

# THE MONTMORENCY 4-H FAMILY HANDBOOK



**This is a guide to the most commonly asked  
questions in 4-H**

## **Montmorency/MSU Extension**

4-H Youth Programs

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# INTRODUCTION TO 4-H

## WHAT IS 4-H?

4-H is an educational program that offers “hands-on” experiences for youth, regardless of race, sex, and cultural or social background. 4-H programs combine fun with the learning of practical skills. Through 4-H experiences, participants acquire knowledge, confidence and leadership skills. Adult and teen volunteers are teachers and role models for youth. The 4-H program strives to help youth prepare for a positive future as productive citizens, family members and workers.

4-H is part of MSU Extension, and is available in every community in Michigan. In Montmorency County 4-H is available through Montmorency/MSU Extension and is funded in part by the Montmorency County Board of Commissioners.

## WHAT IS THE HISTORY OF 4-H?

Michigan 4-H can be traced back to a South Haven man, Liberty Hyde Bailey (1858-1954) who studied Botany and Horticulture at what is now Michigan State University. Bailey was an advocate of teaching youth practical skills by “hands-on” experience. Thus comes the 4-H philosophy of “Learn By Doing.” For example, during his college career he taught young farmers how to graft branches on to fruit trees. Bailey was on a national committee, which helped bring about the establishment of the Cooperative Extension Service by way of Passage of the Smith-Lever Act in 1914.

4-H clubs began forming in Michigan in 1908 with boys and girls agricultural clubs. Through these clubs, young farmers learned practical skills, which they used throughout their lives. Now 4-H clubs and the 4-H concept not only exist in our nation's rural areas, but also in urban areas. Michigan boasts of 200,000 youth members, 30,000 volunteer leaders and over 150 projects from which they may participate. Montmorency County has 250+ youth enrolled in 4-H clubs and over 50 adult and teen leaders. In addition, youth participate in 4-H special projects, camps and school programs.

## WHAT IS THE MICHIGAN 4-H MISSION STATEMENT?

Michigan 4-H Youth Program is a youth development program that involves volunteers in providing positive, experiential and educational opportunities for and with youth. Our mission is to create environments, through collaboration, that build strong, healthy youth that are proactive in a complex and changing world.

## WHAT IS THE 4-H MOTTO?

“To Make The Best Better”

## WHAT IS THE 4-H PLEDGE?

The green 4-leaf clover with four white “H”s on it stands for Head, Heart, Hands and Health as stated in the 4-H pledge:

I pledge my **Head** to clearer thinking  
My **Heart** to greater loyalty  
My **Hands** to larger service and  
My **Health** to better living,  
For my club, my community, my country and  
my World.

## WHAT DOES 4-H COST?

Currently there are no fees or costs to join 4-H and there are no administrative, state or national dues. Individual 4-H clubs, however, have the option of voting to have club dues. These are usually paid monthly or annually, depending on club policy and past practice. Club members are responsible to pay for project expenses such as the wood to make their woodworking projects.

## WHAT IS THE ENROLLMENT PROCESS?

All 4-H members and leaders need to be properly registered at the Montmorency/Michigan State University Extension office. ALL CLUBS NEED TO RE-ENROLL THEIR MEMBERS AND LEADERS EACH YEAR. Every effort is made to keep the process as simple as possible. Winter 4-H club sign up deadline is 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday of January (approximately the 15<sup>th</sup>). The summer 4-H club sign up deadline is May 1<sup>st</sup>. To sign up new leaders you need to refer to the section called "How do I become a 4-H Volunteer". That section explains the selection process in place with all potential MSU Extension volunteers.

## WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE PARENT(S)?

Parents have one of the most important roles to ensure that their 4-H member(s)

have a positive experience in 4-H. When people join 4-H they really sign up as a family since 4-H is a family program. Parents need to look at 4-H as the opportunity to learn with their children and not just a place to drop them off to run errands. When members sign up for project areas it is important that parents understand that their son/daughter made a commitment to meet with the project leader. For related information on this topic read, "How do we get project leaders?"

