

# Teens as Volunteer Leaders

**Recruiting and Training Teens  
to Work with Younger Youth in  
After-School Programs**



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4-H Afterschool is a collaborative effort of the Cooperative Extension System — state land grant universities, state and county governments and the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service, United States Department of Agriculture — and National 4-H Council.



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# Teens as Volunteer Leaders



## Recruiting and Training Teens to Work with Younger Youth in After-School Programs

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4 - H A F T E R S C H O O L

T E E N S A S V O L U N T E E R L E A D E R S

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## What is 4-H?

The 4-H Youth Development organization nationwide is known for engaging youth as leaders and giving them the power to take action. Through the Cooperative Extension System of land-grant universities, 4-H mobilizes trained, experienced and competent educators in 3,051 counties, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, Micronesia and the Northern Mariana Islands to support this community of young people across America who are learning leadership, citizenship and life skills.

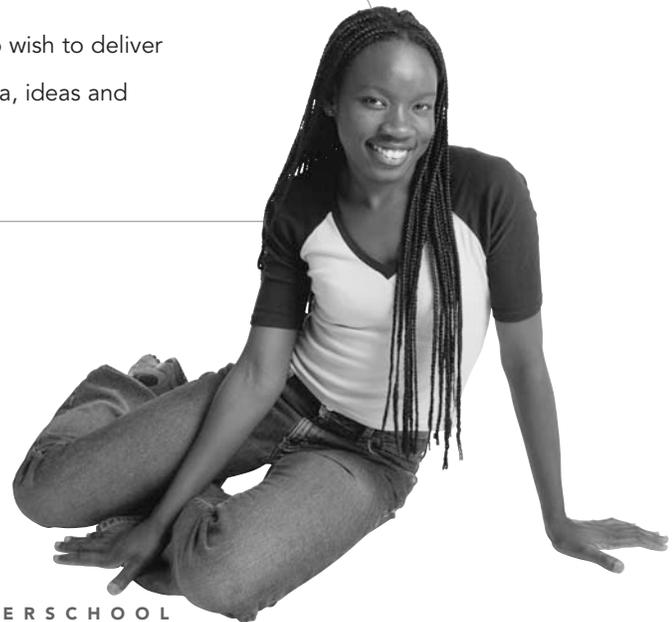
The 4-H mission is to teach youth to reach their full potential, working and learning in partnership with caring adults. The cooperation of more than seven million youth; 572,834 volunteer leaders; 3,600 full-time professional staff; 105 state land-grant universities; state and local governments; private-sector partners; state and local 4-H foundations; National 4-H Council; and National 4-H Headquarters at USDA, make 4-H happen. 4-H alumni now total about 60 million.

4-H stands for Head, Heart, Hands, and Health.

### THE 4-H PLEDGE

*I pledge . . .*  
**HEAD** *my Head*  
*to clearer thinking*  
**HEART** *my Heart*  
*to greater loyalty*  
**HANDS** *my Hands*  
*to larger service*  
*and*  
**HEALTH** *my Health*  
*to better living*  
*for*  
*my club*  
*my community*  
*my country*  
*and*  
*my world.*

This resource guide is designed to be used by Extension professionals who wish to deliver teen-led cross-age teaching in after-school programs. It draws from curricula, ideas and information available throughout the Cooperative Extension System.



## The Issue of After-School Care

Care for school-age children is a concern for millions of American families, particularly those with a single parent or both parents employed. With nearly 40 million children ages 5-14, the United States is experiencing a burgeoning need for out-of-school programs.

Where young people spend their time, what they do and with whom they do it are important to their overall development. After-school hours represent either risk or opportunity. Youth who are unsupervised are much more likely to engage in activities that place them at risk. Programs in the out-of-school hours give youth safe, supervised places to spend time, along with chances to learn new skills, develop interests and spend meaningful time with peers and adults.

Participation in high quality after-school programs is linked with a lower incidence of problem behaviors, such as decreased academic failure, substance use and delinquency. Furthermore, youth who attend these programs have demonstrated improved academic achievement (e.g. better school attendance and better grades) and improved social skills (e.g. positive relationships with adults, opportunity to make new friends, greater self-concept and self-esteem).

However, the challenges in running effective after-school programs are well documented. Primary among these challenges are program quality, staff training, staff turnover and consistent funding.

**After-school  
hours  
represent  
either risk or  
opportunity.**



A broad range of activities and organizations are described as after-school programs, creating ambiguous definitions.\* After-school programs don't always share a common time period (i.e. immediately following the school day), since the term is used broadly to refer to any program outside of school hours. Additionally, programming in after-school hours is not solely the domain of any one group. The after-school landscape is populated by a myriad of program types, program locations and sponsoring organizations.

\* Gootman, J. (2000). *After-school programs to promote child and adolescent development*. Washington, DC: National Academy of Science.

# Why Should 4-H Be Involved in After-School Programs?

The current situation represents a tremendous opportunity to align existing youth development programs available through Extension/4-H with the need for after-school care, as well as an opportunity to create new program delivery models.



18 U.S.C. 707

A young person's healthy development is Extension/4-H's goal, and we have the resources to provide after-school opportunities. Extension/4-H helps youth develop into confident, capable citizens who contribute to their communities.

It is unlikely that Extension/4-H youth development professionals alone could meet the great need for after-school programs in our communities. However, many communities have existing programs that would benefit from our expertise and resources and welcome our partnership.

Elementary and secondary school enrollment is at record levels in terms of numbers of students and is expected to increase every year through the early 2000s. The need for after-school programs will continue to increase.

Although states such as California and North Carolina have a long history of Extension leadership in after-school programming, school-age care education was emphasized nationally when Extension programming expanded in 1991. Thirty school-age child care sites were funded as part of the Youth-at-Risk Initiative, a federal budget initiative that supported efforts to help high-risk youth. Two additional national initiatives (Children, Youth and Families at Risk [CYFAR] and Extension Cares...For America's Children and Youth) have been founded since then, devoting more Extension resources to after-school programs. Despite these Extension initiatives, the 4-H Youth Development Program is not as widely known in the after-school arena.

## What is 4-H Afterschool?



4-H Afterschool trains after-school staff and volunteers, develops quality programs and creates after-school communities of young people across America who are learning leadership, citizenship and life skills.

4-H Afterschool is designed to combine the resources of Extension/4-H with community-based organizations that provide after-school programs that address community needs.

The 4-H Afterschool program helps increase the quality and availability of after-school programs by improving the ability of after-school program staff and volunteers (youth and adults) to offer high quality care, education and developmental experiences for youth; increase the use of 4-H curricula in after-school programs; and organize 4-H clubs in after-school programs. 4-H Afterschool offers support and training materials, including this resource guide, to help teens teach quality program activities.



The 4-H club operates within the structure of the community-based organization that sponsors the after-school program. This 4-H Afterschool club approach works best when the goals of the two organizations are compatible, and both have a shared sense of ownership.

The implementation of the after-school program's 4-H club component can take various forms. For example, 4-H may be offered on a particular day of the week or selected projects may be offered. After-school educators may designate a specific time for club meetings, where youth say the 4-H pledge, officers lead and members make choices about activities to pursue. The person responsible for the 4-H club may be staff paid by Extension/4-H (e.g. a program assistant), staff of the organization running the program (e.g. Boys and Girls Club), a volunteer (adult and/or youth), \* or some combination.

Starting 4-H clubs is a familiar part of the 4-H professional's job. Establishing the 4-H club in the after-school program setting, however, may present some new challenges because the after-school landscape reveals many out-of-school program providers and considerable variation among existing programs despite common elements.



Thus, the approach cannot be “one size fits all.” Extension/4-H staff must be creative, flexible, and above all, able to listen when needs are expressed by sites. Despite these challenges, it's well worth the effort because county 4-H programs and after-school programs both benefit from working with new partners and new audiences. Of course, the ultimate beneficiaries are the children.



\*Any person who works with the 4-H club who is not paid by Extension/4-H funds is considered a volunteer. Thus, paid staff from other organizations are considered to be 4-H volunteers.

## Key Elements of 4-H Afterschool

Certain key elements need to be in place to ensure 4-H Afterschool program consistency, including:

1. Open and responsive communication between the local Extension/4-H office and the local 4-H club leadership.
2. Diversity in 4-H club membership and leadership.
3. Shared leadership responsibilities among adults, youth and children.
4. Youth adult partnerships recognize individual interests, abilities and assets and balance strengths and weaknesses among and between members and leaders.
5. 4-H club leadership is willing and able to be flexible and adaptable to individual situations.
6. Rules contribute to positive youth development and focus on such fundamental issues as safety and mutual respect.
7. A healthy balance exists between cooperation and competition among the 4-H club's members.
8. Active participation of 4-H club members is encouraged within and outside club boundaries.
9. Clear understanding of the 4-H club's purposes, goals and expectations is held by its members, parents and volunteers.
10. Educational programs use an experiential learning model.
11. Volunteer and member accomplishments and contributions are recognized.



Other resource guides in this series offer a more in-depth focus on helping after-school sites start 4-H clubs within their operations and providing activities and learning experiences for day-to-day programming. See “Other Materials in the 4-H Afterschool Series” on Page 11 for more information.

## How to Use This Resource Guide

This resource guide is designed to be used by Extension/4-H professionals to deliver teen-led curriculum in after-school programs. It includes an overview of program delivery, recruitment processes and training outlines.

Teens as Volunteer Leaders is a proven model for involving teens in delivering curriculum and programs to younger youth. This cross-age approach is highly effective in building leadership and life skills in teens and in the younger youth who are involved in the program.

Chapter 1 is an overview of the core elements in developing a Teens as Volunteer Leaders project. Chapters 2 and 3 provide suggestions for recruiting teens, mentors and after-school program staff. Chapter 4 offers an outline for conducting a teen orientation prior to training the teens. Chapter 5 gives a detailed outline for conducting a three to four hour training to prepare teens for working with younger youth and delivering a curriculum. Chapter 6 has tips for recognizing teens and youth participants. The final chapter offers suggestions for marketing a Teens as Volunteer Leaders program.



## Other Materials in the 4-H Afterschool Series

4-H Afterschool offers four other resource guides. *Starting 4-H Clubs in After-School Programs* helps after-school sites start 4-H clubs. *Guiding Growth: Training Staff for Working with Youth in After-School Programs* trains after-school program staff directly, helping them increase their capacities to provide quality care for children.

*Extraordinary Learning Opportunities: A Sampler of 4-H Afterschool Activities* is an excellent sampling of 4-H programming and activities. *Increasing the Quantity of After-School Programs: A Guide for Extension Professionals to*

*Establish Community-Based After-School Programs* provides helpful hints and suggestions for analyzing the need for more after-school programs and the process for establishing new community-based after-school programs.

Each of these guides is intended to be used independently. The guides also work well together during orientation and training of after-school staff and volunteers. However, they do contain some repetitive elements. Visit [4husa.org](http://4husa.org) and [4hafterschool.org](http://4hafterschool.org) for more information about these resource guides.



