

## Section 6: 4-H Events and Activities

In 4-H Youth Development, we speak often of programs, projects and activities. To help us use common terms, here are the 4-H definitions of those words:

- **Program** - A broad, encompassing educational endeavor. It consists of a series of projects and activities designed to strengthen the learning goals for which the program was designed. (Example: 4-H Youth Development Horticulture Program.)
- **Project** - An organized series of progressive learning experiences culminating in a product, tangible or intangible. A project helps young people develop initiative, leadership, cooperation, appreciation for quality of workmanship, and the ability to make decisions. (Example: "Budding Gardeners" - horticulture project for 8 to 11 year olds.)
- **Activity** - A single event stemming directly from a 4-H project or program. It supplements and reinforces specific project learning experiences. (Example: A horticulture program activity might be a "House Plant Clinic.")

The educational activity plays an important role in the total 4-H program. The special events contribute to the overall mission of 4-H by maintaining interest, stimulating greater participation and providing excellent educational opportunities for members. Many of these activities are planned on a countywide basis and occur annually.

**Types of 4-H educational activities include:**

- Clinics
- Family Outings
- Public Presentation Days
- Community Service Events
- Educational Trips
- Leadership Training Events
- Recognition Events
- Workshops

### Standard Annual Activities

Because they relate so closely to the overall 4-H objectives and values, there are three activities that are conducted every year: Public Presentation Events, Community Service Activities, and Evaluation Events. 4-H members are strongly encouraged to participate in all of these annually. They are described on the following pages.



### 4-H Public Presentation Events

The public presentation program is the one most often credited by 4-H alumni as having given them an edge above peers in both college and professional careers.

Through communication activities, youth learn to express themselves and their ideas, develop a positive self-concept and poise, attain self-confidence before a group, and gain subject matter knowledge. Types of presentations include demonstrations, illustrated talks, formal speeches, interviews, and creative communications such as dramatic recitation.

At "Public Presentation Days, 4-H members give their presentations in front of a small audience (usually other 4-H'ers and parents) and are evaluated by an experienced volunteer or 4-H teen.

## Community Service and Service Learning Activities

Community service is the action aspect of the 4-H Citizenship and Civic Education Program and 4-H members are encouraged to participate in at least one service activity per year. While other citizenship activities help members to *understand* their community and *appreciate* its diverse population, community service activities give them an opportunity to *do* something that will help others or improve their community. Such participation enables youth to:

- Better understand the community in which they live
- Take responsibility for their lives in the community
- Learn about social change and participation in a democracy
- Make a difference
- Improve their self-esteem and confidence
- Work cooperatively with others
- Improve their leadership skills
- Demonstrate that they have a positive role to play in their communities

There are many different types of service a club may do - ranging from extended service learning projects to short-term activities. The activity needs to match the developmental stage of those involved, be of interest to those participating and be of value to the community.

### What's the difference between "community service" and "service learning?"

While both provide service to others or to the community as a whole, service learning connects the learning of subject matter to the service activity. For example, a club that wants to learn how to sew may make breathing-aid bears for abdominal surgery patients as the product of their sewing project. Or a group that wants to learn about landscaping may work with village personnel to improve the landscaping around village hall. Before the activity can be completed, members must have gained some knowledge and skill, which is then enhanced through the service activity

## Evaluation Events

Evaluation is an important part of the educational process. Evaluation is built into the 4-H Club Program through special events that occur throughout the year. It is conducted by the members themselves, leaders, educators and judges or evaluators at public presentation events, clothing revue, fair, animal shows, and other contests. No

matter what or where the evaluation occurs, the ultimate goal is the development of the individual or 4-H member.

### What is accomplished by evaluation?

- It helps members gain a greater appreciation of excellence and quality of workmanship or performance.
- It educates members and helps them to improve their skills and techniques.
- It encourages members to discover and develop their talents and potential.
- It makes members think critically and objectively about their work and themselves.

### How is judging done?

- The Danish System is used to evaluate 4-H project exhibits. In this system there is no limitation to the number of awards that may be presented at any level. Each entry receives an award. Items are compared to a standard set of criteria, not to each other. *Awards include:*

Blue or Excellent - The workmanship shows little need for improvement compared to the relative standard.

Red or Good - The workmanship is satisfactory or average but there are definite areas for improvement, even considering the age and challenges of the child.

White or Worthy - The workmanship shows that a worthy effort has been made and that the finished product is useable for the purpose intended. However, there is much need for improvement even considering the age and challenges of the child.



Items that do not meet specifications listed or class descriptions are disqualified.

- The consultation method of evaluation may be used in combination with the Danish System. The 4-H member will be present with their exhibit or item. The evaluator will talk with the 4-H'er about the item and the process utilized.
- A modified Danish system is often used in competitive events such as animal shows or equitation competitions. After each entry receives the appropriate award a specified number of the top entries are ranked to receive "place" awards.

## Recognition Events and the 4-H Recognition Model

Recognition is an important way to help young people feel good about themselves. Recognition is not limited to awards or formal evaluation events, but is also provided through positive reinforcement on a continual basis and should acknowledge more than levels of achievement. The *National 4-H Recognition Model* includes five types of recognition:

1. Recognizing youth for their *participation* can be a first step in building self-esteem.
2. Recognizing young people for their *progress toward personal goals* helps them gain experience in goal-setting and realistic self-assessment.
3. Establishing *standards of excellence* gives 4-H members a pre-determined target for accomplishment, and, recognizing the achievement of those standards helps them to appreciate the skills they are learning.
4. The desire to win is a strong motivator for some people. On the other hand, some young people are threatened by competition with their peers. Recognition that is given as a result of *peer competition* needs to be handled carefully and is not appropriate for youth under age 8.
5. When young people work together, they examine their own skills and abilities and explore solutions beyond their own ideas. This prepares them for life in today's inter-dependent, global society. Young people should, therefore, also be recognized for *cooperation*.

*Sources: 4-H Youth Development Education: A National Model for Recognition in 4-H Programs, page 3; National Cloverbud Manual, Recognition in Youth Programs: Helping Young People Grow, Volunteer Handout, pages 2-6.*

#### **4-H Achievement Night**

Many counties conduct an annual achievement program to award certificates and year pins to members. Members may also be recognized for community service work, promotion of the 4-H program and leadership or excellence in a particular project area. Educational trips and scholarships are often awarded to teen members.