

Remembering the 4-H lock-in

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Extension Assistant

It's 9 a.m. Saturday, January, 16, 1999, and I am finally crawling into bed. What a long night. Thank goodness the 4-H teen council members are such efficient, knowledgeable, hardworking and thoughtful people. They truly made last night's event a positive experience. And what would we have done without Marilyn Schepers, our talented, resourceful teen council sponsor? Together they managed to organize and pull-off a very successful 5th and 6th grade lock-in.

Back at the October teen council meeting, while the teens were sewing tote bags to donate to a charity, they discussed ideas for the annual lock-in held in January. "What should the theme be this year?" Last year it

was, "Around the World in a Day" and the 5th and 6th graders "visited" Italy, Mexico and Japan. I thought the teens did a bang-up job.

They finally all agreed on the popular "Flintstones" cartoon for the theme and decided to use the prehistoric setting as their basis for the lock-in.

The November and December teen council meetings provided an opportunity for the youth to brainstorm. Committees were quickly decided upon and the youth assigned themselves to the committee that sparked their interest. There were committees



on food, education and crafts.

At the January teen council meeting the teens and Marilyn brought supplies to have a "run through." They made some of the crafts, discussed the program and prepared treats they planned on having at the lock-in.

The day had come. The teens began arriving yesterday evening around 5:30 carrying supplies, sleeping bags and their Flintstone outfits (some of the girls even had bones in their hair like Pebbles). They had about two hours to set up for the Flintstones 5th and 6th grade lock-in.

Finally it was time. The kids started arriving. The teens were soon busy registering, leading activities, making name tags and double-checking

the schedule.

Last night (and early this morning) they made paper, treasure rocks, fossils and nachos. They also played games and participated in creative activities. I know many of the teens have been camp counselors and many of the games and activities the teens led were learned there.

Time flew and before long the 5th and 6th graders were watching movies, eating popcorn and sleeping (well, most were sleeping. I know this because Marilyn and I were awake the entire night.)

I had just rested my forehead on the hard, cold table when the lights flashed on in the room. We were all up before the sun was and were soon engaged in some aerobic activities. I'm glad the teens were in charge of those activities as I wasn't feeling too energetic just then. I'm not feeling too energetic now. In fact, I believe I'm ready to go to sleep. First, I need to close those blinds.



Reflections of Teen Leadership

Valerie Lemke
Lancaster County 4-H Member

Watching the Leaders

I've been in 4-H for 9 years and I can still remember when I first started how all those older 4-H'ers (also know as the teen leaders) would be doing so many things at the fair, and they would belong to so many groups and help the younger

kids like me. It was so cool and I wanted to be like them. They were my role models. Role models and teen leadership are two things that definitely go together.

How to Begin

Now I'm a teen leader. How did I begin this teen leadership role? When I was 13 years old, I joined the 4-H Teen Council. There I met a

bunch of teens who were older than I. I was young and inexperienced about what the council did. The experienced members would include me and let me know what they were up to and what the club did. I discovered it was like a "cycle club" meaning I would

get as much out of the club as I put in it. What did I need to put into this club? A few ingredients include leadership, community service, morals, character and kindness.

I started off small. I helped the council with the food committee in the annual 4-H 5th and 6th grade lock-in. Then I began helping the 4-H teen council with all kinds of projects

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