

## 4-H Projects – The Gateway to the Member

The 4-H project is the gateway to the 4-H member. Through project work, members “Learn by Doing.” The 4-H project is a tool, for helping youth develop into more capable adults by teaching them how to set goals, make decisions, follow through with commitments, do evaluations, and report their work.

4-H members learn desirable habits and character traits through 4-H project work. Projects focus on helping members learn to help themselves, which leads to learning to help others. Good work habits are also developed by encouraging members to have pride in doing a job well and completing the task at hand. Encouragement from volunteers, peers, and family members teaches 4-H'ers that it is important to stay committed even when things don't go as planned.

*The purpose of a 4-H project is to create a blue ribbon 4-H'er with a red ribbon pig is more desirable than a red ribbon 4-H'er with a blue ribbon pig.*

Helping members choose a project is one of the biggest jobs of a parent and 4-H volunteer. All members and their parents need to know what is expected in each project before enrolling in that project. This encourages the selection of projects best suited for the member and family. If possible, the member needs to make the decision with guidance from a 4-H volunteer and parents.

4-H volunteers, who are actively involved in the project selection of new members and their families have a greater opportunity to teach more about the 4-H program, and to have quality time to get acquainted with the family.

Young 4-H members should limit their projects to one or two. It is better to enroll in one or two projects and do a good job rather than enroll in many projects and not do any well. Older members should be able to do several projects, at the same time. Consider the following when guiding a child in selecting a 4-H project:

- Interests, needs, and capabilities of the child
- Opportunity for sufficient challenge and growth
- Family situation
- Availability of adequate financing
- Availability of equipment and space
- Availability of leadership for the project

Learn to work smart by “piggy-backing” project work. Select related projects that have a logical connection. This helps 4-H members develop a broader perspective, as well as, learning how many

things in life are a result of or are related to other actions or subjects. Working smart also means thinking about how the 4-H project can be blended into schoolwork (science, history, math, reading, etc.) or other organizations. The key is that you are making 4-H part of the outside activity, not the outside activity part of 4-H! Through this process, members become leaders in providing publicity for the 4-H program.

## **4-H project work develops the following life skills:**

### **DECISION MAKING**

Projects are real life experiences that help 4-H'ers learn to make sound decisions. First the member must decide which project to select. Then the member must decide things like – where to place the garden, what vegetables to plant, what book shelf to build, which lamp to re-wire, what menu to serve the family, or how to launder their clothes. These decisions help members feel responsible for their own actions and give them personal satisfaction.

### **GOAL SETTING**

A goal is a simple statement of what one wants to do or learn. This statement defines a task which may be for self-improvement, personal gratification, or for the good or growth of a group or organization.

Goals can be long-term or short-term. Long-term goals are the main objective or purpose that one is focused on. Short-term goals are the many smaller steps necessary to breakdown the long-term goal. Goals must be attainable. It must be something the person or people can actually do with the time and resources available. Goals only become reality when the person making or setting the goal takes action.

### **PLANNING, IMPLEMENTING, AND EVALUATING**

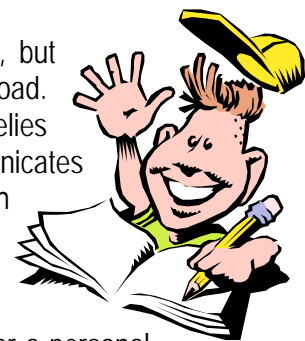
Most 4-H projects are set up to meet the needs of youth of different ages. There generally are projects planned for beginners, for intermediate, and for advanced members. Planning involves setting attainable goals, implementing is using the information learned to reach goals, and evaluation will include personal assessment and the contribution from another source. The other source could include a competitive event.

### **COMMUNICATING**

Learning to work with others is another value of the 4-H project. The work is done in or near the home where the whole family can work and be together. As members work together, they share ideas and help each other.

### **TEAMWORK AND COOPERATION**

Many things in life cannot be accomplished by an individual working alone, but requires the help of others. Each person should be willing to carry his/her load. This requires cooperation. In 4-H project work, each member of a 4-H family relies on other members of their team. Cooperation occurs when the family communicates needs, desires, and assistance. When the family pulls together to accomplish these things, they are a "TEAM - Together Everyone Achieves More."



### **RESPONSIBILITY**

In most projects, 4-H members own the project. When they have ownership or a personal investment, they learn to care for the property and respect the property of others.

## RECORD KEEPING

4-H teaches members to put their goals and progress toward those goals on paper. It provides opportunities for formal and non-formal evaluation, and through that evaluation, members learn how to rearrange goals or set new ones. Each of these things is done formally in what is referred to as a "4-H Record Book."

The record keeping process allows members to see that they have:

- Developed Skills
- Learned by Doing
- Gained Knowledge
- Accepted Responsibility
- Created Ownership
- Explored Careers
- Provided Sense of Achievement and Accomplishment
- Created Family and Community Ties

For information on how to effectively plan and set goals refer to *4-H Club Program Plan (F-467)*.

## Parents' Roles

Members benefit when parents are involved in 4-H. Parents and volunteers, who take time to learn about and understand 4-H, are of greater assistance to their child and the 4-H program. Members need parental encouragement to see project work through, and to keep members focused on what they are learning, not just winning. Parents' roles in Projects work will include:

- Aid in selecting, financing, and managing
- Guide and support work without doing it for them
- Encourage, follow-through, and completion
- Give praise and encouragement
- Assist in gathering tools and supplies
- Encourage record keeping
- Provide support and transportation
- Assist organizational, project, and activity leaders
- Become a project or activity leader
- Serve on committees to plan and implement club activities or project meetings
- Become a certified 4-H volunteer



### Important People

**4-H Volunteers needed to**

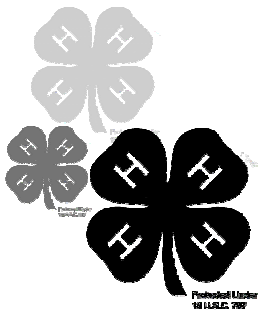
- Create learning environment for youth and adults
- Structure learning experiences for youth and adults
- Help the learner interact with the information

## 4-H Volunteers

Mississippi 4-H Program is committed to providing Volunteer Training on the local, county, district and state levels. The training opportunities provide individuals with positive social interaction with their peers and an opportunity to exchange ideas. For your personal development and 4H skill enhancement watch your county newsletter for details and check out Mississippi 4-H home page at [www.http://msucares.com](http://msucares.com), for district and state events



**Mississippi State University Extension Service**  
**4-H Youth Development**  
[www.http://msucares.com](http://msucares.com)



## Review Questions Unit 1D

Name \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Club \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_ Date Completed \_\_\_\_\_

A minimum of three (3) 4-H Parent-Volunteer Self Study Lessons may be completed as one of the three necessary trainings required to maintain active status as a Certified 4-H Volunteer. The completed review questions from each lesson must be filed annually by the date specified by your county office.

Through project work 4-H members “\_\_\_\_\_.”

4-H projects are the tool for developing capable adults. Teaching them what five things makes members more capable adults?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

In one sentence explain how each of the seven life skills makes the 4-H member a more capable individual.

Decision Making -

Goal Setting -

Planning, Implementing and Evaluating -

Communicating -

Teamwork and Cooperation -

Responsibility -

Record Keeping -

List five (5) of the eleven roles of a parent/volunteer that you plan to focus on.

Fill in the blank.

The purpose of a 4-H project is to  
create \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

Extension Office Use Only Date Received by Extension Office _____ Reviewed by _____
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