental interaction to enhance**

family communication.

3. Use projects that teach cooperation and principles of equality.
4. Recommend roles for junior or teen leaders.
5. Provide opportunities to assume roles in areas such as music, drama, leadership and citizenship.

#### **D. Emotional Development**

1. Suggest ideas that develop the acceptance of body and appearance through clothing and grooming.
2. Provide opportunities for success that will help youth overcome feelings of inadequacy and inferiority.
3. Promote group discussions that address issues of concern to youth.

#### **E. Vocational Development**

1. Plan tours to visit work locations to see what workers do.
2. Design activities where youth can examine their interests, abilities, values and needs, and relate them to occupational opportunities.
3. Suggest part-time jobs to promote self-sufficiency in youth.
4. Suggest visits to colleges, universities and technical schools to explore opportunities to prepare for various occupations.

Reference: This publication is an edited and updated version of the "Texas 4-H Leaders Handbook".



# ARRANGING FOR LEARNING

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4-H participation influences the way young people think, act and feel. Youth participate in 4-H activities when they are fun and interesting. As a 4-H leader, you have tremendous influence in determining the learning that takes place within your 4-H club or group. Leaders also have the task of making the learning experiences attractive to youth. Here are some important learning principles to use in working with 4-H youth.

## PRINCIPLES OF LEARNING

1. Learning occurs best in an atmosphere of warmth and acceptance.
2. Youth must have project or activity goals clearly in mind.
3. The ability to learn varies with each youth.
4. For adequate learning to occur, Motivation is necessary.
5. Young people must participate in selecting their learning activities.
6. Self-evaluation is the most meaningful evaluation.
7. Complex tasks are done in steps, from the most basic to the complex.
8. Use of multiple learning strategies enhances learning - auditory, visual, tactile, kinesthetic.

When you incorporate these principles into your 4-H program you will be "arranging for learning." The central job for a leader is to help the member learn. Some of the recommended methods for working with youth are classified in the following three categories:

**DOING:** Actual experience (4-H Projects), working with models, judging, dramatic participation, discussions, field trips, tours and demonstrations.

**SEEING:** Exhibits, pictures, maps, movies, slides, filmstrips, posters and graphs.

**LISTENING:** Radio, recordings, illustrated talks, and lectures.

Successful leaders use a variety of learning experiences for their club, but they select as many as possible from the "doing" category. The question for the leader is then: How can I present the information so that youth become interested and take action rather than just listen? The steps outlined in the following section should improve the likelihood that the member will understand and apply an idea.

## **STEPS IN TEACHING**

### **1. GETTING THE LEARNER'S ATTENTION**

Club members are seldom aware of the range of things they will learn in their projects. Leaders need to direct participants toward new project-related ideas and experiences.

### **2. STIMULATING THE LEARNER'S INTEREST**

Once attention has been captured, the leader may appeal to the members' basic needs and interests to promote consideration of the idea. Step by step the leader explains to the group how the new idea, skill or activity will benefit them. Present one idea at a time. Make the presentation short, attractive, and understandable.

### **3. AROUSING THE MEMBERS' DESIRE FOR INFORMATION**

The leader must stimulate the members' interest until they make a decision to participate in a learning experience personally. The role of the leader is to help youth perceive utility in the information and experiences given to them as well as in the way in which the activity might fulfill personal needs or interests.

### **4. CONVINCING THE MEMBERS TO ACT**

The learner must understand what is involved in the project or activity as well as how it applies to him or her personally. The leader makes sure that the experience is fun and easy to carry out. Leaders should remove all barriers that keep youth from acting and helping others.

### **5. PROMOTING EVALUATION AND SATISFACTION**

Leaders help members evaluate what they have accomplished. Leaders should encourage youth to share their successes among themselves and express their admiration when appropriate.

Leaders can teach youth many things they may not know they need to learn. In your work with youth, study the teaching steps mentioned above and think creatively about what you will present and teach.