ELEMENTS OF A TEENS AS  
VOLUNTEER LEADERS PROJECT



# Chapter

# 1

# Elements of Teens as Volunteer Leaders Project

## What Is Teens as Volunteer Leaders?

Teens as Volunteer Leaders is a proven model for involving teens in delivering curriculum and programs to younger youth. This cross-age approach is highly effective in building leadership and life skills in both the teens and younger youth who receive the program. Younger youth respond well to teen instructors who often provide a positive role model for them.

The success of the Teens as Volunteer Leaders model will not happen without considerable planning effort. Experience and research has shown that there are 10 core elements to planning and delivering a Teens as Volunteer Leaders project.

A review of each of the 10 core elements follows.



## 10 Core Elements\*

- 1 Dedicated Adults Who Support Teens
- 2 Active Teen Recruitment
- 3 Strong Curriculum
- 4 Initial Training
- 5 Ongoing Training and Support
- 6 Attention to Details
- 7 Recognition and Reward
- 8 Team Building
- 9 Setting Teens Up for Success
- 10 Feedback and Evaluation

\*Adapted from research conducted by Faye C.H. Lee and Shelly Murdock, University of California Cooperative Extension.

Lee, F.C.H. & Murdock, S. (2001). Teens as Teachers Programs: Ten Essential Elements. *Journal of Extension*, [online], 39(1). Available at: <http://www.joe.org/joe/2001february/rb1.html>

## Elements of Teens as Volunteer Leaders Project

### 1 DEDICATED ADULTS WHO SUPPORT TEENS

Committed adults serving as mentors or coaches is an essential element of an effective Teens as Volunteer Leaders project. Teens benefit from the experience and passion of a caring adult. The mentor role should be established early in the process and continued through the completion of the project. Adult coaches and mentors allow teens to explore and try out new roles and new skills in a safe environment. They identify potential problems but allow teens to problem solve and try out solutions. They encourage teens through praise and positive criticism. They allow teens to be the central teachers, planners and evaluators. They view their role as creating an environment where teens will be successful.



### 2 ACTIVE TEEN RECRUITMENT

Finding and recruiting teens to participate in the Teens as Volunteer Leaders project requires planning. Some projects may require teens to have a prerequisite of skills or experience, while others will provide training necessary for the project. Completing an application and keeping some type of records is useful and can be an opportunity to teach job seeking skills. Using a commitment or participation agreement is helpful in spelling out the expectations for teens, mentors and those overseeing the project. See Chapter 2 for suggestions on how to create and implement a recruitment plan.



### 3 STRONG CURRICULUM

Successful outcomes are associated with a solid curriculum that is easy for teens to deliver. Teens will be more competent and feel more knowledgeable and capable when they have strong curricula to deliver. Curricula should utilize the experiential learning model (See Chapter 5.) and be interactive and hands-on. Minimally, curricula should have at least five lessons that are about one to one and a half hours long. The subject matter of the curriculum can vary. Providing activities that interest teens and younger youth is key.



### 4 INITIAL TRAINING

A comprehensive training on the curriculum and how to teach it is essential. Time spent training the teens on curriculum details and allowing them to practice what they have learned will pay off in top results. Shortchanging the initial training can cause problems in program delivery and compromise program outcomes. Equally important is teaching the teens how to work with younger youth. Our experience has shown that program delivery issues most often are associated with classroom management issues that stem from not understanding the developmental characteristics of the young people with which they are working. Unrealistic expectations about the ability of younger youth to sit, comprehend, respond or perform a task can lead to teen frustrations. Addressing these issues in the initial training will assure greater Teens as Volunteer Leaders project success. See Chapter 5 for more information.

### 5 ONGOING TRAINING AND SUPPORT

Successful Teens as Volunteer Leaders projects invest in additional training and support. The initial training can be overwhelming for some teens. They need an opportunity to reflect on what they have learned. A follow-up meeting to review expectations and content can alleviate anxiety. If delivery problems have been encountered, providing a venue to discuss the issue, identify solutions or even receive additional training is helpful. Teens appreciate the opportunity to get together with other teen teams, discuss their successes and get other tips for further project delivery. Mentors should be trained about how to continuously support the teens.



## Elements of a Teens as Volunteer Leaders Project

### 6 ATTENTION TO DETAILS

Giving attention to details may be obvious to many who have experience working with teens or delivering a program of this nature. Successful program delivery is dependent on taking care of the “nuts and bolts” of the project. Great training is only as good as the delivery support system. Plan ahead to provide appropriate communication between teens, parents, mentors, after-school sites and program implementers. Determine in advance what supplies and other materials are needed to deliver the curriculum and how they will be provided. Set dates and share them with all participants in advance of the start of the project. Give attention to teens’ needs, such as planning for food, transportation, rest, relaxation and recreation. Don’t forget to make the project fun!



### 7 RECOGNITION AND REWARD

Everyone needs to be recognized for their hard work. Make sure your program provides adequate recognition for all program participants. Teens will benefit from a variety of recognition forms. They will sense whether their efforts are valued and appreciated. Consider offering both intrinsic and extrinsic forms of recognition. (See Chapter 6.) Some projects offer stipends or pay the teens for their time. These decisions are usually based on the philosophy of the programs, their locale and overall objectives of the project. If some form of financial compensation is offered, it should be well thought out with details of compensation and expectations provided in writing to the teens.

# Elements of a Teens as Volunteer Leaders Project

## 8 TEAM BUILDING

Teens as Volunteer Leaders project that focus on building a strong team approach are most successful. Teen camaraderie and being part of a teen group experience is a motivating factor for many teens' involvement in the project. Most teens also prefer to work with other teens in delivering the curriculum. Our experience shows that establishing these teen teams in advance of the training works best. (See Chapter 2.)

Providing opportunities for teens to continue to meet beyond the initial training also supports team building.



## 9 SETTING TEENS UP FOR SUCCESS

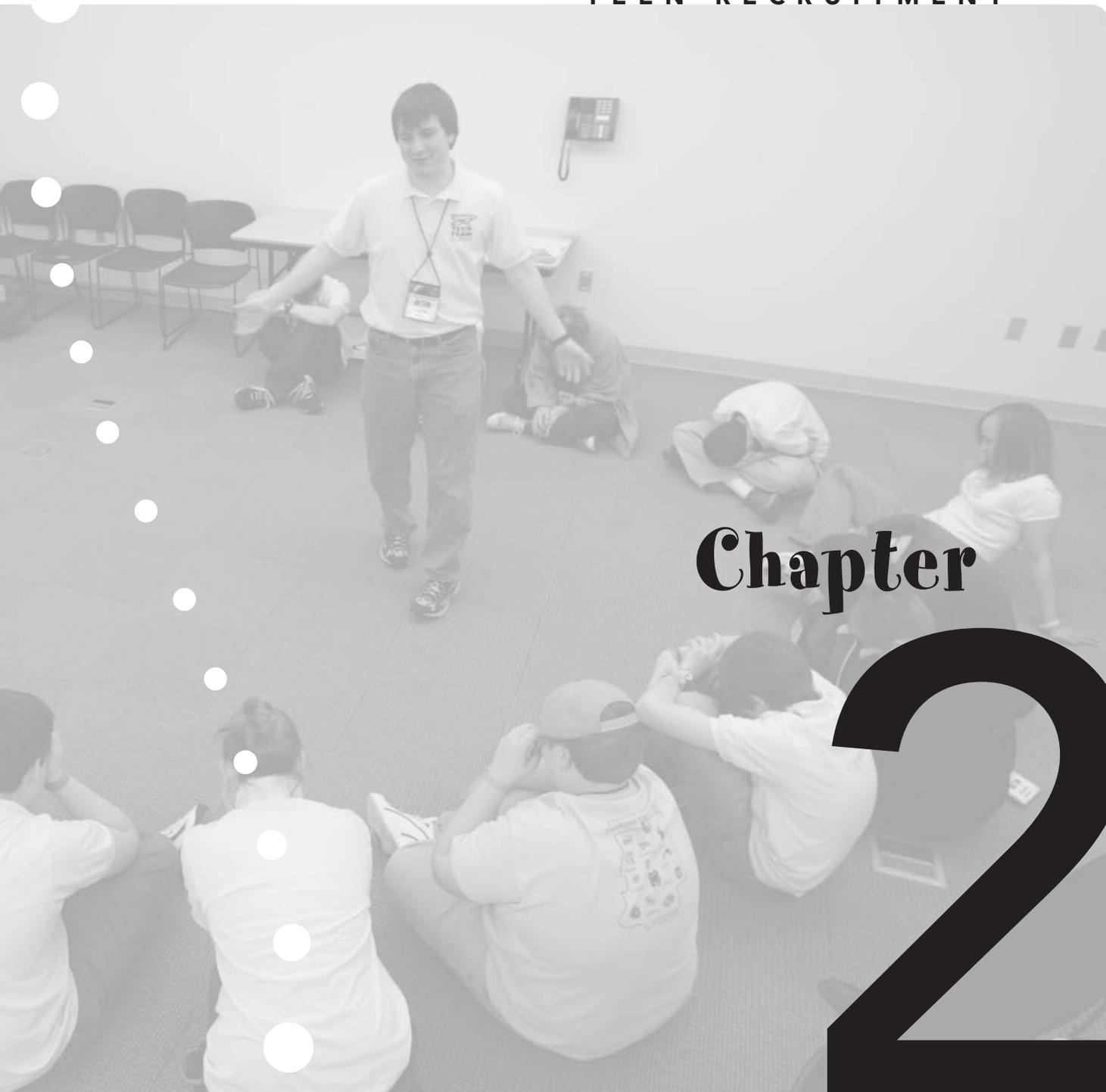
Staff who implement successful Teens as Volunteer Leaders projects know what a successful project looks like, and they work to assure that teens will experience this success. They are flexible and willing to change course if needed. They have high expectations for teens and confidence in their abilities. They pay attention to group needs and those of individual teens. They provide a safe and caring environment where teens can test their abilities.

## 10 EVALUATION

Teens need immediate and constant feedback. Mentors assigned to small groups of teens can provide ongoing encouragement and suggestions. Programs that provide multiple opportunities for teens to receive feedback have been found to be the most successful. Involving teens in critiquing their own performance is valuable to teens and to the project. Providing forms, journals and discussion time to review performance is helpful. The use of portfolios, artifact boxes, videos and photographs of the projects in action are additional ways for teens to record and communicate project successes. Asking mentors to give ongoing feedback on teens' performance can identify areas that may need to be modified. Teens or mentors should be adequately trained about how to administer evaluation tools if they are involved in collecting project outcome data.



## TEEN RECRUITMENT



# Chapter

# 2

# Teen Recruitment

This section of the guide will provide you with some proven tools for recruiting interested teens as project participants.

Some programs may have a ready pool of interested teens while others may need to recruit additional participants. You also may want to use the Teens as Volunteer Leaders project as a means of reaching a new population of teen volunteers.



## What's in This Section

The following is an outline of successful recruitment procedures, including:

- Creating a timeline
- Recruitment planning
- Preparing recruitment materials
- Preparing application materials
- Recruitment strategies

## Creating a Timeline

Strategies and timeline plans should be adjusted to meet the individual needs of your program and community. Each program will have additional resources and recruitment strategies to advertise and promote the Teens as Volunteer Leaders project. Individual communities will also have unique needs that should be addressed early in the project planning. The following timeline gives suggestions for recruitment.

