Purpose – Encourage each 4-H member to understand their role in recruiting and retaining new members and families.

Background Information:
A mentor * is somebody, usually older and more experienced, who advises and guides a younger, less experienced person. In 4-H, a mentor is a motivated and experienced 4-H member who wants to share their enthusiasm and passion for 4-H with a new member and their family. A 4-H mentor means you will help the individual and their family to understand 4-H, encourage their attendance and participation at club meetings, activities and 4-H events. More importantly during their first year of enrollment you will also provide the new member with the leadership and guidance necessary to plan and carry out project work* in “one” 4-H project area.

Studies have shown that participation, cooperation and self-determined goals are more important than participation in peer competition in the retention of new members during their first year.

Preparation
* Read “Mentoring a New Member”
4-H•PDL•504, and the Plan the Work Calendar.

* 4-H Volunteer Management Series 4-
H•VOL•111 “Developing 4-H Project Work” and “Plan the Work Calendar” are available through your extension office as part of the 4-H Volunteer Core Competency Curriculum Unit 2. These materials will help 4-H volunteers understand and guide members in developing project work.

Activity 1: Building 4-H Membership (Spider Web Activity)

Materials needed: A large ball of string or twine.

Do : Start with group standing in a circle. Holding on to the end of the string, call out someone's name and toss the ball to that person. Let that “action” represent the opportunity to mentor a new member and help them get a solid hold on the string (aka 4-H). Once they have a “solid hold”, they can in turn mentor to someone else by passing the ball to another person. Have the group continue passing the ball, keeping a firm hold on the string. When everyone has a piece of the string, begin the reflection and application questions.

Be sure to do the REFLECT and APPLY questions. Don’t just ask questions and move on….draw answers out of the participants by getting them to think. This is critical to the education process, as well as to the relevance of the workshop.

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Reflect:
- How do current 4-H members influence new members/families? In what ways is the influence positive? In what ways is the influence negative?
- In what ways can a single 4-H member impact a new member through mentoring? *After some discussion demonstrate the impact that “not” mentoring can have on the 4-H program by have one or two of the members of the group drop the string, creating slack. This shows how just one or two people can effect the strength of the whole group, as well as illustrates the individual who may not come back.*
- How many people are feeling the effect of the lost member(s) (aka dropped string)?
- Who is or how many of us are responsible for picking up the slack? Have the group pull out the slack.

Apply:
- What happens to our image when someone has a bad experience in 4-H?
- What happens when we don’t take the initiative to mentor to new members?
- What can happen when we do mentor or make it our job to help the new members and their families?
- Why is it important for everyone to work together and put forth their best effort in mentoring new members and families? In what ways can we use what was learned in this activity to make our club a better team?

Activity 2: Blind Trust – verbal guidance

**Materials needed:** Blindfolds or Bandana’s and an area with items which can be moved to create an obstacle course.

**HEALTH and SAFETY Practice** – *Immediately following this activity wash all blindfolds. Do not use them a second time until they are washed. Diseases, such as pink eye can be transmitted by re-using blindfolds.*

**Do:** Prior to the activity set-up an obstacle course in another location so the audience can not see it prior to the activity.

Have audience split into pairs. Give each pair a blindfold. Have one person in the pair wear the blindfold. Take the pairs to the location where the obstacle course has been created. The person without the blindfold must lead the blindfolded partner to the goal using only their voice to guide the individual through the obstacle course. Partners may not touch.

**Reflect:**
- Who do you think had the harder job in the partnership – the person being lead or the person giving directions? Why
- As the person blindfolded what kind of emotions were you feeling? What was stressful about the experience? What did your partner do to make you successful in reaching the goal?
- As the person giving instructions what kind of emotions were you feeling? What was stressful about the experience? What did you do to make your partner successful in reaching the goal safely? How did it feel when you didn’t know where you were going and what kind of obstacles might be in the way?
- Why do you think some couples struggled more than others? What was different about the verbal instructions being given by each set of partners? Why would it have been physically easier to guide them through the course?
Apply:

◆ How could this experience be similar to mentoring a new 4-H member?
◆ How would a mentor know/determine when their mentee is 1) needing help/direction and 2) is being given too much direction?
◆ Why is it important that new members learn to set their own goals and take responsibility for their project work?

Who was a mentor that has guided you through some part of your 4-H career? Why did you respect them? What qualities did they possess that you would like to model for a new member? What qualities did you experience that you do not want to imitate with new members?

Stop here and review handout 4H.PDL.504 with the participants.
1. What does Mentor mean?
2. Characteristics of a 4-H Mentor.
3. Effective Communications
4. Evaluating Progress
5. Developing a relationship with your mentee.
6. Understanding the BIG picture.
7. Helping them Plan the Work

Conclusion/Summary - The more people we mentor the more people who have a solid hold (aka commitment) on 4-H. The more people with a solid hold on 4-H, the stronger the 4-H program and the more our club can do through 4-H programming.

The story of “The 4-H Member Who Never Came Back” can be used to conclude the lesson on a thoughtful note.

Give each member interested in being a mentor a copy of the “Mentoring a New Member” 4-H•PDL•504, the Each One Reach One Report Form (2 pages)a and the Plan the Work Calendar.

Adapted from OK 4-H curriculum 4H.PDL.503 prepared by the 2007-2009 State 4-H Leadership Council

The 4-H Member Who Never Came Back

It amuses me now to think that your organization spends so much time looking for new members — when I was there all the time. Do you remember me?