## WHAT IS 4-H "AGE"?

4-H age is simply the oldest that a member will be during that calendar year. This goes for all events (state and local) unless stated differently. As of September 1, 2004, a youth participant's "4-H age" will be determined by his or her age on January 1 of the 4-H programming year. This means that for youth participating in the 2004-05 program year, their "4-H age" will be determined by their age on January 1, 2005.

## WHAT IS THE BEST AGE GROUP FOR GROWTH?

4-H member age ranges from 5-19. Michigan 4-H members must be 9 or older by Jan 1<sup>st</sup> of the year to be in competitive classes for that year.

The 5 to 8 year old (Cloverbud program is for younger members), and is NON competitive. 4-H youth participate in over 150 projects. The **PROJECT CONCEPT** works best for youth ages 9-19. Older youth often become teen leaders and stay active in their club through project leadership.

Others stay involved in animal projects that require more attention during the summer when school activities are not competing for their time.

## **WHAT TYPE OF 4-H CLUBS ARE THERE?**

There are three types of clubs in Montmorency County. These include: 1. Community Clubs, 2. Project Clubs, 3. Special Interest Clubs. A community club consists of two or more projects that are offered to members. A project club consists of a group of members that get together that have one common interest. Some examples of project clubs in Montmorency County are foods, crafts, and rabbits. Special interest clubs are usually short-term clubs that meet for a specified amount of time. Examples of special interest clubs are babysitting and swimming. These groups might meet only during the season for these activities.

## **WHAT SIZE SHOULD A CLUB BE?**

There is no perfect size for a 4-H club. Clubs are usually 5-15 members. This size club can offer opportunities for the members to gain leadership experience as a club officer. Smaller clubs with 5-10 members usually have fewer project areas to offer members but students tend to form close friendships.

## **CAN THE SIZE OF A 4-H CLUB BE LIMITED?**

The size of the 4-H club may be limited to ensure that the volunteer(s) who are involved don't burn themselves out. If more students want to join than the club can accommodate, a waiting list needs to be maintained to avoid any type of discrimination.

## **SHOULD YOUR CLUB'S MONEY BE IN THE BANK?**

Yes. The shoebox financial system is now an outdated method of keeping club funds. All clubs should have their own checking account or savings account through the local bank or Credit Union of their choice. Clubs need an Employer Identification Number (EIN). **Bank statements must be mailed to the extension office**, who then will forward to the Leaders. The proper form to send into the IRS is "SS-4" and is available at the Michigan State University Extension-Montmorency County office. All clubs need to have a treasurer and financial record keeping is required.

## **WHAT ARE SOME PROJECTS THAT I CAN DO IN A 4-H CLUB?**

Listed below are some examples of different project areas that a 4-H member can be a part of. These include: Art and sculpture, Basket making, Cake decorating, Candy making, Ceramics, Child care, Clothing construction, Clowning and Puppetry, Collections, Community Service, Computers, Conservation, Crafts, Junior (5-8) year old members (Expo), Folk patterns, Food and nutrition, Food preservation and drying, Gardening: flower, indoor and vegetable., First Aid, Knitting and Crocheting, Photography, Shooting sports, Swimming, Veterinary Science, and Wood working. There are many animal science projects

as well. There are few limitations on types of projects 4-H'ers can do.

the office a Letter of Acceptance will be mailed to the candidate.

This process is known as the "Volunteer Selection process". This process is in place to protect all of the children in our 4-H program. All volunteers who have unsupervised access to children need to proceed through this process.

## **DO LEADERS HAVE TO PUT UP WITH BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS IN THEIR CLUB?**

It is a privilege to be part of a 4-H club and 4-H members need to respect the rights of their fellow members. Disruptive members run the risk of being asked not to come back. Of course, this should be used as a last resort and usually after the member and his/her parent(s) have been informed that this is a possible final outcome.

