



Around the State in 4-H

College of Agricultural Sciences

July 2004

4-H and Youth Development



WHY DO WE HAVE 4-H CLUBS? – *Christy Bartley*

As we begin the new fiscal year, change has again been a key player in our professional lives with Penn State Cooperative Extension. When we first started working for Cooperative Extension, many of us probably did not realize that as we worked as change agents with citizens across the commonwealth, we would also be changing the ways that we do business. As we all are adjusting to a new regional structure, it seems appropriate to think about what we do and why we do it. As I visit with volunteers, educators, and 4-H youth, they sometimes mention that it appears that we are moving away from the 4-H club structure toward other experiences that do not take as much time. After all, it is simpler to distribute educational materials and information through school enrichment, groups gathered by other organizations such as Boys & Girls Clubs or Scouts, and one time meetings. If we believe in the power of non-formal education and experiential learning, then we know in our hearts that 4-H club work is the emphasis our program needs to have.

Youth drive non-formal education. They set their knowledge and life skill goals for the year. Personal choice allows youth to develop decision-making skills and clarify their ideas and values. Experiential learning actively involves youth in relevant, real-world situations preparing them for their future. Often, youth and adults learn together. Strong personal relationships are developed between peers and between youth and caring adults. Youth are also exposed to multiple positive adult role models.

As we review the research on transitions of young people to adulthood, the question might change to, “What does it take to assist young people to become healthy, problem-solving, constructive adults?” Based on that research the answer includes—a valued place in a constructive group, learning to build close relationships, gaining a sense of worth, developing a base from which to make informed decisions, expressing constructive curiosity, being useful to others, believing in a future with opportunities, cultivating skills for lifelong learning, respecting democratic values, being a responsible citizen, and building a healthy lifestyle.

WOW! These are some of the same reasons used to argue that the 4-H club program provides the most positive impact for our youth. Your youth development efforts are more productive at the club level based on the research, so be sure to provide it your greatest attention. Enjoy the opportunities that youth take at this time of year to show off their accomplishments in the 4-H club program!

IN THIS ISSUE:

- Pennsylvania 4-H Recognized
- Team Work
- Value of 4-H Volunteers
- Different
- Responsibility, Self-Control and Patience

(Source: *What Is 4-H Youth Development?* Prepared by Cathann A. Kress, Director, Youth Development, National 4-H Headquarters, Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, USDA. Distributed at the March, 2004 nation 4-H State Leaders meeting, Chevy Chase, MD.)

PENNSYLVANIA 4-H RECOGNIZED NATIONALLY (*Christy Bartley & Nicole Webster*)

The Kellyites 4-H Club of Lewisburg was recognized as the first place winner out of 2,000 in the 4-H category as part of the Colgate Youth for America Campaign. In a small rural town without garbage collection or a recycling center, the Kellyites help coordinate the town recycling drop off center. A state grant provided the dumpsters. The club members provide information about the proper sorting and preparation of recycled materials and help to direct individuals to the appropriate recycling containers when the site is open.

Three other Pennsylvania 4-H clubs received fourth place awards for their community service projects:

- McKean County Livestock Club of Smethport, PA
- Grassy Meadows 4-H Club of Pitman, PA
- Southampton 4-H Seeing Eye Puppy Club, Churchville, PA

Congratulations to the club members and leaders who made the extra effort to apply for the award. The community service projects that Pennsylvania 4-H clubs perform across the Commonwealth has great impact on the lives of its citizens. Community service provides an excellent opportunity for youth to give back to their neighborhoods and schools. As a result of these activities, character, leadership, compassion, and integrity are built by youth of all ages.

TEAM WORK (*Robert Lewis*)

In his book "Racing to Win" Joe Gibbs, outstanding professional football coach and NASCAR team owner, said that "team building is tough." In real life, most leaders would say that team work is critical for success. Yet, only a few pull it off. Why is that so? Gibbs identified several qualities necessary to make it happen. Some of the qualities that he identified include:

- "it starts with you" - your attitude, your dreams, your focus on the "cause"
- "surround yourself with quality people"
- "find people who are willing to work toward a common goal"
- "recognize people who are willing to contribute and make personal sacrifices"

This book would be a great reward for YOU, your family, and your adult and teen leaders.

VALUE OF 4-H VOLUNTEERS (*Michael Martin*)

Here's a statistic I thought you might like to share. According to the *Independent Sector**, the estimated dollar value of volunteer time is \$17.19 per hour for 2003. The value of volunteer time is based on the average hourly earnings of all production and nonsupervisory workers on private nonfarm payrolls (as determined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics). *Independent Sector* takes this figure and increases it by 12 percent to estimate for fringe benefits. Based on this information--and the common belief that in Pennsylvania 4-H, 9,232 adults average 4.3 hours per week (223.60/year)--the total estimated time volunteered in their communities for 4-H was 2,064,275.20 hours, valued at \$35,484,890.00.

* Source: http://www.independentsector.org/programs/research/volunteer_time.html

Editor's Note: (*Robert Lewis*)

If we would add the \$35.5 Million volunteer contribution to the current \$74.3 million Penn State Cooperative Extension budget, the 4-H volunteers would make up about one third of the total "extension" budget. This does not include the out of pocket contributions of the 4-H leaders or the many other "extension" volunteers' time contribution. Whatever way it is figured, volunteers play a vital role in the educational program of the Cooperative Extension program, the College of Agricultural Sciences, and The Pennsylvania State University.

DIFFERENT

Hey! Hey! I'm just me!
I'm different from anyone else you'll see!
Taller than John – shorter than Sue...
Hair that is darker than Nancy's too.
Eyes not black or really green
Nor really blue, but in between.
I've got more freckles than Don or Fred.
Jane reads better but I can add,
And Jim runs faster (which makes me sad!)
Johnny's arms are chocolate brown,
And he's got the happiest grin in town.
Judy's arms are almost white
And I'm dark tan – and it's all right
'Cause Johnny is him, and I am me,
And Judy is Judy, plain to see,
And we're all as different as we can be!

Author Unknown.

- Submitted by Patreese Ingram

RESPONSIBILITY, SELF-CONTROL AND PATIENCE (Anne Heinsohn)

Recently both the news media and research literature have featured reports of fighting, bullying and other serious misbehavior among children at school. However, self-control and responsibility for one's actions are learned behaviors and can be taught. Indeed, children must be taught how to control their impulses and to take responsibility for their actions. The earlier such learning occurs, the more likely it will result in positive results.

Group settings such as 4H Clubs, camps and after-school programs offer a variety of opportunities for children to learn responsibility and self-control. In fact these particular behaviors are quite necessary if the group is to be a positive experience for its members. However, in order to learn self-control and responsibility for one's actions, patience is required.

Children develop patience by participating in activities that require it. Learning to knit, sew, use clay, do a variety of crafts and even cook--to name a few--helps to teach patience with one's self and others. Cooperative activities including games, participating in a club and others enhance and strengthen the learning. Learning by doing is key here. Using patience in day to day activities paves the way for developing responsibility and self-control as time goes on and children mature.

The 2004 4-H calendar can be found at <http://pa4h.cas.psu.edu>

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In Consultation with
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This publication is available in alternative media on request.

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