



COUNTY EXTENSION AGENT *Connection*

ISSUE 008 - MAY 2024



CHECK IT OUT!

Feeling the end-of-year burnout? You're not alone! As the busy 4-H season winds down, it's the perfect time to recharge and reflect on your incredible efforts. Remember, you're the heart of our club, and your dedication shapes the experiences and growth of every member. This May, let's celebrate all you've accomplished and look ahead with fresh energy. We've got some exciting tips and tools to help you rejuvenate and get ready for an even more amazing 4-H year. Take a deep breath, pat yourself on the back, and let's gear up for new adventures and successes!

Thankful for you!
Megan

COUNTY EXTENSION AGENT CONNECTION

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Preparing for the New Year

Preparing for the next 4-H year is crucial for ensuring a successful and enriching experience for all members and volunteers. As a 4-H club manager, taking proactive steps to organize, plan, and enhance your club's activities will set the foundation for a productive year ahead. By focusing on key areas such as scheduling, volunteer training, program improvement, goal setting, securing resources, documentation, and community building, you can create an environment that supports growth, learning, and engagement for everyone involved. Here are few tips to help you get started.

1. Plan the Annual Calendar:

- **Set Key Dates:** Identify and schedule key events, meetings, and deadlines for the year. Include project deadlines, workshops, community service projects, and county fairs.
- **Communicate Early:** Share the calendar with members and parents well in advance to ensure everyone is informed and can plan accordingly.

2. Recruit and Train Volunteers:

- **Identify Needs:** Determine the areas where volunteer support is needed, such as project leaders, event coordinators, and mentors.
- **Provide Training:** Organize training sessions to equip volunteers with the necessary skills and knowledge. This could include workshops on youth development, safety protocols, and project-specific training.

3. Evaluate and Improve Programs:

- **Gather Feedback:** Collect feedback from members, parents, and volunteers about the past year's programs and activities. Use surveys, suggestion boxes, or informal discussions.
- **Implement Changes:** Use the feedback to make improvements and adjustments to existing programs. Introduce new projects or activities that align with members' interests and needs.

4. Set Goals and Objectives:

- **Club Goals:** Establish clear goals for the club, such as increasing membership, enhancing community service efforts, or achieving specific project outcomes.
- **Individual Goals:** Encourage members to set personal goals for their projects and overall 4-H experience. Provide guidance on setting SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) goals.

5. Secure Funding and Resources:

- **Budget Planning:** Develop a budget for the year, accounting for all expected expenses such as supplies, event costs, and travel.
- **Fundraising:** Plan fundraising activities and seek sponsorships or grants to support club activities. Encourage members to participate in fundraising efforts to develop their financial literacy skills.

Recognize your Students

At the heart of our 4-H clubs are the incredible efforts and achievements of our members. As we continue to foster a culture of growth and excellence, it's important to take the time to recognize and celebrate the outstanding work of our youth.

Here are a few ways we can do just that:

- 1. Member Spotlights:** Highlight exceptional members in your club newsletter or on social media platforms. Share their achievements, contributions, and stories to inspire others and showcase the diverse talents within your club.
- 2. Awards and Certificates:** Establish awards or recognition programs to honor members for their accomplishments. Recognize achievements in areas such as leadership, community service, project mastery, and overall dedication to the club. Present certificates or plaques at club meetings or special events to publicly acknowledge their efforts.
- 3. Peer Recognition:** Encourage members to nominate their peers for recognition based on qualities such as teamwork, innovation, and mentorship.
- 4. Mentorship Opportunities:** Pair outstanding members with mentorship opportunities where they can share their expertise and experiences with newer or less experienced members.

By implementing these recognition strategies, we not only celebrate the achievements of our members but also reinforce the values of excellence, leadership, and community within our 4-H clubs.

Recognizing your Students

AWARDS INTERVIEWS

Awards Interview season is upon us! Try out these questions when you conduct your awards application interviews this summer!

1. Can you tell us about a specific project you worked on in 4-H that you are particularly proud of? What did you learn from it?

- This question allows the student to discuss their personal involvement and growth within a project that meant a lot to them.

2. How has your participation in 4-H helped you develop leadership skills? Can you provide an example of a time when you had to lead a team or group?

- This aims to highlight the student's leadership qualities and their ability to manage and inspire others.

3. 4-H encourages community service. Describe a community service project you initiated or participated in through 4-H and what impact it had on the community.

- Focuses on the applicant's community engagement and the tangible results of their efforts.

4. Discuss a challenge or obstacle you've faced during your time in 4-H. How did you overcome it, and what did you learn from the experience?

- Reveals the applicant's problem-solving skills and resilience.

5. What are your educational and career goals, and how has your experience in 4-H shaped these goals?

- Helps in understanding how 4-H has influenced their academic and career aspirations.

