

# SPOTLIGHT ON 4-H

Nebraska Extension 4-H Newsletter

June 2017

## Essential Elements of Youth Programs

The 4-H model, of practical, learn-by-doing experiences, encourages youth to experiment, innovate, and think independently. Studies show that youth who participate in 4-H do better in school, are more motivated to help others, feel safe to try new things, and develop lasting friendships. These youth also grow up to be the adult leaders in their communities. But why?

National 4-H commissioned a team to determine the critical elements that make up a quality 4-H experience. The team identified eight essential elements that were adopted later by the 4-H program. These elements are summarized in four key concepts: belonging, mastery, independence, and generosity.

Here's an overview of the essential elements of positive youth development programs and how each contributes to the four concepts.

**Belonging:** Belonging can be accomplished by any one of three elements. A positive relationship with a caring adult who sets boundaries and expectations. Another element is an environment that supports members with positive and specific feedback. A healthy group also celebrates the successes of all members. The third element that promotes belonging is a safe emotional and physical environment.

**Mastery:** Mastery as a concept is developed by two essential elements. The first is providing opportunity for mastery or the building of knowledge and skills and the demonstration of this knowledge. This process takes time. The second element to mastery is engagement in learning. An engaged youth works to understand the subject matter and develops relationships and connections in order to remain engaged. Engaged learners are self-motivated and learn from experience.

**Independence:** The concept of independence has two essential elements. These youth have an opportunity to see themselves as an active participant in their future. They have hope and are optimistic that they can shape their own life choices. The second element of independence is the opportunity for self-determination. These youth believe that they have impact on the events that shape their lives and aren't just submitting to the wills and whims of others. Youth develop a sense of influence over their own lives in order to become self-directing, autonomous adults.

**Generosity:** The last concept is generosity. Youth have an opportunity to value and practice service to others. Service is a way for members to gain exposure to the larger community and to the world!



### In the Spotlight for June

- Ways to Increase Interest in 4-H Clubs
- Club Activity: Focus on Forestry
- Horticulture Contest
- Livestock Showmanship
- Beyond the Needle: Tips & Tricks
- Tweens as Leaders
- Interview Tips for Teens

Extension is a Division of the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln cooperating with the Counties and the United States Department of Agriculture.

The 4-H Youth Development program abides with the nondiscrimination policies of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the United States Department of Agriculture.



## Ways to Increase Interest in 4-H Clubs

Some suggestions to increase interest of members and at the same time increase attendance are:

### **Provide a well-planned program.**

Plan for variety, provide a list of learning activities, (speakers, workshops, videos)

Allow officers to make suggestions, plan the educational and recreational pieces for each meeting.

### **Accomplish something.**

Never waste anyone's time. Adults and children should never leave asking what the purpose of that meeting was.

### **Provide for group participation.**

Have something for early arrivals to do. OPENING ACTIVITY/ICEBREAKER The purpose of this activity is group building. This is especially important with new groups, but it is still important for continuing 4-H clubs to do. Make ALL families and members feel welcome.

### **Allow several people to have a part on the program.**

The more people you get involved the better the club will function.

### **Socialize – Have fun and fellowship!**

Kids come to meetings to have FUN! Include some recreation in every meeting. Some examples include: games, stories, and group activities.

### **Run the meeting on a businesslike basis.**

Meet with the President and officers before the meeting so that an agenda is prepared. Give the officer's as much information as you can so they can run the meeting.

### **Eliminate wasted time of the whole group in discussing minor points and discussing items before adequate information is available. Have lots of busy club committees.**

Officers and members usually don't have as many between-club meeting responsibilities as they would like. Committees could help plan program segments, service projects or even club award ceremonies. Assign lengthy subjects to committees for further detailed study and ask them to make recommendations.

### **Summarize accomplishments.**

Banquets, awards, videos, and slide shows, are just a few suggestions on how to recognize members accomplishments and conclude the year.