## **WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT POSITIONS FOR 4-H LEADERS?**

There are four club volunteer jobs:  
Administrative Leader: Key person(s) in the club who is responsible for the overall management of the club. Project Leader: Work with small groups of youth in a specific project area. Resource Leader: A project leader who decides to share his or her services with more than one club. Teen Leader: Teens who are interested in a project area, who assist an adult in the given project area.

## **HOW DOES SOMEONE BECOME A 4-H LEADER?**

To become a 4-H leader, adults may request a 4-H Leader Application Packet. After filling out the application materials, the proposed 4-H leader candidate's filled out Criminal Records History Check Permission form is processed. Once it is returned to

## **WHAT IS AN ADMINISTRATIVE LEADER?**

Administrative leaders are the key to the success of the 4-H club. Some of the responsibilities of the Administrative Leader are: 1. Secure a club meeting site, 2. Enroll 4-H members; 3. Inform 4-H members of upcoming events; 4. Recruit 4-H project leaders. A successful Administrative leader may not even have project leader responsibility. Their job is to keep things rolling in the club which may include making follow up phone calls to project leaders. At the most, Administrative leaders should be project leaders for usually no more than one project area.

## **WHAT IS A PROJECT LEADER?**

A project leader is usually a parent that is interested in learning more or is knowledgeable in a given project area. They generally agree to meet with a group of youth (usually less than 10) at least six times during the year. By working in a small group these adults become a "significant mentor" and play a major role in the lives of young people. Project leaders include grandparents, teachers, neighbors, business people as well as teens. When 4-H members sign up for a project area they are expected to attend their project member meetings.

## HOW DO WE RECRUIT 4-H PROJECT LEADERS?

4-H is based on family and community involvement. As a general rule, family members and neighbors are encouraged to serve as project leaders. This ensures that there are enough projects being offered and that the number of youth in each project is a manageable size.

## AS A LEADER, WHAT TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES ARE OPEN TO ME?

4-H leaders can participate in a great deal of training if they desire to do so. In addition to training offered locally, 4-H leaders can attend training held statewide at one of three locations. Kettunen Center near Cadillac is the major

source of training. Kellogg Biological Station (near Battle Creek) and Tollgate Educational Center (near Novi) are two other locations. Most of the workshops are held over weekends throughout the fall, winter and spring months. The registration cost (one per year) for these workshops may be covered by the Montmorency County 4-H Council (except for extra fees required i.e. crafts, etc.).

## SHOULD LEADERS PAY FOR PROJECTS?

Leaders should not pay for projects out of their own pockets. The members should **reimburse** the leaders for **materials** used or bring their own materials to project meetings. 4-H members should be made aware of any costs that will be **incurred** prior to signing up for the given project area. 4-H clubs may make **arrangements** to pay for projects from the club treasury. This should be **voted** on by the total membership.

## WHAT ARE TEEN LEADERS?

A teen leader is a teen with significant interest in a project area. Teens work with an adult to provide leadership to a project for younger members. Being a teen leader can be very valuable when putting a resume together to apply for jobs.

## WHAT IS A RESOURCE LEADER?

A resource leader is a person who offers their expertise to many clubs or teaches at county wide 4-H activities.

## HOW CREATIVE CAN LEADERS GET?

Leaders are encouraged to be creative. If a leader wants to be a project leader in a subject area that is new they need only get together a group of youth who share the same interest. Creative approaches are the key to success for project leaders. Creative leaders are the type of people that always have members sign up for their projects and usually have good attendance at project meetings.

## WHAT ARE PROJECT BULLETINS, VIDEOS, SLIDES, ETC.?

4-H leaders and members have access to 4-H bulletins. Current policy allows leaders to get free bulletins in reasonable quantities. Videos and slides for 4-H can also be ordered through the Michigan State University Extension - Montmorency County office free of charge. Many project area materials are available. When planning project meetings leaders are

encouraged to look through the "Guide to Michigan 4-H Youth Programs."

