

Ohio 4-H Project Service Ideas

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The following are 4-H service activities which have been tried by 4-H groups throughout the world at one time or another. Your group might want to consider some of these ideas along with the ideas you think of during your brainstorming and decision-making sessions.

Discovering 4-H - Stencil house numbers on curbs in front of homes in your neighborhood.

Exploring 4-H - Make kites and contribute them to programs and agencies which provide toys and gifts for children for Christmas or when they are hospitalized.

Aquariums - Set up and regularly maintain an aquarium in a hospital waiting room, in a nursing home, in a funeral home, or at a library.

Archery - Conduct a community-wide archery event. Teach archery fundamentals and have a fun target-shooting contest.

Automotive - Sponsor a workshop for people to learn basic auto repair skills.

Beef - Work with local supermarkets and beef associations to do an in-store beef education day. Do displays and distribute information about modern beef production, and provide samples of beef products.

Bicycle - Work with local government officials to establish and maintain safe bike trails in your community for everyone's use.

Caged Birds - Collect and refurbish old bird cages and provide young birds and cages for grade schools.

Cats - Volunteer to help at local humane society shelters to feed and groom animals and clean cages.

Citizenship/International - Conduct an "International Night" for your community with international games and activities, international foods, and presentations by 4-H international exchanges.

Clothing - Provide alterations and mending service for people with arthritis or special clothing needs.

Computers - Raise funds to provide computers for local schools and community centers.

Creative Arts - Organize, promote, and help conduct a local "Creative and Cultural Arts Festival". Involve local artists and craftspeople in demonstrating and sharing their skills. Provide artwork for public buildings.

Dairy - Help community members learn the importance of dairy products and how they reach consumers' tables by conducting dairy farm open houses and doing slide shows for community groups about how milk is produced and processed.

Dog Care and Obedience - Raise guide dogs for the blind.

Electricity - Do a "light up our history" campaign to plan, raise funds for, install, and maintain exterior lighting for local landmarks and historical sites.

Family Life & Child Care - Provide free on-site child care services for community events such as PTA meetings, elections, concerts, Extension meetings, and so forth.

Field Crops - Contribute a portion of the products or the profits from your field crops projects to an international relief organization.

First Aid - Conduct a community safety campaign. Work with local radio and TV stations to publicize safety and first aid tips.

Fishing - Conduct a parent/child fishing expedition at a local lake or stream. Demonstrate various fishing methods and equipment. Top the morning off with a fish-fry for lunch!

Flower Gardening - Plan and maintain community flower beds in parks, at road intersections, beside bridges, and so forth. Take cut flowers to patients in veterans hospitals and long-term care facilities.

Vegetable Gardening - Grow a garden for the needy. Contribute produce from the garden to a community food bank, social service organization, or directly to individuals and families in need.

Foods and Nutrition - Prepare food to contribute to a community soup kitchen or senior center. Volunteer to assist with serving meals at such facilities.

Forestry - Work with local officials and land owners to plant trees in parks, vacant lots, and fields in your community. Publicize the importance of trees and forests in the environment.

Goats - Sponsor scholarships to enable more youth to attend workshops and conferences related to goat selection, care, feeding, and management.

Gun Safety - Give demonstrations on gun safety at local schools, in mall shows, and with other youth groups.

Health - Conduct a "healthy lifestyles" week and get people in your community to commit to eating a balanced diet, exercising regularly, getting enough sleep, and using good safety practices for an entire week.

Home Environment - Redecorate the TV or recreation room at a community nursing home or hospital.

Horses - Provide an opportunity for the public to learn basic horsemanship and ride a horse at a community festival or in another setting.

Insects - Provide equipment and conduct insect collection and study workshops for day camps, schools, and child care centers.

Laundry - Collect and launder bedding and used clothing, and contribute it to a homeless shelter or relief agency.

Lawn Care - Provide lawn care service for elderly and disabled people in your area.

Leadership - Conduct an information campaign about a local issue of concern to your group's members, or volunteer to help with a local candidate's political campaign.

Microwave Cookery & Equipment - Contribute and maintain microwave ovens and other kitchen equipment for a local volunteer fire department, teen center, run-away shelter, or other community facility.