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# TEACHING TECHNIQUES

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Leaders should know how to use a variety of teaching methods and techniques to help youth learn. Leaders should ask themselves what they want to teach and what they should do to help members understand. One cannot know the smell of a flower, simply by reading about it. Neither can one judge the texture of a soil just by looking at it. The five senses (sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch) are the gateway to the mind. From childhood, we all learn through these five senses. Try using the five senses when teaching youth. Watch the reactions of the members of the group to judge if they are understanding what they are being told. If the youth seem confused or are no longer paying attention try to explain the topic using other techniques. It is important that you know each member. What teaching techniques are available to you and how can you use them? Experience in the use of these techniques comes only with practice. Several teaching techniques that you can use are outlined below:

## 1. LECTURE

- a) Usually the teacher speaks to groups from prepared notes without visual aids or opportunity for group questions.
- b) Useful when new facts or information are presented. The lecture method may be used for a short period of time.
- c) it is recommended to tell members before you begin that you are going to talk for a while and that they will be active in discussing what they heard.
- d) Combine this technique with others such as a small group discussion or the question answer technique to allow the group express their opinion.



## **2. ILLUSTRATED TALK**

- a) **An offshoot of the lecture technique where the teacher supports the talk with such things as drawings, posters, copies of articles and other materials.**
- b) **Drawings or posters need not be professional art pieces; only interesting and clear. For example, in entomology, rather than just talking about the various shapes and distinguishing characteristics of insects, sketch them on a large sheet of paper or blackboard or show an actual specimen or picture.**
- c) **Many times the item discussed is in the members' guide, and you can have them follow along.**

## **3. DISCUSSION**

- a) **This technique provides an opportunity for each one to express ideas.**
- b) **Members can be divided into smaller groups and given different topics to discuss.**
- c) **This technique enables members to share experiences, ideas and information with each other.**
- d) **Members get involved and are likely to learn more because of this involvement, assuming that they had something to contribute at the beginning of the discussion.**
- e) **The discussion must have a defined direction. The group should know:**
  - (1) What topic will be discussed.**
  - (2) How to form teams.**
  - (3) How to conduct the discussion.**
  - (4) How much time will be allotted for discussion.**
  - (5) How the group's work will be reported.**

## **4. QUESTION AND ANSWER TECHNIQUE**

The use of the question and answer technique is a quick and efficient way to share the knowledge the group has. Questions from the leader can stimulate the group to center its attention and thoughts on the subject. A question and answer session may take place in different ways:

- a) The leader may ask the question and address it specifically to a member of the group.
- b) The leader may draw questions from the members and he or a resource person, may answer them.
- c) The leader may draw questions from the group, then turn the question back to the group for an answer.

## **5. DEMONSTRATION**

- a) This technique is also known as method demonstration. Basically, the teacher shows youth how to do something. For example: how to change a tire, prepare a recipe or make a tie knot.
- b) Another kind of demonstration is the result demonstration. It is a way of teaching good practices. This technique allows the teacher to visually demonstrate the results that can be obtained from experimenting with objects, plants, etc.. It could be demonstrated, for example, what happens to a white flower when blue dye is added to the water. This technique is a most effective teaching tool.

## **6. WORK SESSION OR PRACTICAL EXERCISE**

- a) This method can be used together with any of the others because it allows youth to "learn by doing".
- b) The work session is the backbone of 4-H work. Members, under the guidance of leaders, can test and perfect their new learning. For example: After having demonstrated to a group how to change a tire, allow members to practice.

## **7. EXPERIMENTATION**

- a) This is a successful technique for 4-H members when based on individual or group study. Here, we see if our ideas will work.

## **8. TOURS AND HOME VISITS**

- a) This technique is especially helpful in projects that cannot be transported readily to the club meeting, such as crops, gardening, livestock, home

improvement, and landscaping.

- b) A visit by the leader and fellow members can provide an opportunity for constructive suggestions.
- c) Tours can also be arranged to view long-term result demonstrations, that is, places using recommended practices.

## **10. EXHIBITS**

- a) This method consists of sharing a learning experience with others. In an exhibit, one demonstrates or talks about a topic related to a specific project.
- b) An exhibit is a project activity useful for showing others what 4-H youth are learning in their projects.

Reference: This publication is an edited and updated version of the "Texas 4-H Leaders Handbook".



# PLANNING THE ANNUAL 4-H PROGRAM

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A well-planned program gives direction to 4-H throughout the year. Advanced planning outlines each person's responsibilities and gives them ample time to prepare. Good planning:

1. Allows each member to be a part of decisions affecting the club.
2. Allows each member specific jobs during the year.
3. Helps assure a balanced program with a variety of events.
4. Permits families to participate in 4-H events.
5. Allows adequate preparation for meetings and events.
6. Includes wide participation of members and volunteers.
7. Helps assure the kind of program that 4-H members, leaders and parents want.