## **SELF-DETERMINED PROJECTS**

With adult support, young people can determine their own projects. The self-determined project makes it possible to work in an area that there is no 4-H guideline books or no 4-H leader in your area. All that is needed is someone over 18 (mom, dad, older brother, sister, grandparents, etc.) to sign on as the youth's adult supervisor.

The youth is then a full 4-H member eligible to show at 4-H Achievement Day, the Fair, win ribbons, trophies, year pins, cash prizes, scholarships to 4-H Camp or Exploration Days at M.S.U. and more.

## **WHAT ARE PROJECT RESOURCES?**

Many 4-H projects have a resource folder that is available from the Michigan State University Extension - Montmorency County office. These are materials that help 4-H leaders get started in a project area.

## **WHAT NEWSLETTERS ARE AVAILABLE?**

The "Montmorency County 4-H" newsletter is the major source of information about 4-H activities in Montmorency County. Once 4-H members or leaders are properly enrolled in 4-H they receive a free copy, one to a family. All major events being planned and conducted are put into this newsletter. For some programs, a special mailing will be sent out.

## **WHAT IS THE NATIONAL 4-H SUPPLY?**

National 4-H Supply is a service of the National 4-H Council. It is authorized to use the 4-H name and emblem on such things as 4-H hats, jewelry, clothing, etc. for profit. By purchasing these items a portion of the profit is used to operate the programs of the National 4-H Council. A catalog of available items comes out every year in the fall in time for the holiday shopping season. A copy of the catalog can be requested by stopping by the Michigan State University Extension - Montmorency County office.

## **WHAT IS MONTMORENCY&MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION?**

Michigan State University Extension - Montmorency County extends the educational resources and research-based information of Michigan State University to the local community. The office and staff are sponsored by a unique partnership that includes the United States Department of Agriculture State funding to Michigan State University. County support comes from County Commissioners, county government, and private contributions.

## **WHAT IS THE CHAIN OF COMMAND WITHIN 4-H?**

All 4-H activity falls under the umbrella of the national Cooperative Extension System. It is administered in states through the designated Land Grant University. In Michigan this is Michigan State University. The next person in line is the County Extension Director. The C.E.D. has the overall responsibility for all Extension related activity in the local office in Montmorency County. The next person is the staff person responsible for 4-H. All activities relating to 4-H are under the guidance of the 4-H Youth Agent. The 4-H program in each county is then under the direction of a 4-H Council. As long as this group makes good decisions that are in line with the goals and objectives of the overall 4-H

program, the local MSU Extension Staff supports this authority. The 4-H Livestock Association also reports directly to the Montmorency Extension Office.

The Montmorency 4-H Fair has an exception to the normal chain of command, based on an exception that was granted in 1947 (before there was a local Extension office).

### **WHAT CAN 4-H STAFF DO FOR LEADERS?**

There are two main components to the role of 4-H staff. These two areas are:

1. Education
2. Facilitation

The educational leadership is a very high priority. 4-H staff leads workshops and programs for club members, youth groups, volunteers and schools. They can also meet one-to-one and in small groups to provide technical training and educational resources from MSU. The second area is that of facilitation. Staff is here to assist the volunteers in getting things started that is identified as necessary to the success of the 4-H program. Staff can provide significant assistance on new projects for the first or second year. Volunteers are depended upon to evaluate the need and to carry on individual programs. Some areas the staff can offer assistance is in the facilitation role that may include: Help individuals develop an approach to getting a new program started or provide training to start a new 4-H club. Staff will provide information concerning county events & programs as well as out of county events.

### **IF A PROBLEM OCCURS CAN LEADERS GET ANY ADVICE?**

A 4-H staff person is available to give you options and solutions that are available to you concerning club issues. A brief discussion can often provide several valuable alternatives to questions or problems. In the case of personality conflicts 4-H staff encourage those involved to sit down and talk things out with each other. This should be done if, for no other

reason, than to show a good example to the members of the club.