Money Management - Designate a percentage of your group's funds to contribute to a worthy charity.

Natural Resources - Do a letter-writing campaign to encourage and support efforts to clean up the environment. Write to businesses and manufacturers to thank them for specific things they've done to reduce pollution, waste, and litter, and to offer suggestions for further efforts. Write to government officials about your views related to environmental issues and legislation.

Ohio Birds & Mammals - Survey what animals are facing extinction in your area and work to increase their numbers. For example, in some areas there is a need for people to raise and release bobwhite quail, and in other areas, bluebird housing is needed to reestablish bluebird populations.

Photography - photograph or videotape various community activities. Develop a community bulletin board to display photos in public buildings. Share videos with shut ins during a visit.

Plants & Soil Science - Construct and distribute composting bins and publicize information about the benefits of composting.

Poultry - Contribute dyed eggs and prizes for a community egg hunt in the spring.

Rabbits - Conduct a petting zoo with rabbits and other small gentle animals at a mall show or fair.

Rocketry & Airplanes - Sponsor a community model show with demonstrations and flying contests using model rockets and airplanes.

Rope - Help make swings and construct other equipment for a local park.

Self-Determined - Answer the question, "What could we do related to our project that would benefit others?"...Then do it!

Sheep - Raise a lamb to sell, and contribute the proceeds to provide trips for 4-Hers to state animal science workshops and conferences.

Small Animals - Hold an "adopt-a-pet" week in cooperation with a local pet center or humane society.

Small Engines - Provide free labor and do lawn mower tune-ups for all your neighbors.

Swine Production - Invite all the adults who have made a difference in your life (parents, teachers, clergy, elected officials, civic leaders, neighbors, grandparents and other relatives, youth group advisors, etc.) to a "Pork Barbecue and Appreciation Program". Treat them to a pork barbecue and fun entertainment.

Tractor Safety - Offer to do farm safety checks in your community.

Trapping - Conduct an information campaign to help the public understand trapper's perspectives related to animal welfare issues.

Veterinary Science - Volunteer time at an animal hospital to help in the care and recuperation of ill and injured animals.

Woodworking - Select items from your project to build and contribute to community centers or shelters.

Writing - Write regularly to people from your community serving overseas in the armed forces.

General

- Have each person in the group "adopt" at least one "secret friend". Choose as your "secret friend" someone who may not be getting along well at school, someone who doesn't seem to have many real sincere friends, or someone who may seem on the outside to have a perfect life but on the inside is facing some big challenges. Then for at least a year, do nice things for your "secret friend" without letting anyone at all know you're doing them. Send them friendly anonymous cards for holidays and their birthday, don't let other kids tease or make fun of them, get other people to encourage them to get involved in positive things, etc.
- Invite unpopular kids to be a part of your group, and strive to make each one an important, valued friend.
- Help disabled or senior citizens by doing yard work, fixing up homes, repairing appliances, shoveling sidewalks, visiting regularly, providing food, etc.
- Work with local officials to install street lighting or signs where needed.
- Make improvements at your 4-H camp or other county Extension facilities. Contribute needed items such as window curtains, sound systems, projectors and screens, extension cords, furniture, kitchen supplies, craft materials, nature study equipment, building supplies, tables & chairs, paint, screens, or other items your facility needs. Or, volunteer to help with camp or other facility "clean up fix up days".

- Pick up litter along roadsides and clean up vacant lots.
- Paint trash cans, fences, and equipment for schools, community centers, fairgrounds, etc.
- Plant trees and ground cover to control erosion and help the environment.
- Serve meals to shut-ins.
- Host a 4-H exchangee from another country and ask them to share their culture at meetings, mall shows & camps.
- Volunteer to help a local museum locate and restore items of local historical significance.
- Sponsor a series of dances or parties with a school or workshop for the mentally retarded.
- "Adopt" a needy family and provide food and gifts for holidays and special occasions.
- Conduct grooming and appearance workshops with youth participants in job training programs, hospital weight loss programs, etc.
- Contribute time, money, or other resources to support local charity drives.