### THREE MONTHS BEFORE TRAINING:

- Determine number of teens you want to train
- Determine the type of strategies to use for recruitment
- Develop written recruitment materials (letters, flyers, posters, applications, etc.)

### TWO MONTHS BEFORE TRAINING:

- Advertise through 4-H newsletters
- Advertise through local newspapers
- Send letters to schools and other groups
- Make phone calls and personal visits

### ONE MONTH BEFORE TRAINING:

- Re-advertise and follow-up as needed
- Review applications
- Schedule orientation meeting
- Send out an orientation letter

## Teen Recruitment

**TIP:**

**For best results, include adult mentors and after-school staff with the teens.**

**TIP:**

In your recruitment planning, consider:

- Use of teen team approach
- Formation of teams prior to training
- Number of teens to recruit
- Elements of the project
- Teen expectations

### Recruitment Planning

Prior to starting the recruitment process, determine the size of the Teens as Volunteer Leaders project that you want to implement. Determine the number of curricula that you will use, the number of after-school programs that you will target and the timeframe to deliver the project. A review of your objectives will help you determine how many teens you will need to recruit for a successful project.

#### USE THE TEEN TEAM APPROACH

Organize teens in teams around a singular thematic unit or curriculum. Each team must have a sufficient number of teens to carry out the hands-on aspects of the curriculum. The use of a team allows teens the option of specializing in one activity of a curriculum and encourages peer support in leading the various elements of the units (i.e. exploration, investigation, discussion, communication and interaction with the young learners).

#### FORM TEAMS BEFORE TRAINING

The teams should be formed prior to the training so that they can get to know one another during the interactive session. Also, important planning strategies are built into the curriculum so teams are creating an implementation plan as they are trained on the theme units.



# Teen Recruitment

## DECIDE NUMBER OF TEENS TO RECRUIT

We have found that teams of teens (at least two to five per team) work best. In most cases, the curriculum is delivered over at least a five-day period, but often over several weeks. Because of the schedules of teens, it is important to plan for some teen absences and even attrition. Having sufficient numbers of teens on a theme unit team can prevent the cancellation of sessions if one or two teens can't make the scheduled session at the last minute.

## VERIFY ELEMENTS OF THE PROJECT

The Teens as Volunteer Leaders project as it relates to curriculum delivery usually includes several of the following elements:

- Five or more curriculum content sessions
- Activities centers for extended learning
- Guest speakers and enrichment activities
- Family activity nights
- Take-home activities
- Community service activities

### TIP:

Check the dates of seasonal school schedules, community activities and 4-H calendars prior to setting dates.

Scheduling conflicts for teens can be one of the greatest hindrances to the success of the program.

After determining which elements will be part of your local Teens as Volunteer Leaders project, you are ready to further develop timelines, recruitment materials and teen and after-school staff expectations.

## TEEN EXPECTATIONS

We have found that clearly defined expectations with tangible time-frames are essential in the recruitment of teens. Consider the *Elements in Determining Teen Time Commitments* outlined below.



## ELEMENTS IN DETERMINING TEEN TIME COMMITMENTS

- Orientation meeting (one to two hours)
- Curriculum unit training (three hours pre-training, six to eight hours theme unit training)
- Teen pre-session planning meetings (one to two hours)
- Teen pre-session organization and preparation (one to five hours)
- Family activity night (one to two hours)
- Community service projects (one to five hours)
- Program evaluations and reflecting (one to six hours)
- County Teens as Volunteer Leaders project meetings and recognition (one to ten hours)

Be sure to include any other expectations that you have for the teens and their participation in the project. Also, consider any expectations that project collaborators or after-school programs may have for the teens. Consider using a written agreement with the teens.

## Teen Recruitment

### Preparing Application Materials

Before developing application materials, determine the dates and locations for both the Teens as Volunteer Leaders training and delivery. It is important to communicate these dates in all of your correspondence with the teens.

Determine the information you want to obtain from the teens; consider age, grade level, experience and interest as well as other personal data. Don't overlook the availability of teens to deliver the program. Some teens can only present sessions one day a week, others for only one week per quarter. For your scheduling and that of the after-school programs, it's a time saver to know this information ahead of time.



**TIP:**  
A photo enhances articles submitted for publication.

### Recruitment Strategies

Traditional promotional strategies such as word-of-mouth, personal contact, written letters, newsletters and news releases have proven effective in recruiting teens.

When looking for places to recruit teens, don't overlook continuation high schools, home-schooled teens, youth organizations and other agencies as a source for interested teen participants.

Many high school students now must participate in annual community service projects or conduct a more intensive senior project as a requirement for graduation. A significant number of teens have been introduced to 4-H and the Teens as Volunteer Leaders project through this requirement.

#### NEWSLETTERS AND WEB SITES

Articles in the county 4-H newsletter have been a successful method for recruiting 4-H teen volunteers and adult mentors. 4-H Web sites can provide photo albums of teens delivering the program and provide copies of applications and other program descriptions.

**TIP:**

The application should be as short as possible to avoid discouraging teens. You might obtain other information after the teens have been recruited.

#### NEWS ARTICLES

News releases in local newspapers that promote the Teens as Volunteer Leaders project and the need for teen recruits have been effective. They also are a means of publicizing the program and recruiting after-school programs that are interested in participating.

Consider asking local newspapers to print a feature article on the project and information in upcoming events sections. Don't overlook local high school newspapers. Refer to Chapter 7, *Promoting Your 4-H Program*, for more information.

#### PERSONAL LETTERS

Personal letters to high school teachers, senior project advisors, service and organizational club presidents and advisors, 4-H volunteers and other youth organizations can be effective recruitment tools. Along with the letter, several copies of the flyer and application should be enclosed. A follow-up letter and phone call at two week intervals have proven most effective.

# Teen Recruitment

## Preparing Recruitment Materials

Determine the dates, times and location of the training and the delivery of the program prior to recruitment. Determine whether you will hold an orientation meeting prior to the training. (We strongly recommend an orientation, especially if you are recruiting non-4-H teens.) You can further explain the project and its requirements, answer questions and assign some field observations at this meeting.

You will find sample recruitment materials including news releases, newsletter articles, letters, flyers and posters at [4husa.org](http://4husa.org) and [4hafterschool.org](http://4hafterschool.org). These materials can be easily adapted for your local use.



Adapted from YES...Youth Experiences in Science Project, University of California.

MENTOR AND AFTERSCHOOL  
PROGRAM RECRUITMENT

## Chapter

# 3

# Mentor and Afterschool Program Recruitment

## Recruiting Volunteer Mentors

As we recommended in Chapter 1, committed adults serving as mentors or coaches is an essential element of an effective Teens as Volunteer Leaders project. Before recruiting volunteers and mentors for your program, read through the list of suggestions below and consider how you can provide these elements in your recruitment efforts:

1. Provide a reason to participate. Appeal to what really interests each individual.
2. Give recognition. Encouragement and recognition motivate people.
3. Clearly define and communicate your goals. Maintain a clear sense of direction so people will “get” what the program is about.
4. Conduct meetings that stimulate and have clear focus. Nothing is more discouraging than a poorly organized, rambling, unproductive meeting.
5. Listen. Everyone wants to be heard. The biggest cause of group apathy is the failure of leaders to really listen.
6. Reduce risks of participation. Good communication helps identify risks such as volunteers who are made to feel insecure by participation, feel as if they have been given too much responsibility, etc.

## What Motivates Volunteers?

Volunteers are motivated by a variety of reasons. Look for ways to provide opportunities to:

- Help their families
- Learn new skills
- Help the community
- Meet and get to know people in the community
- Develop leadership skills
- Receive community recognition
- Use personal skills and knowledge
- Learn more about community efforts and activities



## Mentor and Afterschool Program Recruitment

### Where to Find Volunteers

You may already have a ready source of adult volunteers to serve as mentors for your program. If not, consider some of the following:

- **Local 4-H program.** Asking existing 4-H volunteers to be part of your program can be a fun and rewarding way for them to learn new skills and share their knowledge.
- **Parents of participants.** Parents can make great mentors because they are interested in what their own children are doing and want to support their efforts.
- **School teachers.** Often high school, middle school and elementary school teachers are interested in supporting new learning and

leadership opportunities for their students and are willing to put in the extra time to provide this experience.

- **After-school staff.** Involving after-school staff as teen mentors is a plus for the program. Their knowledge of the after-school program setting and the young people attending can be very beneficial to the teen's success.
- **Business community.** Look for ways to involve adults from a variety of occupations. They have many skills to share with teens about the work environment and future careers.
- **Volunteer agencies.** Many communities have volunteer centers. These individuals already are interested in volunteering—they just need a program.

#### TIP:

4-H and other youth organizations rigorously screen volunteers in their programs. Be sure to cover your local 4-H volunteer screening process with the mentors and the after-school program staff.



# Mentor and Afterschool Program Recruitment

## Mentor Roles and Responsibilities

Well-trained, highly-motivated mentors are essential to the Teens as Volunteer Leaders project. It is important that they understand their roles and responsibilities. Here are some functions to consider when developing a job description for program mentors.

**General Description:** Provide support and guidance to a team of teen teachers as they deliver learn-by-doing experiences to younger youth in after-school settings.

### Responsibilities:

- Serve as a Teens as Volunteer Leaders program mentor and receive training as needed
- Attend orientation, planning, evaluation and follow-up meetings
- Work with teens to successfully plan and deliver age-appropriate activities outlined in the curriculum
- Provide motivation and problem-solving to teens
- Assist in collection of evaluation and project completion data
- Offer appreciation and recognition to the teens

### WHERE TO FIND AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS

You may already know of after-school and out-of-school programs with which you can partner. If not, consider some of these suggestions for finding them:

- Phone book
- Internet search
- School districts
- County office of education
- Child care resource and referral agencies
- Parks and recreation departments
- Social service agencies
- Youth organizations
- Churches and faith-based groups
- Public housing agencies



## Mentor and Afterschool Program Recruitment

### Establishing a Relationship With an After-school Program

If you are establishing a new relationship with an after-school program, you may want to consider discussing some of the following with the staff of the after-school program:

- **Goals of the 4-H program.** Explain the 4-H program and specifics of this teen-led project.
- **Goals of the after-school program.** Have a conversation about how the programs may have similar objectives and how a partnership can be beneficial.
- **Roles of all partners and participants.** Make sure to cover roles of 4-H, the after-school program, teens, mentors and other partners.
- **Program expectations.** Discuss what the expected outcomes are for the youth, teens, staff, mentors and partners.
- **Program delivery.** Explain in detail how the program will be delivered and the time and resource commitment for all involved.
- **Statement of understanding.** A written statement of what is expected of both partners can be useful. See the sample on Page 30.



# Mentor and Afterschool Program Recruitment

## AFTER-SCHOOL STAFF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Supportive and well trained after-school staff are essential to the Teens as Volunteer Leaders project. It is important that they understand their roles and responsibilities. Here are some functions to consider in developing a job description for after-school staff.

