



4-H ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

PYD: Generosity

"Among the most powerful means of enriching young lives is to enlist their energies in improving their own communities." - Great Transitions

Essential Element: An Opportunity to Value and Practice Service to Others

Finding one's self begins with losing one's self in the service to others. Service is a way for 4-H members to gain exposure to the larger community, indeed the world itself. It is necessary to actively practice and treasure service. The premise of Generosity's essential element - the **opportunity to value and practice service to others**, is that young people should feel free to contribute their skills, ideas and time and that their contributions should be accepted, acknowledged, and appreciated.

4-H volunteers might consider the following questions regarding generosity in their club:

- Do all members contribute to the club experience?
- Do we provide opportunities for youth to practice and demonstrate skills to others?
- Do members work with adults to practice service to others?
- Do we plan with youth as partners, meaningful experiences?
- Are members challenged to contribute to their community?
- Do we allow time for youth to reflect on successes, setbacks, growth, and pride?
- Are members recognized for their service contributions?
- Do members know that others value their community service contributions?



Some practices volunteers might want to implement in a 4-H club if they have not already done so include:

Look for opportunities to incorporate community service as a part of the project learning activities during the

year. Project leaders working alongside 4-H members can learn project skills as well as service skills.

Organize club programs with service as their primary goal. Guest speakers from the community could be invited to attend a club meeting to discuss issues/needs of the community. They could share ideas of how youth could make a difference by addressing these issues/needs. Involve youth in planning these club programs.

Adopt principles of service learning (service plus reflection). At club meetings or events, take time for members to share their thoughts and feelings regarding the service projects that they conduct. At the end of the project, allow time for members to reflect and evaluate the experience.

Establish opportunities for members to volunteer their time, interests or skills in order to have a positive influence on others. Help members think about community service projects they may engage in related to their 4-H projects or their school work.

School or community organization groups may use the **Leadership Development through Community Action** curriculum as the basis for the group's identification, planning, implementation, and evaluation of a service project.

Share opportunities for the club/group to enroll in a group project. Clubs may enroll in the *Public Adventures, Service Learning 1* or *Service Learning 2* projects.

Create opportunities for youth to participate and contribute to the welfare of the community. Challenge each member to learn how to individually and collectively pursue activities that help others. Members will feel good about themselves when they see that they are capable of making a positive difference for someone else.

Allow youth to teach or serve as “mentors” for younger youth. This may be in the formal role as “junior leader” or in an informal role as a “Big Friend.” Refer to the article at www.urbanext.uiuc.edu/4hfacts/responsibilities.html titled Junior Leader Responsibilities for additional ideas. *Big Friend* and *Welcome to 4-H* are publications available at the local Extension Office as well.

Involve youth in the decision to get involved in service projects that will truly meet community needs. Young people need to learn to identify needs in their own area and look for ways to help others to meet those needs.

Provide opportunities for youth to develop civic responsibility and learn more about their community through programs and projects that bring them in contact with people from local agencies, government, service organizations and the like.

There are some excellent activities in the two curriculums mentioned earlier that help address this point. Involve youth in completing the 4H club/group report form in the community involvement and global awareness curriculum area. These are due Aug. 15 in the State 4-H Office.

Incorporate time into the 4-H club program to recognize individual and club service contributions. Invite agencies or organizations that have benefited from the members’ work to come and thank them for their efforts. This will let members know that others value their accomplishments. See that your groups’ activities are highlighted in the local media.

Encourage members to complete State 4H Award Applications in the Achievement and Leadership Award areas as well as the 4-H Key Award and the LCP Award. These awards focus on community service.



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