

## **It's all about the Cloverbuds!**

By Kathleen Jablonski, Extension Educator, 4-H Youth Development

Do you know a child between the ages of 5 and 7? Are you looking for a program to help them build life skills, learn about the world around them and have fun? You may be looking for the 4-H Cloverbud program!

Cloverbud groups are led by interested parents or community members who become screened 4-H volunteers. Parents and other caring adults associated with the youth's family are encouraged to help at group meetings.

The 4-H Cloverbud program exists as a distinct part of the total 4-H youth development program. It is designed as a non-formal approach to developing the confidence, social skills, decision making abilities, subject matter knowledge, and physical skills of kindergarten through second grade youth. As youth begin their 4-H Cloverbud experience they take part in a unique blend of activities and opportunities specially designed for their age level.

### **Who Can Be a Cloverbud?**

Membership eligibility for the 4-H Cloverbud Program begins when a child has reached the age of 5 as of January 1 of the current 4-H year.

Although all counties in New Hampshire have a Cloverbud program, not all groups (such as: community-project clubs, schools, etc.) provide the opportunity for the involvement of Cloverbuds. Individuals should check with the local Extension office to discover where a Cloverbud group meets in their particular area. Better yet, contact the Grafton County Extension Office (603-787-6944) and find out how you can start a Cloverbud group in your community.

Cloverbud groups can be organized in several ways. You might have Cloverbud Clubs where members meet separate from any other group or club. Cloverbud clubs may meet in community centers, schools, libraries, childcare settings, churches, or in the home of interested parents or trained adults.

You could have a Cloverbud Classroom Club. Cloverbud materials are ideal for K-2 grade classrooms. Teachers trained in their use receive support and resources from their county extension office.

Cloverbud members can be part of an existing 4-H traditional club, but meet separate from the 8-18 year-old members while doing Cloverbud activities.

There are differences between the Cloverbud and older 4-H member programs. The Cloverbud program is geared toward activity based learning. Curriculum is based on age appropriate research and involves cooperative, experiential, and noncompetitive activities. Older 4-H member learning is project based. Cloverbud instruction is leader directed. Older members receive instruction from a leader and through self-study. Cloverbuds are recognized for their participation only. Older members are recognized for participation, goal achievement, achievement of standards, and being the best in their area via competition. Cloverbud activities come from an approved statewide curriculum, or may use materials approved by their county Extension Educator following the Cloverbud program parameters guidelines. Older members utilize project manuals or other materials designed for their age group.

The Cloverbud Activity Manual is a series of lessons that address such subjects as citizenship, expressive arts, the environment, personal development, and plant and animal science to name a few. Each lesson includes a background information section followed by a recommended teaching plan. Screened leaders may borrow the Activity Manual to use with their group.

Leaders, upon request, may also sign up for special edition newsletters that contain additional activities to do with the 'buds.

All programs sponsored by UNHCE are consistent with pertinent Federal and State laws and regulations on non-discrimination regarding age, color, handicap, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran's status.

Special thanks to Ohio State University Extension website and the UNH Cooperative Extension website for providing the information contained in this article.

For more information about 4-H Youth Development or the 4-H Cloverbud program, please contact the UNHCE Grafton County Office at 3855 Dartmouth College Hwy, Box 5, North Haverhill, NH 03774, call 787-6944 or email: [Kathleen.jablonski@unh.edu](mailto:Kathleen.jablonski@unh.edu).

*All programs sponsored by UNHCE are consistent with pertinent Federal and State laws and regulations on non-discrimination regarding age, color, handicap, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran's status.*