**General Description:** Provide support and assistance in the delivery of the 4-H curriculum at the after-school site. Provide a learning environment where teens can successfully deliver the curriculum and learn-by-doing experiences to younger youth at the after-school site.

### Responsibilities:

- Receive orientation and training as needed
- Help promote the curriculum and delivery
- Determine areas where the curriculum can be delivered
- Manage the classroom appropriately so that teens can deliver the age-appropriate activities outlined in the curriculum
- Motivate teens. Help them with problem-solving
- Assist with collection of evaluation and project completion data



## Mentor and Afterschool Program Recruitment

### SAMPLE STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING

This understanding between 4-H and \_\_\_\_\_ establishes a program whereby youth will participate in at least \_\_\_\_\_ hours of 4-H educational programs annually. No maximum number of hours which may be devoted to 4-H programs is set. The program is scheduled to begin on \_\_\_\_\_. After-school providers and other personnel agree to attend scheduled training sessions. Through the acceptance of this program, the 4-H organization will provide the curriculum, orientation training and recognition. In return, after-school sites will help promote the 4-H program consistent with 4-H policies and educational philosophies. Sites agree that 4-H can market and promote the program and feature young people from the center as opportunities arise. This understanding may be terminated upon initiation by either party.

## Mentor and Afterschool Program Recruitment

**4-H WILL PROVIDE:**

- 4-H curriculum taught by trained teens
- Ideas and assistance in expanding the curriculum
- Letters to parents informing them of 4-H activities
- Suggestions for guest speakers and other enrichment activities
- Certificates of participation
- Opportunities for youth to participate in county, state and national 4-H events and activities

**AFTER-SCHOOL SITE WILL PROVIDE:**

- Adults to supervise and help youth learn through the curriculum
- Time in which the curriculum can be delivered
- Communication with county 4-H program
- Educational supplies and resources as needed
- Consistent opportunities to display 4-H materials (banners, posters, etc.)
- Opportunities for data collection and evaluation

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AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM LOCATION

---

DIRECTOR/ADMINISTRATOR SIGNATURE

---

4-H/EXTENSION STAFF SIGNATURE

---

DATE



TEENS AS VOLUNTEER LEADERS  
PROJECT ORIENTATION

Chapter

4

# Teens as Volunteer Leaders

## Project Orientation

Teens, adult mentors and after-school staff benefit from an orientation to the Teens as Volunteer Leaders project. A brief introduction provides a good overview of the goals and objectives of the project, an opportunity for questions and answers and a chance to involve teens in active, hands-on activities similar to ones they will be facilitating in Teens as Volunteer Leaders project delivery. A suggested outline for conducting this orientation follows:

### OBJECTIVE

To provide teens with an understanding of the project's objectives and expectations.

### TIME REQUIRED

One hour

### GROUP SIZE

Large group

### MATERIALS

- Flipchart
- Markers
- After-School Observation Sheet handout (See Page 35.)
- Supplies for conducting a sample curriculum activity

### GETTING READY

1. Gather all needed supplies. Make sure you have enough for everyone at the orientation.
2. Reproduce the applications, commitment contracts, observation sheets and other informational or promotional materials.
3. Set up a comfortable and inviting area for the orientation.
4. Prepare refreshments in advance if you choose to serve them. (We strongly recommend it...any time of day!)

### OVERVIEW

Teens, adult mentors and after-school staff are introduced to the Teens as Volunteer Leaders project during the orientation where they have an opportunity to get acquainted with each other, learn about working with younger youth and discuss expectations of the project.

### DIRECTIONS: PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1. Ask participants to sign-in, pick up any handouts and complete a nametag as they arrive. If you are serving refreshments, have them available as teens arrive.
2. Introduce yourself. Then ask the teens to introduce themselves and tell why they are interested in volunteering for the project. Often, the teens' responses are very enlightening. Don't forget to include the adult mentors and after-school staff, although it's a good idea to have the adults introduce themselves after the teens.
3. Give a brief overview of the project and explain the project objectives.
4. Emphasize the key elements of the project and any requirements you have for participants. Be sure to review the timeframe, number of hours required for training, minimum number of hours for preparation and teen leading and any further dates for follow-up meetings.
5. Ask teens about any requirements they may have for senior projects or community service projects. You may need to meet individually with teens that have specific requirements.

### TIP:

It is very important for teens to observe the sites where they will be training. Site visits are the first step in forming relationships with the after-school staff and children and make their first teaching session much less stressful.



## Teens as Volunteer Leaders Project Orientation



### DIRECTIONS: PROJECT DELIVERY

1. Discuss the need for teens to understand developmental characteristics of the age group with whom they will be working and the after-school environment.
2. Ask teens how they think they can best learn more about these subjects based on their prior experiences. (i.e., first-hand observation). Then, share with teens the After-School Observation Sheet.
3. Explain that you would like each of the teens to visit an afterschool site and observe the children, staff, environment, resources, materials and other relevant items.
4. Ask teens to return the observation sheets to you before the training, so you will have a sense of what the teens observed.

### DIRECTIONS: PROJECT ELEMENTS

1. Explain to the teens that they will be teaching younger youth in a hands-on, interactive way. Tell them that you have an activity to do that is similar to what they will be teaching. (We suggest you then present an activity from the curriculum for teens to experience.) Make sure the activity is hands-on and uses the experiential learning model.
2. Conduct the activity. Make clear to the teens that they have an opportunity to explore and learn just like the younger youth with whom they will be working.
3. Discuss with teens how this activity relates to curriculum and hands-on learning. Ask the teens to briefly explain what they learned. Also, discuss how they think younger youth would respond to this open-ended, hands-on activity. Add your own questions!

### WRAP-UP

1. Complete the orientation by answering any questions and passing out information about the dates, locations and times for the training.
2. Allow time for individual discussions with teens, parents, mentors and after-school staff.

#### TIP:

We recommend you use the *Guiding Growth: Training Staff for Working with Youth in After-School Programs* resource guide to help train teens. The guide provides training materials on ages and stages, youth development, guidance and discipline and experiential learning.

## AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS TEEN OBSERVATION SHEET

Site Observed: \_\_\_\_\_

Dates of Observations: \_\_\_\_\_ Times: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Staff in Attendance: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Children: \_\_\_\_\_ Approximate Ages: \_\_\_\_\_

*The Program Setting:* Briefly describe the program setting. Include observations about: amount of space; number of tables; access to water; types of available supplies, equipment and games; locations and amount of bulletin boards and display space; etc.

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### *Children's Activities:*

Check the following activities that you observed children doing. Check all that apply.

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> indoor activities       | <input type="checkbox"/> outdoor activities       | <input type="checkbox"/> playing games/puzzles |
| <input type="checkbox"/> doing homework          | <input type="checkbox"/> eating snacks            | <input type="checkbox"/> singing               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> building objects        | <input type="checkbox"/> performing drama         | <input type="checkbox"/> listening to music    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> recreational activities | <input type="checkbox"/> reading                  | <input type="checkbox"/> doing art projects    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> doing science projects  | <input type="checkbox"/> doing cultural projects. |  |

*List other activities that you observed:*

---



---

### *Program Relationships:*

Check what you observed children participating in. Check all that apply.

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> working in small groups             | <input type="checkbox"/> working in large groups | <input type="checkbox"/> working individually |
| <input type="checkbox"/> working one-on-one with staff       | <input type="checkbox"/> staff-led activities    | <input type="checkbox"/> child-led activities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> free time or free choice activities |  |   |

*General Comments:*

---



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Signed \_\_\_\_\_ (Teen's Name)

TRAINING TEENS TO  
DELIVER PROGRAMS

## Chapter

# 5

# Training Teens to Deliver Programs

This overview provides an essential foundation for successful teen delivery of curriculum in after-school programs to younger youth. Plan to offer this section in a workshop format with multiple attendees. The total time needed for this training is about three hours.

This training is designed to help teens understand the developmental characteristics of the younger youth that will be participating in the programs. It also will teach them principles of experiential learning and successful program delivery. We suggest that mentors and after-school program staff participate in the training. Arrange the seating and room layout so that teens and adults are co-mingled for the training. Establishing this partnership early is important.

You can present this training in a variety of ways. Presenting the activities outlined in this chapter on a Friday evening followed by the curriculum training on Saturday works well.



## Training Matrix

ACTIVITY	PURPOSE	MATERIALS NEEDED	TIME
GETTING ACQUAINTED —ANIMAL SOUNDS	To establish a comfortable group environment and introduce participants to each other.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Names of animals written on slips of paper</li> <li>Sheets with introduction and discussion instructions</li> </ul>	15 to 25 minutes
CHILD DEVELOPMENT —REMEMBER WHEN?	To enhance understanding of pre-adolescent youth and adolescent youth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ages and Stages</li> <li>Development Characteristics handouts for the target audience</li> <li>Development Characteristics role playing cards</li> <li>Flipchart</li> <li>Markers</li> <li>Overhead projector</li> </ul>	45 minutes to one hour
EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING —LEARN BY DOING	To be able to understand and use the experiential learning model when delivering curriculum.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flipchart</li> <li>Markers</li> <li>Handouts</li> <li>Paper helicopter on 20 lb. paper (pre-cut)</li> <li>Paper clips, 1 per participant</li> </ul>	45 minutes to one hour
COMMUNICATION —KEEPING AUDIENCE TUNED IN!	To understand processes to keep participants engaged and interested.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flipchart</li> <li>Markers</li> </ul>	30 to 45 minutes
PLANNING —WRAP-UP	To review and share what was learned.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Foam ball or torch</li> </ul>	15 minutes

# Getting Acquainted—Animal Sounds

## OBJECTIVES

To establish a comfortable group environment and introduce participants to each other.

## TIME

15 to 25 minutes

## MATERIALS

- Names of animals written on slips of paper
- Sheets with introduction and discussion instructions

## OVERVIEW

Icebreakers help participants to get to know each other in a non-threatening way. They also can set the stage for what is to come. The icebreaker helps teens get acquainted with each other. Teens should be encouraged to use icebreakers with the younger youth they will be teaching. The selected icebreaker should be appropriate to the audience being trained. Use the icebreaker below or one of your choosing.

## START

1. Welcome the group. Explain you are going to do an interactive game to help everyone get to know each other.
2. Explain how the game works:
  - All participants will be given a slip of paper with the name of an animal.
  - The task is for all like animals to find each other.
  - The catch is that no one can talk. Participants can only use sounds or movements made by their animal.
3. Give each participant a slip of paper with the name of an animal written on it.
4. Allow time for everyone to find their animal family.
5. Once the family circles are formed, give the groups a list of questions to encourage discussion. Consider asking questions such as:
  - What is your name and what is your favorite animal?
  - Why are you interested in the program?
  - What do you hope to accomplish by participating?
6. Discuss the function and importance of icebreakers. Discuss how teens can use icebreaker games with younger youth.



## Child Development—Remember When?

### OBJECTIVES

To enhance understanding of pre-adolescent youth and adolescent youth.

