

# WELCOME TO THE WORLD OF **4-H**

BASICS FOR NEW LEADERS

## Opportunities for 4-H Members

### Key ideas

- Member opportunities at the club, county, state, regional, and national levels
- Other resources for 4-H members and leaders

**N**ow that you've had several club meetings and the members are excited about their project work, you'd probably like to consider other types of involvement for your members and their families. Ask at your local Extension office about the many 4-H activities available to your members. Watch for announcements and descriptions of these in your county 4-H newsletters or on state or local websites. Share announcements with your 4-H members. Plan to participate in many of the activities yourself, and encourage your members and their families to join in too!

### Opportunities at the club level

In addition to regular meetings, field trips, and special activity days, some clubs also plan **social events** such as family potluck dinners, picnics, swimming parties, train rides, and campouts. This is a good way to involve 4-H members in planning and carrying out their plans.

One 4-H goal is to help members become caring

citizens of their communities. Therefore, every club is encouraged to choose and work on a **community service** project. Many clubs share something related to their project area with older people in retirement or nursing homes, such as taking pets for the residents to see, making special holiday favors, or just visiting. Some clubs work on environmental projects such as cleaning up trash, planting flowers and shrubs, building and maintaining nature paths, or hosting and teaching special events for young children. As your club members grow and mature, they may decide on a long-term project to be developed or repeated over several years.

Service learning is community service with a twist. The community experience is enhanced with members studying issues related to their experience. For instance, members could learn about issues

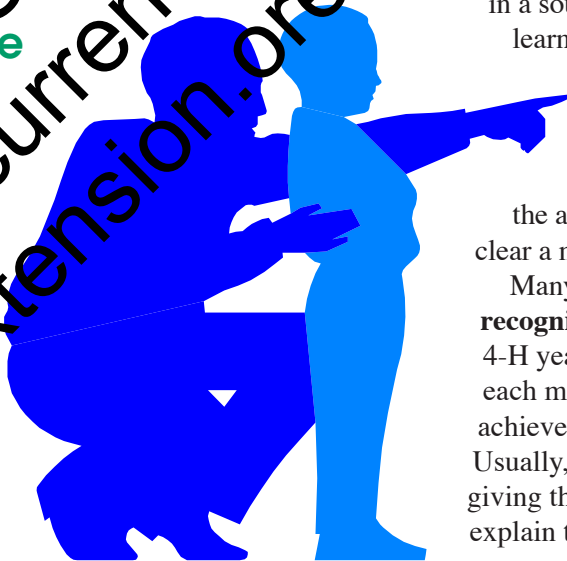
related to homelessness and then visit or assist in a soup kitchen. The members could learn about the natural foliage that

grows along a trail, what can be removed without endangering wildlife in an area, or perhaps the historical value of

the area (service learning) and then clear a nature trail (community service).

Many clubs have a special **recognition activity** at the end of the 4-H year, at which they acknowledge each member of the group for his or her achievements during the year.

Usually, families and friends are invited, giving the club leader an opportunity to explain the club activities and goals.



## 4-H member divisions (by grade)

To design 4-H experiences based on the developmental levels of youth, 4-H members are divided into four groups by grade: *4-H Adventures* (K–3), *junior* (grades 4 through 6), *intermediate* (grades 7 through 9), and *senior* (grades 10 through 12). These divisions commonly are used in county and state 4-H activities.

## Opportunities at the local level

During the 4-H year, each local office has many activities in which you and your members are encouraged to participate. It's helpful to know what these are at the beginning of the year so you can plan accordingly. Watch for announcements and descriptions of these in your local 4-H newsletter. Encourage your club members to participate.

**Project workshops.** Many Extension offices schedule workshops in various project areas (such as large animal clinics, small animal workshops, home economics learning days, horse clinics, dog obedience training, and natural resources workshops). Sometimes these also are offered in neighboring counties or on a regional or statewide basis.

**Contests.** Regularly scheduled 4-H contests include food preparation contests, fashion reviews, animal shows, and others. Ask the Extension staff which contests are held locally. These contests provide educational opportunities for both 4-H members and leaders. Also, many 4-H members find that competition motivates them to “make the best better.”

**Judging and identification contests.** These are contests in which each 4-H member evaluates classes of three or four items each and ranks them from the highest quality to the lowest quality. Your local Extension office may have judging and identification contests in the following areas: dairy cattle, dairy goat,

meat animal, dog, horse, cavy, poultry, rabbit, clothing, foods, and forestry. The 4-H member almost always is asked to support his or her decisions by giving either written or oral reasons for the placings. The highest scoring members in selected judging and identification contests (intermediate and senior divisions only) are eligible to participate as an individual or as a team at the State Fair.

**Public presentations.** These are short, informative talks or demonstrations given by individual 4-H members (or a team of two members) on any topic they choose. The younger 4-H members are when they start learning to give presentations, the easier it is for them to enjoy doing it. You might want to invite older 4-H'ers with experience in giving presentations to help teach this skill to your club members.

Presentations usually are shorter (3 to 5 minutes) for younger members and 10 to 20 minutes long for older members. Presentations can be given first to a member's own club, then at public gatherings, and finally at the local 4-H presentations contest. Ask at your local Extension office for appropriate publications and score cards. The contest has separate classes for juniors, intermediates, and seniors. Local winners in the intermediate and senior divisions may be selected for State Fair.

