

Welcome to the 4-H Family

Dear 4-H Leader,

Having become a 4-H leader you are united with a special group of people who believe that adults and youth can learn, grow, play and serve their communities in partnership with one another. Over time a 4-H club leader becomes a teacher, coach, confidant and friend to the 4-H club members. Close bonds develop among the members, their families and their leaders. Within the family-like environment of a 4-H club youth are supported as they venture to try new things, their accomplishments are affirmed when they succeed and their confidence is bolstered when they face disappointment. Without its leader this nurturing 4-H family would not exist. We thank you for caring enough to accept this important role.

In this same spirit of family the 4-H staff extends our support to you. Starting with this book, we will provide the resources, instruction and guidance you need to make your leadership experience effective, satisfying and enjoyable. We urge you to take full advantage of the training programs, project workshops and leader meetings that will be available for you. We invite you to call the 4-H Youth Development staff whenever you have questions or experience difficulties within your club. Welcome to the 4-H family!

As a 4-H leader in New York State you are also a Cornell Cooperative Extension Volunteer. Board and committee members, office assistants, instructors and volunteers serving in many other capacities are essential to the success of Cornell Cooperative Extension's broad variety of programs throughout New York State. The Cornell Cooperative Extension Volunteer Involvement Policy guides staff in the selection, training and supervision of all CCE volunteers. It also details the responsibilities of volunteers to CCE. Your volunteer position description, Code of Conduct and Volunteer Agreement are all based on that policy.

The Cornell Cooperative Extension 4H Youth Development staff is committed to enabling your success as a 4-H leader and we look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Cathann A. Kress

Cathann A. Kress, PhD
Director, Youth Development
National 4-H Headquarters
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How to Use This Book

This handbook summarizes the information you learned during your volunteer orientation session and presents both background and practical information about the 4-H Youth Development Program, 4-H club activities and special events. You may use it as a self-training manual to help you learn your job as a new 4-H leader, as a reference book to find information about up-coming 4-H events and activities and as a resource to help you and your members to plan a well balanced 4-H club program each year. Here are some suggestions for specific uses to get you started:

- ◆ Section 1 will help you to understand the workings of Cornell Cooperative Extension and its relationship with Cornell Cooperative Extension Volunteers.
- ◆ To understand the real reasons behind the things we do in 4-H and the way we go about doing them read Section 2 - "What is 4-H?" When you have questions or suggestions from members or parents who would like your club to do different things or to do things differently, referring to this section will help you determine whether their suggestions are compatible with the purposes and mission of the 4-H Youth Development Program.
- ◆ Before you conduct a club organizational meeting with parents read through Sections 3 through 5. These topics will guide your decision making as the organizational aspects of your club are discussed and program options are considered.
- ◆ Section 6 will help you guide your members in the selection of their projects. The information presented in that section should also be discussed with all project leaders who work with your members.
- ◆ Refer to Section 7 when you receive information about up-coming 4-H events and activities. You will also want to read the information about 4-H community service and service learning activities included in that section before your members select their service activities for the year.
- ◆ Section 8 will help you to understand the unique aspects of working with teens. As your club members mature, be sure you encourage your members to get more involved with planning their educational opportunities in 4-H.
- ◆ Appendix: "Policies and Procedures" will help you understand the recommendations, requirements and restrictions that apply to your activities as a 4-H Leader.