



## 4-H Clubs

### Still the Optimum Experience

#### What is 4-H?

4-H is the youth educational program of the UNH Cooperative Extension. It is conducted by the US Department of Agriculture, the University of New Hampshire (our land grant university), and each county in New Hampshire. The 4-H program is open to all interested youth, regardless of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, creed, national origin, or disability. The mission of 4-H is to assist youth in acquiring knowledge, developing life skills, and forming attitudes that will enable them to become self-directing, productive and contributing members of society. 4-H emphasizes the importance of involving youth in the learning process. In 4-H, everyone learns by doing. 4-H projects are the special interest areas members explore and master skills, knowledge and competencies. Projects can be taken as part of a club or done at home. UNH Cooperative Extension provides project books and leader's guides. The major project areas are: plant and animal science, science and technology, family and consumer sciences, communication and expressive arts, citizenship, personal development and leadership, environmental education and natural resources, and healthy lifestyle education. There are more than 50 projects to choose from within these broad areas.

#### 4-H Clubs

4-H Clubs are organized groups of five or more youth, ages five to 19, who meet under the guidance of volunteer leaders. Younger children, ages five to seven, participate in the noncompetitive 4-H Cloverbud Program. Each club decides its own name, officers, how often to meet, and what program/projects to conduct at the meetings. Dues or fund raisers are voluntary and decided by the club in order to accomplish group goals and to cover supply costs. Through participation in a wide selection of 4-H programs and projects, youth develop life skills in communications, decision making, group process, learning, self-esteem, relationship and management skills. They can be organized in neighborhoods, towns, multi-town, or countywide.

#### There are Different Ways to Participate in 4-H

**Community Clubs** have planned meetings, elected officers; work on and complete projects; do at least one community service project and participate in some countywide 4-H programs.

**4-H Short Courses** focus on a specific project area for a short time period. An example would be a 4-session course on forestry or babysitting.

**4-H Family Clubs** are for families which participate in 4-H, independent of any 4-H club affiliation. Parents enroll as 4-H volunteers and children of 4-H age enroll as 4-H members or Cloverbuds. The parents advise their children in the projects of their choice. Meetings are planned at a given time period, or whenever that particular 4-H project area is worked on. Basic requirements, in addition to enrolling in and completing projects include: a community service project; participation in county 4-H events; and completion of 4-H member and club report forms.

**Independent 4-H Members** are not members of either 4-H clubs or family clubs who want to work on their own in a given 4-H project and participate in county and state 4-H programs. Independent members select an advisor or parent to help them review their goals and evaluate their 4-H projects and progress.

**School Enrichment** consists of 4-H programs that are taught by volunteers or teachers to enhance the school curriculum. These can be done as a part of the regular school day, or as after-school enrichment programs. Training is provided by an Extension Educator or trained volunteer.

## **How are 4-H Clubs organized?**

The 4-H Club system is flexible to allow self-determination by members and leaders. 4-H Clubs choose when they meet. 4-H Clubs tend to be organized as:

**Community and multi-project 4-H Club:** 4-H members and leaders meet together for a general meeting then may separate into one or more project or age groups for specialized instruction.

**Project 4-H Clubs:** members and leaders meet and focus on a particular project interest either locally or on a county level.

**Cloverbud Clubs:** members ages 5-7 are introduced to life skills in 4-H by exploring a variety of projects and interest areas. Meetings are outlined in the 4-H Cloverbud curriculum notebook. Cloverbud Clubs provide discovery of the world of 4-H opportunities.

## **What are the volunteer leadership roles in 4-H Clubs?**

**Organizational Leader** - Organizational Leaders perform the primary leadership role in the 4-H club or short course. They serve as the liaison between the UNH Cooperative Extension Office and the local club or short course - its members, leaders and volunteers. They manage local club programs, assist club officers and other leaders. They are responsible for 4-H member/leader enrollments and coordinate participation at local, county, and state 4-H programs. They help new members and volunteers become involved in 4-H.

**Project Leaders** - Project Leaders teach specific projects to members for an agreed upon length of time. This is sometimes done as a part of an overall club meeting and at other times done at separate meetings for those interested in completing the given project(s). They assist and communicate with the Organizational leader.

**Activity Leader** - Activity Leaders organize or help with special 4-H programs and/or activities at local and county levels. Examples include: 4-H Awards Night; Community Service Projects; Rally Day; Fashion Revue; County Activities Day; etc.

