

## Community Service by project area

### Adventure Programming . . . and Community Service

- Coordinate a community drive to collect and repair used bicycles. Donate the refurbished bikes to a community agency that will give the bikes to kids. Partner with local police, public safety departments and businesses to make sure that each bike comes with a new bike helmet. (It isn't safe to recycle bike helmets!)
- Playgrounds and families go hand-in-hand. Have your club or group sponsor a playground pizzazz day! Spiff-up and fix-up a community playground. Celebrate your efforts with a picnic at the park and invite neighborhood kids and families to attend. Ask a local hardware or builders supply store to share in the fix-up and the fun!
- Start your community walking, running or wheeling by sponsoring a 4-H, family and pet-friendly 5K run or walk.
- Check out the bicycle and snowmobile trails in your area. Are they well-marked and well-groomed? If not, coordinate the effort to pick up the rubbish, update the signs and create posters about the "new and improved" local trails. Ask local businesses and community service agencies for permission to display the posters on their premises.
- Waltz the afternoon away with a group of senior citizens. Work with a local senior citizens community group or home to coordinate dancing lessons for young people. Ask the local seniors to teach the popular dances of their youth to a group of young people. Then have the young people in your group coordinate a community dance for the seniors.

### Animal Projects . . . and Community Service

- If you're in a 4-H livestock, poultry or rabbit project, you could raise animals to donate to local food banks, senior citizen centers or community shelters. Raise and sell your animals through the fair auction as a part of the summer program, then donate the sale proceeds to the target organization. Another way is to raise the animals, then donate the processed products to the target organization. Donations often are especially welcome during major holiday seasons. Individuals or entire clubs can take on this kind of project.
- Consider organizing a visiting pet program in your community. Members of any kind of 4-H animal project can arrange to visit nursing homes, senior citizen centers, group homes for the disabled or special education schools with their animals. People at nursing homes and senior citizen centers especially enjoy seeing and touching farm animals. These visits can be a welcome opportunity for people to share stories and memories of their childhoods and experiences growing up on farms. Cats, dogs, calves, lambs, pigs, rabbits, ducks, chickens, snakes, lizards, gerbils, hamsters and guinea pigs all make great animals for visiting pet programs.
- Volunteer at your local humane society or county animal control office. These facilities often need individuals or groups to help with animal bathing, dog walking and facility clean up. If you can't volunteer at the facility, consider holding a fund-raiser such as a dog walk or pet wash day.
- Hold a "hug a hog" fund-raiser and educational event and donate the proceeds to a community project or other charity. Introduce the public to a hog and share what you've learned about raising hogs. One Ionia County 4-H club sold "Hugg-A-Hogg" T-shirts and took people's pictures with a hog. Proceeds from their fund-raiser went to the American Cancer Society.

## Careers . . . and Community Service

Older teens can use the activities in the WOW! (Wild Over Work) learning materials to introduce younger kids to the career exploration process. When they use WOW! to work with younger kids, teens have the chance to develop their own leadership skills and to provide valuable community service. They're gaining skills for the workforce, too!

## Citizenship and Leadership . . . and Community Service

Attend Citizenship Washington Focus, the Wonders of Washington - American Heritage or [4-H Capitol Experience](#). These programs will help you find out more about your rights and responsibilities as a United States citizen and a Michigan resident. When you return, you'll be prepared to put what you've learned to use as an advocate for a cause you feel strongly about or by sharing what you've learned with younger kids.

## Clothing and Textiles . . . and Community Service

- Help sort donated coats, used blankets and other winter clothing such as jackets, scarves, hats, mittens and gloves by size, type and state of repair. Use any cash donations to buy new snowsuits and coats in sizes most needed but not often donated.
- Help provide low-income mothers with basic baby items necessary for the first months of their infants' lives. Use grant money, donations or funds your group has raised to put together layettes from items purchased in your county stores. The layettes could include one infant gown, one receiving blanket, one combination garment and one crib sheet. Meet with the managers of local stores to compare selections and prices on infant merchandise. After you put together the packages, a local community services agency could distribute them to low-income mothers.
- Make, adapt or repair clothing for shut-ins or residents of nursing homes, other group homes or homeless shelters.
- Plan and conduct (or help with) a clothing drive for Goodwill Industries or hold a "Christmas in November" (or May or July or whatever month works for your group) clothing sale to benefit a worthy cause.
- Make a community service exhibit or poster on clothing or textiles related topics. For example, you could make a poster urging joggers and bicyclists to wear reflective clothing if they're out after dark. Your poster or exhibit with examples of safe and unsafe Halloween costumes, masks and face paints could help parents and kids settle on the perfect look for Halloween. You could prepare a poster on clothing care and stain removal and ask permission to post it in a local laundromat.
- Older teens could use the Michigan 4-H "Sew, Read!" program with 5- to 8-year-olds in afterschool programs and libraries. The group could use the "Sew, Read!" kit centered on the book *The Boy and the Quilt* and make a quilt to donate to a homeless shelter or senior citizens center.

