

Lesson 14: **Marketing 4-H Clubs**

Procedures for Maintaining Clubs

1. Involving youth and leaders in planning and conducting the meetings
2. Involving club members in preparing a yearly club plan
3. Promoting or marketing the club
4. Helping youth transition to new communities when families move

This lesson will address the last two procedures in maintaining clubs; **promoting or marketing the club and helping youth transition to new communities**. The focus is on methods for attracting youth and families to 4-H clubs and groups and retaining them in 4-H.

Promoting or Marketing the Club

When the 4-H club is organized and functioning well, members can begin to plan ways to publicize their club. It is important to note that publicity requires a product. That is, the club must have something to tell about before efforts to promote it can take place. Someone has defined publicity as “doing good things and telling the world about it”. Youth might translate that to “doing cool stuff” and telling others how they can be a part of it.

Promotional efforts should be designed to inform and involve the community with your club and should be a planned part of your group’s ongoing activities. While good publicity may help the group attract new members, the real strength of engaging the group in publicizing their club lies in the opportunities youth are given to learn skills in marketing and promoting their club work. Preparing press releases, web sites or Power Point presentations are great “learn by doing” opportunities for young people.

Marketing is not about slogans, it is about seeing needs and meeting them. Flyers are not sufficient marketing tools in this day and age of technological advances. It is important for our marketing strategies to be appealing to our audience—the youth that we want to participate in 4-H. We need to think of new, different and creative ways to reach out to them.

The key to all marketing however, is to remember that



youth don't join 4-H because it is well publicized. They join because the clubs and meetings are interesting and enjoyable. And they initially come to 4-H because someone—another youth or an adult—personally invited them!

Ideas for Marketing Your 4-H Club

Forming a publicity committee is a great method for expanding community involvement in your club program. Recruit people from the community who work in communications or who do a great job of keeping the community informed. Young people should be involved in all phases of promoting and publicizing your 4-H club.

Have special events that are high profile and lots of fun. Open them up to all kids, whether they've signed up for 4-H or not. These are officially considered "4-H events" (so you can count the numbers in your reporting) and they provide a good introduction for your club program.

Use technology to help promote the 4-H program. Encourage 4-H'ers to create a web site that highlights your 4-H Club activities.

Ask the newspaper to do a tabloid or special feature on 4-H with lots of action pictures of your 4-H'ers. Find success stories about local 4-H'ers, volunteer leaders, and 4-H alumni.

Your county Extension office has promotional 4-H videos. Show them at various locations during the year. See if the local cable company will run a video on a regular basis.

Provide local radio and television stations, including the cable channel, with public service announcements about 4-H.

Have 4-H'ers recognized as a group during special events or before adult service clubs. Long time 4-H'ers (and adults who were in 4-H) could give testimonials on the positive influence of 4-H in their lives.

Create a proclamation declaring a 4-H Appreciation Week.

Put up bulletin boards about 4-H wherever young people gather in the community; fast food shops, shopping areas, video stores, theaters etc.

Have a 4-H club enrollment drive. Set up a booth with information about 4-H and what's available to youth at schools in your community. Create rewards or recognition for kids who help recruit other kids to join.



SECTION III: Starting and Maintaining 4-H Clubs

Ask a volunteer to write an article about 4-H community service events and promote it through various newspapers/newsletters.

Announce special events with banners around the community.

Have 4-H volunteers and 4-H'ers address civic club meetings.

Carry out a community project, such as reading to youngsters during story time at the library or a school; cleaning up a street or highway; recycling cans or newspapers; participating in a food drive; helping with a blood drive or presenting an entertaining program in a nursing home. Make sure that good photos are taken, and work with local media to "toot your horn."

Have 4-H announcements made at school during morning announcement time or during an assembly program.

Plant a tree or wildflower garden to honor 4-H in your community.

Have 4-H'ers, 4-H staff, or community volunteers promote 4-H on a stretch of radio morning shows, television talk shows, and local news broadcasts. Ask the cable company to do a video message board (crawl) promoting 4-H.

Arrange for the public address announcer at Friday night football games to read a public service announcement promoting 4-H membership.

Work concessions at ballgames to raise funds for local programs. Wear your 4-H t-shirts while working.

Create and wear buttons that say "Ask Me About 4-H" during National 4-H Week.

Adapted from: Publicizing National 4-H Week and Other Special Events, Donna Reynolds, Extension Communications Editor, News and Public Affairs, and Chuck Hill, 4-H Program Specialist, Alabama Cooperative Extension.

Helping Youth Transition to New Communities When Families Move

Marketing includes keeping existing members involved and active. Continued participation becomes more difficult to



support, however, when youth move to a new community. A strategy to retain members through this transition is an important factor in a youth development program. Today's families are much more mobile than families were when 4-H first began. Many youth will experience a move to a new community several times during their childhood and teen years. The advantage of belonging to 4-H, an organization that provides programs to youth in every county in the United States and its territories and to youth on military installations throughout the world, is that a move to a new community should not result in losing club or group membership.

While long time involvement with the same group of people is a positive factor for healthy development, youth can experience some of the benefits of longevity through participation in clubs that are similar in structure and goals. State 4-H programs may vary, but the basic concepts and formats of 4-H clubs are familiar to new members with past 4-H experience. Therefore, 4-H can provide some continuity in out-of-school opportunities for youth who are new to a community.

If you are an extension 4-H youth development professional, you will need to facilitate connection to agents in the new county. You will be expected to provide information to help 4-H youth who are moving to new communities connect with 4-H programs in those communities. You should have a listing of the phone numbers for all of the state 4-H offices in the U.S. We have included a listing that is current at the publication date of this handbook in the Appendix. Your state 4-H office can give you this list as well. By contacting the state 4-H office in the state to which a youth is moving, you can obtain the county 4-H office phone number for your 4-H'ers new community and provide the youth/family with that information. This will facilitate connection to 4-H in the new community. You can increase your level of assistance by making a phone call to the agent in that county to alert them to the arrival of a transitioning 4-H member.

If you are a youth development professional from a partnering organization, your county 4-H agent can provide you with the information you need to help youth transition to another 4-H program. If you are a military partner, your extension liaison person will also have this information.

In addition, you will want to be sure that the adult leaders in your community are aware of the transition connections available to 4-H members and that they refer youth who will be moving to your office or work with you to make these connections themselves. 4-H Club leaders can assist youth who are moving away by helping them gather all of their 4-H records and paperwork to take to their new community.



SECTION III:
Starting and Maintaining 4-H Clubs

Club Leaders should assist youth who are new arrivals to the club by making sure new members have the information they need to succeed in this new club. Taking time to talk with young people about the club they have just left and the experiences they have had with 4-H will give the leader the information needed to help youth become a part of the community.



