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Leadership and Citizenship

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Most of the life skills in 4-H are a part of leadership development. The question becomes how do you teach leadership to youth. As a 4-H leader you play an important part in helping 4-Hers develop their leadership skills. Nebraska 4-H has a series of manuals entitled “Step Up to Leadership” The manuals will help you work with your 4-Hers to identify what leadership is and how they can develop this life skill. The curriculum has a large number of activities you can do with youth to help them understand what leadership is and how they can work to develop their leadership skills.

The material includes mentor guides for grades K-5, grades 6-12, a leadership workbook for grades 3-5 and a journal for grades 6-8. The leadership activities can be use with groups or as an individual. The activities have success indicators that describe what the youth can do and learn. The indicators will help the youth reflect on what they learned and how they can use the knowledge at home, at school, or with their friends.

One important aspect of leadership is the youth/adult partnerships that are developed in the 4-H program. In the 4-H program it is important to work with youth when 4-H activities are planned, conducted and evaluated. When they participate in this process they will develop their leadership skills. The manuals will help you to provide youth with a positive experience as they identify and develop their own unique leadership style as they grow up.

As 4-Hers grow and develop there are a number of 4-H leadership activities they can participate in at the local, district, state and national level. There is a Leadership and Citizenship work group that is developing additional curriculum for use in the Nebraska 4-H Leadership program.
Food fund-raising events are a great way for communities and organizations to earn extra cash. However, proper food handling is essential to make sure participants don’t get more than they bargained for.

Traditional bake sale foods such as bread, cookies, cake, and candies rarely cause illnesses, it is important to remember that under the right circumstances any food can cause foodborne illness.

**Before the Bake Sale**

- Always wash hands before handling any food!
- Do not handle food if you have – a skin infection, respiratory illness, upset stomach or diarrhea, a cold or you suspect you have any communicable disease.
- Wash, then rinse, then sanitize and air dry any pots, pans or utensils before you use them. (Sanitize by dipping them in a mixture of 1 teaspoon of regular – not scented – bleach to 1 gallon of warm water.) Do NOT use sponges.
- Do not use home canned products in your baked good.
- Touch the food with your bare hands as little as possible.
- Use plastic wrap or tin foil to individually wrap products for sale. Do not use trash bags for storage of food.
- Label items that have common food allergens in them (milk, eggs, wheat, soy, peanuts, tree nuts, shellfish or fish).

**Fundraising for Food Safety**

- NO cream pies or cream-filled pastries.
- NO home-canned meats, vegetables or fruits.
- Set up your bake sale table in a clean area protected from dust and flies. Have a covered trash container near your table.
It’s more than smile and say “Cheese”

Kids and cameras…it’s hard to think of one without the other. Many 4-H members now have access to a digital camera. As a 4-H leader, knowing how to help them with this new technology can be an increased challenge. The following information is adapted from the www.youthlearn.org website which has lots of great information and teaching ideas.

Photography is not just about pointing and pressing a button; it’s a decision-making process. One of the best reasons for working photography into your activities and projects is that it helps 4-H’ers better understand the media images they’re bombarded with every day.

Photography is also just plain fun, and it’s a wonderful foundation for community-based projects. If you introduce photography properly, it helps 4-H’ers look much more carefully at the world around them.

When we teach how to do photography, we’re also teaching how to really look at the images they see. They come to understand the emotional effects inherent in a photographer’s choices about angle, focus and other aesthetic elements.

When we teach image-editing programs like PhotoShop, we show how images can be changed to distort the truth or fabricate untruths.

When we teach about video, they learn more about the differences between reality and acting and how subconscious elements like music or setting can alter the emotional reactions to a scene.

The youthlearn.org website has some great ideas on introducing digital photography to your members. They also have several lesson ideas for using photography, such as “Zany Zoom Ins” where the members zoom in on everyday items and everyone else tries to guess what they are.

After you’ve introduced photography, you can also work on computer image-editing techniques, especially if they intend to use the pictures for fair exhibits, or in multimedia presentations. 4-H presentations at county and state can now use LCD, slides, video or overhead projector for one class of presentations, while the Multimedia presentation class is a fully automated presentation. Of course the regular poster presentation is still an option and a photo enlargement could be used there too.

In any case, photography is all around us and helping 4-H members learn the skills to create…not just “take” good pictures are lessons they will use their entire lives.
An Opportunity for Community Service

It’s a Win-Win Situation!