## CONSIDER THE SITUATION

1. Consider the members' ages, where they live and what they do. Remember to consider their involvement with other activities and organizations.
2. Study the community: schools, businesses and people. How can 4-H work with other groups to develop a good program and improve the community?
3. Refer to the current emphasis in the county 4-H program, noting the training available, county or district events and activities or emerging areas of interest and support.

## ESTABLISH CLUB GOALS

Goals state what leaders, members and parents would like to see the club accomplish. They should flow from the interests of the club members and the other considerations stated above. Here are some suggested club goals:

1. Promote 4-H and recruit new 4-H members.
2. Involve parents more in program activities.
3. Learn more about the 4-H program in other counties.
4. Participate in community service activities.
5. Participate in project training meetings.
6. Receive more assistance from project leaders.
7. Promote youth participation in local 4-H programs and events.

Once specific goals are defined, leaders should guide club members in determining the specific things they must do to achieve each goal. For example to accomplish the goal of developing greater parent involvement, a committee might plan a parents' night, or plan visits with each parent at their homes.

## **DETERMINE ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS**

1. Keep club goals in mind in order to select appropriate activities.
2. Decide which goals should receive greater emphasis.
3. Select activities compatible to youth interest.
4. Work with committees during the year to share responsibilities among everyone.

## **PREPARE THE PROGRAM PLAN**

1. Make sure the program is planned and approved by the club.
2. Keep good minutes when planning.

The complete plan for the year should be presented in simple writing and should be copied and distributed to each member, parent and leader in the group. An annual 4-H program typically should include the following activities:

1. A monthly meeting that takes places on a fixed date every month.
2. An educational field trip or presentation by special guest.
3. Recreational activities (games, songs, etc.) for each meeting.
4. Special events such as parties, dances or picnics.
5. At least one community service project.
6. Two or three projects lasting at least two months each.
7. One fund raising activity.
9. At least one opportunity for each member to make a presentation.
10. One club recognition activity.
11. One promotional activity during National 4-H week.
12. One meeting to plan the program for the following year.

New 4-H leaders or club managers can use publication #7 titled "The 4-H Club Meeting", which provides a model agenda for conducting club o project meetings. This will help establish a routine for conducting monthly meetings.

Reference: This publication is an edited and updated version of the "Texas 4-H Leaders Handbook".



# THE 4-H CLUB MEETING

Celina G. Wille, Ph. D.  
Extension 4-H & Youth Development Specialist



Club meetings are conducted by the leader or volunteer and the club executive committee. The meetings are specifically focused on activities related to the educational objectives set by the club. Regular meetings usually range from 30 minutes to 2 hours. They should have a definite starting and stopping time. Meetings should last only as long as is necessary to accomplish the purposes outlined in the agenda. Special meetings may be called as needed. Every part of a 4-H meeting is educational. Learning takes place from the moment members begin to arrive until they depart. It may be helpful to have some activities planned for early arrivals. Songs, games and puzzles could be used. Youth can also assist with setting up the room or other meeting needs. The typical 4-H meeting might include:

## OPENING

The meeting is called to order and a 4-H opening ceremony is held. This is a brief ceremony that includes the Pledge of Allegiance to the American flag and the 4-H motto, pledge and prayer. It is important to welcome new members and visitors. When appropriate, begin with an ice breaker or other games to set the stage for a dynamic environment.

## BUSINESS

The business portion of the meeting should be led by elected club officers, and it should be short and interesting. Club business should be handled in a manner that reflects a democratic process. Both parliamentary procedure and consensus decision making are common practices in clubs. Formal business should follow parliamentary procedures. Business meetings should only be held if they are needed, that is, when there is club business to transact.

The business session could include these elements: a) roll call, b) reading or review of minutes, c) treasurer's report, d) committee reports, project and activity reports and e) old and new business.

## **PROGRAM**

The program is the heart of the 4-H meeting. Involve 4-H members in planning and conducting each program. The program should be interesting to the entire group. Many ideas and methods could be used during the programs. These include: demonstrations, slide shows, videos or films, guest speakers, project training or orientation, panel discussions, field trips or any other element the membership views as important.

## **RECREATION**

All meetings should include some type of recreational activity. One of the main reasons that members belong to 4-H clubs is to have fun with other young people. The 4-H club provides a safe environment where youth can enjoy recreational activities important for their development. To provide a varied program include activities that allow youth to get acquainted, where both sexes males and females of different ages can participate. Well-rounded programs include a variety of activities: music, drama, small and large group activities, or quiet individual activities. Entertainment or recreation provided by members and guests enriches most activities. Social skills are learned by members quickly when they are involved and having fun together.

Providing for different ages and interests in a club is most easily accomplished by including a wide variety of programs and activities. You can also promote youth participation in leadership roles.

The following guide is suggested for your use in conducting your program at club meetings

Reference: This publication is an edited and updated version of the "Texas 4-H Leaders Handbook".

# 4-H PROGRAM

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Club or group \_\_\_\_\_

## 1) INTRODUCTION

Welcome

4-H Ceremony:

a) Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag

b) 4-H Motto

c) 4-H Pledge

d) 4-H Prayer

Ice breaker/mixer

## 2) BUSINESS SESSION

Next meeting \_\_\_\_\_

Roll call

Secretary's report

(Secretary reads minutes taken during the last meeting)

Treasurer's report

Reports by activities and project committees

Report of pending business

New business

3)

PROGRAM \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4)

RECREATION \_\_\_\_\_



# ROLL CALL

Club or group \_\_\_\_\_

## NAMES

1 \_\_\_\_\_

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2 \_\_\_\_\_

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3 \_\_\_\_\_

4 \_\_\_\_\_

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5 \_\_\_\_\_

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6 \_\_\_\_\_

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7 \_\_\_\_\_

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8 \_\_\_\_\_

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9 \_\_\_\_\_

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11 \_\_\_\_\_

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12 \_\_\_\_\_

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13 \_\_\_\_\_

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14

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15

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# EFFECTIVE 4-H MEETINGS

Celina G. Wille, Ph. D.  
Extension 4-H and Youth Development  
Specialist



As a 4-H volunteer, you will have different functions. An especially important task is to prepare interesting and effective meetings where youth can obtain the greatest educational benefit while having fun. Remember that you don't have to be a professional teacher. Any volunteer with a sincere desire to help in the positive development of youth has the ability to teach with enthusiasm.

The following are some recommendations that you can use to conduct effective meetings:

## 1. MAKE THE MEETING PLACE COMFORTABLE

At the meeting place, arrange chairs in a circle, making sure that everyone can see or hear properly.

## 2. GET THE MEMBERS' INTEREST

Use an attention getting device or activity to grab member interest. You could, for example, arrange a special exhibit. Roll call could involve kids responding with the name of their favorite food. You could also send in advance a postcard to the youth announcing the meeting. This may suggest to the members that something interesting and special has been prepared. An illustrated demonstration could also be planned or a list of topics for the meeting passed around to the members.

### **3. MEET THEM WHERE THEY ARE**

Using questions, brainstorming or a listing process can help you learn their level of knowledge, things they would like to know or learn and subjects they would like to discuss.

### **4. INVOLVE EVERY MEMBER**

Involve several members in setting up their meeting place, conducting games, songs and serving refreshments. The simple principle is "let the kids do it." That reinforces the 4-H way of learning by doing. Youth can also help with planning and making arrangements before the meeting.

### **5. MAKE EDUCATIONAL PRESENTATIONS PRACTICAL**

Try to work with the same type of equipment that can be found at home and that members will be able to use in their own project activities. Do not present photography or food preparation lessons using expensive or difficult to find materials. When explaining complex topics use models to explain. Use live animals or displays, whenever possible, when describing animals or objects.

### **6. TEACH BY ASSOCIATION OF IDEAS**

Parts of a bike and their functions can be learned more easily when members can relate the new information to something that is already known. A recipe can be more clearly understood if it is demonstrated or explained using terms that youth understand.

### **7. TEACH BASIC PRINCIPLES**

Rather than telling 4-H members participating in a nutrition project what kinds of food to eat, they should learn what nutrients are needed and their effects on their health.

### **8. USE A VARIETY OF TEACHING TECHNIQUES**

In a meeting related to pet grooming and hygiene for example, showing the tools to be used, discussing them, demonstrating them and having members practice with them provides multiple ways of learning. Discussing and summarizing the lesson adds a higher order of processing to aid retention.



