

Section 7: 4-H Events and Activities

Some of the common words we use when discussing the opportunities available to 4-H members have very specific connotations that differ from the ordinary use of the same words. That can cause confusion for members, parents and volunteers. Three words that have several different meanings are program, project, and activity. To facilitate effective programming and communication, it is important to understand the definition of these words in the context of 4-H Youth Development.

- **Program** - This is defined as a broad, encompassing educational endeavor. It consists of a series of projects and activities designed to strengthen the learning goals for which the program was designed. (Example: 4-H Youth Development Horticulture Program.)
- **Project** - A 4-H project is defined as an organized series of progressive learning experiences (units, modules) culminating in some end product. The end product may be tangible or intangible. A project is a tool used to develop in young people such things as initiative, leadership, cooperation, appreciation of quality workmanship, or the ability to make decisions. (Example: "Budding Gardeners" - a horticulture project for 8 to 11 year olds.) 4-H Projects are discussed in detail in Section 6 of this book.
- **Activity** - a single event stemming directly from a 4-H project or program. It supplements and reinforces specific project learning experiences. Examples include field trips, clothing revue, contests, clinics, or community service events. (Example: A horticulture program activity might be a "House Plant Clinic.")

The educational activity plays an important role in the total 4-H program. The special single occurring event contributes to the overall mission of 4H. These events help maintain interest, stimulate greater participation, and provide excellent educational opportunities for members. Many of these activities are planned on a countywide basis and occur annually.

Types of 4-H educational activities include:

Clinics	Family Outings
Public Presentation Days	Clothing Revue
Community Service Events	Judging Contests
Educational Trips	National 4-H Week Events
Leadership Training Events	4-H Camp Weekends
Recognition Events	Fair
Workshops	Field Trips

FIELD TRIPS

All day and/or overnight field trips must be chaperoned by a sufficient number of qualified leaders or volunteers.

Chaperone Requirements

- Must be an enrolled leader or volunteer who is at least 21 years of age.

Chaperone Responsibilities:

- Provide 24 hour supervision of youth during:
 - Travel time to and from assigned locations.
 - Programming, Meals, and Free Time
 - Sleep Time
- Follow adult supervision guidelines provided in Tool L-3.
- Maximize the educational value of the field trip.
- Ensure the health and safety of each member.
- Full decision-making and disciplinary responsibilities.
- Ensure youth are where they are assigned to be at all times.
- Provide contact information to each member's parent/guardian.
- Abide by the same rules and guidelines as participants.
- Ensure the following forms are completed for all participants. All forms must be in the possession of a chaperone on the field trip.
 - Cornell Cooperative Extension Permission Slip and Medical Release Form
 - 4-H Member Code of Conduct
 - Acknowledgement of Risk Form (if necessary)
 - Accident Report Forms (should be taken on all field trips). All accidents must be reported to the 4-H office within 24 business hours of the accident.

Standard Annual Events and Activities

Because they relate so closely to the overall 4-H objectives and values there are three types of events and activities that are conducted every year: Public Presentation Events, Community Service Activities and Evaluation Events. 4-H members are strongly encouraged to participate in all of these annually. They are described on the following pages.

4-H Public Presentation Events

The public presentation program is one of the most beneficial and rewarding 4-H experiences. It is the one most often credited by 4-H alumni as having given them an edge above peers in both college and professional careers. It provides a unique opportunity to develop a positive self-concept and poise, gain self-confidence before a group, learn to express ideas clearly, respond spontaneously to questions, and gain subject matter knowledge. Through a progressive series of communication activities youth learn to express themselves and their ideas. Types of presentations include demonstrations, illustrated talks, formal speeches, interviews and creative communications such as dramatic recitation.

Cloverbuds begin preparing a simple "show and tell" to help relieve the "jitters" and get them use to talking on their feet to a small audience. First-time presenters in grade 3 or higher start with a short, but formally organized, demonstration. New skills and more emphasis on delivery and "showmanship" are introduced each year. Presentation training starts at the club level. Area or countywide public presentation workshops may be conducted by 4-H staff or experienced volunteers. Training materials are available from the 4-H office.