## Clowning . . . and Community Service

- Consider arranging a 4-H clown performance for people with special needs, such as residents of nursing homes, handicapper centers, medical care facilities and VFW children's homes. (Before any such visit, an adult should meet with the facility administrator and tour the facility. The adult should tell the 4-H'ers about the facility and the special needs of the clientele.) 4-H clowns may also participate in community events such as parades and festivals, and visit day care centers and library story hours.
- Paint hearts, flowers, diamonds, zigzags, suns, moons, stars, comets, ladybugs, snakes or other fun and simple shapes on kids' faces at a festival or fund-raiser. Use water-

based cosmetic paints (such as Kryolan, Mehron or Snazroo) purchased from a clown supplier. Apply the paint with cotton swabs or paint brushes (sable works best). Be sure to bring a mirror so the kids can admire your handiwork!

## **Communications . . . and Community Service**

- Create Posters - Kids can create posters include information about local projects, events or community service opportunities. Posters could be placed in schools, libraries, grocery stores and other businesses to promote 4-H and the positive ways in which kids are involved in their communities. The 4-H Communications Toolkit publication (available through your county MSU Extension office) has a section on visual communications and activities to help young people learn how to create effective posters.
- Make Speeches - Involve young people in giving talks and making speeches to local service clubs, chambers of commerce and school assemblies, and in other settings. Kids can share the many positive things they're doing to help make the community a better place to live and work. The 4-H Communications Toolkit (available through your county MSU Extension office) has a section on verbal communications that includes activities to help young people improve their ability to speak in public.
- Create Television Ads and Programs - Work with your local cable television company and get young people involved in producing television programs. Kids could produce and host a program that focuses on how young people can and are making a difference in their community. Kids who've been involved in community service projects could be featured talking about their projects and why they get involved. The young people could promote future opportunities and events and appeal for adults to become involved. The 4-H Communications Toolkit includes a section on media and technology that has information about building video production skills.

## **Environmental Education . . . and Community Service**

- Project F.I.S.H. (Friends Involved in Sportfishing Heritage) - Think about a good fishing spot in your community. Is it a stream, pond, small lake or fishing pier? Whatever fishing site comes to mind, it probably needs an occasional cleaning. Worm containers, fishing line, pop cans and lost tackle are just a few of the items you may find littering your favorite site. Create a cleanup crew to deal with this messy situation! Connect with another fishing group or adults you know who like to fish. Decide on a cleanup day. Collect the supplies you'll need, such as trash bags and rubber gloves. Depending on the time of the year, you may also need bug spray. Wear sturdy boots or shoes you won't mind getting wet and dirty. You and your friends will all enjoy fishing more in a litter-free area that you've helped clean up. Happy fishing!
- Prepare and deliver an educational talk or demonstration about beneficial insects ("good bugs") and environmentally responsible ways to handle "bad bugs." Your county MSU Extension agriculture agent or pest scout can help you learn about how farmers are controlling insects more effectively with integrated pest management techniques.

## **FOLKPATTERNS . . . and Community Service**

- Photograph old barns and farmsteads in your community.
- Hold a "family traditions" night at a local nursing home or senior center. Family Folklore: A 4-H FOLKPATTERNS Project (4-H 1330) is filled with activity ideas.
- Record the grave markers in an old cemetery for a local genealogy society or library. The "Cemetery Study" activity in the FOLKPATTERNS 4-H Leader's Guide (4-H 1506) tells how.
- Interview people at nursing homes, senior citizens centers and farmers markets about heirloom vegetable and flower varieties they or their families may have grown. The FOLKPATTERNS 4-H Leader's Guide (4-H 1506) and Heritage Gardening - Vegetables (4-H 1279) contain information on how to conduct interviews and heirloom seed varieties, respectively.

