



# ENHANCING THE CLUB EXPERIENCE.....

## MAXIMIZING RECOGNITION IN 4-H

Recognition is provided in the 4-H program as a tool to motivate self-improvement, by providing satisfaction and a feeling of accomplishment in youth, volunteers and parents/supporting adults. If recognition is to satisfy, it should come as a result of sincere effort on the part of the 4-H member and/or volunteer, and should be in proportion to the quality of work achieved.

### RECOGNITION OF 4-H MEMBERS

When recognizing 4-H members for achievement, the major focus should always be on the development of the individual 4-H club member in relation to project work, 4-H club activities, helping other members and sharing experiences, rather than only on awards.

Attention must also be given to the differences in age group interests and abilities when deciding the type of recognition to provide.

- The 5- (or kindergarten) to 8-year-old needs special recognition that does not involve peer competition.
- The 9- to 12-year-old is strongly motivated by the 4- H pin or ribbon as an award and a pat on the back from a leader or parent/supporting adult for recognition.
- The 12- to 14-year-olds are influenced by such awards as money, county medals and ranks in organizations; they seek recognition through added responsibility as a junior leader or club officer and admiration by their peers.
- The 14- to 19-year-old is motivated by trips, scholarships and recognition given by important people in the community and awarded in a public place, and/or by more adult responsibility being given to them.

### NATIONAL RECOGNITION MODEL

The National Recognition Model applies to groups, youths, adults, families and parents. Recognition, support and encouragement for learning is provided equally in all five areas. Cooperation partly overlaps Participation, Progress toward Self-set Goals, Standards of Excellence and Peer Competition. Cooperation is a part of all four. The intent of the graphic is to show individuals and people working together in teams or groups.





## **RECOGNIZING 4-H MEMBERS FOR PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES**

Develop simple criteria for all youth who participated in a 4-H educational experience. The recognition should be part of the learning experience, can be earned several times and is appropriate for each age level. Because this form of recognition is best received immediately following the participation in a learning activity, it should be given at the very basic learning levels of 4-H, specifically the 4-H club/special group meeting or the project group meeting.

Some examples of this type of participation recognition include:

- Participation in a 4-H project group
- Participation in a special 4-H project workshop, tour, field trip, or camps
- Attending a certain number of 4-H club meetings
- Participating in the 4-H club meeting program (pledge, committee report, introducing a guest, etc.)
- Participation in the 4-H club's community service project
- Representing the club at county/district/state 4-H activities

Examples of awards you might use include t-shirts, caps, movie passes, food coupons, gift certificates, membership/participant cards, certificates, participation ribbons or any other creative items.

## **RECOGNIZING 4-H MEMBERS FOR PROGRESS TOWARD SELF-SET GOALS**

This type of recognition is one step higher than participation in an educational event because the participation in the educational experience also involves the 4-H member setting goals. Goal-setting should be done with the family and/or in a small group (project) situation. Each 4-H member should have his or her own personal goals. Evaluation of 4-H members' progress toward their goals should involve an adult. Once again, this type of recognition should be given at the 4-H club/special group and 4-H project group level.

One of the tools used for goal setting and tracking progress toward goals is the Member Achievement Plan (MAP). This document is available on the Texas 4-H Website at: <http://texas4-h.tamu.edu>

Some examples of recognition for progress toward self- set goals include recognition for:

- Completing goals set in a 4-H project
- Turning in a completed Member Achievement Plan (MAP)

Some examples of awards you might use include positive comments to youth, parents or other 4-H members, media coverage, 4-H ribbons, pins, certificates, stickers or other creative ideas.

## **RECOGNIZING 4-H MEMBERS FOR ACHIEVEMENT OF STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE**

The next type of 4-H recognition is comparing a 4-H member's knowledge, skills, abilities and/or accomplishments to an established set of standards. We use standards of excellence in 4-H but not as much as competition. Your goal as a recognition task force is to make sure that 4-H opportunities are made available to 4-H members that compare their work with set standards. Remember that awards are given only on established standards.

Some examples of Standards of Excellence recognition include:

- Hosting a project/club/county educational presentation activity or other contest in which awards are given based on a blue (100- 90), red (89-80) or white (79 and below) scores
- Photography contest with awards based on a blue (100- 90), red (89-80) or white (79 and below) scores
- Project achievement levels based on completion of preset criteria such as one level of award for participating in 10 learning experiences, a second level of award for participating in 7 learning experiences and a third level of award for participating in 5 learning experiences
- A project show in which 4-H members demonstrate their knowledge in a project, a skill or skills they have



learned in their project work, or an exhibit of the results of their project work

Some examples of awards you might use include ribbons, certificates, project equipment or supplies, plaques, project pins or other items.

### **RECOGNIZING 4-H MEMBERS FOR RESULTS FROM PEER COMPETITION**

Recognition for competition among peers is prevalent in 4-H and is an American tradition. In this type of recognition, it is vital that competition rules must be clearly defined and fully enforced. Because this type of recognition is a high risk to individuals (self-image), those involved need to understand that 4-H is a youth development organization and that highly coveted extrinsic awards sometimes become the ends, not the means, for a successful learning experience. In competition among peers, a winner or champion is named.

Some examples of peer competition include:

- County, District or State events such as Food Show, Fashion Show, Stock Shows, Share The Fun, Educational Presentations, Judging Contests, Quiz Bowls
- National competitive events
- Recordbooks
- Scholarships

Some examples of awards you might use include medals, trophies, plaques, monetary awards, buckles or other things that you can identify to reward success.

### **RECOGNIZING 4-H MEMBERS FOR COOPERATION**

Learning and working together promotes high achievement. Cooperation may take advantage of all the skills represented in the group, as well as the process by which the group approaches the learning task/goal. Everyone is rewarded.

Some principles to use in cooperation include:

- All young people need to be fully involved in the entire process.
- There need to be mutually agreed upon goals.
- Attention needs to be given to the way the group works, as well as to the project.
- The ultimate goal is not extrinsic recognition, but the satisfaction of being part of a team effort.
- All members are recognized.

### **RECOGNITION OF PARENTS, SUPPORTING ADULTS AND VOLUNTEER LEADERS**

To be appreciated and to feel important and needed is a prime motivator in all of us. Encouragement and recognition are essential to maintain active involvement in all volunteer groups. A county recognition plan should also include adult recognition methods.

Individuals differ in the type of recognition they prefer. Some examples of volunteer recognition include:

- Personal letters
- Publicity through media outlets, to their employer or other venues
- Gift Certificates/coupons
- Plaques
- Certificates
- Promotion or new title
- Special learning opportunities

Just like kids, volunteers need to be told that they are doing a good job!



### **INFORMAL RECOGNITION**

Sometimes the most meaningful recognition that can be given in 4-H clubs is not pins, medals, ribbons, plaques, etc. Try some of the following recognition methods and watch members, parents and other leaders develop self-confidence and the desire to do more and better work.

- Introduce new members and guests at club meetings and activities.
- When a member or leader is sick, send a card. When they come back to the club, be sure to say, "We're all glad you're back."
- Ask a young member to lead the pledge.
- Take pictures of the club and give to appropriate members, leaders and parents.
- Simply say "Thank you."
- Give a junior leader a specific responsibility.
- Notice small improvements and compliment members.
- Give appreciation to leaders for specific efforts.
- Pay partial or all expenses for trips won or for chaperons.