Public Presentation Days

Growth in communication skills requires practice and coaching. Public events called "Public Presentation Days" provide both. Here, 4-H members give their presentations in front of a small audience (usually other 4-H'ers and parents) and are evaluated by an experienced volunteer or 4-H teen. After each presentation the evaluator consults with the presenter offering praise,

encouragement and suggestions for “making the best better.” Local Presentation Days are open to all members. Participation in presentation events held on the county, district and state levels is generally by invitation with achievement at the local level being one of the criteria.

Community Service and Service Learning Activities

Community service (including service learning) is the action aspect of the 4-H Citizenship and Civic Education Program. While other citizenship activities help members to *understand* their communities and *appreciate* its diverse population, community service activities give them an opportunity to *do* something that will help others or improve their community. Because young people need to recognize they are part of a community and can have an active role in that community 4-H members are strongly encouraged to participate in at least one community service activity each year. Such participation enables youth to:

- Better understand the community in which they live
- Take responsibility for their lives in the community
- Learn about social change and participation in a democracy
- Make a difference
- Improve their self-esteem and confidence
- Work cooperatively with others
- Improve their leadership skills
- Demonstrate that they have a positive role to play in their communities

There are many different types of service a club and/or members may do. Whether the club or individual members take on an extended, complicated service learning project or just do a short term activity the important thing is that members serve their communities in some way each year. What *is* essential is that the activity match the developmental stage of those involved, be of interest to those participating, and be of value to the community.

Cloverbud members are still in the process of broadening their circle of security beyond the boundaries of home. Since much of their thinking and activity is still very home-centered, community service activities that help families or other children would be most appropriate.

Nine to eleven year-olds begin to understand the true meaning of citizenship when they can see the results of their efforts to help others. Community service activities for this age group might include making things for shut-ins and then visiting them to present the gifts. Or they might plan a party for handicapped youth and enjoy the event with them.

Community service activities for *twelve to fourteen year-olds* should help these young teens see how things get done in a community so that they understand the planning and work that goes into making a community a good place to live. They should see how their efforts help the community as a whole even if they don't directly benefit identifiable individuals. They should also gain satisfaction from working as a group. Activities might include clothing drives, register-and-vote campaigns or community beautification projects.

Older teens should experience first-hand contact with community problems. By working directly with community leaders they begin to see themselves as responsible young adults, gain practice in program development, and realize that sometimes things don't work out as planned but that some problems may be solved in many different ways and it is worth trying another alternative. Conducting a survey of some special village or county need (a need for health, recreation or child-care facilities, for instance), helping to improve the physical environment at an orphanage or nursing home, teaching special groups or becoming involved in any other activity that requires planning and personal commitment would be appropriate for older teens.

What's the difference between "community service" and "service learning?"

While both provide service to others or to the community as a whole, service learning connects the learning of subject matter to the service activity. For example, a club that wants to learn how to sew may make breathing-aid bears for abdominal surgery patients as the product of their sewing project. Or a group that wants to learn about landscaping may work with village personnel to improve the landscaping around village hall. Before the activity can be completed members must have gained some knowledge and skill, which is then enhanced through the service activity. In other words, in "community service" the emphasis is on the service, while in "service learning" the service and the learning are equally emphasized. "Learning by doing" becomes "learning by serving."

Often (although not always) service learning goes beyond the level of an activity and becomes a project in and of itself. A major community improvement project such as the development of a playground, would involve activities related to several 4-H program areas, would certainly involve more than six hours of instruction and would enhance the members' development of head, heart, hands and health (See "Understanding 4-H Project Work" on page 5-1). A major project of this nature would most likely be the group's only project for the year.

The characteristics and developmental outcomes of *community service* and *service learning* are compared on the next page.

