



# STARTING A NEW 4-H CLUB

## A Leader's Guide For Getting Through The First Year



## Recruitment, Promotion and Recognition

### Recruitment:

A personal invitation for families to join your club is the best way to gain new members. People feel really good about being asked to become part of a group. Encourage your 4-H families to think about other families they know who might enjoy the 4-H experience and invite them to join.

### Where else can you find members?

- Visit elementary school classrooms
- Announcements in your church bulletin
- Set up a booth at school orientation
- Use your local paper—write news releases about your club's activities and publicize your meeting date. Write a special news release when your club is reorganizing.

The best time to recruit members is August to October because that's when most of the clubs reorganize. Of course the sooner a new member turns in an enrollment form, the quicker they receive the 4-H newsletter and become involved in the club's activities. New members must be enrolled by March 1 and meet all the project guidelines and requirements for the projects they have enrolled in to show at the county fair. New members enrolled between March 2 and June 1 are eligible to exhibit in non-animal projects only.

### Recruitment Tools:

Here are some of the recruitment tools we have available to help you:

- "4-H is Family Fun" brochure that lists all the clubs in the County. It is also possible to personalize the brochure for your club. Often clubs will share the responsibility of recruiting new members in the same school district by taking turns visiting the classroom.
- "Commonly Asked Questions About 4-H" brochure
- "Top 10 reasons to join 4-H" bookmarks
- A display board with several themes to choose from. Two examples are "4-H Throughout the Year" and "Are You Into

It". It makes a great table top display.

- 4-H pencils to hand out in classrooms
- 4-H banners to hang behind a booth or table top display

### Promotion:

Your 4-H club is in the very best position to promote 4-H. Why? Because your 4-H families live in the "circulation area" of the local paper.

### Pictures Capture Attention

Photographs of your club being actively involved making an item at a project meeting, touring a local business, participating in a community service project, etc make great news releases. Take your camera along whenever your club has an activity and take pictures. You'll only use one or two for the paper but you can use the rest for a club scrapbook or a member's record book.

### Captions Tell the Story

Writing captions is easy, especially with a little practice. Just make sure to include these parts:

- Names of the people in the picture
- Name of the 4-H club
- Briefly describe what's happening

Here are a couple of sample captions:

*Chris Clover, a member of the Green Through and Through 4-H Club, is helping weed an elderly neighbor's garden as a community service project.*

*Members of the Green Through and Through 4-H Club learned about the wildlife at Willow River State Park on a 4-H club tour. Pictured left to right are: Chris, Mike, April and Troy.*

Talk with the families in your club to decide if you want to include last names in the captions or just first names.

### Writing News Releases

If you want the public to know more about the club's activity a news release is another option. Captions are wonderful but they are limited in how much information you can

provide. News releases can tell the whole story. A news release doesn't have to be long. Sometimes several paragraphs is enough. There are three things to remember:

1. The information needs to be current. News papers aren't interested in what happened a month ago.
2. It needs to be submitted to the paper in a readable manner — printed neatly or typed (double spaced).
3. On the top of the page, include the name of the 4-H club, the name of the person submitting the news release and their phone number. Including that information on the top of the page makes it easy for the paper to contact you if they have questions.

Include these parts in a news release:

- **Who**—always identify your 4-H club. Sometimes you may even include the names of individuals
- **What**—describe what the activity is
- **When**—the date of the activity is only important if the event hasn't happened yet and you are inviting the public to join you
- **Where**—if it's a business or public area they will appreciate the publicity too
- **Why**—it's especially important to describe what the members are learning or how the community is benefiting

## Recognition:

Recognizing 4-H members, leaders and parents on a regular basis, says "You are important and I appreciate your \_\_\_\_\_", It can also increase their interest and motivate them to keep trying even when things didn't go just the way they hoped. The National 4-H Recognition Model includes 5 types of recognition:

1. Participation—regularly attending meetings or taking part in an educational experience can be a significant accomplishment for some 4-H'ers.
2. Goal Achievement—setting their own personal goals and working to achieve them.
3. Standards of Excellence—striving to reach the standards established by the industry. Judging at the County Fair falls under this type of recognition because judges use the standards as a measuring stick.
4. Peer Competition—structured competition that leads to a single award.
5. Cooperation—working together in a cooperative setting to accomplish a goal/task.

It is important to remember that different people have different needs in terms of recognition. Some 4-H'ers really like winning the ribbon or prize. Others just like the self-satisfaction of having done a good job and still other simply like being involved with the group. The important thing is to make sure that everyone in the 4-H club is recognized at some time.

Here are some pointers for recognizing members, leaders and parents in your club:

- No matter what type of recognition is being used, members need to know exactly what they must do in order to get recognized. Following are a couple of examples:
  - \*\* All members who attend 8 of the 10 4-H club meetings will receive a certificate or prize (Participation)
  - \*\* Completed woodworking items must have a smooth finish (Standards of Excellence)
  - \*\* The member/club who wins the contest will receive a trophy (Peer Competition)
- Recognition is more meaningful when it occurs soon after it is earned. This is especially true with younger members and can easily be incorporated into participation. Perhaps your club needs volunteers to help set up the chairs and tables before each meeting. At the end of the meeting, present the volunteers with a special sticker or let them be first in the snack line.

## A special note about recognizing 4-H'ers for Goal Achievement:

It is important to help members learn to set goals, plan ways to achieve their goals and work toward their goals. Many youth are not experienced in setting their own goals and may need help. That doesn't mean adults tell them what their goal should be but instead help them learn the steps in the goal setting process.

The first thing to learn is that goals need to be realistic and reachable in a set time period. All members have some form of goals or ideas about what they would like to learn in a project. Are the goals realistic given the member's age, the resources they have available and their past experience?

Here are examples of questions you can ask to help a member think about the progress they are making toward their goal(s):

1. What is your goal(s)? Why did you decide on it?
2. What have you done to achieve your goal(s)?
3. What did you learn?
4. How do you feel about the experience? Why?
5. What would you do differently?
6. How can you use this experience in the future?
7. What's next?
  - Modify goal(s)
  - Continue to work on it?
  - Set a new goal?

Checking on progress toward goals is often assumed to be an end-of-year activity. It can be more meaningful for the 4-H'er if it's done on a periodic basis—especially if a 4-H'er hasn't had much experience or success in achieving goals.