

Title: YOUTH...Are the Strongest Link...to Community Service

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Objectives:

Participants will:

1. Explore what motivates youth to perform a community service project.
2. Learn the benefits of youth performing a meaningful community service project.
3. Learn five essential steps to completing a meaningful community service project.
4. Understand the importance of involving youth in the entire process of a community service project as linked to the eight critical elements of the Ohio 4-H Experience.
5. Develop new ideas for community service projects for youth participants.

Best Time to Teach:

- Anytime of the year
- Preferably before beginning a community service project

Best Location/facility Requirements:

- Classroom, meeting room, or comfortable site with seating

Materials/Equipment Needed:

- Large sheets of paper (flip chart size)
- Flip Chart
- Markers
- Links

Handouts needed:

- Eight Critical of the Ohio 4-H Experience
- Cox, Kathryn and Culp, Ken III. "Involving Teens as Leaders." Extension Factsheet 4H-021-99.
- Dalzell, Julie. "What is 4-H Youth Development?" Extension Factsheet 4H-002-99.
- National 4-H Council. "Are you into it?" Retrieved from <http://areyouintoit.com>
- Woodrum, Woody. "Community Service." Extension Factsheet 4H-012-99.
- USA Weekend. "Make A Difference Day. Project Tools for Teachers. Project Tools for Teens. Link to Friends." Retrieved from <http://usaweekend.com/difday/index.html>

PRESENTATION

INTRODUCTION:

- ♣ Share with a partner(s) what the most meaningful community service your 4-H club has been involved with.
- ♣ Explain what made the experience beneficial.

1. Why should 4-H members perform community service projects?

- ♣ The 4-H pledge “hands to greater service...for my club, my community, my country, and my world”
- ♣ One of the eight critical elements - “Opportunity to value and practice service for others”
- ♣ Community service can be linked to the other seven critical elements in the Ohio 4-H experience
- ♣ Youth learn new life skills - leadership, team work, communication skills, organization skills, decision making skills, citizenship, budget and resource management.
- ♣ Builds self-esteem and self worth of youth participants
- ♣ Facilitates positive relationships between adults and youth
- ♣ Teens learn marketable skills and also network with community leaders
- ♣ Youth are a valuable resource for community projects that can save the community money and time
- ♣ Youth who perform community service projects are more likely to volunteer as adults in their community

APPLICATION:

- A. Have the large group break into small groups of either two or three people.
- Ask the small groups to share with each other a community service project that their 4-H Club participated in that was meaningful.
 - Ask why it was meaningful.
 - Ask who benefited from the experience. Why.
- B. Review why 4-H Clubs perform community service.

September 11th is etched into all of our minds vividly. Many of us reacted at first with tears and gasps to our innocence being blasted apart. Then the dust settled and we reacted by asking “What can I (we) do to help?” The response was almost immediate from across the United States and the world.

History - During the last 100 years of 4-H Youth Development, 4-H'ers have responded to those in need. A prime example of early examples of 4-H members to give to their country happened during World War II, when they donated 1,355 hours in one year as farm labor, the collection of tin cans, bailing wire, waste fats, and silk and nylon. These youth bought War Bonds and Stamps, besides donating to the Red Cross. 4-H members have made impacts during many crises.

Reflect on the 4-H pledge and it's meaning for a minute. Ask have your members taken time to examine the meaning of the pledge? Provide the eight Critical Elements of the Ohio 4-H program handout. Explain how all elements can be linked to a meaningful community service project.

Examine the benefits of performing community service through 4-H for: youth, adults, and the community.

Discuss how most Ohio 4-H project books have a community service requirement.

Making the Best Better

2. Strengths and weaknesses:

Divide into groups of three.

List on paper:

- A. What are some your clubs' strengths when participating in a community service project? What was the role of the 4-H members?

Example: Get the project done with all the club members working together.

- B. What are some of your clubs weaknesses when performing a community service project? What was the role of the 4-H'ers?

Example: Doing the same project every year.

