Welcome to Volunteering In The Panhandle!

Letter From The Editor

Whitney Cherry
Calhoun County 4-H Agent

You may think that as a volunteer you are here to help agents, and to some degree that is true. You are essential to the success of our programs. However, we all know that you are really here to help develop essential life skills in youth. Recently the thoughts of our district 4-H agents have turned to you, and how we can better help to prepare you for the awesome task you take on when you sign up to work with 4-H in the capacity of a volunteer. This newsletter is our feeble attempt to do so. It is just one tool that we are preparing to help you feel more secure in your role.

You can look forward to an issue of this newsletter every quarter. We are in the process of developing a webpage for you that will be the home of this newsletter and countless other helpful tidbits. You are the focus of this effort, and our goal is to keep you up-to-date with current volunteer practices, and to help you see that you are not alone; that indeed there are others, and you are all enjoying success.

As this newsletter evolves it will become better, and we count on your feedback to help make it so. Please feel free to contact me or your county 4-H agent(s) to let us know what you enjoy or would like to see changed in the publication.

Thank you for your commitment and dedication “To Making The Best Better”.

In This Issue

Chaperoning Overnight Trips Pg. 2
Shooting Sports Training Pg. 3
Life Savers Pg. 4
Nutrition Nuggets Pg. 4
Garden Activity Pg. 5
4-H’ers Learn To Serve Pg. 6
Inspirational Thought Pg. 6
Salute to the Centennial Pg. 7
Calendar of Events Pg. 8
Contact Information Pg. 9
Making The Best Better

Tips for Chaperoning Overnight 4-H Events

Heather Kent
Northwest District Regional Specialized Agent

Studies have shown that 4-H members who get involved in 4-H events and activities beyond the county level have stronger leadership and communication skills. Fortunately, 4-H provides LOTS of opportunities at the district, state, and national levels for 4-H youth and volunteers. You may have already been asked to chaperone an overnight activity such as camp, congress, or executive board. Within the next year, Florida 4-H will begin implementing a certification program for all overnight volunteer chaperones, but until then, here are a few tips should you find yourself in that situation:

Basic Chaperone Responsibilities:
- All chaperones MUST be screened by the 4-H agent
- Be familiar with the Florida 4-H code of conduct and dress code. Chaperones are expected to adhere to both of these (just like the youth)!
- Be aware of your responsibilities - if you’re not sure, discuss with the 4-H agent or staff in charge of the event. Basic responsibilities include:
  - Supervising youth during the entire event or activity
  - Encouraging youth participation

- Being a team member with the other chaperones and staff at the event
- Helping with logistics
- May also include transporting youth to and from the event

Transporting Youth:
- Avoid transporting one youth alone in a vehicle.
- Size of van matters – 7-12 passengers acceptable; 15 passenger vans are not recommended.
- Driver must be at least 18 years of age with valid license and liability insurance, and 2 years of successful driving.
- Personal insurance is primary when in personal vehicle.
- Must have seatbelts for all passengers, and use them.
- Be aware of specific county policies.
- Carry participation forms on all youth

Basic Risk Management Practices:
- Never put yourself in the position of working alone with a 4-H member.
- When talking with youth, keep doors open.
- Keep conversations friendly, but avoid sensitive personal issues. If being asked about a sensitive personal issue that needs to be dealt with immediately follow the rule above and inform the event coordinator and/or extension agent.
- Youth are not to be housed in the same room as the volunteer chaperone.
- Maintain proper youth/adult ratios:
  - One adult per 5 youth ages 5-7
  - One adult to 8 youth 8-10
  - One adult per 10 youth ages 11 and older.

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- When conducting “bed checks” for curfew, two female adult chaperones to check the rooms of male youth participants and vice versa.
- Respect privacy- everyone has different comfort levels!
- Be alert to physical and emotional health.
- NEVER use physical punishment or withhold basic needs. If a youth is in violation of the code of conduct or dress code, report to the staff in charge of the event. Florida 4-H has a review board process in place for dealing with discipline problems.