### **WHAT IS THE MONTMORENCY COUNTY 4-H COUNCIL?**

The 4-H Council is the main decision-making body for Montmorency County 4-H. The 4-H Council as well as all the 4-H affiliated groups are recognized as nonprofit tax exempt 501©3 organizations. They work closely with 4-H staff and are authorized to use the 4-H name and symbol by Montmorency/MSU Extension. 4-H Council is the hub of the 4-H program planning, administration and policy.

### **HOW DO I JOIN THE 4-H COUNCIL?**

The 4-H Council is made up of 9 adults and 3 teen members. Adults serve a three-year term and teens serve a one-year term.

Three adult terms and three teen terms are open each year. All leaders, parents and teens are encouraged to consider running for an open seat. Information regarding nominations for 4-H Council are in the October 4-H Newsletter.

Montmorency/MSU Extension also has a 4-H Livestock association. In addition to these committees, the 4-H Council appoints special committees to work on: Awards, Achievement Day, Program Development/Leader Recruitment, Ice Cream Booth, and other fund raisers as needed.

### **4-H LIVESTOCK ASSOCIATION**

This is an association of livestock parents/leaders and teens. Their main roles are to help prepare the county 4-H livestock guidelines, and to plan for the auction. All livestock families are encouraged to become involved.

## **WHAT ABOUT LIABILITY INSURANCE?**

All 4-H leaders are covered under the same liability coverage as Michigan State University employees. It has been determined that any adult who has successfully gone through the Volunteer Selection Process is eligible for this coverage. This coverage is in effect whenever a 4-H meeting or event is being conducted.

## **WHAT IS A SPECIAL EVENT INSURANCE?**

4-H clubs, such as Shooting Sports, swimming, skiing or horse events may want to obtain their own accident insurance. At this time the cost varies from \$2.00 to \$5.00 per year, per member. The applications may be obtained at the Extension office. Special events such as Achievement Day, 4-H camp, and 4-H Exploration Days are insured and paid for by the Montmorency County 4-H Council.

## **ARE THERE OTHER METHODS TO CONDUCT 4-H ACTIVITIES?**

There are several ways that youth can participate in 4-H activities that do not involve 4-H clubs. One common method is by involving schools to conduct programs. These programs are usually considered special projects and may range from introductory programs to programs that meet 12 times. Those who wish to volunteer, but not in a 4-H Club, may do so by working in one of these areas.

## **DO FUNDRAISERS GO TO PAY FOR 4-H STAFF POSITIONS?**

No! All money raised goes to fund programs where kids and volunteers benefit. There are no hidden administrative charges that come out of the profit.

## **FUNDRAISING**

It is necessary to raise money on a countywide basis to support 4-H programs and activities. The 4-H Council coordinates countywide fundraising. One activity is the Ice Cream Booth. We have also had bagel sales, raffles, etc. All of these dollars go back to the program for scholarships to 4-H Camp, Exploration Days, etc.; for volunteer training, to cover expenses at Achievement Day or the Awards Program, etc.

**CLUB FUNDRAISING:** Individual clubs also need money to support their club activities. Club members should be active in raising these needed dollars. Typical activities include bake sales, car washes, etc. Prior to doing club fundraising the club must contact the Extension Office. The Extension Office must approve fundraising that is done using the name of 4-H.

**COMMUNITY SCHOLARSHIP DONATIONS:** Many Montmorency County businesses, clubs and individuals make direct donations to the Montmorency 4-H program. 4-H members use these \$75 scholarships for 4-H camp or 4-H Exploration Days.

## **SHOULD OUR MEMBERS KEEP A RECORD OF THEIR INVOLVEMENT?**

If a 4-H member decides to participate in any awards program, this record keeping would be an important part of their involvement. Record keeping in itself is important because it will teach members to document their accomplishments and develop skills in recording and summarizing their work. This can be

done in several ways. One way is to use the "Member's Record Book" available at the Montmorency Extension office.

