

## Letters to New Leaders: Letter 5



# 4-H Activities

## Missouri 4-H Youth Development Programs

### **Dear Volunteer Leaders:**

Now that you have had several club meetings and the members are excited about their project work, you would probably like to know about the other 4-H educational activities.

### **Club Activities**

#### **Leadership**

Giving all youth leadership opportunities before, during and after club meetings is one of the most important things that adult volunteers should do. In addition, all youth should be encouraged to give individual or team talks or demonstrations on topics they like.

#### **Social Activities**

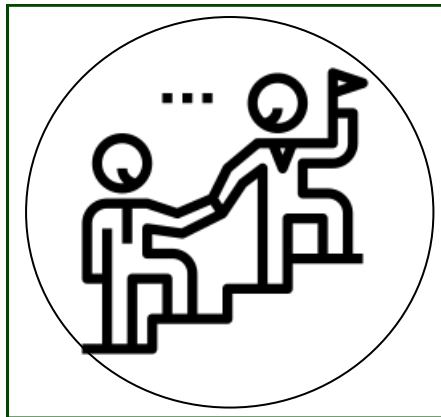
The most successful clubs have youth work with adults to plan fun events such as swimming, skating or holiday parties; trail rides; campouts; picnics to help youth get to know each other.

#### **Community Service Projects**

4-H goals include helping members become caring, contributing citizens of their communities. Clubs are encouraged to work on short term or multisession community service.

#### **Recognition Activities**

Many clubs hold special recognition events for members and leaders. Members invite families and friends to the ceremony, and use the opportunity to explain club activities.



### **Resources:**

- Missouri 4-H Events

[4h.missouri.edu](http://4h.missouri.edu)

Missouri 4-H Foundation - Scholarships and Community Service grants

[4h.missouri.edu/foundation](http://4h.missouri.edu/foundation)

#### **Project Workshops**

Many counties offer workshops in various project areas, such as animal clinics, dog training, crafts, leadership or visual arts.

#### **Judging and Other Contests**

Your county may have judging and identification contests in several areas, such as livestock or horses.

#### **4-H Show/Fair**

One of the major 4-H activities is the county fair, where eligible members display exhibits they made and skills they learned during the project year.

Exhibits are judged against an objective standard, rather than against each other. Some projects may be chosen to exhibit in the Missouri State Fair 4-H Building's non-competitive Showcase of Displays.

Most counties use conference judging for non-livestock projects at their 4-H shows. In this method of judging, members discuss their projects with the judge and explain what they did and learned during the project. The judge offers positive comments and suggestions for possible improvements in future projects. This is often the most helpful learning experience of the year for members.

### **Regional 4-H Activities**

Some regions offer occasional activities and conferences such as teen leader lock-ins, energizers, camps, float trips or retreats. Check with your local 4-H staff for upcoming regional 4-H youth or adult events.

#### **4-H Camp**

Members have various options for camp, where they can participate in a variety of activities.

Older youths can participate in counselor-in-training programs to be camp leaders.

Contact your local 4-H staff or check your 4-H newsletter, web site or Facebook page for important camp deadlines, fees, scholarships and other related dates.

## College Scholarships

Many counties, as well as the Missouri 4-H Foundation, offer scholarships to eligible 4-H youth.

## State Opportunities

The first overnight state event is the State 4-H Teen Conference for youth ages 12 and 13. Participants attend workshops to help them develop leadership skills, tour the University of Missouri-Columbia campus and meet other 4-H members from around the state. Encourage club members to attend this event.

### State 4-H Congress

4-H members ages 14 and older may attend the annual State 4-H Congress, where they experience college dorm living, share ideas with others and participate in the selection of the State 4-H Council.

### State 4-H Judging Contests

State judging contests such as Fashion Review, Horse Bowl, Public Speaking etc. are held on one of the University of Missouri campuses.

State judging events let the 4-H members test their judging skills against official standards. Winning teams may compete nationally.

### Missouri State Fair

The state fair features livestock and non-livestock projects, as well as demonstrations and presentations. The State Fair 4-H Building exhibits are not judged; instead, they serve as a showcase of locally selected items.

## National 4-H Events

National 4-H Week occurs every October. Counties and clubs may promote 4-H programs. National activities include the following:

- Citizenship Washington Focus—for youth 15 to 19
- National 4-H Youth Congress for state award winners
- National 4-H Conference—for teen members of each state's 4-H advisory council and their adult coordinators

## International Travel

The 4-H International Program offers international exchanges and other programs for 4-H members and their families to promote cross-cultural understanding and international development.

Missouri 4-H families can host international exchanges with members of youth groups similar to the 4-H program in other countries.

The 4-H members also can travel to other countries for varying lengths of time.

Contact the state 4-H office for more information.

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Adapted from *Letters to New 4-H Leaders*, M.A. Dodd, L. Hoglum, and M. Robinson (1998) Oregon State University Cooperative Extension, Corvallis, OR. Updated August 2017 by Elaine Anderson, Elaine George, Tammy Gillespie and Paula Skillicorn.

## Quality Matters in 4-H: A Checklist for Staff and Volunteers

- \_\_\_ I know how to provide a safe physical and emotional youth program environment
- \_\_\_ I know how to provide a warm welcome to all youth, free of bias or exclusionary behavior
- \_\_\_ I know the physical safety safeguards I should put in place at all 4-H events
- \_\_\_ I know best practice strategies for helping youth reframe conflict if needed
- \_\_\_ I know how to support youth engagement with materials and abstract ideas
- \_\_\_ I allow youth officers to maintain control at least 50 percent of the club meetings
- \_\_\_ I know how to support youth interaction through multiple planning techniques
- \_\_\_ I know how to provide all youth with specific encouragement rather than blanket praise
- \_\_\_ I know how to support youth decision making in content and process choices
- \_\_\_ I know how to create opportunities for all youth to serve in a leadership role in some capacity
- \_\_\_ I know how to create opportunities for all youth to express ideas with others
- \_\_\_ I know how to provide all youth with opportunities to reflect and evaluate activity and club experiences

***Thank you for your commitment to improving 4-H program quality through volunteer development!***