

February 9, 2007

Dear 4-H members and parents,

We want to extend a warm welcome to you and congratulate you on choosing to make 4-H a part of your life. 4-H is a youth development program that is a part of the United States Department of Agriculture and administered in Indiana by the Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service. Locally, the Boone County office of the Purdue Cooperative Extension Service and the Boone County 4-H Club, Inc. administers the Boone County 4-H program.

Included in this letter is some information I hope will be helpful to you and will provide you with the tools necessary to a positive start with your 4-H career. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions regarding this information after you have read it.

PURPOSE OF THE COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

4-H is a non-formal educational program provided by the United States Department of Agriculture and is delivered through its Cooperative Extension Service. The Cooperative Extension Service is administered in Indiana through its land grant university, Purdue University. CES offers educational programs in the areas of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Consumer and Family Sciences, Leadership and Community Development, and 4-H and Youth Development. In Boone County, CES Educators receive program direction and support from the Extension board that is comprised of a cross-section of people throughout the county.

4-H provides youth in grades 3-12 educational programs through their participation in project and club related activities. Boone County 4-H offers programming through 63 different projects and has 19 different 4-H clubs. 4-H project workshops provide members with technical training that each member needs to be successful not only in that discipline, but also with life long technical skills. 4-H club work provides members with life long leadership and social skills that will be of benefit to every member in career preparation.

BOONE COUNTY 4-H STRUCTURE

While 4-H is a state and national educational program, each county in Indiana is provided the flexibility to adapt their 4-H program to the needs of that community. In Boone County the 4-H Council is charged with overseeing the 4-H program by establishing policies and administering the 4-H program. While the 4-H Council establishes policy, the 4-H Fair Board is responsible for conducting the 4-H Fair. The 4-H Fair allows every 4-H member to display his or her exhibit so the public can see what the children have learned that year from his or her involvement in 4-H. I like to refer to the 4-H Fair as a showcase of the talents of Boone County's youth.

4-H HANDBOOK, PROJECT MANUALS, LEADERS

This year's 4-H handbook is distributed to families through their 4-H club leader. The handbook contains all policies, both state and county, relating to the 4-H program. It is important that every 4-H member and parent/guardian read this book. Not only does it have the

general requirements for all 4-H exhibits, but it also has the exhibit requirements for each individual project. Judges at the 4-H Fair are provided with these exhibit requirements and critique exhibits based upon these requirements.

In addition to receiving your 4-H handbook, every member also receives a manual for each project he or she is enrolled. Manuals are distributed to members by their club leader and serve as a resource for technical information relating to that particular project. Please note that many of the project manuals have activities to enhance the learning process. Many of the projects require completion of three activities in this project manual in order to be able to exhibit at the 4-H Fair. Requirements with regards to manual activities can be found in the 4-H handbook.

4-H leaders, both club and project, can be your greatest resource. Their telephone numbers are listed in your 4-H handbook. It is suggested that in the event that 4-H members are unable to attend a project workshop or 4-H club meeting, they contact their leader to find out what they missed. 4-H leaders should be contacted with questions regarding clarification of exhibit requirements and 4-H activities.

4-H MAILINGS

The Extension office tries to effectively communicate with 4-H families through several means. Newsletters are published four times a year and are mailed through the US Postal Service bulk mailing system. Newsletters contain important information and reminders with regard to deadlines and other pertinent information so every 4-H member can have a successful year. Other information that needs to be delivered in a timely manner is mailed first class in either an envelope that has a 4-H clover and Boone County 4-H return address or one that has a Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service return address. In any case, it is critical that any information you receive in the mail regarding 4-H be read immediately.

4-H FAIR CATALOG

In June, 4-H club leaders will distribute to families their 4-H Fair catalog. This catalog highlights activities that occur during the week of the fair. More important, however, is that every 4-H member and parent pay particular attention to exhibit check-in and release times. It is recommended that members use a highlighter to mark the times that are critical to their individual projects. It is also important to know that many of the projects are judged in an open judging format the week prior to the 4-H Fair.

4-H FAIR EXHIBIT REQUIREMENTS

Every 4-H project must not only meet the general exhibit requirements, but also its own project exhibit requirements. Again, these requirements can be found in your 4-H handbook. Some projects require that 3 activities be completed in the project manual and turned in with the member's exhibit before it can be exhibited at the fair. In addition, a project record sheet must accompany every 4-H exhibit. Remember, exhibiting at the 4-H Fair is a privilege of 4-H membership, not a right.

4-H YEAR COMPLETION REQUIREMENTS

Ideally, every 4-H member will be able to complete an exhibit for every project they are enrolled and prepare an exhibit for each project to display at the 4-H Fair. Realistically, this does not happen for a number of reasons. Maybe the rabbit escaped from its cage and didn't return, or maybe the yeast rolls just wouldn't rise, or maybe a 4-H member just ran out of time and didn't get their exhibit prepared. Regardless, even though a member may not have been able to exhibit their project at the fair, the member still was able to learn something about that project throughout the year. That is why the only requirements to complete a project is enrollment in the project, completion of a project record sheet, and completion of the project manual activities if required by that project.

ACHIEVEMENT RECORDS

Every 4-H member receives a 4-H Record of Achievement card their first year of membership in 4-H. This card provides a means for members to keep track of the projects they were enrolled, exhibit placing, county 4-H activities, and 4-H club activities. It is important that this card be updated each year because when the 4-H member becomes older he or she will be eligible to apply for scholarships, trips, and awards not only in the county, but also those offered on a state and national basis. By keeping this record of achievement card updated it simplifies the completion of these applications later in their 4-H career. Additionally, 4-H members are encouraged to compile an achievement record book that highlights what they have learned by their participation in 4-H projects and club activities.

PERMANENT RECORD CARDS

The Extension office maintains a permanent record card for every 4-H member in Boone County. This record card contains a listing of every 4-H project that a member has been enrolled, their exhibit placing, their record sheet and manual grades, as well as the trips and awards they have received and participated in. The county awards committee and scholarship committee utilizes this information when selecting 4-H members for awards and scholarships.

AWARDS, TRIPS, AND INCENTIVES

Boone County 4-H, Indiana 4-H, and the National 4-H offer members a variety of awards, trips, and incentives. A summary of these is included in your 4-H handbook. In addition, businesses and individuals who have contributed to the 4-H Booster Club sponsor these locally. Therefore, it is necessary for members wishing to be selected for these trips and awards to complete an application and submit it to the awards committee. These applications are in your 4-H handbook.

CONTACTS

The 4-H Youth Extension Educator and 4-H Program Assistant manage the county 4-H program on a daily basis. Feel free to use any of the means listed below to contact us with any questions that may arise throughout the year.

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We hope that the information provided herein will benefit you as a 4-H family. It is our goal to provide each 4-H member with information necessary for them to have a successful 4-H year. Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of any service throughout the year. Best wishes to you and your family as you participate in this educational program.

Sincerely,

Tony Carrell
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4-H Youth Development

Vicki Ballentine
4-H Program Assistant