### **MEMBER YEAR PINS**

Each member may receive a year completion pin and a 4-H Member Certificate at the Recognition program usually held in January. To qualify the 4-H member needs to show at 4-H Achievement Day or the Montmorency 4-H Fair.

### **WHAT ARE COUNTY 4-H AWARDS?**

These are awards for special merit in a particular project area. Leaders may nominate members or members may nominate themselves. Deadline is usually sometime in November of each year. Anyone interested just has to contact the office for an application (785-8013).

### **WHAT IS THE MICHIGAN AWARDS PROGRAM?**

Participation in the Michigan Awards program offers 4-H members an opportunity for state and national 4-H awards. After participating in county and state 4-H programs 4-H members apply to become district award winners. This is done by filling out the "Michigan Awards form" and submitting these around the first part of each year. After winning the district award members fill out an in-depth booklet and compete in June at Exploration Days with other 4-H members from all over Michigan.

### **WHAT ARE SOME EVENTS HELD EVERY YEAR?**

Annual 4-H events open to all 4-H families are:

- Spring Achievement (usually held in April)
- Exploration Days (June)
- 4-H Summer Camp (July)
- Montmorency County 4-H Fair (August)
- National 4-H Week (early October)
- Leader Banquet (October)
- Member Banquet (January)

### **WHAT IS SPRING ACHIEVEMENT Day?**

Spring Achievement is a countywide event in which all 4-H clubs are invited to participate. The event rotates between Hillman, Atlanta and Lewiston. It is the major opportunity in the spring for 4-H members to show their winter 4-H projects to the public. These projects are evaluated and members are eligible to win scholarships to be used towards 4-H Camp or Exploration Days. All scholarship winners must send a thank you.

This weekend event is usually held in April on a Saturday.

### **WHAT IS 4-H SUMMER CAMP?**

Montmorency County 4-H Council annually sponsors a 4-H Camp for three days. The participants include children who are 9-12 by January 1 of the current year. Some of the activities usually include hiking, nature study, campfire, music, swimming, fitness trails, crafts, Food & Fitness, skits and games. The cost of the camp is kept low and winners of Achievement Day scholarships can apply it towards the cost of camp. The camp utilizes the talents of local 4-H teens to

conduct activities while providing a valuable leadership training experience for these young people. This camp is usually held in July in conjunction with Otsego and Alcona County.

### **HOW CAN I SHOW AT THE MONTMORENCY COUNTY 4-H FAIR?**

4-H projects can be shown at the fair. By using the guidelines printed in the fair book each year 4-H members and leaders can ensure that their project(s) meets the given criteria. There is a one-dollar cost to exhibiting 4-H projects at the fair at this time. Information needed to participate in the fair can be found in the fair book that comes out usually in late June or early July.

### **WHAT IS 4-H CAPITOL EXPERIENCE?**

4-H Capitol Experience is held annually in Lansing for 4-H members (for high school freshmen and older from all over Michigan. 4-H members learn about state government and community service. They have the opportunity to interact with their local politicians. This program is a three-day program and is usually held during the school week. The Council will usually provide two scholarships.

### **WHAT IS 4-H EXPLORATION DAYS?**

Exploration Days is the largest statewide 4-H event for youth and volunteers. The event, held during the latter part of June brings nearly 3,000 4-H members and leaders from all over Michigan to the campus of Michigan State University.

While there, 4-H members participate in “options” or educational workshops or classes. 4-H members also learn what it is like to live, eat and learn on a university campus. 4-H members are required to be 12 years old or older (4-H age). You must be signed up in 4-H in the current year to attend Exploration Days. Exploration Days gives 4-H members the opportunity to make new friends and also enjoy watching top-notch entertainers. Cost is usually around \$155-165 for 4-H members. A scholarship won at Achievement Day can be used towards the cost of Exploration Days. We also receive some \$35 dollar scholarships from MSU (these are based on need).