

## 4-H Volunteer Leaders' Series

# Celebrating Progress

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A leader can best recognize progress by showing approval of each person. A smile is a pat on the back. It is recognition, acceptance and celebration.

### Why Celebrate?

Celebrating what we have accomplished, whether large or small, completes the learning experience. It needs to be a part of every meeting.

With the abundance of possible activities available to youth today, we must continually help 4-H members see the value of the time they have spent in each 4-H meeting. We all tend to choose to do those things which appear to have the most value to us and which make us feel good about ourselves. Therefore, if we want youth to choose 4-H, we need to be certain we provide activities which generate positive kinds of feelings.

Celebrating is an intentional way of helping members feel good about what they have done. It can happen every time they get together, after talking about what they have done, with one member to another, with one adult to a member or with one member to himself/herself.

### Ways to Celebrate

Celebrating does not have to be dramatic and time consuming. It can be done five minutes before the end of the meeting – just to say in some way – “This is what we did today.” Or, it can be a big party planned to culminate a long-term activity.

No matter what form is used, celebrating says: “I feel good about what I have done. My friends are happy. Wow! What a great way to spend my time.”

Celebrating can take many forms. Some possibilities are:

1. Plan a recognition party. All members tell, show or share what they feel best about.
2. Give all members the chance to verbalize what they feel they have accomplished.
3. Give members the option of writing a 4-H story based upon their feelings.
4. Have 4-H'ers evaluate their own projects, then add your comments, suggestions and encouragement.



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5. Put newspaper stories in the local paper, county newspaper or club publication about 4-H club activities. This will help keep people enthusiastic and involved. Recognition once a year is not enough reinforcement.
6. Remind people to show their appreciation and thanks by setting an example for them to follow. A friendly word or a pat on the back may be just the boost a person needs.

7. Celebrating can be expressed with . . .

“Wow, look at what you have made.”

“Tell us about what you saw.”

Hugs and pats on the back

Parties/refreshments

Letters or notes to other members or to self

Telling parents about what their children have accomplished

Ceremonies (such as awards night and officer installation and new member initiation ceremonies)

8. Giving group hugs and stuff:

- Get everyone in a circle with their arms around one another’s shoulders. Everyone faces in to the center, slowly walks in and squeezes hard – just hard enough to be close.

- Or, have everyone stand in the circle, all facing clockwise. Now start rubbing the shoulders of the person in front of you. Nice, easy strokes. Turn around and face the other way, and do it again.

- Or, stand and face someone. Give your partner five compliments and let him/her give five to you.

9. Giving warm fuzzies:

“Susan, you have lots of patience, sitting there working so hard.”

“Bill, it was great that you could share your scissors and pencils with Sam.”

Some unique awards:

- Bricks or Trowels – to those who tried hard
- Oil Cans – To those who made other people feel good (greased the wheels)
- Loving cups (made of thimbles, two safety pins on the sides, on a small base) – To those who behave lovingly
- Towels – To those who sweat the most
- Paper Bags – To those with the most attempts and leftovers
- Feathers – To those who make others laugh and feel good

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