Community Service

- Volunteering done in the community without formal attachment to curriculum; focus is on service
- A project that allows young people to make a contribution or change within their community
- Youth learn more about and better understand the community in which they live and impact it has on their lives
- Youth know how to relate to communities in order to participate effectively in community activities, program, and organizations
- Youth develop knowledge and skills in leadership
- Youth develop and carry out a community project to improve the quality of their environment

Service Learning

- Focus is both the learning that occurs within the member and the service to the community
- Is a method by which members learn and develop through active participation in organized experiences that meet needs
- Structured time to reflect, talk and write about the actual service they are performing increases learning
- Improved problem-solving ability, leadership and social abilities, self-confidence, have more enjoyment in the overall learning experience
- Are more likely to volunteer to serve the community in the future
- Retain subject matter longer

Evaluation Events

Evaluation is an important part of the educational process. Evaluation is built into the 4-H Club Program through special events that occur throughout the year. It is conducted by the members themselves (self-evaluation), leaders, educators, and judges or evaluators at public presentation events, clothing revue, fair, animal shows, and judging contests just to name a few. No matter what or where the evaluation occurs the ultimate goal is the development of the individual or 4-H member.

What is accomplished by evaluation?

- It helps members gain a greater appreciation of excellence and quality of workmanship or performance.
- It educates members and helps them to improve their skills and techniques.
- It encourages members to discover and develop their talents and potentials.
- It makes members think critically and objectively about their work and themselves.

How is judging done?

- The Danish System is used to evaluate 4-H project exhibits. In this system there is no limitation to the number of awards that may be presented at any level. Each entry receives an award. Items are compared to a standard (set of criteria) not to each other. **Awards include:**

Blue or Excellent - The workmanship shows little need for improvement compared to the relative standard.

Red or Good – The workmanship is satisfactory or average but there are definite areas for improvement, even considering the age and challenges of the child.

White or Worthy - The workmanship shows that a worthy effort has been made and that the finished product is useable for the purpose intended. However, there is much need for improvement even considering the age and challenges of the child.

Items that do not meet specifications listed or class descriptions are disqualified.

- In addition to the quality of workmanship, age, skill level, years in the project category, factors that may limit the abilities of youth, and type of adult supervision are considered.
- The consultation method of evaluation may be used in combination with the Danish System. The 4-H member will be present with their exhibit or item. The evaluator will talk with the 4-H'er about the item and the process utilized.
- A modified Danish system is often used in competitive events such as animal shows or equitation competitions. After each entry receives the appropriate award a specified number of the top entries are ranked to receive "place" awards.

Recognition Events and the 4-H Recognition Model

Recognition is an important way to help young people to feel good about themselves. Recognition is not limited to awards or tied to formal evaluation events but is also provided through positive reinforcement on a continual basis (see pages 3-9 and 3-10) and should acknowledge more than levels of achievement. The *National 4-H Recognition Model* includes five types of recognition:

1. Recognizing youth for their *participation* can be a first step in building self-esteem.
2. Recognizing young people for their *progress towards personal goals* helps them gain experience in goal-setting and realistic self-assessment.
3. Establishing *standards of excellence* gives 4-H members a pre-determined target for accomplishment, and, recognizing their achievement of those standards helps them to appreciate the skills they are learning.
4. The desire to win is a strong motivator for some people. On the other hand, some young people are threatened by competition with their peers. Recognition that is given as a result of *peer competition* needs to be handled carefully and is not appropriate for youth under age 8.
5. When young people work together, they examine their own skills and abilities and explore solutions beyond their own ideas. This prepares them for life in today's inter-dependent, global society. Young people should, therefore, also be recognized for *cooperation*.

Sources: 4-H Youth Development Education: A National Model for Recognition in 4-H Programs, page 3; National Cloverbud Manual, Recognition in Youth Programs: Helping Young People Grow, Volunteer Handout, pages 2-6.

Each 4-H Club is encouraged to provide recognition for club members.