“Adolescents who volunteer do better in school, feel more positive about themselves, and avoid risky behaviors,” documented by a 1996 research study. (1) Community Service is one way that 4-H sets itself apart from other youth organizations. Leaders are wonderful examples by being volunteers themselves. Leaders also capitalize on opportunities for their 4-H club members, and can do so in a variety of ways.

Things to Think About

Volunteering to do something to help others with friends is always fun! In fact, research shows that 96% of teens who knew both peers and adults who volunteered also volunteered themselves. And Nebraskans are good at volunteering...we rank second in the nation in percentage of people who volunteer! (2)

Leaders are the backbone of a club, so expect it will be your responsibility to bring ideas for community service to club members. Club members can vote to accept or reject the suggestion.

Let your club members tailor the activity to become something they will enjoy, at a time when the greatest number can participate.

Develop your 4-H members’ leadership potential by having them help with organization of the project.

Get a calling or email committee together for a reminder of the event so there is a good club turnout.

Encourage occasional community service that includes monetary donations from your club’s treasury if financial resources are available. 4-Hers enjoy using money they have earned to make a contribution to others less fortunate or to enhance their community.

Get the media involved in community service opportunities. If your club plans an activity that is unique, a good photo opportunity or provides good educational information, invite the local newspaper to bring a camera and get some action shots of what’s going on.

Use community service as a way to help 4-Hers experience a career path.

One final note: Help your 4-Hers be sure they record all community service in their 4-H Career Portfolio. Documented community service is valuable when they are completing high school and applying for scholarships!

Resource Links for Community Service Ideas

- http://lancaster.unl.edu/4h/club/ServiceIdeas.htm
- http://www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/4h/service-learning/
- http://vinton.osu.edu/4h/commserv.htm

(1) Research-to-Results, Child Trends, Publication # 2006-19.
(2) Volunteering In America: State Trends and Rankings, 2002-2005, from the Corporation for National and Community Service.
Many youth want to exhibit an animal at the fair, but they think they have to live in the country or that it cost a lot of money. That is not true; the 4-H Dog and 4-H Cat projects are excellent opportunities for youth wanting to exhibit an animal at the fair. Many youth whether they live in the city, town, or country have a dog or cat that would make an excellent and inexpensive 4-H project.

The initial start up cost for a dog or cat is very low in comparison with the start up cost for larger animals. The items need to get a 4-H Dog project started are a choke chain, leash, grooming supplies, a current vaccination record, and of course your dog. To get started with the 4-H Cat project youth will need a cage, grooming supplies, a current vaccination record, and their cat. Other supplies need for both the dog and cat include a food, water, food and water containers, and other items; since the dog or cat is already part of the youth’s home many of these items will already be in the home.

The biggest investment that the youth will have is their time and energy. Even though the monetary investment is not a large one the time and effort that the youth will need to put in will be large, especially if they want their pet to be in peak condition for the show.

In order to be prepared for the show youth will need to make sure that they read their counties fair book closely to ensure that they met all the guidelines. Working with a fellow 4-H member who exhibits 4-H Dogs or 4-H Cats can help the youth to understand what they will need to do at the show. Another way to help ensure their success is to attend a dog or cat show and observe what goes on. Reading the 4-H Dog and 4-H Cat manuals is another way for them to gain knowledge of their pet and how to exhibit them.

Through the 4-H Dog and 4-H Cat projects youth will learn time management, how to be responsible for their pet, and how to properly care for their pet. They will also build a special relationship with their dog or cat. All youth who have a dog or cat are strongly encouraged to try the 4-H Dog and 4-H Cat projects.
Pre-Fair Leader Training, May 24

New leaders, experienced leaders, 4-H members and parents are invited to this leader training on Thursday, May 24, 9:30 a.m. or 7 p.m. at the Lancaster Extension Education Center. Come and receive information on how to fill out the entry tags, the in’s and out’s of interview judging, Life Challenge, presentations contest and other important county fair information. Preregister by May 23 by calling 441-7180.

Animal ID’s Due June 15

All identifications for 4-H/FFA sheep, goats, swine, breeding beef, bucket calves, dairy cattle and rabbits which will be entered in the Lancaster County Fair are due to extension by Friday, June 15. Note: animal ID forms are not available online because they are carbon copy triplicates. Pick up forms at extension office.

University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension