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 !!!

Reprinted from material prepared by Faye Caskey, Agricultural Extension Service, University of Minnesota. Updated by Beverly Hines, former 4-H specialist, Cooperative Extension Service, University of Arkansas.

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