# THE 4-H PROJECT

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As a leader, you will find that projects in 4-H are useful tools for teaching a wide variety of skills to young people. The primary objective of all projects is to help them become more capable adults by learning basic life skills like planning, setting goals, making decisions and evaluating alternatives. Leaders must understand the life skills development objective and support it through their actions. In preparing to carry out a project with the youth, leaders should keep in mind the importance of youth involvement in project planning.

An overall goal of 4-H is to help each member develop his or her capabilities to the fullest. Leaders must recognize that while they are teaching subject matter they are helping members understand themselves, their role in society, and the skills needed for living.

## PLANNING AND EVALUATING PROJECTS

Planning and evaluating are learning tools for the member and teaching tools for the leader. In order to help the members learn, the leader must know what they want to learn and what is already known about the project being selected.

Planning and evaluation are continuing processes with each member and each project. Members should be coached in the process of developing their own objectives for each program year, that is, the things they want to learn or accomplish. Periodically during the year, the member and the leader or a teen leader should review the plan, check progress and revise it as necessary. Stating goals that are achievable but challenging usually requires more guidance with younger members, and this provides a service opportunity for more advanced youth. Remember, these plans must meet the personal objectives of the member.

**Another part in the learning process is evaluation. This is the best way to show members that the leader is personally interested in each one and their progress. Knowing their leader's sincere interest in them, increases learning for the member.**

**Together, the leaders and 4-H members are in the best position to evaluate what has been learned about the project and assess personal growth . Parents can also help leaders and youth in the evaluation process. It is recommended that both the member and leader evaluate accomplishments. In the evaluation of a photography, sewing or animal project for example, it is important to ask what did the member learn. Using this method allows youth greater involvement in the evaluation process. It is much deeper and more personal than exhibit judging. Through this method, members learn that everyone has needs, some common to everyone and others specific to individuals. They also see that needs and values give meaningful direction to what we want to learn and how hard we are willing to work for it.**

**Learning increases when members set goals early in the project and have an idea of how they can benefit from the experience and the things they are learning.**

**As members grow in ability to identify personal wants, needs and values, they also gain a greater appreciation for their personal abilities. This helps them become more self directed individuals and helps them develop positive feelings of success.**

**Reference: This publication is an edited and updated version of the "Texas 4-H Leaders Handbook".**



# ORGANIZING YOUR 4-H PROJECT GROUP

Celina G. Wille, Ph. D.  
Extension 4-H and Youth Development Specialist



Project work is a method used in 4-H for leaders to teach and youth to learn new skills and gain new knowledge. Each project group should be organized in cooperation with the club's organizational leader. The following ideas should also be considered when planning your first project meetings:

1. Inform 4-H members about the project at the monthly club meeting. Get names and addresses of interested members and parents.
2. Encourage young people living in the area to select the project and join 4-H. Discuss the project with parents.
3. Invite 4-H'ers and parents to the project organization meeting.
4. Present outlines of what could be done, when and where the project group will meet and approximate number of meetings planned.
5. Ask a committee of parents and youth to help plan the project group meetings and activities to complete the project.
6. Ask parents to serve as leader helpers.
7. Explain that lessons to be covered at the project group meetings will be based on goals set by the 4-H members, parents and leaders.
8. Discuss possible community projects, activities and tours.
9. Discuss number, time, place and frequency of meetings.

10. Have each member tell what he/she plans to do and learn from this project.
11. Present the first lesson for members to begin their project work.
12. Discuss with the group and with each member what they will need to do before the next project meeting.

## **HOW OFTEN TO MEET**

**Meet as often as is necessary to complete the project. Many project groups meet once a week for 2 or 3 months until the projects are completed. Shorter projects usually involve the member building, making or repairing something. These projects should be completed quickly to maintain youth interest.**

**Other group projects can meet twice a month for 4 or 5 months. These could be gardening , public speaking, horticulture o animal raising projects. Some other groups meet once or twice a month for a year or until the projects are completed. These could be animal raising or leadership project groups.**

**When the project group begins and finishes its activities for the year depends upon plans and activities at the club and county levels. Project shows of various kinds are held by individual clubs and/or on a county basis. Projects usually are completed before they are exhibited.**

**Reference: This publication is an edited and updated version of the "Texas 4-H Leaders Handbook".**





# PLANNING THE PROJECT MEETING

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Project group meetings must be planned well in advance. Members should be involved in completing some type of work prior to the next meeting. This gives the leader a basis for knowing how to conduct the next project meeting and make efficient use of time.