### TIME

45 minutes to one hour

### MATERIALS

- Ages and Stages
- Development Characteristics handouts for the target audience (See Page 43-46.)
- Development Characteristics role playing cards
- Flipchart
- Markers
- Overhead projector

### OVERVIEW

This activity will help teens and adult mentors better understand how younger youth think, feel and act. This understanding is extremely important for teens as they begin delivering the curriculum and activities. Knowledge of these principles and how to use them will help teens solve behavioral issues they may encounter working with younger youth.



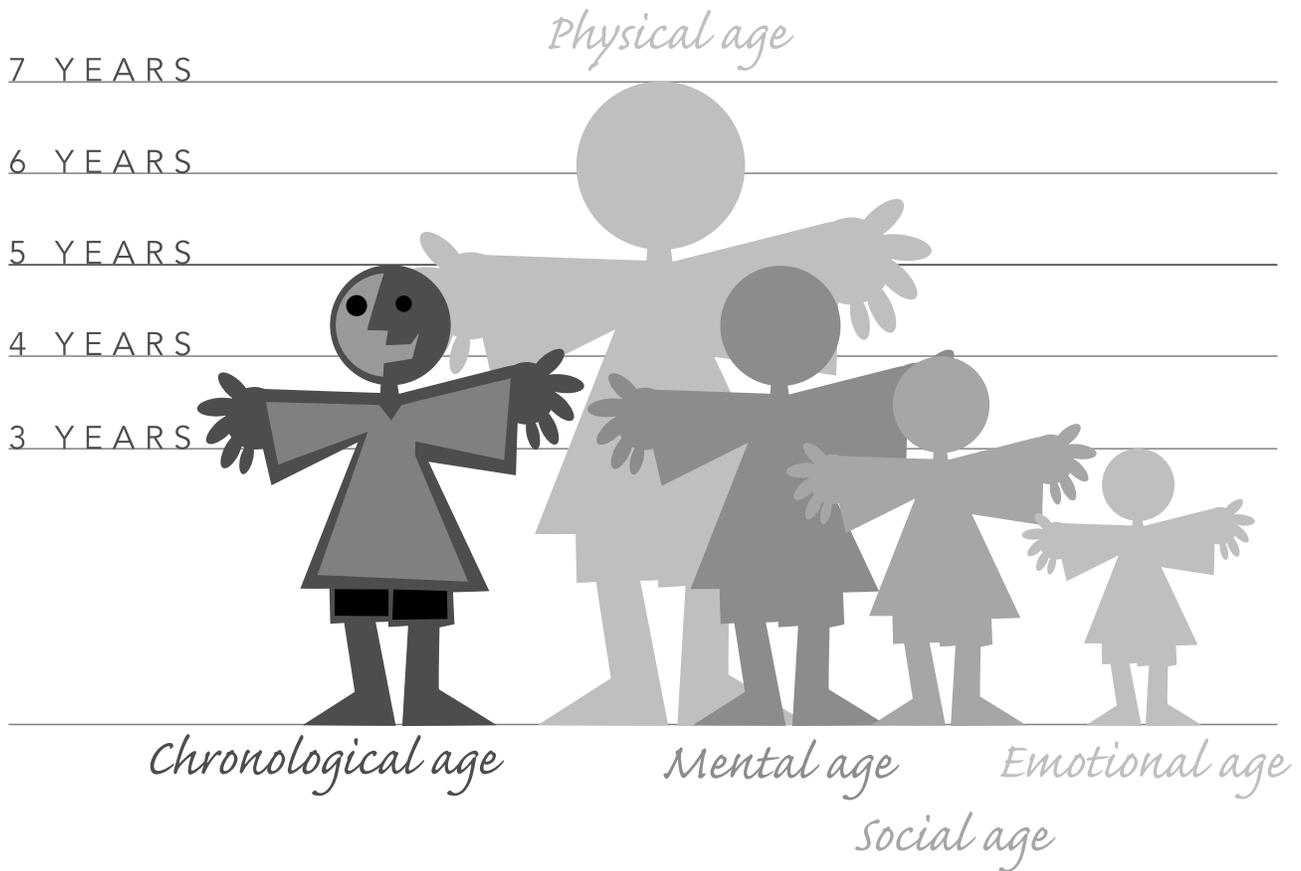
### START

1. Explain that middle childhood and early adolescence are exciting times for children. It is often the time when childhood memories are made and when much development occurs. During this time, young people are maturing in many ways—physically, mentally, emotionally and socially. Individual development during this time period is not the same from one child to the next, nor is it consistent within the various areas of development, even for one child. Each child grows and develops at his or her own rate.
2. Show the Developmental Stages overhead on Page 41. Discuss how children have a chronological age as well as a physical, mental, emotional and social age. These different developmental ages mean that children's development and ability to perform tasks will vary. For instance, some children's physical growth may outpace their classmates, but they may be behind in other areas of development.



## DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES IN DIFFERENT DOMAINS

Children can be in different developmental stages in each developmental area. For example:



SOURCE: Cooperative Extension System Extension "CARES" for America's Children and Youth Initiative, March 2001.

OVERHEAD 1

This overhead and those on Pages 43-46 are modified from 4-H Afterschool's *Guiding Growth: Training Staff for Working with Youth in After-School Programs* Resource Guide.

## Child Development—Remember When?

### START (continued)

3. Ask teens to share how these developmental differences can influence:
  - how younger children learn;
  - how teens would need to deliver the program;
  - how adaptations might need to be made when presenting activities.
4. Show the Characteristics of Youth overhead for the target age group with which the teens will be working. Briefly review the physical, social, emotional and intellectual characteristics and the implications for programming.
5. Conduct a role play activity to demonstrate these differences.

Note: In advance, make a set of role play cards that include one of the developmental characteristics and the implications for programming on each card.

  - Divide the group into teams of four to six people.
  - Give each group a card that includes the developmental characteristics and implications for programming.
  - Explain that they will be given five minutes to create a skit that demonstrates these principles.
  - Ask each group to present their skit to the larger group.
  - After each presentation, discuss what was learned. Offer other suggestions to enhance learning.
  - Relate the skit presentations to possible situations that they may encounter in delivering the program to their target audience in informal after-school settings.
6. Ask the group to summarize what was learned. Remind the teens and mentors to refer to Developmental Characteristic handouts as they prepare their presentations to take to after-school programs or if they encounter any behavioral problems in working with the younger children.



# Ages and Stages

## Characteristics of Youth

GRADES K-3

**CHARACTERISTICS**

**IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMMING**

### Physical

Growing slowly, just learning to master physical skills. Can control large muscles better than small muscles.

Projects and meal times are messy. Activities that encourage use of large muscles, such as running, playing games, etc. are good.

### Social

Learning how to be friends; may have many friends. Fighting occurs but doesn't last long. Towards the end of this phase, boys and girls separate.

Small group activities let this group practice their social skills, but still allow for individual attention. Role-playing helps children gain empathy. Encourage children to participate in mixed-gender activities.

### Emotional

Are self centered. Seek approval from adults, and go out of their way to avoid punishment. Are sensitive to criticism; don't like to fail.

Be positive! Plan activities where everyone can experience some success. Foster cooperation, not competition.

### Intellectual

Are concrete thinkers — base thinking in reality. Can't multi-task well. Are more interested in doing things than getting a good result at the end.

Plan lots of activities that take a short time to finish. Focus on the process rather than the final product. Allow for exploration and inquiry.

OVERHEAD 2

## Ages and Stages

# Characteristics of Youth

GRADES 4 – 6

**CHARACTERISTICS**

**IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMMING**

### Physical

Growth continues at a steady rate. Small muscles have developed so they can do activities such as hammering, sawing, playing musical instruments, etc. By the end of this period, they may be as coordinated as an adult, although lapses of awkwardness are common.

Provide for lots of physical involvement. Use hands-on activities that allow youth to make and do things.

### Social

Peer influence grows. To be accepted by peer group is reward. Peer group can become a club, gang or secret society. Prejudice can develop during this period. Independence from adults is increasing. Discusses and evaluates others, develops a concept of "fair" or "unfair" as relates to others.

Provide activities through clubs and group activities. Use activities that allow the youth to make decisions about what they make, do and use. Group youth in same sex groups when possible.

### Emotional

Growing independence. Beginning of disobedience, back-talk and rebelliousness. Common fears are the unknown, failure, death, family problems and non-acceptance. Concept of right and wrong continues to develop. Sense of humor develops. Concept of self is enhanced by feelings of competence. Strong attachment to their own sex and show antagonism towards opposite sex.

Don't compare youth to one another. Emphasize progress and achievement.

### Intellectual

Reading becomes an individual experience. Abstract thought is possible and plans can extend over several weeks. Activities can be evaluated with insight. Attention span increases. Ability to understand "Why?"

Use simple, short instructions. Include real-life objects when teaching and involve their senses when possible.

OVERHEAD 3

# Ages and Stages

## Characteristics of Youth

GRADES 7 – 9

**CHARACTERISTICS**

**IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMMING**

### Physical

Often have a growth spurt that can cause clumsiness until coordination catches up with the growth. Most girls are more developed than boys. Distinguishing physical features such as large feet, ears or nose may be a source of worry. Increase in appetite.

Avoid activities that cause youth to compare their physical characteristics to others. Offer projects that require more coordination.

### Social

Participation in youth organizations may decline. A feeling of dependence on the rules and regulations specified by adults continues, even though they may protest. Peer group pressure increases. Crushes are common. Interest in the opposite sex is often shown in contrary behavior...pushing, hair pulling, etc.

Provide some activities that include both sexes, but still offer same sex activities. Provide opportunities for the group to determine the rules.

### Emotional

Worry and/or shame associated with body development. A strong emotional attachment to an older youth or an adult may be evident. Keen interest in their own bodies especially sex and sex processes.

Provide lots of opportunities to succeed. Avoid comparing performance with others. Provide opportunities to work with other youth and adults.

### Intellectual

Growing capacity to reason and think abstractly, although manipulation of concrete objects is often enjoyed. Ability to persist until desired result is achieved. Avoid tasks beyond their ability. Can take more responsibility in planning and evaluating their work. Vocabulary may be equal to an adult; however, reading interests are different.

Provide more complex tasks. Projects that require more reading and analysis can be offered. Allow them to evaluate their own work. Avoid tasks that are beyond their abilities.

OVERHEAD 4

## Ages and Stages

# Characteristics of Youth

## H I G H S C H O O L

### CHARACTERISTICS

### IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMMING

#### **Physical**

Physical changes are usually accepted, but boys may still be growing quickly. Most females reach maximum height by age 14 and most males by age 16.

Be willing to answer questions about physical changes. Avoid comments that criticize or compare body shapes/sizes.

#### **Social**

Self-centered, but capable of feeling empathy. Are able to maintain relationships with many diverse people. Acceptance by members of the opposite sex is important. Want to belong to clubs yet be recognized as unique within those organizations. Spend more time working and going to school, less time in club and group activities.

Let teens plan their own programs. Establish a climate that is conducive to peer support. Emphasize personal development whenever possible.

#### **Emotional**

Searching for their identity, they usually find it around age 16. Want to be autonomous from parents. May have trouble with compromise and may have unsettled emotions. Strive to earn responsibility and the respect of others.

Let teens assume responsibility. Expect them to follow through. Help them explore their identity, values and beliefs. Help them develop individual skills. Encourage them to work with other teens and adults.