**Key Leaders** - Key Leaders are responsible for major 4-H programs, projects, and activities on the county and state level. They work closely with the Extension Office, other volunteers, parents, and members for coordinating major efforts in 4-H.

## **Who's Who in 4-H?**

**Cloverbuds** - 4-H'ers ages 5-7 years old by January 1st. The 4-H Cloverbud program is non-competitive and explores the variety of life skills and project areas of 4-H. Cloverbud members can participate in local and most county 4-H events, except for showing animals. At awards night, Cloverbuds receive a 1st, 2nd, or 3rd year 4-H Cloverbud pin. They must complete a 4-H enrollment form annually to enroll in the Cloverbud project.

**4-H Members** - Youth between the ages of 8 and 18 as of January 1st who participate in 4-H Clubs, Family Clubs or as Independent Members. Basic requirements: Complete 4-H learning by doing projects; complete an annual project completion form; and participate in at least two activities where they demonstrate some of the skills they have learned (fairs, fashion revue, International Foods Day, etc.). 4-H members receive 4-H ID cards, project books (some have a small charge), and pins, seals or certificates when requirements are met.

**4-H Parents** - Support 4-H'ers in their family projects, providing necessary resources. Assist with "home projects". Many parents also help 4-H volunteer leaders by sharing skills at 4-H meetings, sharing in "parent of the month" duties by providing extra help at meetings, providing refreshments, helping with 4-H records, insuring 4-H member's participation through transporting to 4-H meetings and programs, pitching in to assist at club and county events.

**4-H Junior Leader** - More experienced 4-H members. No age limit, but usually 12 or older. They assist 4-H volunteers by helping at meetings or project sessions, or by helping younger members. They work with adult volunteers in a helping role that is jointly planned. Leadership is listed as a separate project on their 4-H member enrollment.

**Teen Leaders** - 4-H Teen Leaders are those who take on leadership roles normally done by adults. They organize a separate 4-H club, or teach small project groups, often for younger members. They complete both member and volunteer leader enrollments. They still qualify for 4-H member and participation awards.

## **What are the essential parts to a 4-H meeting?**

There are three components:

- ★ Business (Conducted by members who are elected or duties are rotated) to accomplish group goals.
- ★ Program (decided on by the members and leaders) can be “hands on”: making a project, a guest speaker, field trip, or special educational program.
- ★ Fun - social interaction, recreational or healthy fitness activity.

Depending upon the age of the 4-H members, some meetings will have all three components listed above while other meetings may focus on just one or two. Most meetings are 1 1/2 or two hours long. Cloverbud Clubs meet for an hour. Clubs choose to meet weekly, every other week, or once a month.

## **What are the requirements in 4-H?**

- ★ All members and leaders of the club must complete and submit annual enrollments stating biographical information and project selections for the year.
- ★ Each 4-H member needs to finish at least one learn-by-doing project per year.
- ★ Decide, plan, and complete a community service project during the year.
- ★ Participate in at least two county wide 4-H programs.
- ★ Summarize accomplishments to receive achievement awards and recognition.

## **What are the costs of 4-H?**

In 4-H, there are no uniforms and no national, state, or county dues or assessments. Some 4-H project manuals have a publication charge to members. There is a free copy for each club or leader teaching a group. Supplies and materials to make a project as in sewing or woodworking, are the responsibility of parents. Some clubs seek contributions of materials/supplies to keep costs of the project affordable. Many businesses also provide discounts for 4-H member's projects.

## **What are some county 4-H Programs?**

Members and leaders learn about upcoming programs and events through their county newsletters and special mailings. There is much to look forward to, such as . . . presenting a demonstration, action exhibit, or public speech; displaying finished projects at the fairs, participating in a foods day, fashion revue, or other special programs; consumer, or animal science judging programs; attending 4-H Camp. By attending county events, you will network with other members who have similar interests and discover that there's always more in 4-H than you thought.

4-H has lots of opportunities for growth as there are also programs on county, state, regional, national, and international levels.

## **How do I learn more about starting a 4-H Club?**

Most new leaders start with an orientation visit with the Extension Educator, 4-H Youth Development in their county. There are plenty of resources to help new volunteers - 4-H Leader Handbooks, Leader's Guides, and a Leader's Correspondence Course. You may want to attend a leader's forum or workshop.

New 4-H leaders often get assistance, too, from experienced leaders who have similar interests or club structures. Visit the 4-H office to discover more resources that can be of assistance to volunteers and 4-H clubs.

The county extension office numbers are included in this packet. The University of New Hampshire is an equal opportunity employer and educator.