## **Food, Nutrition and Fitness . . . and Community Service**

- Use the "Handwashing Rap" from the Operation RISK Notebook (VTNB01) to teach a group of younger kids the proper way to wash their hands. You'll be helping them cut the spread of germs from hands to food to mouths!
- Talk to other 4-H clubs and groups in your county about how to handle food safely at horse shows, fairs and other events. Your county MSU Extension home economist and Selling Food for Fun and Profit - Doing It Safely (E2578) are great resources on the topic.
- Volunteer at a local homeless shelter or soup kitchen. It's not just for holidays!

Conduct a fun, food-related science experiment with a group of younger kids. Use a case from one of the five "Food Mysteries" bulletins to help the kids find out more about Telltale Grains (4-H 1417), Fruitful Evidence (4-H 1418), Vegetable Magic (4-H 1419), Protein Puzzlers (4-H 1420) or Dairy Discoveries (4-H 1421). The Food Mysteries Leader's Guide (4-H 1422) give you more information on the facts behind each experiment.

## **Inclusive Programs . . . and Community Service**

- Volunteer as a sidewalker, horse leader, fund-raiser or aide with your county 4-H PEP program and help young people with disabilities enjoy a horsebackriding experience.
- If you own a gentle, well-trained horse or pony, have it evaluated by your county 4-H PEP program to see whether it would qualify for use in the program. You and your horse could become program volunteers!
- Evaluate your own 4-H club or group to make sure that you're as accessible as possible for kids with disabilities. Let your county MSU Extension office know that you're willing to add members who may have disabilities.

## **Photography . . . and Community Service**

- Photograph a community event such a parade, ethnic festival or sporting event. Photograph visiting important people such as your state and federal legislators or authors who visit local bookstores. 4-H Photography Unit 1: Adventures With Your Camera (4-H 1205) will help you take good photos. Take notes on all your photographs in a small notebook you can carry in your pocket or in your camera bag. Record who is in the photo, where and when it was taken, what is happening in the photo and who (you) took the photo. Mount your best photos and create a photo story of the event (Adventures With Your Camera has information on how to do this). Donate a copy of the photo story to your local historical museum.

## **Plants, Soils and Gardening . . . and Community Service**

- Donate any extra produce from your garden to a local homeless shelter or food kitchen. Or work with a community agency to set up a community garden site for people who don't have their own land.
- Help the residents of a nursing home or other group home set up and maintain container gardens of vegetables and flowers. (See page 13 of the Michigan 4-H Guide to Herb Gardening Projects, 4-H 1516, for information on container gardening.)
- If a wild area near you is destined for development, catalog the wildflowers and other plants growing there. Be sure to obtain a permit before removing any protected or endangered wildflowers!

## **Science and Technology Projects . . . and Community Service**

- Organize a recycling program. In addition to providing a much-needed service to communities, this project also can give young people the chance to learn about local government. The event can run for just one day or be a long-term project that runs over many months with the support of local government agencies and area businesses.
- Plan a park clean-up day. Members of environmental science clubs or any other group can help clean up wetland areas, lakes and ponds, natural areas or playgrounds. Your group also might consider planning and designing a play area for your community. Kids who are interested in engineering, landscaping or construction can all find ways to share their interests and talents to better their communities.
- Work with the civil engineering department in your community to help conduct a community water quality survey. You can learn more about water treatment plants and the things that affect the water we drink.
- Start or volunteer to help with an existing community hazardous waste disposal day. Work with your local government officials and area businesses to plan, promote and conduct one.
- Disaster preparedness is a great project for members living in tornado- or flood-prone areas. Young people can develop and present a disaster preparedness program at local schools, day care facilities or afterschool child care facilities to help other children know what to do in case of a tornado or flood.
- Members involved in 4-H small engine projects can hold lawn mower repair clinics in their communities. Consider teaching basic lawn mower maintenance or offering lawn mower repair services to senior citizens or low-income families in your community.

## **Shooting Sports . . . and Community Service**

- You could design a brochure or display for the county fair on firearm and bow safety.
- Older teens could volunteer as resource people or aides with a local hunter safety program.