#### **Intellectual**

Gain cognitive and study skills. Are mastering abstract thinking. Emphasis is on exploring and preparing for future career and roles. Like to set their own goals based on their own needs. May reject goals imposed by others.

Give them real-life problems to figure out. Let them make decisions and evaluate the outcomes. Encourage service learning. Plan field trips to businesses and colleges.

# Experiential Learning— Learn By Doing

## OBJECTIVE

To be able to understand and use the experiential learning model when delivering curriculum.

## TIME

45 minutes to one hour

## MATERIALS

- Flipchart
- Markers
- Handouts
- Supplies for the sample activity

## OVERVIEW

This activity will help teens and mentors understand the theory of experiential learning. Almost all 4-H curricula uses experiential learning in their development and delivery because 4-H recognizes that direct, hands-on involvement (learn by doing) is the most effective way to help children learn. Experiential learning actively engages learners, encourages them to think for themselves, work hard and, ultimately, learn more.



## Experiential Learning— Learn By Doing

### START

1. Discuss the five steps to the experiential learning model.
  - Step 1—Experience the activity. Provide an opportunity for youth to perform or do an activity.
  - Step 2—Share what happened. Ask the youth questions about the activity and the experience after they have completed it. Ask them to describe the results and their reactions.
  - Step 3—Process what happened. Ask questions about something that was important about the experience or activity. Help them analyze the experience and reflect upon the results.
  - Step 4—Generalize. Help youth to apply the results of their learning to the real world. Ask questions to help them connect the learning to life skills and other subjects. Ask “so what” questions.
  - Step 5—Apply. Help youth to apply what they learned to their own lives. Ask “now what” questions to help them see how they can use their new skills or information.
2. Use the Helicopter Activity (or one of your own) to demonstrate and practice experiential learning. (See Page 51.)



# Experiential Learning Model

**DO**

Describe the activity you'll have participants do. Encourage them to think about what they might see or what might happen. Then, let participants experience the activity; perform or do it.

**SHARE**

Ask questions about the activity and the experience after they've completed it. Participants describe the results and their reactions.

**PROCESS**

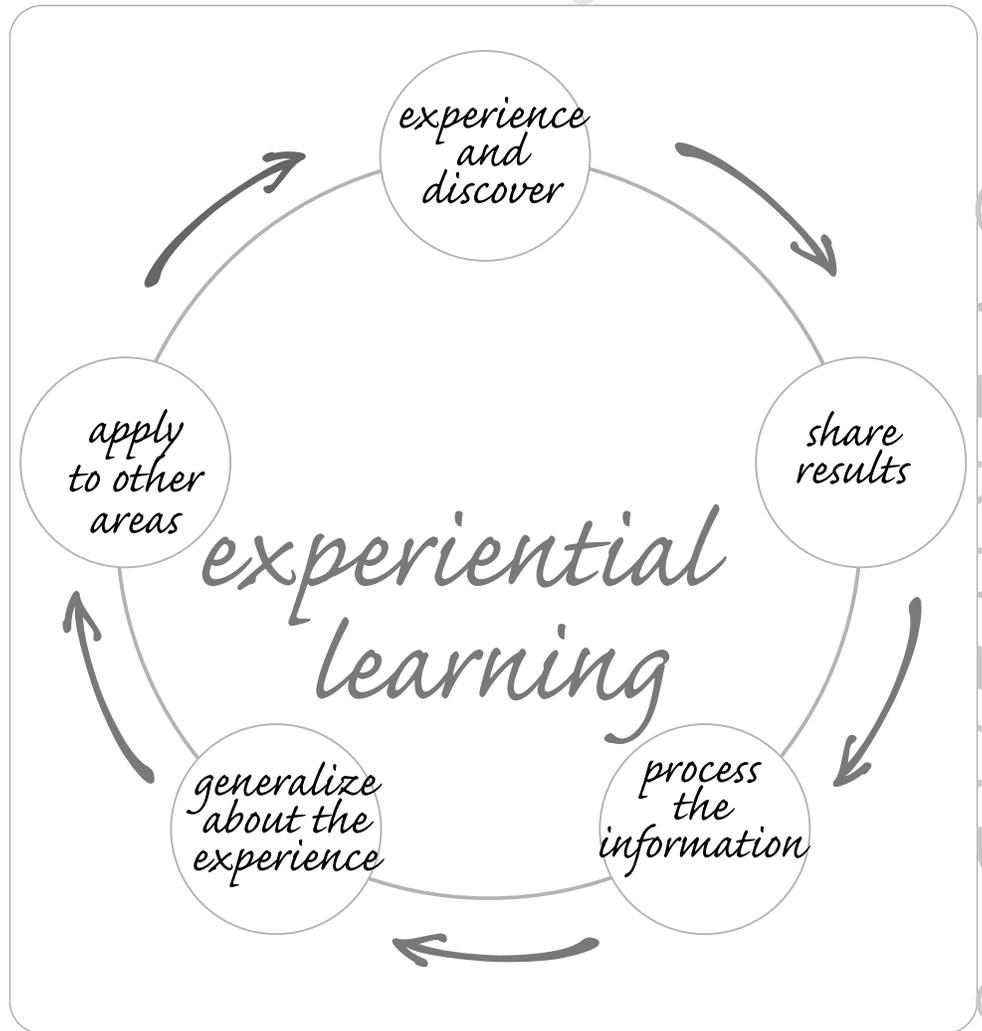
Ask questions about something that was important about the experience. Participants analyze the experience and reflect upon the results.

**GENERALIZE**

Now apply the results back to real world examples. Ask questions to help participants connect the subject matter to life skills and the bigger world.

**APPLY**

Help participants apply what they learned to their own lives, to give them opportunities to practice these new skills or use the new information.



OVERHEAD 6

## Helicopter Activity— The Power of Experiential Learning

### MATERIALS

- Pre-cut paper helicopter on 20 lb. paper. Diagram follows
- Paper clips, one per participant
- Flipchart paper and markers

### EXPERIENCE THE ACTIVITY

1. Show the participants the paper helicopter. (Pre-cut the helicopters along the dotted lines; the solid lines are for folding). Show how to fold along the solid lines.
2. Ask the participants to predict what will happen if they were to hold the helicopter at eye level and drop it. Record some of the responses.
3. Pass out the helicopters. Ask the participants to drop the helicopter and observe what actually happens.
4. Next, ask the group to predict what might happen if they were to hold the helicopter sideways and then drop it. Record responses. Ask the participants to experiment with dropping the helicopter from various positions.
5. Next, pass out paper clips. Ask the participants to clip the paper clip to the bottom end of the helicopter. Again, ask the group to predict what might happen.

### SHARE WHAT HAPPENED

6. Talk about what occurred in each of the activities above. Talk about what they observed. How were they able to make the helicopter perform differently?

### PROCESS WHAT HAPPENED

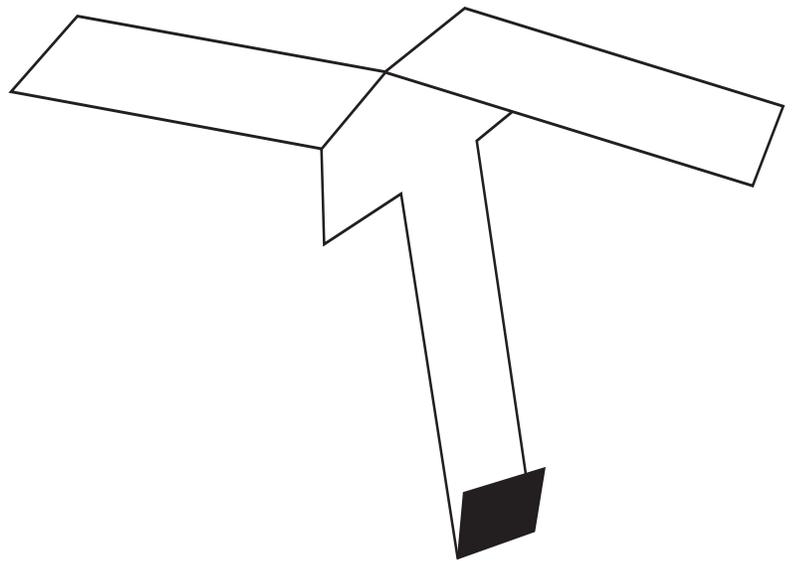
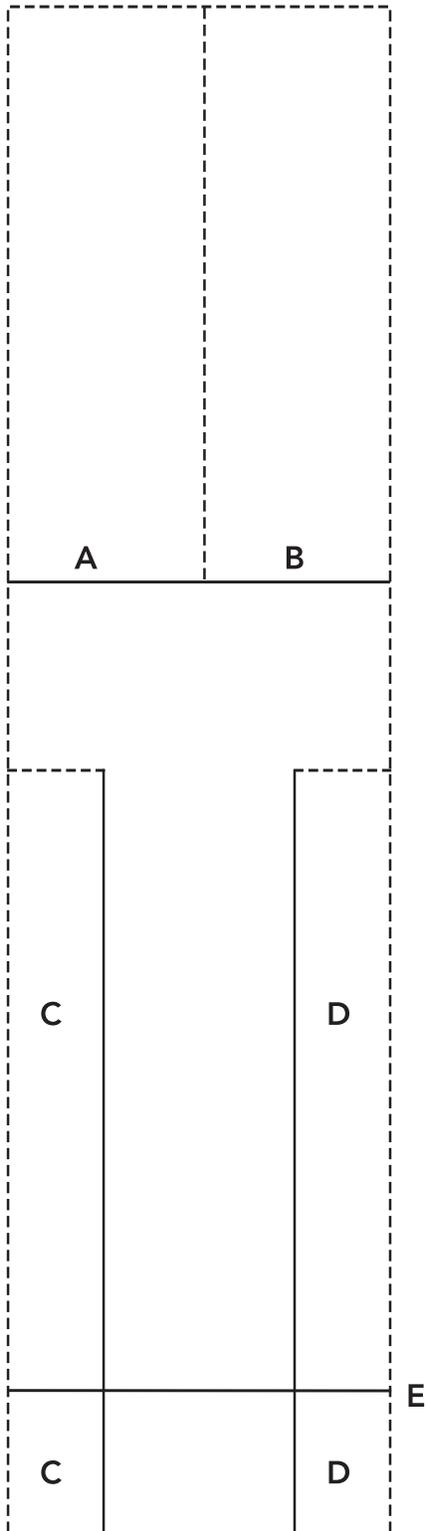
7. Ask questions about things the participants did to change the rate of spin. What is the rate of fall? What is the direction of spin? How could we make the helicopter spin faster? Slower? What other ideas can we test?

### GENERALIZE

8. Ask the group (or in smaller groups) to describe other objects that spin like the helicopter in flight. What generalizations can we make from what we learned? Where could this information be useful? Where might this process occur in nature?

### APPLY

9. Now, ask the group to apply what they have learned from the helicopter exercise in constructing a paper airplane.
10. Pass out paper and allow a few minutes to construct and fly the paper airplanes. Observe and discuss the variables and application.



