

# FORTY QUESTIONS You Always Wanted Answered About Ohio 4-H, But Never Asked!

## 4-H MEMBERS

### *What is 4-H?*

4-H is an experiential, educational program for youth, regardless of race, color, creed, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, gender or handicap.

### *What does the green clover mean?*

4-H has an official emblem, a green four-leaf clover with a white "H" on each cloverleaf. The name and emblem are copyrighted and may be used only as approved by 4-H professionals.

### *What do the four H's stand for?*

Head, Heart, Hands and Health. The 4-H Pledge states: "I pledge My Head to clearer thinking, My Heart to greater loyalty, My Hands to larger service and My Health to better living, for My Club, My Community, My Country and My World."

### *How is 4-H funded?*

Financial support for 4-H comes from local and county government (through county commissioners), state government (through The Ohio State University) and federal government (through the United States Department of Agriculture). Private individuals, businesses and foundations also provide financial support for Ohio 4-H.

### *Who is in charge of 4-H?*

County, district and state 4-H Professionals, who are staff members of Ohio State University Extension, are responsible for the Ohio 4-H program.

### *Why do boys and girls like 4-H?*

They have educational and fun experiences with their friends at meetings, social activities, tours, camps and fairs. They learn by actually doing interesting things, such as taking care of animals, taking pictures and doing community service.

### *How can a young person get involved in Ohio 4-H?*

Call your local Extension Office to learn how your child can join 4-H and how you can contribute as a 4-H volunteer. 4-H is usually listed in the phone book under "Ohio State University Extension" in the county government section.

### *What is the age requirement for members?*

Membership eligibility for the 4-H Cloverbud program begins when a child has reached age 5 and is enrolled in kindergarten as of January 1 of the current year; membership to the 4-H club program begins when a child is at least age 8 and enrolled in 3rd grade as of January 1 of the current year; Ohio 4-H membership eligibility ends December 31 of the year in which an individual attains the age of 19.

## 4-H VOLUNTEERS

### *What is a 4-H volunteer?*

A 4-H volunteer is anyone who contributes their time, energies or talents to 4-H and is not paid by Ohio State University Extension for their contributions.

### *Are there different kinds of volunteers?*

Yes! Ohio 4-H works with a variety of individuals, with differing interests, skills and abilities, as 4-H volunteers. There are six basic kinds of 4-H volunteers: club advisors, middle managers, school enrichment volunteers, special emphasis volunteers, committee members and youth volunteers.

### *What does a 4-H club advisor do?*

A club advisor works with a 4-H community or project club that involves two or more youth who meet regularly to conduct club business, plan the club program and enroll individually or as a group in one or more 4-H projects. 4-H club advisors serve in three roles: 1) An organizational advisor serves as the primary communication and information liaison between the county 4-H professional and the club members, their parents and other advisors in the club. 2) A project

advisor assists 4-H members with their 4-H projects. 3) An activity advisor works with members in planning and conducting club activities. However, all of these advisors work together as a team in supporting the members of a 4-H club and their parents.

***What does a 4-H middle manager do?***

A middle manager serves in a coordination role between professional Extension staff and other volunteers, parents or members. There are three types of 4-H Middle Managers: Key Leaders serve as experts in particular subject matter areas or with specific activities and events; Master Volunteers teach subject matter to other volunteers or parents; and Committee Members assist professional Extension staff in planning, implementing and evaluating 4-H educational programs.

***What does a 4-H school enrichment volunteer do?***

A school enrichment volunteer is any individual (including a classroom teacher) who works with short-term 4-H programs, offered during regular school hours, to enrich the formal classroom curriculum. A 4-H school enrichment program focuses on hands-on experiences, provides real life applications of knowledge gained, increases member understanding of difficult concepts and encourages the development of student members as young adults.

***What does a 4-H special emphasis volunteer do?***

A special emphasis volunteer works with a short-term 4-H group to offer a series of hands-on activities designed to meet the interests and needs of the youth within their community. This is the most flexible of the 4-H groups, because it can be offered to various numbers of young people in a variety of settings and on a multitude of topics. In many communities, 4-H special emphasis groups meet in schools, community centers or churches. They focus on one or more topics through activities such as after-school programs, juvenile diversion programs, sports clinics, etc. Special emphasis groups can also be organized by individual volunteers as small, informal gatherings that meet in homes or local businesses. These groups typically attract youth from surrounding 4-H clubs or within the community by focusing on a particular area of specialty, such as woodworking, aquariums, cultural arts, foods, clowning, photography, computers, etc.

***What does a 4-H committee member do?***

A committee member contributes time, energies or talents to any 4-H-sponsored committee. Committee members work with 4-H professionals to plan, implement and evaluate programs.

***Is there a specific age requirement to be a 4-H youth volunteer?***

No. Youth volunteers, with the emotional maturity and leadership ability necessary to function in any of the above volunteer roles, are important partners in Ohio 4-H programs.

***What are 4-H teen leaders?***

Most counties have teen leaders who are also 4-H members. They work under the guidance of an adult and may help with any of the leadership jobs in the 4-H program, depending on their abilities and experiences.

***Where can I learn to be a 4-H volunteer?***

Your main source of information is the Extension office in your area, usually located in your county seat. To prepare you for your responsibilities as a 4-H volunteer, you will be invited to special training meetings for 4-H volunteers and receive newsletters and other written materials to help you with your job. County Extension agents and other volunteers will provide personal help throughout the year. Ask for the name of an experienced 4-H volunteer who lives near you, to call if you have questions or need help.

## **4-H CLUBS**

***How do you organize a 4-H club?***

After you have completed the volunteer application process through your Extension office, have a meeting with youth who are interested in joining 4-H and adults who are willing to help. Publicize the meeting through schools, churches, community centers or any place where young people and their parents can be reached.