## Club Activity: Focus on Forestry



From identifying trees to knowing why leaves change colors, from the tree in your front yard to an entire forest of trees, the forestry 4-H project allows youth to learn in depth about trees, the environments that they live in, and how they help our environment.

Forestry is a project for any age, year round, making it a great club project. This project isn't just for the summer as many would think. Forestry is an all year round project. In fact winter is the only time to collect twigs for a twig display. It is a great time to work on a cross section of a tree exhibit or prepare seeds to grow a tree.

Start the forestry project by teaching youth about why trees are important to our environment, the benefits to our health and the habitat they provide for many animals. The Arbor Day Foundation has many resources which aid in this lesson including <https://www.arborday.org/celebrate/documents/poster-contest/2009.pdf>

Once youth understand the importance of trees, let them try their hand at identification using the Mystery Tree Challenge which may be found at: <http://www.arborday.org/kids/treemazefinal.pdf>. Before beginning the Mystery Tree Challenge review the tree identification terms and techniques using the following resource manuals as a guide: Tree Identification Manual (4-H 332) and Trees of Nebraska (EC 92-1774-X).

Once youth have reviewed and understand the difference between terms such as evergreen and deciduous tree or compound leaf and simple leaf they are ready to begin identifying. The Mystery Tree Challenge says to gather leaf examples but don't let this limit you to only doing this activity in the summer. Use photos of trees, leaves and berries or fruits instead and make it a winter activity. Practice again in the summer when the trees have leafed out.

Next youth can practice their identification skills by identifying and collecting leaves from different trees and making a leaf notebook. Take a field trip and discover the many arboretums across the state and collect from a wide variety of trees.

Once youth begin to collect leaves they will need a way to press the leaves. Go here for simple instructions to make a leaf press for all their collections [http://forestry.about.com/od/treeidentification/ht/build\\_leaf\\_pres.htm](http://forestry.about.com/od/treeidentification/ht/build_leaf_pres.htm) Ask your local Extension Office for options of making this a fair exhibit.

The forestry project doesn't stop here. Youth can also make twig displays, grow a tree from a seed, make a cross section of a tree trunk or branch, wood display, and for the novice 4-H'ers, prepare a poster on the parts of a tree.





## Horticulture Contest

Another contest area you can enter through 4-H is the Horticulture Identification Contest. The Horticulture Contest is set up to give youth the opportunity to test their knowledge in the area of plants, fruits, vegetables, and more. Being able to identify certain plants is a skill youth will carry with them their entire lives. Maybe one day youth will become a Master Gardener or even continue into a career field involving plants.

Many counties across the state have local Horticulture contests, however, youth do not have to compete locally before competing at the State Horticulture Contest held during the Nebraska State Fair. Local contests may have different rules for competition, so it is important to check with local extension staff before the contest for specific rules. If your county does not have a local contest, you may be allowed to attend a neighboring county or area contest.



### State Horticulture Contest Rules

**Eligibility:** Open to youth ages 10 and older on January 1 of the current year.

**Guidelines:** There are two age divisions for the contest and youth may compete individually or as a member of a team.

Youth will participate in three areas:

**Identification:** where youth will identify plant specimens by accepted common name. Intermediate youth will identify 50 samples and Seniors will identify 100 samples.

**Judging:** where youth will be asked to rank a class of items from best to worst based upon a set of criteria. Intermediate participants will judge one class and Seniors will judge two classes.

**Written Exam:** where youth will complete a multiple choice/true false exam. 25 questions for Intermediate and 50 questions for Seniors.

For both local and state contests, youth are welcome to check out the awesome resources available for them.

<http://njha.org>

The National Junior Horticulture Association has a wealth of resources on their website including: Identification for flowers and indoor plants, landscape ornamentals, fruits, nuts and berries and also vegetables. There is also help with the written exam portion as well.