3. YOUTH...Are the Strongest Link... to Community Service

A. Five Links between Youth Development and Community Service (CS):

- ⚙ Decision Making
- ⚙ Planning
- ⚙ Implementation
- ⚙ Evaluation
- ⚙ Publicity and Reporting

B. Who's involved in each link?

- ☺ 4-H Club Members
- ☺ 4-H Club Advisors & Members
- ☺ 4-H Parents, Advisors, & Members

- ⊗ Only 4-H Advisors
- ⊗ Only 4-H Parents & Advisors

C. Ways to involve youth in each link to CS

★ Decision Making

- Ideas of youth - 4-H'ers discuss ideas
- Brainstorming - list of ideas
- Youth assess community needs/issues
- Survey
- List ideas on poster & give members multiple stickers to vote for a project
- Think short term & long term projects with the benefits & challenges of each

C. Linking youth (continued)

C. What makes a community service successful? Is it that the project was completed? Reflect on the whole meaning of the community service project you may have been involved in. Break into small groups to share strengths and weaknesses of the project. What were the highlights and what were the challenges? Share these with the entire group? Is there any commonalities? Or patterns emerging?

As you reflect on your community service project think about how the project took shape. How did you decide to do that project? Who was involved in the decision making? Was it a project that was repeated from the year before? Did the 4-H advisors suggest the project and the members vote on the project? Was there any discussion?

Most importantly, what roles did the youth play in the entire process of the community service project? Were the youth involved in all phases or did they just show up to perform the work? How did they feel about their role?

(Pass out links and join the links together)
Take time to think about how to organize a successful project. You can break it into five stages linking youth to all parts of a meaningful community service project. Youth need to feel ownership to benefit the most from any project. Provide Fayette County Teen Leaders Survey to highlight some questions to ask when planning projects with teens.

D. Provide Factsheet 4H-012-99 on Community Service and 4H-021-99 on Teen Leadership. Why should you involve teens in decision making? Handout Factsheet 4H-002-99 on Youth Development. Provide websites information - "Make A Difference Day Friends Link" and the National 4-H Council "Are You Into It?"

Model how to make a club decision without had votes using large piece of paper and dot voting method. List ideas for community service projects. Vote with dots. Narrow down the project to one idea. Discuss.

☆ **Planning**

- Each member has a role in planning
- List things to be done (teen) &
- Timeline for project
- Each youth volunteers for a job
- List what, when, where, how, cost for each job
- Think about safety issues
 - first aid kit,
 - emergency phone numbers,
 - medical history & release forms
- Permission from anyone involved
- Publicity of event - who, what, where, why, how

☆ **Implementation** (Doing)

- Who is doing what
- Where
- When
- Publicity and reporting
- Use planning timeline

☆ **Evaluation**

By: Members

Volunteers & Advisors

Community Members

Other key stakeholders

- Make time to REFLECT
- Journal
- Articles, discussion, survey
- Document

☆ **Publicity and Reporting**

- Report who was involved
- Report who it benefitted
- Thank you to anyone involved
 - Media
 - Letters/cards of appreciation
- When appropriate inform community leaders about community service project
- Celebrate your accomplishments

4. **YOU are the Strongest Link to YOUTH and their Communities**

By giving them the tools, **YOU**

- ★ Build Positive Relationships with Youth
- ★★ Build Bridges to their Communities
- ★★★ Build Skills for their Future

E. In March, the sports pages are covered with the predictions of who will get to the Big Dance. Readers focus in on the present game and those looming, not thinking what came before all those games. A game plan was drawn up by coaches, players, administrators, etc. As adults, we sometimes take for granted all the little steps in getting to the big dance. With a community service project it is important to hand over the reins to the youth when planning the project. As adults, we need sometimes to sit back in the saddle and ride a few bumps to get to end of the rode. The ride will be a success if the youth holding the reins learns as they guide the horse forward. The key is to let the youth decide the direction of a project. Provide them with the proper equipment for a successful ride. Handout "Make A Difference Day" Guides - Teach/Adult Volunteer and Teen. Discuss how clubs may use these guides to supplement their Ohio 4-H Factsheets.

Implementation of a project is important, but only be successful with good planning and the enthusiasm of the youth involved. What motivates youth to perform community service?

1. Having fun
2. Helping others
3. Making new friends

Evaluation and Reporting a project through different means brings meaning to the project. Who did it benefit? Did it really make a difference? How could we do it better? What comments did you hear from those who were the ones we were trying to help? How did you feel during the project? How did you feel after the project was completed? Would you do it again? Journals and group discussions are an important part of bringing closure and meaning to a project.

Ask youth. Listen to youth. Let youth do the doing. Empower youth. They are the strongest link with your link.

"And so, my fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you - ask what you can do for your country." - John F. Kennedy