Meeting plans are based on essential information youth need to complete their project work. Planning is most valuable when club members and parents are actively involved and are aware of their specific responsibilities.

Some project groups list all activities necessary to complete the project. This list later becomes the foundation for planning project meetings.

Members may participate in the project meeting by:

1. Discussing and showing their project
2. Giving a method demonstration
3. Preparing information for presentation at one meeting
4. Teaming up with parents to make the presentation at the meeting
5. Conducting project meetings in a setting that is appropriate to the type of activity to take place. For example a nutrition project group should meet in the kitchen if they are preparing food or at the supermarket if the lesson is related to food purchases. A project group studying electricity should meet in a shop or a site where electrical work is performed.

Program plans must be able to adapt to meet new situations or emergencies. All group members should participate in the meetings several times in the year. New

**members should be incorporated into the activities of the group as quickly as possible.**

**Well-planned meetings run smoothly when you help each member understand what they need to do and how to carry out their assignments. Make sure that all persons involved are aware of their roles and review the plans with those persons a few days prior to the meeting. Plan a schedule prior to the meeting.**

**Reference: This publication is an edited and updated version of the "Texas 4-H Leaders Handbook".**



## PROJECT SELECTION AND RECORD KEEPING



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Extension 4-H and Youth Development Specialist

Texas 4-H members have more than 40 project areas available to them. Members should consult with their parents and 4-H leaders when choosing a project. Publication 4-H 5.020 "Texas 4-H Leader Guide for Selecting Projects" offers more detailed information to help youth in the selection process.

Some of the items that should be considered are included below:

Personal interests, needs and capabilities.

Family situations, including project costs.

Suitability of the project to their area or site.

Availability of leadership support for the project.

New members, particularly younger ones, may want to limit their project enrollment to a single project. As they gain experience and confidence with the 4-H system, the number and complexity of the projects can increase to meet their interests and needs.

As soon as possible, members should consider developing a tentative project plan that can be used throughout their 4-H careers. A main project can be used as the foundation in their 4-H development. Project work that is rewarding and stimulating should be continued when possible. Increasing project involvement will provide more learning. Activities that are related to the core project or that hold a specific interest for the member are logical additions to their project lists. For example, a member that has a food and nutrition project could select gardening or poultry projects. A member that has a beef project could select a

**project related to cattle feed.**

**Youth with nutrition projects could select others in the areas of health and food preparation.**

**Project activities are the core around which the 4-H member's personal growth and experience develops. Experienced members find satisfaction in expanding their project work, in new things learned, in discovering new vocational opportunities and in understanding the "whys" behind the "how tos" of project work.**

## **THE 4-H PROJECT RECORD**

**4-H members learn by keeping records of project activities, including finances and results of their efforts. Record forms are available from your county Extension office. Members who complete a project record may receive a completion certificate, pin, ribbon or medal. If the 4-H member conducts more than one project, records are completed for each of them.**

**4-H members who are 14 years old before January 1 of the current year and wish to compete in the awards program must also complete the report forms and other requirements for the awards program they elect to enter. Information on awards programs is available from your county Extension office, the Texas 4-H Opportunities Handbook and the 4-H Roundup Handbook.**

**Reference: This publication is an edited and updated version of the "Texas 4-H Leaders Handbook".**



# 4-H ACTIVITIES

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Extension 4-H and Youth Development Specialist



4-H activities offer young people many exciting opportunities for personal development. These activities often are a part of their project activity. For example, a community beautification project group might tour a local nursery to learn more about shrub planting and care. Yet, many activities not related to a project will also be planned by a 4-H club. For example, a club may plan to tour an area of historic interest. A brief description of some activities which add spice to your 4-H program follows.