4-H Shooting Sports Has Positive Impacts

Julie Dillard
Washington County 4-H Agent

Ten volunteers from Calhoun, Liberty and Washington counties were trained in the shooting sports discipline of shotgun in early March. Both Calhoun and Liberty County will begin new Shooting Sports clubs that will add to the scope of their 4-H programs by reaching a new audience. The addition of new coaches to the Washington County 4-H shooting sports program will allow more youth to be served through the club as they have had a waiting list for two years.

Some people may find it hard to believe that 4-H has shooting sports teams or may even question safety issues around shooting sports. The National 4-H Shooting Sports Program stands out as a stellar example of 4-H’s main focus of developing youth as individuals and as productive and caring citizens. Youth learn marksmanship, safe and responsible use of firearms, principles of hunting and archery, and so much more. Most importantly, the activities of the program and the support of caring adult leaders provide young people with opportunities to develop life skills, self-worth and conservation ethics. According to a 2002 study conducted by the Texas 4-H Shooting Sports Program, one of the most significant impacts found was that “youth involved in the 4-H shooting program are spending more quality time with family members and practicing more with supervised instruction.” The positive impacts of the program are far reaching as youth are learning skills for life and an activity for a lifetime.

Shooting sports can be especially gratifying for youth who are not into traditional athletic programs offered through schools and other programs such as YMCA. Over 300,000 boys and girls are being reached each year through the National 4-H Shooting Sports Program.

For more information and support resources for your county’s new or existing Shooting Sports program, visit the National 4-H Shooting Sports program website: http://www.4-hshootingsports.org/index.php

Above: Nationally Certified Shooting Sports Instructor, Jennifer Williams, trains local volunteers to work with youth in the shotgun discipline.
They say time is money. Time is time and money is money. The most valuable between time and money is time. We make decisions of how we will spend our time or I should say allot our time each day. Yes, there are factors we have to give our time to so that we can maintain our relationships, standard of living, etc. What does all this talk of time have to do with 4-H? Maybe you were in 4-H when you were a child or so happened to be the child of a “I bleed 4-H Green” parent. You recognized that those adults involved in the clubs make a long term commitment. You decided that when you got older that you wouldn’t dare commit that much time to 4-H or anything else.

As you matured, you realized all the benefits of being involved 4-H gave you. You understand now why those adults were so committed and spent lots of time helping youth develop. You look at your life and you see that you truly cannot at this point devote time to being a long-term club volunteer but you want to contribute something. The solution is to become an episodic 4-H volunteer.

What is an episodic volunteer? This person only volunteers to assist in the coordination and implementation of an annual 4-H event. For example, maybe you loved public speaking. You know that your county 4-H program does the 4-H Tropicana Public Speaking Program. You’ve may have had the opportunity to judge for the county level contest. You could volunteer to help the 4-H agent in your county by coordinating, training, and facilitating the judges for this event.

Once the event is concluded there may be a post event meeting to evaluate and adjust for the next year’s contest. You are now done until it is time to prepare for next year’s event. You’ve contributed to your local 4-H program, alleviated some of the stress from your local 4-H agent, and didn’t have to commit yourself all year long. There are a variety of yearly 4-H events happening in your county. Contact your 4-H program at the County Extension office to set up an appointment with the 4-H agent. Share what it is you want to do. As you work as part of the 4-H team, you will see that you made a great investment.

**Nutrition Nugget**

**Monica Brinkley**
Liberty County 4-H Agent

With Spring and summer months on their way, picnics are a great way to enjoy being with people you care about as well as being outdoors. These occasions tempt us to pack one of those great, portable, natural foods: the hard-boiled egg. When packing a picnic basket and you plan to include hard-boiled eggs, although the risk of getting a foodborne illness from eggs is very low, some food safety precautions must be followed.
While only a small number of eggs may contain salmonella, it would be wise to follow a couple of food safety recommendations. At the store, choose eggs that are Grade A or AA with clean, uncracked shells.

