



# Teens AS TEACHERS



## TIP SHEET: ENGAGING TEENS

### Potential 4-H Teen Teachers (Who to Recruit)

- Teens that are new to 4-H!!
- Existing 4-H Members
- Teens who may not have already expressed interest or been identified for leadership opportunities (i.e. the “forgotten half”)
- Teens who have demonstrated mastery in a project area and want a new challenge
- Teens who have participated in other leadership roles and are looking for ways to extend that experience

### Recruitment Strategies

- Recruit teens through peers who are already involved in some aspect of 4-H
- Recruit teens directly from other 4-H programs
- Recruit teens through relationship with community partner organization (i.e. Boys and Girls Club, YMCA, etc.)
- Recruit teens through parents
- Recruit teens through recommendations from teachers or other volunteers in the 4-H program

### Successful Communication with Teens

- Face-to-face relationships are key!
- Create cohort experience and provide teambuilding opportunities.
- No single communication strategy works for all youth. Recommend sending important information through multiple methods.
- Communicate with other adults who can help verify that teens are getting the targeted information (e.g. parent, grandparent, guardian, teacher, staff at youth center where teen is already involved)
- Establish norms for “communication Etiquette”
  - ✓ Discuss when it is appropriate to call or text an adult on their personal cell phone – i.e. not late at night or in the middle of the night; use Sunday’s with discretion; consider dinnertime, etc.
  - ✓ Discuss how to leave a message – i.e. identify what the call is about, clarify if the matter is time-sensitive, etc.
  - ✓ Discuss the importance of respecting personal time and knowing that a message on a Friday night might not get responded to until Monday





### Best Practice with Different Communication Tools

- Face-to-Face Meetings
  - ✓ By far the preferred mode of communication
  - ✓ Be flexible in meeting location – might mean gathering at McDonald’s or Burger King, stopping by their school, or dropping in at a community center
  - ✓ Transportation can be a barrier to participating at a prescribed location
- Email
  - ✓ Provide complete details accompanied by a text message with highlights and a reference to the e-mail. Very few teens in our program checked e-mail regularly (unless prompted to)
  - ✓ Not all teens have e-mail (although requiring it for Teens as Teachers is a thought – colleges and some employers will require that)
  - ✓ Including parent e-mails helps engage them as partners in keeping youth aware of upcoming opportunities
- Text Messages
  - ✓ Text messages get rapid and consistent responses although not all teens have a cell phone and/or unlimited texting plan
- Postal Mail
  - ✓ Well suited for detailed information or “big ideas” to give families an idea of what opportunities are coming up and what to be looking for via e-mail
  - ✓ Difficult to get and maintain correct addresses
- Social Media
  - ✓ Teens use a variety of social media tools (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, SnapChat, GooglePlus) but seem to prefer other communication modes for sharing information related to Teens as Teachers