## DEMONSTRATIONS AND ILLUSTRATED TALKS

"Show me how," "Let me see you do it" and "I'll show you," are heard often when 4-H members work and learn together. Preparing and presenting demonstrations and illustrated talks help 4-H members gain additional knowledge and learn new skills and practices. Younger members start with easy-to-do, "show and tell" presentations. Members often need help from their leader in choosing a topic and a suitable way to present it. The topic should be of interest to the member, simple to do and something the member can do or learn to do well. If the topic is one that can be done best by making or doing something and results in a finished product, the member should prepare a demonstration. However, if he can best show and tell how to do something with drawings, maps, models or pictures, an illustrated talk may be a better choice of presentation type. By giving demonstrations and illustrated talks youth learn to develop or improve skills, increase their knowledge and express themselves well, develop poise and confidence and develop initiative and earn recognition. Regular 4-H meetings or project meetings are good settings for demonstrations. Service and Civic clubs, community groups and other organizations offer additional opportunities for giving demonstrations.

# **JUDGING**

Judging is an effective means of teaching. It can be as simple as deciding between two items and choosing the best. Possible judging situations can be found in all 4-H projects and activities. All youth should have an opportunity to learn to recognize quality and why one item is superior to another. Through learning to judge, 4-H'ers develop skills in decision making, a process they will use throughout life. The objectives of judging are:

1. To teach an individual to think for himself when making decisions.
2. To learn to compare one object to another to determine which one more nearly approaches the ideal.
3. To develop the ability to recognize objects that meet tested standards.
4. To develop the ability to organize thoughts and express decisions verbally.
5. To help individuals to be tolerant of other's decisions.
6. To stimulate club members' interest in 4-H club work through group activities.
7. To be able to apply what was learned through judging in everyday living.

# **COMMUNITY SERVICE**

Community service is an activity conducted by 4-H members to make the community a better place in which to live. Every 4-H group and member should strive to make worthy contributions to the community by working as a 4-H group or in cooperation with other organizations or groups. This activity is important in developing each 4-H'er as well as being valuable to the community and to the club's success. The group should choose an activity that meets a real need in the community and can be completed. The needs might related to health , safety, recreation or other areas. Examples of community service activities include caring for public property and buildings, assisting with health drives and contributing to worthy charities.

## **EXHIBITS**

Many times a 4-H group or an individual member is offered the opportunity to put up an exhibit. An exhibit is a display of the skills and achievements of 4-H members. It may be related to a 4-H project area or it may be general in nature. Good exhibits arouse interest and stimulate a desire or determination to try new things and adopt new practices. Often, youth exhibit individual items they have made as part of their 4-H project work. For example, 4-H'ers enrolled in the electric project may exhibit lamps they have made. Or members enrolled in clothing could display garments they have constructed. Individual items often are exhibited at 4-H club meetings, achievement programs, fairs and similar programs.

Other exhibits may be more educational in nature in that they tell how to do something or why a new idea is good. For example, 4-H'ers enrolled in the electric project could design an exhibit which shows what to look for when buying a study lamp. Limit an exhibit of this type to one main idea or subject. It should be original, interesting and cause people to stop, look and learn. Such exhibits are appropriate for use in store windows, at schools, in fairs and in other public places or events.

## **TOURS**

Youth like "to go places and see things". A well-planned tour offers 4-H members an opportunity to satisfy this desire and to learn. Tours to club members' homes to see their project work can boost the enthusiasm of the member and his parents. The group also is given a chance to compare methods and see the progress each is making. A project tour can be planned so that each person visited has time to tell his experiences, show results of his work and even give a short demonstration.

Another type of tour can be made to places that relate to 4-H projects, such as a bakery, furniture store, yard goods department, stockyard, dairy or electric plant. Valuable lessons can be learned by visiting the county courthouse, newspaper office, banks, hotels, fire departments, museums, radio stations and similar places. Allow time for discussion, questions or some type of group participation.

# **NATIONAL 4-H WEEK**

During the first full week on October, 4-H members throughout the nation celebrate National 4-H Week. National 4-H week provides a chance to increase public understanding of 4-H and to gain support for year-round activities. It is a good time to express appreciation to friends of 4-H and recognize the contribution they make to the program.

## **RECREATION**

Recreation is an important part of the 4-H program. It contributes to the fourfold development of youth. It also it helps to maintain member interest and adds variety to the program. Good recreational activities require as much careful planning as a 4-H project. Consider planning club recreation activities along with the rest of the club program rather than separately. There are three parts to a recreation program: member, family and club recreation. In addition to song and game leadership, recreation can include: arts and crafts, woodwork, leatherwork, metalwork, native materials, music and dramatics, nature study and reading.