## Communication— Keeping Your Audience Tuned In!

### OBJECTIVE

To understand processes to keep participants engaged and interested.

### TIME

30 to 45 minutes

### MATERIALS

- Flipchart
- Markers

### OVERVIEW

Knowing the information that you want to present is just one part of being an effective teacher. Being organized, removing distractions and knowing how to communicate the information so that learners are engaged also are important.

### START

1. Introduce the concept of engaging learners. Ask participants to recall a time when they were not engaged. What was the experience like for them?
2. Ask them to identify some of the reasons why they were turned off and not engaged. (i.e. long lectures, sitting too long, not allowed to do the work, speaker using a monotone voice, other things going on in the room, etc.). Write their responses on flipchart paper.
3. Break the participants into groups of four to five. Assign each group one of the topics identified as turning off audiences. Give them about 10 minutes to brainstorm ways—as a presenter—they could keep the audience engaged.
4. Bring the groups back together and ask one person from each group to share their suggestions.
5. Discuss how they can apply these tips in their teaching.



# Planning—Wrap-Up

## OBJECTIVE

To review and share what was learned.

## TIME

15 minutes

## MATERIALS

- Foam ball or torch

## OVERVIEW

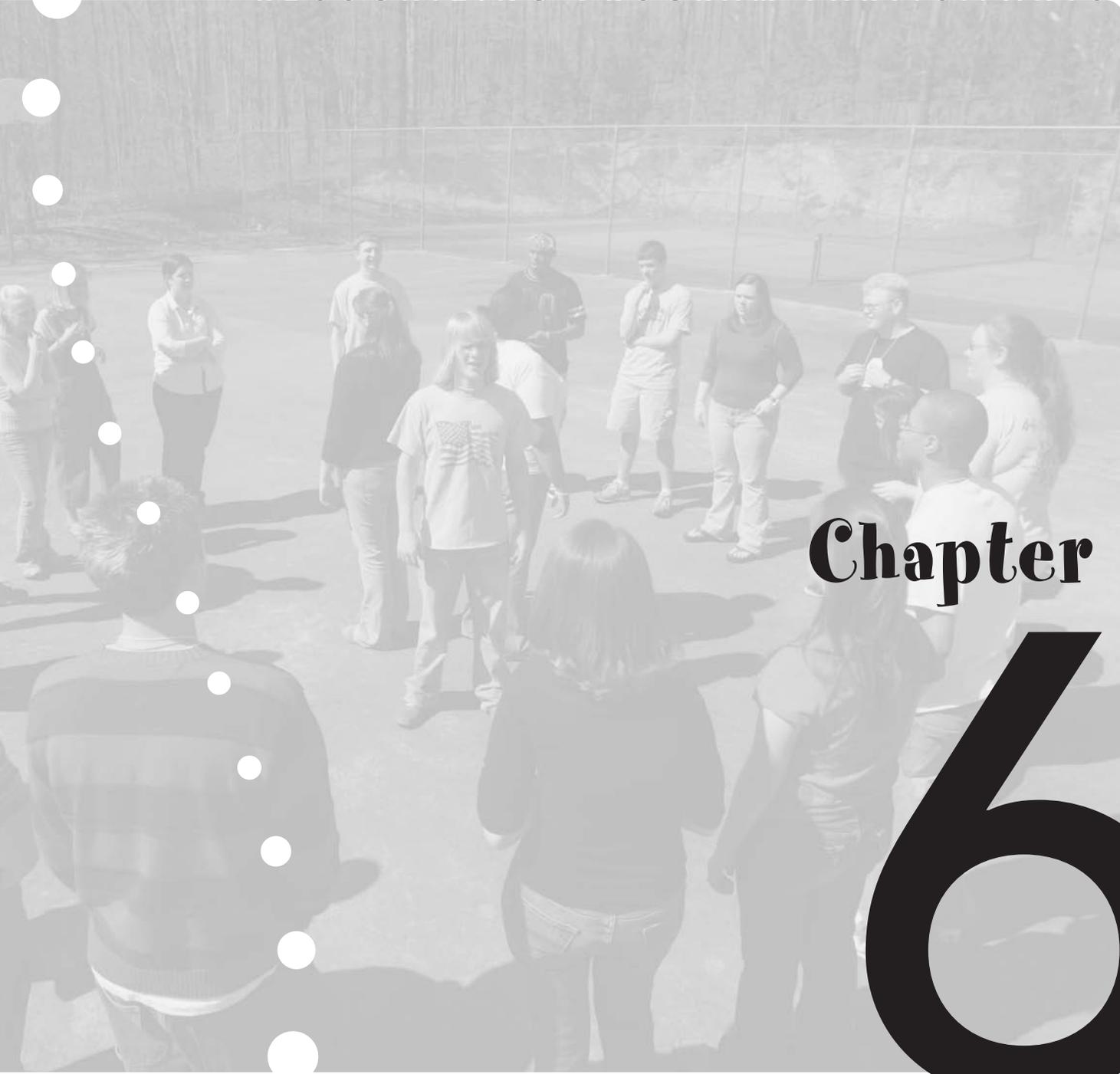
It is important to review what was learned in the workshop. It is especially helpful to have each participant share their own thoughts. Use the activity below, or one of your own, to close the workshop.

## START

1. Form the group into a circle. Share any other information before completing the rest of this activity. Ask the group to reflect on what they learned through the workshop.
2. Toss the ball (or pass the torch) to one of the participants and ask him or her to share one thing that he or she learned.
3. After the participant has shared, then he or she tosses the ball to another participant. Sharing should continue until everyone has had the opportunity.
4. Thank group members for their participation.



RECOGNIZING PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS



# Chapter

# 6

# Recognizing Program Participants

Because you will want to recognize the efforts of many individuals in this project, you may choose to design specific recognition programs for youth participants, teen leaders, mentors and volunteers, after-school program staff and other partners.

Ultimately, one of the major outcomes for participation is a sense of mastery and an increase in self-esteem for all of the program participants. While some people need outward signs for recognition, others thrive in the sense that they have done a job well. Some people like to be publicly recognized, while others prefer individual praise or a “pat on the back.” Try to offer recognition that is most meaningful to the individuals and groups with which you work.



## Recognizing Program Participants

### Tangible Recognition

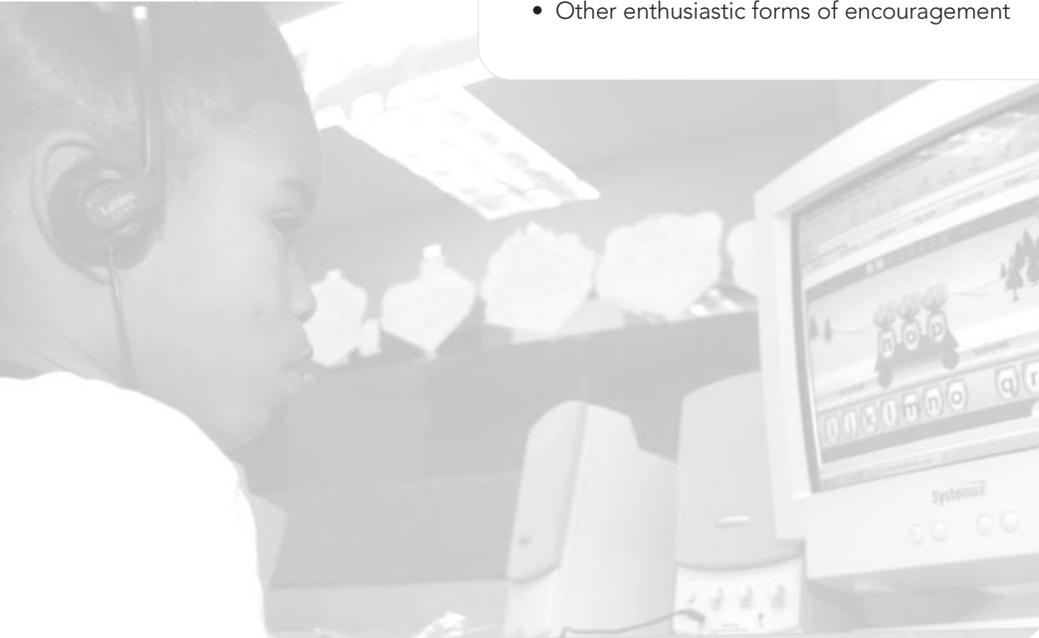
Consider offering some of these tangible forms of recognition for program participation:

- Participant and completion certificates (available online at [4hafterschool.org](http://4hafterschool.org))
- Ribbons
- Scholarships to future training or events
- Plaques to after-school programs
- 4-H membership cards
- Other incentives (such as movie passes)

### Other Forms of Recognition

Consider offering some of these forms of recognition:

- A pat on the shoulder
- Nodding
- Specific verbal praise
- A note to the participant
- Opportunities to demonstrate skills to rest of the group
- Opportunities to share skills with the larger community
- Other enthusiastic forms of encouragement



# Recognizing Program Participants



## National 4-H Recognition

Use the key elements of the National 4-H Recognition Model to guide your recognition planning. These elements are:

1. **Recognize youth for participation.** This recognition acknowledges their involvement in the first step of working toward a goal and helps build a positive self-image.
2. **Recognize youth for progress toward their personal goals.** This recognition helps youth gain experience in setting goals and realistically assessing their abilities.
3. **Recognize youth for achieving standards of excellence.** These predetermined targets give youth something to aim for in their learning experiences.
4. **Recognize youth through peer competition.** This type of recognition can be a strong motivation for some children. However, it is not appropriate for children under age eight.
5. **Recognize youth for cooperating.**

PROMOTING YOUR  
4-H AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM

## Chapter

# 7

# Promoting Your 4-H Afterschool Program\*



It's important to spread the word in your community about 4-H Afterschool programs. You'll increase participation by letting youth and their parents who could benefit from the programs know how to get involved. You'll achieve academic, government and business community support that may result in better facilities, funding and/or volunteer participation. By making 4-H Afterschool highly visible and showing its value to the community, you'll help ensure the future of after-school programming.

4husa.org and 4hafterschool.org have lots of resources to enhance your promotional efforts. Visit the Media Resources section to download graphics, sample news releases and get great ideas to try in your area!



\*This chapter has been written in collaboration with Gwyn Donohue, David Henderson and Laura Phillips Garner of the National 4-H Council Marketing Communications Team. Contact us at [gdonohue@fourhcouncil.edu](mailto:gdonohue@fourhcouncil.edu), [dhenderson@fourhcouncil.edu](mailto:dhenderson@fourhcouncil.edu) or [lgamer@fourhcouncil.edu](mailto:lgamer@fourhcouncil.edu) for help promoting your 4-H Afterschool program.

