**Thoughts for the New 4-H Year**

**Dr. Denise Legvold**

As we begin the new 4-H year and think about Extension reorganization’s impact on the 4-H program, ‘county based’, ‘face-to-face’, and ‘local presence’ are all terms you have used to describe the 4-H program you desire for your county. Rest assured that is my vision as well. Let’s prepare ourselves though to recognize that some changes may be necessary to improve efficiency and enhance program quality. Some local 4-H events may be eliminated in order to direct resources to a new venture. Office and staff support may be available in new and convenient ways using technology and centralized functions. Let’s not assume that how we’ve done it in the past is the best way to do things in the future. Now is a great time to share with local staff your ideas on how to improve and grow the 4-H program in your county. Thanks for your efforts!

**Building Youth Leaders**

As your 4-H club or group ends one year and gets ready to start another, set aside time to think about the older members of your club and their development in the leadership realm. Whether they are 13 or 18, teen members are often willing and ready to accept specific responsibilities within groups in which they enjoy and belong. Involving members in the leadership of a group keeps their interest and can lead to the member staying with the organization – even after they’ve entered high school. When asked why they stayed in the 4-H program, older teens often respond because they enjoyed the opportunities available to them – helping younger members, county-wide teen groups, conferences on the state and national level, judging contests, and more. All of those opportunities start with taking that first step of reaching beyond being a ‘member’ and becoming a ‘leader’ within the group.

Leadership does not mean the youth has to be a club officer. Youth can develop their leadership skills by helping members in a specific project area, planning specific events or community service projects, or simply being responsible for your meeting location set-up. Encourage participation in one of the 4-H Leadership projects. The revised *Leadership Skills You Never Outgrow 1 for Grades 3-6* and *new Leadership Skills You Never Outgrow 2 for Grades 7-9* provide individual members with extensive activities to start to grow those individual skills. *Step Up to Leadership* and *What’s Leadership?* offer clubs or groups ways to develop skills on a group level.

Although some members may be shy to step forward to volunteer, your encouragement may be just what they need to bring them out of their shell and get them involved. Keeping them involved leads to development of youth leaders who stay with the program and grow with the responsibilities they take on. Start your young members on the leadership track this year!

**North Central Region Volunteer Forum**

**Oct 7-10, 2010**

**East Lansing, MI**

The **2010 North Central Region Volunteer Forum** will be held in East Lansing, Michigan, **October 7-10, 2010**, at the Kellogg Center. The theme of the forum is “Heads On Hands On.” The forum will feature speakers, seminars, educational tours, entertainment, and networking. All 4-H leaders are welcome to attend. Program, lodging, and registration information is available on-line at [http://web1.msue.msu.edu/cyf/youth/ncr4hvf/index.html](http://web1.msue.msu.edu/cyf/youth/ncr4hvf/index.html). Early bird fee by **Aug. 15** is $200.
New projects include **Foods and Nutrition**: 4-H *Cooking 401*, an advanced level project; final in cooking series; **Foods and Nutrition**: *Delivering Dynamic Demonstrations* DVD, complements the 4-H *Foods Demonstration Guide*; **Interior Design**: *Design Decisions*, multiple year project for youth ages 12-18; **Leadership**: *Leadership Skills You Never Outgrow* 2, for grades 7-9; **Robotics**: new projects to be released in November 2010; level 1 and 3 are online only; and **Shooting Sports**: ONLY OFFERED IN CERTIFIED COUNTIES; archery, rifle, shotgun.

**Discontinued Projects** include **Foods and Nutrition**: *Exploring Our Food Heritage; Foods with an International Flavor*, and **Robotics**: *Robotics Explorer, Robotics Probe, Robotics and You CD*.

**Project Plans Update**: The *Illinois Project Plans* for members 12-14 and 15-18 have been revised. Discard any older versions. The new Project Plans are available for order through the local Extension office or can be downloaded from the State 4-H website.

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**4-H National Youth Science Day  October 6**

On **4-H National Youth Science Day, October 6, 2010**, millions of young people across the U.S. will begin an experiment focused on water quality and climate change. The experiment offers several activities to showcase how people increase the amount of carbon dioxide (CO$_2$); how the earth responds to increased CO$_2$; and explore the effects of CO$_2$ and nutrient runoff in lakes leading to changes in water quality. Using worksheets and online guides, youth will be able to connect the activities back to their lives by measuring their own carbon footprint, their family’s footprint, and estimate energy savings by looking at gas and electric bills. To download youth and facilitator guidebooks go to [www.4-H.org/NYSD](http://www.4-H.org/NYSD). Check with your local office to see how your club can participate.

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**4-H Volunteer Courses**

Three new **4-H Volunteer Courses** have been introduced this summer and are ready for use by 4-H leaders across the state. The first of the three courses is an update on the overall **4-H Volunteer Orientation**. The session helps new volunteers understand the roles and responsibilities of the 4-H Organizational Leader, Project Leader, or Activity Leader. It also helps leaders understand how they fit into the larger picture of 4-H and University of Illinois Extension.

The second course is titled **You’re On! – Public Presentations: Plan, Prepare, Practice, and Present**. This course will provide resources (fact sheets, evaluation tools, etc.) and activities for teaching youth how to effectively plan, practice, and present speeches and demonstrations.

The third course is **“Come to Order, Please!”** – on parliamentary procedure and working with club officers. This course helps volunteers and members understand the basic rules of parliamentary procedure and the order of business of a club meeting. It also helps outline the role of officers in a 4-H club.

Leaders may enroll in these courses by going to [http://web.extension.illinois.edu/4hc/](http://web.extension.illinois.edu/4hc/). In addition, there is a page for each of these courses of related tools that will be valuable to 4-H leaders to download and use as they work with their club. The courses are a part of the **VALUED Volunteer Orientation and Training Series**.

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