***What happens at the first club meeting?***

Get acquainted and have fun with a group mixer and/or some refreshments. Show and talk about 4-H projects and activities the group might enjoy. Discuss when, where and how often the group will meet.

***What about club officers?***

4-H clubs have officers and committees to conduct business. 4-H has materials available on-line for club presidents, vice-presidents, secretaries, treasurers,

news reporters, recreation leaders and health and safety chairpersons. A club may have other officers, too, depending on its needs. It is a good idea to wait until the second or third meeting to elect officers so members know each other and are better prepared to select the most qualified people.

#### **Who names a club?**

The members of the club (with guidance from advisors).

#### **How often does a 4-H club meet?**

Some clubs meet every week for a month or two and some meet once or twice a month all year long. This depends on the club, what its members want to do and the time advisors have available. The most important thing is to schedule meeting times so members and their families can remember and include them in their schedules.

#### **Are there enrollment deadlines?**

4-H clubs may organize any time of the year. However, most counties have enrollment deadlines by which time members must be enrolled and enrollment forms turned in to the county Extension office in order for members to participate in certain programs (camps, county fair, awards programs, etc.)

#### **Should 4-H clubs have dues?**

This depends on the club's need for funds. If the club needs money for some meaningful project, members usually decide to charge minimal dues or conduct money-making activities. Check with your local Extension office for specific fund raising guidelines. Members should never be excluded from a 4-H group because they are unable to pay dues.

#### **Where do 4-H clubs meet?**

Any place large enough and convenient for the members of the group is suitable. Some clubs take turns meeting in members' homes. Some meet in central places, such as a school, church or community center. Some meet in advisors' homes.

#### **How large should a club be?**

This depends on the age of the members, where they meet and the leadership available. The ideal club is large enough for members to have fun and learn together, but small enough for everybody to feel a part of the group. Most Ohio 4-H clubs have ten to twenty members, and two or three advisors.

## **4-H MEETINGS**

### **What do 4-H members do at meetings?**

4-H members usually do four general kinds of things at club meetings: business, educational, social and service activities.

### **Do they do all of those things at one meeting?**

Sometimes, after a short business meeting, members work on their projects, then play a game or two. Other times, the meeting will be devoted entirely to one thing; everyone may bring a dog and practice obedience training, help elect officers and plan the club programs, visit a local historic site or plant flowers at a local fire department.

### **Who plans the club's program?**

Members of the club plan the program. With small groups, everyone might be involved in program planning at a meeting of the entire group. With large groups, it might be better to get ideas from every member and let a committee, led by the vice president, put together the club program.

### **What do advisors do at meetings?**

Advisors should be in the background at meetings to advise and provide support for members as they conduct their activities. It is important for advisors to work with club officers ahead of time, so that they and the members (not the advisors) can be "front and center" during the meetings.

## **4-H PROJECTS**

### **What are 4-H projects?**

4-H projects are specific areas of planned experiences, such as training pets, making clothing, growing plants and building rockets. 4-H projects are in-depth learning experiences for 4-H members. Approximately 200 projects are currently available, with project literature written by faculty members of The Ohio State University.

### **What does a 4-H project cost?**

There is a small charge for project books. The total cost to complete a 4-H project varies a great deal. A member enrolled in foods might use supplies from around the home (to practice the skills being learned) and have no direct expense. A member who buys and keeps a saddle horse might invest hundreds of dollars. Advisors, parents and members should discuss costs when projects are selected. Costs should be realistic for the family budget.

**Are 4-H members expected to do their own project work?**

Yes, with help. 4-H is a “learn-by-doing” program. Advisors, key leaders, teen leaders or parents may tell or show a member how, but members are expected to do the work themselves.

**What is a self-determined project?**

In this project, a member with a special interest designs a project different from existing projects. It may be completely new or an adaptation, specialty or advanced stage of an existing project. Members should discuss such projects with their advisors.

**What is project evaluation?**

Members in each project should visit regularly with advisors who help them review the work they have done towards completing the learning experiences in the project book. They should evaluate their results and determine the extent to which they have accomplished project objectives and personal goals, and identify strengths to build upon and weaknesses to overcome in current and future projects.

**Do members have to participate in county judging to complete their projects?**

No. Members are not required to exhibit their work or participate in competition in order to complete their 4-H project. However, participation in competitive activities and exhibits is encouraged as an educational, recognition and public awareness opportunity. Fair premiums, ribbons and other awards are incentives and symbols of recognition in many counties for those who choose to participate.

**Do 4-H members work on projects individually or as a group?**

Both. Some projects, such the international projects or Meals Outdoors, are more fun if done as a group. Others, such as making an outfit or creative writing, are best done individually.

**4-H Parents**

**How do you encourage parents to help?**

Ask them. Be specific about jobs with which the 4-H group needs help. Think positively. People who expect help will probably get it. Offer a choice of jobs. People have different amounts of available time, interests, skills and abilities. Ask 4-H members to invite their parents to become involved.

**How do you explain the role of a 4-H volunteer to parents?**

Help parents understand that 4-H volunteers are not being paid. Invite parents to a 4-H meeting so they can see how volunteers work with the 4-H group.

Revised 1/04 by Joe Campbell, Kathryn J. Cox, Bob Horton, and Ryan Schmiesing

All educational programs conducted by Ohio State University Extension are available to clientele on a nondiscriminatory basis without regard to race, color, creed, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, gender, age, disability or Vietnam-era veteran status.

Keith L. Smith, Associate Vice President for Ag. Adm. and Director, OSU Extension

TDD No. 800-589-8292 (Ohio only) or 614-292-1868