

Making the Best 4-H Clubs Better

Intended Audience

- 4-H club members

Lesson Objectives

Club members and parents will:

- Learn why community service is part of 4-H
- Develop a plan to implement a community service project
- Evaluate the success and outcomes from that project

Time: 20 minutes

Equipment and supplies

- Easel paper
- Markers
- Handout:
 - o "Planning a Successful Community Service Project – Project Planning Guide"

Do ahead

- Review lesson.
- Gather equipment and supplies
- Copy handout, one per member
- Discuss community needs with various groups in your community
- Compile a list of past community service projects

Community Service

BACKGROUND

Community Service - a donated service or activity that is performed by someone or a group of people for the benefit of the public or its institutions.

Community service has always been a major component of 4-H and is clearly stated in our pledge:

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.

4-H members are encouraged to develop and practice skills to become helpful or useful in their club, community, country, and world. 4-H community service projects allow youth and adults to work together while helping others at the same time.

Did you know? Young people in 4-H are committed to improving their communities. A notable trend of the 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development indicates that eleventh grade 4-H youth are 3.3 times more likely to actively contribute to their communities when compared with youth who do not participate in 4-H. Read more at: <http://www.4-h.org/about/youth-development-research/positive-youth-development-study/>.

WHAT TO DO

Activity: Develop the Plan - A community service project can take many forms, and whatever the project, if it meets a need, then both the community and 4-H members benefit.

Step 1: Determine the need. On a large sheet of paper ask club members and family members to list some of the needs they have seen in the local community. (Ahead of time, ask adults to talk to community officials, Extension staff, church, or other organizations regarding needs of the community.)

Step 2: Determine the interest level and abilities of your 4-H members and families. On a second sheet of paper ask 4-H members and families to list their interests, hobbies, and special skills, such as sewing, animal care, writing, cooking, etc.



Sources

- Diem, Keith. Clemson Extension, South Carolina, 4-H Leader Training Series, “10 Steps to a Successful Service Learning Project.”

Additional Links

- <https://4h.extension.illinois.edu/sites/4h.extension.illinois.edu/files/Community%20Service%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf>
- <https://4h.extension.illinois.edu/sites/4h.extension.illinois.edu/files/Community%20Service%20Interview%20Questions.pdf>

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Step 3: Match your group's interests/skills with the needs of your community. For example, if your club has an interest in animal care and the local animal shelter needs donations this would be a good match.

Step 4: Put it on paper. Once you have an interest and a need consider your club size, ages of members, and time commitment available and begin planning your project using the “Planning a Successful Community Service Project – Project Planning Guide.”

Step 5: Documentation. Assign documentation duties to various club officers (News Reporter, Secretary, Historian and Committee Chair). Documentation can include: photos, videos, news stories, or scrapbooks to be shared with local paper, the Extension office, and club social media sites.

Step 6: Evaluation of Project. Plan how you will evaluate the project's success. This will help members process the learning experience by discussing the successes and short comings of the event. We often learn more from our mistakes than from our successes.

Food for thought: Remember members learn by doing and should be actively involved in all aspects of the project: planning, gathering supplies, recruiting volunteers, implementing and documenting the project or activity, and evaluating its success. The role of adults should be to guide members in the right direction and to provide support and encouragement as needed.

TALK IT OVER

Reflect

- Is community service an important part of your club's program?

Apply

- Plan to do at least one community service project from beginning to end with the members of your club.
- After completing the project conduct the evaluation as planned. Discuss your club's goals. Where they met? What impact did the project have on club members and their families? The community?