Helpful ideas for 4-H members and leaders are listed in *You Present* (4-H 0226).

**Exchange programs.** 4-H sponsors some excellent exchange programs, providing an opportunity for 4-H members and their families to gain a broader understanding of the world around them. These programs are usually for intermediate and senior 4-H members. Some Extension offices participate in exchanges with 4-H groups from throughout Oregon or other states. Some participate in a Japanese exchange program by hosting Japanese youth or by having members visit Japan as part of an exchange group.

**Community or county fairs.** One of the major activities of the 4-H year is the community or county fair, where every member has the opportunity to exhibit what he or she has learned in his or her project area during the year. Ask your local Extension staff for a copy of the most recent 4-H fair book so you can determine the schedule and requirements for the exhibit classes. This may help in planning the project work for your club members.

As soon as the new fair books are available, get a copy for yourself and each of your members. Also make sure that your members get the necessary entry



forms for fair exhibits and that they know how to fill them out correctly.

Some offices use *interview judging* at their fairs. This is a conference method of evaluating 4-H members' fair exhibits. In this method of judging, the 4-H member brings his or her exhibits and visits with the judge for a few minutes. The judge evaluates the member's acquired skills and knowledge and offers positive comments and suggestions for possible improvements in future projects. This can be one of the 4-Her's most helpful learning experiences of the year.

*Ribbon awards* usually are given at fairs and in 4-H contests. The group (Danish) system of judging is used for exhibits and contests. This means that exhibits are judged against a predetermined skill level standard. Each exhibit receives a blue, red, or white ribbon based on the following criteria:

- *Blue ribbon*: excellent, within the ability of most of the contestants
- *Red ribbon*: good quality, some room for improvement
- *White ribbon*: acceptable, but shows need for considerable improvement

A champion and a reserve champion ribbon, if merited, can be awarded in some classes.

**4-H summer camp.** Day or residential summer camps are offered in some areas. Ask your local Extension staff for the appropriate age requirements and for the schedule and camp program to share with your members.

Local Extension offices may have other events planned for 4-H members. Ask the local staff for a list. Also, watch your county 4-H newsletter for activity announcements.

## Opportunities at the state level

**State Fair.** 4-H members' exhibits that qualify at the local level may be sent to State Fair for judging and display. Intermediate and senior contest participants and animal science exhibitors who qualify at the local level are eligible to participate at State Fair. Contests at State Fair may include fashion revue, food preparation, presentations, and selected judging and identification contests. Other participation events, such as 4-H in Action, also may be opportunities for your members to show their skills to the public.

Older 4-H members may apply to do volunteer work at State Fair. Leaders and parents also are needed as

department chairs, clerks, hosts and hostesses, and organizers for many of the contests and shows. Contact your local Extension staff for information.

**State 4-H Teen Event.** Older 4-H members participate in workshops, listen to inspirational speakers, and enjoy various recreational activities during this annual event. It usually is held at the land grant university during June.

**Know Your Government.** This special citizenship training is for older members who enjoy learning about politics. Interested members focus on specific aspects of government for a few months prior to holding a conference at the state capitol building when the legislature is in session. Check with your local Extension staff for eligibility requirements and specific program plans for each year.

**Scholarships.** Many local Extension offices have scholarship assistance available for 4-H members applying to attend 4-H summer camps, special workshops, or college. Contact your local Extension office to find out what's available.

## Opportunities at the regional and national level

There are several regional and national 4-H seminars and conferences for senior members (grade 9 through 12). These include the Western Region 4-H Leaders Forum, National 4-H Conference, National 4-H Congress, national subject matter competitions, and interstate and national exchanges as host or exchange representatives. Information on these programs is available through your local Extension office.

As you can see, there are lots of activities for your 4-H members, in project areas as well as in citizenship and leadership development. The more you can encourage your members to participate in these activities, the more they will gain from their 4-H experience.

## Global education opportunities

The world has changed drastically since the early 1990s. What happens in other countries and on other continents affects each of us in some way. As adults, we realize that the world's collective survival depends on awareness of the world and its peoples. We can pass on this responsibility by engaging young people in the following 4-H global education opportunities:

- *4-H Japanese Exchange Program:* Each year, Oregon hosts more than 80 Japanese youth through

this program. In addition, there are opportunities for older youth and adults to experience the culture and customs of Japan.

- *4-H Future Leaders Exchange (FLEX) Program:* Hosting opportunities are available each year on this high school exchange program. Delegates are from countries of the former Soviet Union.
- *International Four-H Youth Exchange (IFYE) Representative Program:* This is a 3- or 6-month experience for ages 19–30.

Additional information is available in the *Oregon 4-H Clover* (4-H 0230) or by contacting your local Extension office.

## Action steps

- Consider planning new activities into your club program for 4-H members and their families.
- Familiarize yourself with opportunities available for 4-H members at local, state, and national levels. Share this information with your 4-H members and their families.
- Encourage your members to participate in the events and activities that are offered in your county and state.

## Reference materials

Check with your local Extension office for these materials:

- *You Present* (4-H 0226)
- *Oregon 4-H Clover* (4-H 0230)
- Oregon 4-H website (<http://oregon.4H.oregonstate.edu>)

## Contacting your local Extension office

To locate an address and phone number, look in your local telephone directory. It may be listed in any number of ways in the white pages or in one of the special sections. For example, it might be listed as: 4-H, Oregon State University Extension Service; or (county name) Extension.

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