MEET YOUR COWORKERS

KRISTEN CLARK



- 1. What is your official job title?**
 - a. County Extension Agent – 4-H Youth Development
- 2. How long have you been in Extension?**
 - a. 16.5 years
- 3. What is your biggest program?**
 - a. Ag Science & Water: This includes a couple of ag days, hatching in the classroom, water education days, Youth Ag Tour and some gardening type programs. We work together as a group in our office to make this happen year-round.
- 4. What is your most favorite program?**
 - a. I have 2 favorites:
 - i. Youth Ag Tour is a program I started when I was in Anderson County. After I had been in Johnson County for a few years, we started it back up as a multi-county program with Hill, Johnson and Ellis. It has evolved over the years and been picked up by many other counties in a similar format. It does such a great job of combining education on career development, agriculture awareness and lots of agriculture production cycle topics that allow kids to see the whole realm of what agriculture encompasses.
 - ii. Johnson County Washington DC Trip – a program I inherited when I moved to Johnson County, this one is special! The kids I work with over the two years of raising money, planning the trip and then getting to go on the trip are the ones I get to know the best in my program. The trip itself is an excellent way to help kids travel and become a little more cultured!
- 5. Where did you go to college? What is your degree(s) in?**
 - a. Texas A&M University, BS Agriculture Economics
- 6. Who makes up your immediate family?**
 - a. Husband – Greg and children – Clayton (6) and Kori (3)
- 7. What are you most passionate about?**
 - a. Encouraging kids to get involved and helping them find their thing they like and then putting every opportunity in front of them. I think camps are the gateway to getting hooked on 4-H so I encourage Surge and County Camp big time. A personal call or text to a family to tell them they need to do something goes a long way and I do A LOT of telling families to get kids signed up for things!
- 8. Are you an early bird or a night owl?**
 - a. Early bird, but give me the coffee first.
- 9. When you were a kid, what did you want to be when you grew up?**
 - a. As a young kid, I wanted to be a vet. As I got older, I thought I'd be a banker.
- 10. What is the most fun part of your job?**
 - a. Taking kids on trips. I love getting them out and traveling with them, letting them see new places and experience new things. I love seeing the change in those kids through their participation in those activities.

Johnson Co



District 8 4-H

Making the best better

MEET YOUR COWORKERS

THOMAS BOYLE

- 1. What is your official job title?**
 - a. County Extension Agent, 4-H Youth Development
- 2. How long have you been in Extension?**
 - a. This is my 7th Year with Extension
- 3. What is your biggest program?**
 - a. Our Biggest program is our Annual Kids Kows and More event with 300 local 3rd graders.
- 4. What is your favorite program?**
 - a. My Favorite program is Hatching in the Classroom
- 5. Where did you go to college?**
 - a. Texas Tech University
- 6. What is your degree(s) in?**
 - a. Bachelor's degree in animal science
- 7. Who makes up your immediate family?**
 - a. I have 1 brother and 2 sisters scattered all across the State.
- 8. What are you most passionate about?**
 - a. In work I am most passionate about pushing kids to be the best they can be and excel in anything they commit their time to.
 - b. Outside of work I have a passion for Fitness and Health. (I can be your free personal trainer)
- 9. Are you an early bird or a night owl?**
 - a. I can wake up at 3am no problem staying out past 10pm is a challenge.
- 10. When you were a kid, what did you want to be when you grew up?**
 - a. I wanted to be an Electrician we see how that played out.
- 11. What is the most fun part of your job?**
 - a. What keeps me engaged and passionate about my job is getting to see kids grow up and become the best versions of themselves.



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District 8 4-H
Making the best better





4-H VOLUNTEERS SHAPE YOUTH SUCCESS

8,228

adult volunteers
supported by Extension
4-H staff and training:



LEAD

4-H clubs

TEACH

skills

MODEL

what it means
to be an engaged
member of the
community

Youth who have relationships with three or more caring adults who are not their parents are more likely to develop into healthy, caring and responsible adults themselves, and to be successful in college and career.*

Volunteers guide 4-H experiences for over 41,000 kids each year, in Minnesota counties and tribal nations.

*Search Institute

Partnerships between volunteers and agents are vital to the success of Texas 4-H programs, providing a robust foundation for community engagement and youth development. Volunteers bring enthusiasm, skills, and real-world experiences, enhancing the educational outreach and mentoring that agents facilitate.

Together, they create a dynamic environment that fosters leadership and personal growth in young members. These partnerships not only enrich the 4-H experience but also strengthen community bonds and ensure that the program continues to adapt and thrive, offering meaningful opportunities that prepare youths for future challenges.



District 8 4-H

Making the best better