<http://marketplace.unl.edu/ne4h/curriculum/plantscience>

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln 4-H Program also has publications to use as resources. Everyone a Gardener!, Growing Great Houseplants, All About Annual Flowers and Selection and Preparing Vegetables, Herbs and Fruits For Exhibit The State Horticulture Contest is linked to a National contest. If youth compete well at the Nebraska contest, they may be eligible to represent their county and state at the National Contest. If you would like to know more about the Horticulture Identification Contest, please contact your local county office or State Superintendent, Elizabeth Killinger (Hall County).



## Livestock Sportsmanship

The big day has finally arrived. It's early in the morning, youth and their families are getting all the animals washed, rinsed and dried. After animals are cleaned, then comes the hardest part of the day and that's when families and exhibitors work together to get their animal(s) prepared for their reward within the ring.

This portion of the County Fair should be the highlight where 4-Hers show off their newly gained skills that they learned in preparing and showing their animals. Sometimes we don't see these actions be put on display but see things that don't really promote 4-H youth development. How are youth supposed to learn if they are distracted with other obstacles or others doing the work for them? Listed below are a couple of situations to think about when preparing youth in the 4-H livestock project.

**First Situation:** You may have noticed a middle school youth sitting in a chair looking at Facebook or sending the next Snapchat to a friend. Not noticing what's going on with their beef animal which is getting groomed prior to entering the ring by their parents or other adults. What is wrong with this particular situation? First, you're thinking well maybe the youth doesn't know how to fit a beef animal, second, maybe they don't like showing cattle in general. But from a youth developmental educational point, they should take an initiative and be part of the action like observing what's being applied to the animal or making sure the animal is calm when standing in a chute or stall. This concept would be illustrated as "Learning by Doing – 4-H Slogan."

**Second Situation:** As youth are entering the ring to display their animal, you always overhear parents or other adults say "keep the head up" or "walk the animal slowly." This would be a situation of last remarks which are a great reminder for our youth to get focus on their actions. Sometimes we need these little reminders to push forward in life. This practice can be performed at home, especially when working with our younger junior division youth who may be nervous with a larger animal. These reminders help youth and adults connect to each other in making the situation a highlight of their day at the fair.



The conclusion in regards to livestock sportsmanship, we all need to work together in providing all the tools and knowledge so the youth of the next generation have the life skills, motivation and self-confidence when they become adults.



## Beyond the Needle: Tips & Tricks

The STEAM Clothing series is designed for youth to learn how Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math are integrated into clothing and textile creation. The *Beyond the Needle* activity manual is all about the ART of clothing. Art is what makes us really love our clothes – designers work hard to give us garments to wear that are appealing to our various senses.

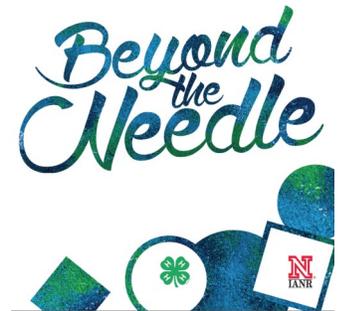
The foundation of this manual is based on the elements and principles of design and the design process. Every activity in the book asks youth to create a variety of samples before working directly on a garment or fabric yardage. This allows for creative experimentation in a worry-free environment. When youth have perfected a technique, they will be ready to apply it to fabrics or ready-made garments with confidence. Encourage youth to utilize the design process while creating multiple samples before settling on one particular design.

Project samples can be displayed in a 4-H *Beyond the Needle* Portfolio.



\*Portfolio Tip: Be sure to include notes on how the sample was developed, including materials used and the date completed.

Do not overlook the *Design Basics* section; this includes the Elements and Principles of Design, as well as Color Theory activities. In these activities, youth will define the elements and principles of design through observation.



\*Design Tip: The principles of design are the GOALS of the design – this is what a designer wants to achieve. The design elements are the tools that designers use to achieve those goals. One garment or textile can reflect more than one design element at a time.

### Design Prep

When working with youth, it may be helpful to consider using the following tips and tricks for preparing the garment or fabric for embellishment or treatment.

Prewash fabric yardage. It is recommended that fabric is laundered as the garment would be after construction to eliminate shrinkage, which could affect the appearance of your embellishment or fabric treatment.

