

Examples of 4-H Teen Leader Activities and Long-Term Projects

This section includes examples of activities and projects that you might consider to develop and practice your leadership skills. The first group is designed to get you started in doing activities and the second group is composed of more in-depth projects that require more time and resources. Both will give you ideas to get started.

Examples of 4-H Teen Leader Activities and Long-Term Projects was adapted from:

- Calhoun County Michigan State University Extension Program. (1999). *4-H leadership project area: Project description*. Marshall, MI: Author.
- Isabella County Michigan State University Extension Program. (2005). *Isabella County 4-H teen leadership project guidelines and evaluation forms*. Mt. Pleasant, MI: Author.
- Kent County Michigan State University Extension Program. (1997). *Kent County 4-H teen leader project*. Grand Rapids, MI: Author.

4-H teen leader activities designed for first- and second-year 4-H teen leaders

Taking on an activity is a big decision. It means that you are going to practice the leadership skills that you have and refine and develop more. As a new 4-H teen leader you might want to start small and move up to larger activities. It is much easier to continue with something if you have success with your first project. The activities listed below will give you some ideas to get started. Also, use the 4-H Teen Leader Portfolio to help in the process.

- Help a 4-H leader plan and conduct special activities or programs for a family night.
- Work with a 4-H leader and help club members plan and organize a community service project. For more than 250 community service ideas, visit the Michigan 4-H Web site at: <http://web1.msue.msu.edu/cyfl/youth/commserv/commserv-ideas.html>
- Work with an older 4-H teen leader, to help a group plan and organize a club fund-raising activity. Brainstorm creative ways to get the funding a group needs.
- Teach a skill at a 4-H afterschool program, 4-H workshop, summer recreational program, day care center, teen center, senior citizens center or another place that welcomes volunteers.
- Promote 4-H to local schools, community organizations and media. Work with your 4-H club and leader to make displays, give demonstrations and help others learn how to give effective demonstrations.
- Explore printed resources available to teens about an issue you are concerned with. Write a booklet or information sheet and ask the library to put it out or show it at the 4-H fair.
- For more ideas, explore the Web site <http://www.4husa.org/> Designed for and by young people, it changes regularly to give you new ideas about projects and what others are doing in 4-H.

Examples of teen leadership projects

Teen leadership projects are in-depth and long-term activities in which you (the 4-H teen leader) develop and practice leadership skills. They require you to lead a group and also to work independently to get the job done. The 4-H adult leader will work closely with you as a coach to help you in becoming more responsible for getting the activities and project done.

As you plan these activities, as a 4-H teen leader, work with your 4-H advisor or coach to help you think through the steps of the project, decide who else to involve and what it will take to get the job done. These projects will take longer to do and give you a chance to practice your leadership skills. It is suggested that the 4-H teen leader attend additional training on leadership, teaching, facilitation or project skills before or during the time working on the activities.

- Investigate the needs of a community center. Organize a 4-H club to plan and conduct special activities or programs for a family night at the center based on one of those needs.
- Determine what is needed in a community and organize club members to plan and organize a community service project.
- Based on the club's budget needs, help a group plan and organize a club fund-raising activity. Brainstorm creative ways to get the funding a group needs.
- Design and create a small discussion group of teens close to your own age. Match each older teen with a younger youth and invite those younger youth to meet with the discussion group. Meet twice a month or more to talk about issues that are important to you. Find funding to allow your group to meet in places that are fun, and for your group to do a few fun things together during the year.
- Look around your community and organize a series of community speakers to educate or promote awareness in the community about an issue you are interested in, or help to promote 4-H by centering the topic around one of the 4 "H's" in the 4-H pledge: Head to clearer thinking, Heart to greater loyalty, Hands to larger service and Health to better living.
- Be a big brother or a big sister to a younger youth or new 4-H club member. Introduce them to others, welcome them at meetings, involve them in club activities, be sure they are enjoying their 4-H membership, and most of all, develop their skills and help them to explore their interests. Help them find resources — places, people and information — to strengthen their skills.
- Become an active member of a county or teen council, youth advisory committee or other group outside 4-H. Find a creative way to share your experiences with other 4-H members.
- Send letters to elected officials about a topic that concerns you. Organize an event to raise awareness of this topic to generate energy and action. Present your findings to a local governmental board.
- Do volunteer work with a social service organization. Help get other youth interested in volunteering with the same organization so that you can ensure further volunteer involvement after your service is completed.
- Organize 4-H club members to teach projects or skills at a summer recreational program, day care center, teen center, senior citizens center or another place that welcomes volunteers.
- Lead other club members in promoting 4-H to local schools, community organizations and media. Try getting the word out about the benefits, accomplishments and experiences of 4-H through newspapers, radio, TV, school or window displays. Develop a Web page to promote local 4-H activities.
- Explore printed resources available to teens about an issue you are concerned with. If there is a need, develop a creative way to get your message out. Organize and involve other club members in creating a booklet, organizing a small newspaper or magazine, developing a Web site or exploring other media outlets.
- Be creative and insightful; design your own project based on the needs of your community and resources available to you.

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