## **4-H CAMPING**

Camping is a significant part of some 4-H programs. Some 4-H groups plan and conduct overnight or weekend camping trips. In addition, many 4-H members have the opportunity to attend a county or District 4-H camp during the summer. These are held at various locations throughout the state. Ask you Extension agent for information concerning 4-H camping opportunities.

Reference: This publication is an edited and updated version of the "Texas 4-H Leaders Handbook".





# PARENT INVOLVEMENT

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Extension 4-H and Youth Development Specialist

Parental involvement is vital to the success of the 4-H program. 4-H leaders and Extension agents may interest youths in becoming members, but it takes the parents' good will and support to keep them interested, enthusiastic and active. A child's attitude and accomplishments are strongly influenced by parental attitudes. The expectations of volunteer leaders, Extension agents and 4-H members has a strong influence on the kind and extent of parental cooperation received. When parents are involved only peripherally and not informed about club activities, little cooperation can be expected. We must inform parents about the 4-H program and provide them opportunities to participate in club activities.

## IMPORTANCE

### IT IS IMPORTANT TO THE LEADER

4-H parents can save the 4-H leader much time and effort. They can help with skills the club leader may not have.

### IT IS IMPORTANT TO THE 4-H MEMBER

When parents participate in the 4-H program, members gain support, confidence, assurance and a feeling of security they might lack otherwise.

### IT IS IMPORTANT TO THE 4-H PARENT

Participation in the 4-H program can help the parents feel they are contributing to their community and to the development of their own child and other children. The 4-H program offers many opportunities for families to do things together; thus, it develops family unity when parents participate actively.

## **HOW TO INTEREST PARENTS**

- 1 Encourage parents to attend club organizational meetings.**
- 2 Explain the 4-H program.**
- 3 Explain what is expected of a 4-H member.**
- 4 Explain how parents can help.**
- 5 Explain what parents can expect adult leaders to do.**
- 6 Hold special parent meetings.**
- 7 Make home visits and telephone calls.**
- 8 Include parents in special activities and events.**
- 9 Hold meetings in the home of 4-H members.**
- 10 Arrange tours to homes of all members.**
- 11 Give credit to parents for their help.**
- 12 Be specific when asking parents for help, and be sure it is meaningful help they are asked to give.**

## **WHAT PARENTS CAN DO**

- 1 Hold 4-H meetings in their home.**
- 2 Help members select, finance and manage their projects.**
- 3 Encourage record keeping.**
- 4 Help members get to meetings and events.**
- 5 Attend 4-H meeting and events.**
- 6 Serve on committees to help plan and conduct 4-H events.**
- 7 Help leaders conduct project work.**
- 8 Help leaders locate and obtain other qualified adults to conduct project work and help with 4-H activities.**
- 9 Share special talents, such as piano playing, song leading, flower arranging, camp leadership and crafts.**

Reference: This publication is an edited and updated version of the "Texas 4-H Leaders Handbook".



## 4-H AND THE COMMUNITY

**Celina G. Wille, Ph. D.**  
**Extension 4-H and Youth Development Specialist**

The strength and success of a local 4-H club are related directly to the amount of support provided by local people. A new 4-H Club is organized only after parents in an area volunteer to serve as leaders. Organized support of a sponsoring group is desirable since this approach assures early assistance and high interest of area people to support the new club. Use the following recommendations when planning activities to strengthen community support and participation.

1. Encourage frequent involvement in 4-H programs of as many in the community as possible, including parents, church, school and business leaders, civic groups, women's groups and others.
2. Begin by developing a list of groups and individuals in your area who could help the local club. List ways each might assist. Keep this list current by recording what each individual or group does.

In working with people in your community remember that:

- People like to be recognized for things they do well.
- People are interested in and support something in which they have an active part.
- The club profits by using talents available in the community.
- The club should help other groups and individuals.
- The community benefits when people work together.
- Much is gained by all groups in a community or neighborhood if they join together in some project.

- **When planning your annual club program, consider meeting dates, special days and areas of service of other organizations.**

**Success attracts success, and your efforts in publicizing your program usually make your work to obtain community support easier.**

**Reference: This publication is an edited and updated version of the "Texas 4-H Leaders Handbook".**