Determine if the design will be an all-over embellishment or treatment, or if it will appear on specific areas of the garment. Determine what is trying to be accomplished with the design. If youth want to develop an area of emphasis, they may want to apply the embellishment or treatment to only the most important area of the garment.

Determine at what stage in garment construction youth will complete your embellishment or fabric treatment.

Get creative and have fun exploring the activities and techniques offered in the *Beyond the Needle* activity manual!



## Tweens as Leaders

A nine year old addressed a crowd of children with his rocket he built, completed and launched. He told details of the 4-H rocketry project and how others can get involved. The same day, an eleven year old 4-H'er helped a Clover Kid measure ingredients to make play dough while explaining how each ingredient originated in agriculture.

Tweens are youth between the 9-12 years of age. These youth enjoy and are proud to be part of group or club activities. They are excited to take leadership roles if they are guided, taught, and encouraged by responsible, caring adult leaders.

Tweens vary in their interests, academic abilities, attention span, and reasoning skills. Therefore, knowing how to help each tween become a successful leader requires knowing the young person's ability level and selecting a leadership role that is appropriate for each tween. Clover Kid activities are normally appropriate for tweens to lead if the tween is well trained in the activity.

Mentoring tweens to lead and teach is important. Prior to the activity, build their confidence by showing them exactly what will be expected of them. Role playing how the activity will go with the younger children will help them practice their leadership role before the children arrive.

Allowing tweens to help lead activities they have completed already and are extremely interested in will also help them be successful and have confidence in their leadership role. The nine year old sharing his rocketry project grew in his public speaking abilities, his salesmanship, his confidence, and his ability to explain the science, technology, engineering and math skills in the rocketry 4-H project.

The 4-H Clover Kids who were helped by the eleven year old learned how agriculture has a role in their daily lives and how to measure dry and wet ingredients to make play dough. They learned that older 4-Hers care about them and can make great leaders and teachers. Some now aspire to be leaders as soon as they are able because they admire the tween leader. The eleven year old learned he could help teach younger 4-Hers about agriculture and that he loves being a teacher and leader.

Benefits of utilizing tweens as leaders span beyond leadership itself. Life skills, such as concern for others, public speaking, and self-esteem are all benefits. Tweens benefit the youth they lead and overall 4-H programs. These youth have positive leadership experiences that grow them into effective leaders and communicators within their club, community, country and world in the future.





# CALENDAR OF EVENTS



## Expert Tips for Teens...At the Job Interview

Punctuality and reliability are important. You can show punctuality by arriving 15 minutes early for the interview and if you have stellar school attendance, cite that.

First impressions are important.

Don't chew gum. Gum chewing is a major turnoff for employers.

Don't downplay your previous experience. Babysitting for the same family for three years, shows you built rapport with the kids, and are trusted by the family. A Red Cross babysitting certificate shows you are interested in learning more. These are transferable skills which include being flexible, creative, communicator, promptness, handling money, setting and keeping a schedule, and balancing schoolwork with activities.

Fill out every part of the application and use your best handwriting.

Avoid peppering interviews with "um" and "like." The best way to get past overusing these "pause words" is practice. Have someone flag you if you start inserting too many "um's" and "like's".

Make eye contact. It's extremely important for connecting with your interviewer.

Be yourself.

Show your enthusiasm. Employers list lack of enthusiasm as their No. 1 turnoff. The best way to show enthusiasm? A big smile throughout the interview.

Project confidence. Overcoming the fear and appearing confident is a great way to stand out. Use a strong, forceful voice.

Ask questions. Interviewers invite you to ask questions. Asking questions shows your enthusiasm, (avoid salary or vacation time.)

Close the sale. If you want the job, say so. Conclude the interview by thanking the interviewer.

### After the Job Interview

- Write a thank-you note. It's just common courtesy to thank people for their time.
- If you haven't heard a hiring decision by the time you expected to, call the interviewer to check on your status.