You don't need to wash eggs. Nevertheless, you can further protect yourself and your family by discarding eggs that are unclean, cracked, broken, or leaking. You also need to make sure that the eggs have been kept refrigerated, because any bacteria present can multiply quickly.

If you want to eat colored eggs, color only uncracked eggs and use food colors or natural color from vegetables such as beets, cranberries, and blueberries. Hard-cooked eggs will keep refrigerated for one week. And, if these eggs were out of the refrigerator for more than two hours, discard them. So, if you use hard-cooked eggs for decorative pieces or hiding them on the ground, you might want to save those for the Easter Bunny...rather than your children.

If you are working with youth in gardening or recycling projects here is a great activity. We have used this activity for heritage day, earth day, and gardening projects. It is an activity that will allow you to treat many with their very own plant. It also eliminates the hassle of dealing with lots of plastic seedling pots! It is fast, easy, and inexpensive.

Just use yesterday’s news to start tomorrow’s flower and vegetable seeds. You tear or cut newspaper into ~3½" x 10" strips (adjust so it will wrap around your form a couple of times). Roll strips of newspaper around a hardwood form or a can, jar etc. that fits comfortably in your hand. No glue needed. Then Fold the ends under and press into a mold or slightly larger can or jar to create a biodegradable pot perfect for seeds, young seedlings, and transplants. The pots generally last about 6 weeks before you will have to plant them. This biodegradable paper pot will go right into the ground when it’s time for planting.

You can buy a wooden potmaker online from commercial sites, just Google paper potmaker. They will generally run from $13 to $17 each. You can do the same project with two cans, jars or other round shaped item. The main thing is that they are two different sizes and will fit inside each other to form the seal at the bottom of the pot. If using cans be sure you have taped over any sharp edges so no one gets hurt.

This is a fabulous way to demonstrate the regenerative powers of recycling. It is one project that you can really take home and use. Make recycling more fun, save money and make your own paper pot. Can you think of a better way to use yesterday’s news!

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Paper Pot Maker

Paula Davis
Bay County 4-H Agent
Jefferson County 4-Hers Giving Back to Their Community

John Lilly
Jefferson County 4-H Agent

Service to others has always been an important part of Jefferson 4-H Clubs. One part of the 4-H pledge states, “I pledge my hands to larger service.” Jefferson County 4-H County Council is lending a hand to give back to their community. 4-H County Council members conduct community service projects in Jefferson County year round. Some of the projects include: adopt-A-Road Project, collecting donations for food pantries, volunteering in nursing homes, the 4-H Nature Trail Clean-up, 4-H Million Trees Project and the Head Start Reading Program.

Above: 4-H County Council Members cleaned the Jefferson Elementary/4-H Nature Trail. Those member that participated are (Left to Right): Latoria James, Ireshia Denson, Kashonda Morris, Lena Odom, John Lilly, Kassandra Simpkins (bending) and Janelle Bassa (kneeling).

County Forester, Mike Humphrey, (below) demonstrates to Jefferson County 4-Hers how to use a dibble to plant pine seedling

Inspirational Thought

Bill Heltemes
Northeast District Regional Specialized Agent

“Molding”

I took a piece of clay
and idly fashioned it one day.
And as my fingers pressed it still
it moved and yielded at my will.

It came again, when days were past
that pot of clay was hard at last.
The form I gave it still it bore
and I could change that form no more.

I took a piece of living clay
and gently formed it day by day.
And molded with my power and art
a young child’s soft and yielding heart.

It came again when days were gone
he was a man I looked upon.
He still that early impress bore
and I could change it no more.
This has always been one of my favorite poems. It was shared with me during my first year as a 4-H agent by a very wise 4-H leader. I hope it inspires you each day you continue your mission working with our youth – as it has been a daily inspiration for me.