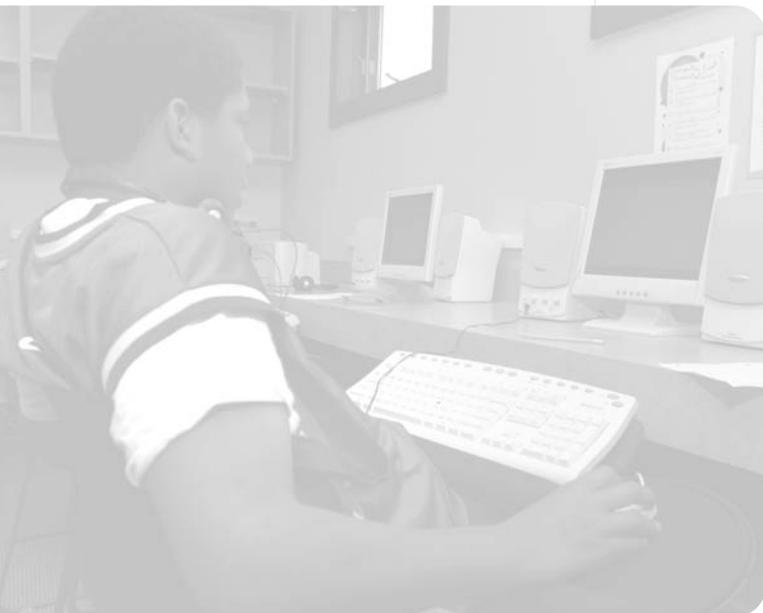
## Promoting Your 4-H Afterschool Program

**TIP:**

Go to [4husa.org](http://4husa.org) and [4hafterschool.org](http://4hafterschool.org) for marketing communications and media relations materials to promote your 4-H Afterschool program.

Here are some ideas for how to promote your program:

1. **Engage youth and adults.** Ask teens and mentors to form a publicity committee to generate ideas and create a plan for publicizing the program based on the *10 Tips for Better Media Coverage* on Page 62.
2. **Get your story in print.** Draft a news release and send it to local newspapers, newsletters and community Web sites. Think about places other than the main newspaper, such as school, residential community and local business newsletters as well. Be sure to take into account the *10 Tips for Better Media Coverage* to make sure your release is newsworthy!
3. **Hold special events.** Hold a high-profile special event to bring attention to your program such as a *Lights-on Afterschool!* event or a family activity night. (See Pages 64-65 for more information.)
4. **Take photographs.** It's easy to use a digital camera to document the many memorable moments in your program. Send them to the local newspaper along with a news release about an interesting project. Create a scrapbook to display when you participate in community events. Use photographs to illustrate brochures and posters. Challenge youth to create collages that can be displayed in local libraries or stores. High-resolution digital photos are best, but high-quality prints also are acceptable. Remember to get parent/guardian permission to use the photos. Go to [4husa.org](http://4husa.org) or [4hafterschool.org](http://4hafterschool.org) for a sample permission form.





5. **Participate in community events.** The youth in your programs are your best salespeople. Have them demonstrate the many activities they experience in your 4-H Afterschool program by setting up tables at art shows, food festivals and farmers markets or marching in holiday parades. (See Pages 66-67 for more information.)
6. **Create a Web site.** Involve teens in creating a Web page on your program. Make sure you include photos and quotes from young people and timely content such as a calendar of events or stories about projects you're working on or recently completed.
7. **Contact radio or television stations.** Ask teens and mentors to contact radio and television stations to pitch stories on your programs. Use the *10 Tips for Better Media Coverage* as a training tool for all involved before they begin pitching.
8. **Give presentations.** Community groups are always interested in having guests share their activities. Ask teens to give presentations about what they did and learned while participating in your program.
9. **Prepare an impact report.** Periodically, prepare a brief report about the impact and outcomes of the program. Share this report with key decision-makers and potential funders in your community.

## 10 TIPS FOR BETTER MEDIA COVERAGE

Few greater thrills exist than to see a favorable, balanced and accurate news story about your 4-H program. Accurate news coverage, with its implied third-party endorsement, is credible and considered far more influential than paid advertising.

In today's highly competitive world, a good news story positions 4-H and Cooperative Extension as a leader, as something special. The news media's coverage of 4-H builds reputation and enhances our brand. It drives awareness and interest in 4-H quicker than anything else. It opens doors to audiences that might otherwise remain out-of-reach and attracts support for 4-H.

Much is competing for the media's attention. The media you knew last year isn't the same media today. Understanding how the media functions, what it takes to craft a story idea into something that might attract interest and what a reporter needs for a story can give you the competitive edge.

Here are 10 tips for better media coverage:

1. **Develop your story.** Read *USA Today*. Note its concise style and copy it. Every story has four elements: a headline that captures attention; lead sentence that trumpets the story's importance; body with background, quotes and facts; and, a conclusion that's often a call to action, such as "for more information, check out this website...." A reporter needs more than an idea or a news release to do a story. You will need to provide access to people for interviews and background data.
2. **Make it timely.** News must be timely in order to be news. Reporters are always looking for a timely news angle, tied perhaps to some event, date or anniversary.

By David Henderson, senior vice president, strategic communications, National 4-H Council. Henderson is a lecturer at the University of Virginia and a former award-winning network news correspondent and public relations executive. He is author of *Media Relations: From a Journalist's Perspective*.



3. **Think visuals.** Nothing tells a story better than a terrific photo.
4. **Consider the audience.** Ask yourself “what’s the value to the reader?” We know 4-H has important stories. They need to be presented in a way that readers will share our enthusiasm.
5. **Avoid competitive clutter.** Don’t copy what someone else has done. You may be perceived as a second place runner. It’s okay to be imaginative in our approach.
6. **Find the right reporter and develop a relationship.** Call the reporter even when you don’t have a story, introduce yourself and let him or her know you are available for 4-H issues. Suggest a meeting for a chance to present an overview of 4-H.
7. **Be aware of a reporter’s schedule.** Find out the best time to contact the reporter so you don’t call at his or her daily deadline.
8. **Keep everything concise and focused.** Most journalists are under untold pressures and time demands. The last thing they need is a rambling voice mail or multi-page news release.
9. **Be responsive.** Understand that if a reporter calls for a quote, story or background, they generally can’t or won’t wait until tomorrow.
10. **Deliver what you promise.** If you pitch a story, work with the journalist to make it happen.

## Family Activity Nights\*

### OBJECTIVE

To give parents, caregivers, children and staff opportunities to interact and learn in informal ways.

### TIME

45 minutes

### MATERIALS

- Photocopies of *Family Activity Night Planning Handout* (Page 65)
- Flipchart and markers or chalkboard and chalk
- Construction paper, scissors, glitter glue, markers, posterboards and other art supplies

### OVERVIEW

In this activity, participants break into teams to plan Family Activity Nights. Before you begin, put together an art table that has construction paper, scissors, glitter glue, markers, posterboards and other art supplies. You also may wish to write the information found under *What's Next?* (core strengths) on a chalkboard or flipchart.

### START HERE

Begin by discussing the idea of involving parents and other community members by holding Family Activity Nights. Such events can be as informal as an open house or as scheduled as a workshop. In all communities, Family Activity Nights serve to let children, parents/caregivers, community members and staff interact in a relaxed and positive atmosphere.

Ask sites if they've ever held such outreach events. What were the outcomes? What were the strengths of the events? What were things that needed improving?

Review the following "core strengths" information with the group:

To build strong community partnerships for learning, it's recommended that:

1. Families read together.
2. Parents and caregivers monitor out-of-school activities.

3. Parents talk with children and teens.
4. After-school sites make after-school visits easier.
5. Sites promote family learning.
6. Sites encourage parent leadership.

Point out that Family Activity Nights can help promote all of these core strengths.

### WHAT'S NEXT?

Break the group into teams of about three or four people each. Give teams a copy of the *Family Activity Night Planning Handout*. Explain that teams will plan the activity nights by filling out the planning sheets. Ask them to keep the previous "core strengths" information in mind while planning their events. For example, they may wish to plan a family reading night or have parent boards plan the events.

Also explain that some of the best Family Activity Nights happen with the collaboration of children at the site. Ask one member of each team to "become" a seven-year-old child and creatively offer up any ideas he/she may have.

After teams are done planning the night according to the theme, they will move to the art table and design a large poster to advertise their event!

### FINAL ACT

Give teams a chance to share their planning ideas and posters. Discuss how the events can be implemented at each site and what the outcomes or improvements might be.

\*Materials on Pages 64-67 are taken from *Guiding Growth: Training Staff for Working With Youth in Afterschool Programs*, a 4-H Afterschool Resource Guide.

# Family Activity Nights

## Family Activity Night Planning

Plan a celebration! Our theme is: \_\_\_\_\_

**1** What is the best time of day to offer this activity? Immediately after school? On Friday nights? Write the day and time here: \_\_\_\_\_

**2** What do we want to happen at this night? What are our goals — to help families meet other families and staff or learn something? Write goals here:

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**3** How are we going to help families get to know each other and the staff? Write ideas here:

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**4** What is our main activity of the night?

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**5** Are we going to serve food? How will it be prepared — will we have families help make or bring the food?

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**6** If we are going to have an educational event, how will we do this? Will we show a video? Bring in a guest speaker? Lead the group in an activity? Write ideas here:

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**7** How will we wrap up the evening?

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**8** How will we measure its success?

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HANDOUT 1

# Working With the Community at Large\*

## OBJECTIVE

To understand how to begin to build a sense of community at sites.

## TIME

45 minutes

## MATERIALS

- Flipchart and markers or chalkboard and chalk
- Photocopies *Community Outreach Event Handout* (Page 67)

## OVERVIEW

In this activity, teams review and or brainstorm some ideas to involve the children at their sites with the community, and then plan an event that would accomplish this.

## START HERE

Explain that a sense of community plays an important part in developing a child's self-esteem. Children need to know who they are and how they fit into the world around them. They need to become aware of others and the community in which they live.

Explain that infants care only about their own physical needs. Preschool children, too, remain very self-centered. However, school-age children are becoming better able to reach out to others. They need opportunities to develop giving relationships and to understand the world around them.

Next, suggest the following activities to help children feel part of the larger community or ask participants to brainstorm a list and fill in:

1. Invite people from the community to come to your after-school site and talk about what they do.
2. Take field trips to places in the community.
3. Take part in community activities.
4. Make service to the community a part of your program.
5. Collect food for hungry people.
6. Hold a special program for teachers in the community.
7. Entertain senior citizens.

## WHAT'S NEXT?

Break the group into teams of two to three participants each. Ask them to choose one of the ideas from the list and make a *Community Outreach Event* plan to implement at their site, using the *Community Outreach Event Handout*. Give teams time to plan their events.

## FINAL ACT

After they have finished, let teams share ideas. Remind them it's important to get the children's feedback on their plans, and, in fact, children should be involved from the earliest point. Ask teams if they think they have viable plans, and how they would implement them.

\* Reprinted in part with permission from the National Network for Child Care – NNCC. Eller, C.A. (1991). Building a sense of community. In Todd, C.M. (Ed.), *School-age connections*, 1(1), pp. 1-2. Urbana-Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Cooperative Extension Service.

## Working With the Community at Large

### Community Outreach Event

Our idea:

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How are we going to do this?

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Where it will happen?

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Who's involved?

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When will we do it?

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What will children learn?

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How will community members benefit?

---



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---

Other comments:

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NOTE:

ALL community outreach event plans should be reworked with input from youth before they are implemented!

HANDOUT 2







4-H AFTERSCHOOL  
7100 CONNECTICUT AVENUE  
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