

4-H Volunteer Leaders' Series

Welcome to New Club Leaders

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You've Just Said "Yes"

- "Yes – I will lead this 4-H club."
- "Yes – I will work with others to make 4-H available for youth in my community."
- "Yes – I would like to become a part of the larger 4-H system which spans our county, state and nation."
- "Yes – I want to invest some of my energy and time so that my family and my children may have 4-H experiences."
- "Yes – I expect to learn new skills and grow personally as I provide leadership to this 4-H club."

The Journey

Think of your "Yes" as the first step in a journey of discovery, leadership and service.

- Where would you like this journey to go? What will you accomplish?
- What do you expect to do and learn on your journey?
- With whom will you travel; with whom will you share ideas and support?
- What tools and resources will you need?
- Will you become a different person as you travel?

The setting for the journey is your 4-H club. This club provides the primary 4-H experience for each of its members. Your leadership is a primary ingredient in the success of the club. As a club leader, you are responsible for three major functions:

1. Adult volunteer leaders provide friendship, ideas and long-term support to 4-H members and their club. The organizational leader coordinates the efforts of this leadership team.
2. Your county Extension office and county 4-H program provide the larger setting for your 4-H club program; you maintain contact and keep communications flowing between the county and your club.
3. Your community is proud to support 4-H; you see that your club and its activities are known to the community.

As you do these three things, you and your team will provide 4-H experiences for learning for 4-H youth; you will be teachers, guides and helpers to young men and women.

Your companions in the journey are the members of your club and their parents. 4-H is a family affair. Parents participate with their children in the 4-H meeting and provide project support and guidance at home. Participation in 4-H strengthens families.



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Resources for Volunteers

The *4-H Leaders' Handbook* and the *4-H Volunteer Quick Reference Guide* are intended to be a tool kit, a set of resources for your journey. These are for your use as a club leader and for sharing with members of your leadership team and parents.

4-H Leaders' Handbook:

- It is written in small pieces (fact sheets) to make helpful information easy to find, easy to read and easy to share.
- The Table of Contents will help you know where to look for what you need. In this handbook, you will find help for:
 - Starting a new club
 - Understanding 4-H
 - Understanding teamwork and organizing for 4-H leadership
 - Involving parents in 4-H
 - Planning the club program
 - Holding effective meetings
 - Solving problems of your group
 - Providing project leadership
 - Providing record keeping leadership
 - Providing activity leadership
 - Knowing when you have done it well
 - Celebrating with your club
 - Finding program resources

This *4-H Leaders' Handbook* is not intended to be read in sequence from beginning to end. Look for the parts where you or your team members need help. Read and share those parts first.

The *4-H Volunteer Quick Reference Guide* is a condensed version of the *4-H Leaders' Handbook*. It discusses the key concepts which an adult volunteer should know when working with a 4-H club or group and references the fact sheets of the *4-H Leaders' Handbook*.

One copy of the *4-H Leaders' Handbook* is located in each county Extension office. The fact sheets which make up the handbook are available on Extension's website at www.uaex.edu under Publications and are titled *4-H Volunteer Leaders' Series*. The *4-H Volunteer Quick Reference Guide* is available free of charge through the county Extension office.

Important 4-H Concepts

This *4-H Leaders' Handbook* has been developed around some very important concepts. These ideas are like handles to help you "take hold of 4-H." These include:

- Youth Development – 4-H members are front and center; 4-H exists to provide learning experiences for 4-H youth!
- Lifelong Human Development – The importance of growing and learning throughout one's lifetime.
- Informal Education – Learning by doing and by discovery, especially in areas of interest to oneself.
- Life Skills – Those feelings about self and skills for coping which are basic to survival, productivity and human community.
- Helpership – An interpersonal relationship of support and guidance; "doing with" rather than "doing for."
- Teamwork – Doing it together; a team is more than the sum of the parts of the team!
- 4-H Is a Family Affair – Members and parents learn together through 4-H.
- Communication – The key to helping 4-H happen.

Your 4-H club team (the group with which you work) and the 4-H system (the larger 4-H family which supports your club team) are guided by these important ideas. The ideas matter because they tell us "why 4-H is" (our basic mission) and "how to help 4-H happen" (ways 4-H has chosen to accomplish this mission).

Questions to Answer

So you are a new 4-H club leader! You have said "yes" to beginning a journey. You will share this journey with the members of your club and their families. You have a strategic role to play in 4-H. You have a new kit of tools to use along the way.

The journey is up to you:

- How much of yourself will you invest?
- How will you involve others in the journey?
- What do you need to know?
- To what use will you put these tools?
- What do you want most for your club; for 4-H members?
- What do you want for yourself along the way?

Satisfaction and Rewards

4-H club leaders who have started the journey before you have many kinds of satisfaction and rewards:

- The joy of watching boys and girls become secure and skillful young men and women.
- The strengths which emerge as a family learns and shares together.

- The excitement of personal growth – new skills, deeper awareness, caring, a richer set of relationships.
- The good feeling of investing self where the pay-off matters.

Welcome to leadership in 4-H !!!

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