Florida 4-H: A Century of Youth Success

Tracy Tesdall
Leon County 4-H Agent

The Florida 4-H Club Foundation is pleased to announce the publication of a new volume in the history of Florida: Florida 4-H: A Century of Youth Success. The book recounts the first century of Florida 4-H events, camps and characters. Each of Florida’s 67 counties are represented along with the history of the 4-H camping program, the 4-H Hall of Fame and the Florida 4-H Foundation. The pages highlight the many activities occurring through four generations of local youth. Among the photos documenting Leon County’s history are the girls’ week at Camp Cherry Lake in 1941, the state winning judging team from 1955 and one of their current environmental education programs.

To commemorate our centennial and as a special and unique fundraiser for Florida 4-H, this stunning 8.5” x 11” hardcover volume, celebrates the people and our history from the past 100 years. Relive those precious memories throughout 208 pages of interesting text, complemented with many historic and modern photographs.

Since 1909, the Florida 4-H Program has impacted the lives of youth through lifelong learning, leadership skills, and self-confidence. What began as a program to teach new farming techniques became a community-based educational program that teaches young people how to learn by doing and become engaged citizens. The program would not be possible without the dedication of every person involved in 4-H as a member, volunteer, parent, faculty/staff, and/or donor.

Florida 4-H: A Century of Youth Success is currently available. Standard edition books are available for $55.00. Leather edition books are available for $90.00, limited supply. A portion of the proceeds will fund a Florida 4-H scholarship endowment. For more information or to order your copy, contact your local county Extension office.

Florida 4-H: A Century of Youth Success is published by The Donning Company Publishers of Virginia Beach, Virginia, the largest specialty pictorial history publisher in the United States, and this publication is part of Donning’s “Portrait of America” series.

Book Specifications:
8 1/2” x 11”, hardcover, limited edition, 208 pages and 250 color and black and white photographs
Volunteer Leader Forum
The Florida 4-H Volunteer Association and the University of Florida invite you to join us at the Volunteer Forum to celebrate the 100th Birthday of 4-H in Florida April 24-26, 2009 at 4-H Camp Ocala. Join volunteers from across the state to learn and share your 4-H knowledge and skills. Come share your enthusiasm and make new friends in our 4-H family. Click on this link to find all the registration information:
http://florida4h.org/events/state_volunteer_forum.shtml
Registration deadline April 6, 2009

Volunteers are encouraged to bring a historical scrapbook from your county. If you don’t have pictures check with your county office. There will be a Florida 4-H Volunteer Association meeting with the election of new officers. We will have applications for new members and renewals. Please bring items for a Silent Auction and a door prize basket that will be given away during the weekend. Silent Auction funds will help support the Association.

Summer Camps
With the end of school rapidly approaching,

National Shooting Sports Certification
The 2009 National 4-H Shooting Sports Workshop will be held at WVU Jackson’s Mill State 4-H Camp, Weston, WV. Registration fees and postmarked deadlines as follows: April 1, 2009 – $325.00 per person; April 2 – April 15, 2009 – $350.00 per person; After April 16, 2009 - $375.00 per person.

Return completed application with full payment to your State 4-H Shooting Sports Coordinator. Coordinators are to return completed applications to: Jean Woloshuk, Extension Specialist, 4-H Youth Agriculture, 1062 Ag Sci Bldg; PO Box 6108, Morgantown, WV 26506. Registration is complete when forms and full payment is received. Payment is requested to be one form of payment per state. Registration is on a first come, first serve basis. Participants at National Workshops must have the approval of their State 4-H Shooting Sports Coordinator.

4-H Day at the Capitol
4-H Day at the Capitol will be held in Tallahassee, Fl on April 14, 2009. If you would like to help chaperone youth from your county on this trip, please contact your local 4-H extension agent using the contact information on the following page.
NW District Extension Offices
Contact us for More Information or if You Have Any Questions

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Solutions Through Helping!

Information Provided By Your 4-H Extension Agents
In Northwest Florida