

September 28, 2004

Dear 4-H Professionals,

4-H professionals have identified areas of priority for the Ohio 4-H Youth Development program. The 4-H areas are: clubs, camping, youth leadership, volunteer development, school enrichment, and curriculum. 4-H After-School was not initially identified at the same level but we recognize the increasing need for quality after-school programming across Ohio and it has also been identified as a National 4-H initiative.

Our opportunity is to define strategies for action that transform these areas into areas of positive youth development excellence. With our vision and mission in mind, I believe program excellence will be achieved through (1) providing the highest quality of youth and adult programming within OSU Extension, 4-H Youth Development (guided by positive youth development and experiential learning principles), (2) serving as a resource partner with other organizations, (3) shaping governmental policy, and (4) increasing available human and financial resources. I welcome your feedback regarding these parameters of excellence.

This will be accomplished through clear leadership and resources needed to meet the needs and resulting in programmatic excellence within Ohio State University Extension and communities across Ohio. Our next steps are:

1. Create programmatic leadership teams in the areas of clubs, camping, youth leadership, after-school and volunteerism. This will be accomplished with 4-H Specialists providing leadership to (1) survey the most immediate needs of 4-H Educators in each of the identified priority areas through a zoomerang survey, (2) develop a foundation proposal for 2005 Ohio 4-H Foundation funding and recruit team members, (3) formalize a team and operational & leadership procedures around a specific priority area, and (4) work with the team to continue identifying needs and develop strategies to address those needs. Teams should also represent the interdisciplinary nature of the programmatic efforts.
2. Appoint a school enrichment committee to evaluate 4-H's work in this area and make recommendations regarding our unique contribution to enhancing Ohio's educational capacity through the school day.
3. Continue exploring how we identify curriculum needs, develop resources and related programs, and evaluate. Work is currently underway to develop a draft strategy.

Extension 4-H Specialists will provide leadership to defining the initial needs within the priority areas and identifying programmatic teams. They will continue in a strong leadership or co-leadership role as defined within the team structures. Specialist leadership roles: clubs – Bill Harris*, Kathy Cox, and Vicki Schwartz; camping – Niki Nestor McNeely*; youth leadership – Kathy Cox*; after-school – Theresa Ferrari* and volunteer development – Ryan Schmiesing* and Vicki Schwartz. Bob Horton will

provide leadership to the review process of school enrichment programming. Bob and Jeff will be developing a draft process for developing 4-H subject matter curriculum.

As I shared earlier in this letter, a zoomerang survey will be developed around each of the priority areas. There will be a total of five initial surveys (clubs, camping, youth leadership, volunteerism and afterschool) that will be sent via email about 1 ½ to 2 weeks a part. This will be done over the next two months. We request that you provide feedback on each of the priority areas. You may also be asked if you would be interested in being a member of one of the team, please be aware that several teams will be formed and a final call for team members will be done at the end of this process. As soon as a survey is completed an adhoc committee will be formed to analyze the data and to establish priorities. Our next step will be to form teams around each of the priorities. You will have an opportunity to select and serve on a team.

I am also requesting names of individuals to serve on the school enrichment committee. Let Bob Horton or myself know by October 4th if you are interested or know of a school partner that could contribute to this review.

Discussions will continue regarding the curriculum development process. The initial work will focus on the member project materials within the context of overall curriculum development. More information regarding curriculum development will be included in the October Clover-Graham. In the same edition of the Clover-Graham, I will share information regarding areas of specialization within the 4-H program.

In summary, the following items need your input and participation:

1. 4-H professionals will be receiving zoomerang surveys to assess the most immediate needs within the priority areas of clubs, camping, volunteerism, youth leadership, and afterschool. Teams will be formed around these program priorities. The first will be sent in just a few days. I encourage 100% participation from 4-H professionals (educators, program assistants, and specialists).
2. Provide feedback to Bob Horton or myself on potential names to serve on the school enrichment committee. We would appreciate names by October 5, 2004.
3. Provide feedback to Jeff on the components of defining excellence as described in the second paragraph. I would appreciate your feedback by October 5, 2004.

Thank you for your continued leadership and support.

Sincerely,

Jeff King
State 4-H Leader, and
Assistant Director, Ohio State University Extension