

National Volunteer Week April 22-28

A special thank you to all the 4-H volunteers. Over 400 volunteers lead 4-H clubs, assist with activities, workshops and programs, serve as fair superintendents and VIPS committee members.

4-H Leaders-Poem

Somewhere between the sternness of a parent and comradeship of a pal is that mysterious creature we call a 4-H Leader.

These leaders come in all shapes and sizes, and may be male or female. But they all have one thing in common—a glorious twinkle in their eyes!

4-H Leaders are found everywhere—at judging contest, fairs, square dances, and talent shows. They always are preparing for, sitting through, partici-

pating in, or recuperating from a meeting of some kind.

They are tireless consumers of muffins, expert at taking knots out of thread, peerless coaches, and spend hours on the telephone.

A 4-H Leader is many things—an artist making a float for the Fourth of July, a doctor prescribing for an underfed calf, a counselor at camp, a lawyer filling out reports, and a shoulder to cry on when that dress just won't fit. Nobody else is so early to rise and so late to get home at night. Nobody else has so much fun with so many boys and girls.

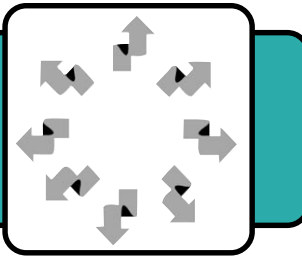
We sometimes forget them, but we can't do without them. They receive no salary, but we can never repay them.

They are angels in aprons, saints in straw hats. Their only reward is the love of the kids and the respect of the community. But when they look around them at the skills they've taught, and the youth they've built, there's an inner voice from somewhere that says, "Well done."

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Thanks again. Lancaster County has a successful program because of you. (LB)

Miscellaneous



LABOR

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attract and retain the best employees? There are many different options available, and most do not involve a large increase in expenses for the operation. Employee management solutions can be as simple or advanced as you want, but there are some basic things that must be done to have any chance at attracting and retaining employees.

Be competitive! Wages are a must, but benefits and hours may also need to be examined to determine your ability to attract employees. A rule of thumb, if you would not work in that job for that amount of money, why would you expect anyone else to?

Be creative! I realize that almost all of you will not be able to pay top dollar for employees, and I'm not suggesting that you should, but since most producers are small and have very few laws governing their employment practices, they can be creative in the

development of compensation, benefit, and time packages. One example frequently practiced, is the use of an existing house for the employee and their family.

Finally, be a courteous communicator! Treat your employees the same way you would want to be treated if you were working for someone else. I know this may seem simple, but if an employee is not doing something correctly, tell them in a non-confrontational way. I believe employer-employee conflict causes more people to leave agricultural jobs than wages. Plans are being made for programming on labor management, including programs on legal issues, hiring, compensation, and motivation. If you are interested in programming or other information on agricultural labor management, please call Lance Cummins-Brown, extension educator, at 402-441-7180 or e-mail him at lbrown4@unl.edu. (LCB)



Barrel Decorating Contest

Have A Barrel of Fun in 2001
Sunday, June 10
4-7 p.m.



Lancaster Event Center
84th & Havelock

Get your club, family or committee together, pack a picnic lunch and join other Lancaster County families in the paint a trash barrel activity. Decorate your barrel with a county fair theme. All paint will be supplied. Bring your favorite brush and creative ideas and join the fun.

Call 441-7180 to reserve a barrel

Dinner will be at 6 p.m.

Barrel decorating will be judged and prizes awarded by the Lancaster County Agricultural Society. (LB)

How To Exhibit At The County Fair

New leaders, experienced leaders, 4-H members, and parents are invited to "How to Exhibit" leader training, Thursday, May 24, 9:30 a.m. and 7 p.m. at the Lancaster Extension Education Center. Learn how to put an entry tag on an exhibit, where to take the model rocket exhibit, and other exhibit information which will prepare you for the 2001 Lancaster County Fair. (TK)

Keep Kids Busy, But Know When Enough is Enough

Annie's day begins at 6:30 a.m. She eats breakfast, gets ready for school, attends school until 3:20 p.m., goes to dance or gymnastics practice, attends a Brownie meeting, eats dinner late, does her homework, takes a shower, and says good night to her Dad at about 9 p.m. Annie is a typical 9-year old who is overbooked.

Activities outside of school help children develop social, mental, and physical skills that often pave the way for interests they will pursue as adults. However, parents and children need to carefully consider when enough is enough. Factors such as time involved, amounts of practice, finances, and transportation arrangements should be evaluated before adding an activity to an already busy schedule.

Start slowly is good advice for any parent. Most children should only tackle one new thing at a time and see how they manage time requirements, setting priorities, and meeting home and school activities. Other activities can be added later. Although it is important for children to follow through with commitments, dropping activities may be an option for some children before they explore something else. Parents who allow children to explore a variety of interests encourage them to define their own special gifts and talents.

Kids, as well as adults, need time to relax. Unstructured time gives children the opportunity to choose how to spend their time. In turn, they develop a sense of self-direction and learn how to make their own

choices. They learn how to be comfortable with who they are.

Age of the child is an important factor. For example, piano teachers generally agree a 7- or 8-year old child is ready for piano lessons because these children read fairly well and can easily transfer reading skills to the piano. However, children can start swimming lessons at an earlier age.

Parents are cautioned about trying to live out their own dreams through their children. Children who see a parent pursuing their own interests and hobbies, and modeling the skills of self-discipline and determination that they want their children to gain, are more likely to practice those skills themselves. (LJ)

TEENS

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establish norms by restricting tobacco use in public places and by making access to tobacco inconvenient for children and youth.

As we frequently say in the Character Counts Program, parents and other responsible adults need to teach, advocate, enforce and model behaviors that we expect from our children. The efforts we make to reduce the use of teen smoking will pay big future dividends.

BUILDING

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For more information on how to register for the conference, contact:

Building Family Strengths
International Symposium
Department of Family and
Consumer Sciences
University of Nebraska-
Lincoln
Lincoln, NE 68583-0801
Phone: 402-472-8209
Website: <http://familystrengths.unl.edu>

The Art of Stepparenting

For children, the blending of two families may not be an easy process and adjusting to new relationships takes time. Although the adults have fallen in love and have decided to live together, the children may not desire the stepfamily situation. Parents need realistic expectations about children's periods of adjustment.

Merging families creates many differences. There may be new children in a household, celebrations may change, rules may be different, and often children are expected to adjust to a new school and community. To the extent possible, it is important to keep some things the same. If, for example, your child is actively involved in a particular sport, keep him/her involved.

Things such as what to call a stepparent create many anxieties in children. Stepparents often wish children would call them Mom or Dad, but kids frequently are not comfortable

with that idea. To lessen family tensions, let children decide what to call newfound parents.

Stepparents help create family unity when they:

Work with the natural parent.

Communicate as husband and wife, apart from the children, about all routines and rules.

Find out the background of family rules, procedures, and activities.

Let the natural parent verbalize the rules, and hand out consequences in the beginning.

Consider both spouses' feelings when communicating about the rules.

Allow time for a real feeling of family to develop. This may take months to several years.

Expect ambivalence. Feelings of love and hate by the stepchild may change frequently. (LJ)