I’m the member who came to every meeting but nobody paid any attention to me. I tried several times to be friendly, but everyone seemed to have their own friends to talk to and sit with. I sat down among some unfamiliar faces several times, but they didn’t pay much attention to me.

I hoped someone would ask me to join one of the committees or somehow participate and contribute – but no one did.

Finally, because of illness, I missed a meeting. The next month no one asked where I had been. I guess it didn’t matter very much whether I was there or not. On the next meeting date, I decided to stay home and watch a good television program. When I attended the next meeting, no one asked me where I was the month before.

You might say that I’m a good person. I have a good family and love my community.

You know who else I am? I’m the member who never came back.

Source: Voluntary Action Leadership, Fall 1984
Mentoring a New 4-H Member

Developing the Next Generation of 4-H Members

What does Mentor mean?
An individual with experience who is recognized as being successful within 4-H is assigned to serve as a “guide, role model, tutor, advisor and/or coach” to a new or inexperienced 4-H member. As a 4-H mentor you will help the individual and their family to understand 4-H, encourage their attendance and participation at club meetings, activities and 4-H events. But most importantly, during their first year of enrollment you will provide the new member with the leadership and guidance necessary to plan and carry out project work in “one” 4-H project area.

The objective of mentoring is “Quality vs. Quantity.” We want you, the mentor, to make an investment in the individual so the new member becomes as passionate about 4-H as you are! It is important to understand that participation, cooperation and self-determined goals are just as important as participation in peer competition in the retention of new members during the first year(s).

Characteristics of a 4-H Mentor:
1. A mentor understands 4-H is more than club meetings and competitive events. 4-H starts with the desire to belong, followed by finding something of interest which is fun, educational, and challenges the new member to develop their head, heart, hands and health.
2. A mentor will help a new member feel welcomed, comfortable and included in the 4-H family, by helping the individual and their family learn about the 4-H program – including its culture and terminology.
3. A mentor encourages the new member to select at least one “project” area of interest and develop that project by setting goals, working through project manuals or other support materials, recording what they have learned, noting what they have completed, seeking feedback on what they accomplished and setting goals for further developing that project or maybe even selecting another project area to explore.
4. A mentor will help the new member explore the various opportunities provided through 4-H without pressure or coercion.
5. A mentor will guide and support work without doing it for them.
6. A mentor encourages follow-through and completion.
7. A mentor gives praise and encouragement.
8. A mentor assists in gathering resources - tools and supplies.
9. A mentor may even provide support and transportation.

Developing a relationship with your Mentee:
1. Invite them to accompany you to 4-H activities and events. Have them come and observe or even help if they are not comfortable with participating in an event/activity. Explain why you enjoy the event/activity and how you got started. Share funny or scary things that have happened so they know it doesn’t always go so well but that through the process you become more knowledgeable and skillful.
2. Be patient – people join organizations for various reasons. Find out what is important to your mentee – just being a participant/part of the group; exploring new and different project areas; developing an expertise in a specific project; being of service to others; etc.
3. Build their confidence by helping them with their project work or finding someone who has the experience or expertise to help them get the most out the 4-H project.
4. Encourage but do not force or intimidate (boss, bully or shame) someone into doing something they are not comfortable with. Encourage them to find their interest and talents.

Effective Communications
1. Explain everything to the new person. Do not assume they know or will understand anything about 4-H. Ask them to ask questions. That is the best way to learn and will help you become a better communicator.
2. Send hand written notes of encouragement.
3. Call the mentee and their family to see if they have questions or need help with project work.
4. Invite them to accompany you to 4-H activities and events.
5. Make sure they are receiving letters, emails or other forms of communication from the club leadership, project leader or county extension office.

Evaluating Progress
1. Periodically check with the new member. See how they are feeling about their 4-H experience.
2. Share that feedback with club leaders, teen leaders, project leaders and county staff.
Understanding the Big Picture

What is 4-H? – The youth development program of the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service, which is part of Oklahoma State University. The primary purpose of 4-H is to provide educational opportunities and experiences through project work.

What is 4-H Project Work? – Project work is the foundation of 4-H, through project work members “Learn by Doing.” Young 4-H members should limit their project work to one or two projects so they can do a good job, rather than enroll in many projects and not do any well. Beginning level members (1st-3rd year) should use the first few years to explore projects, try different things, “taste the 4-H smorgasbord”!

Choosing a project should not be taken lightly, the member and family need to know what is expected in each project before enrolling. This encourages the selection of projects best suited for the member and family. When someone is enrolled in the “right” project – one they are truly interested in – it is easy to get them to plan the work and work the plan because of their “interest.”

Two terms to be familiar with are “4-H Project Work” and “project.” The term “4-H Project Work” is in reference to a single subject. (i.e., Horticulture, Foods, Safety, etc.) It is the big picture or long-term goal of what a member wants to learn. The term “project” is in reference to the individual parts or short-term goals of the “4-H Project”.

How Life Skills are developed through project work - 4-H focuses on helping members acquire life skills. Life skills are developed as a member learns a “skill” through project work. A “skill” is a learned ability to do something – like accurately measuring feed/chemicals/ingredients. “Life skills” are the ways we apply the information learned to real life situations – by learning to measure accurately a member

What is a 4-H Project Group or Club? - Project groups meet on a varied schedule outside the monthly club meeting, under the guidance of a project leader learning in-depth about a single project area. Project clubs are centered on one primary project. It functions the same as a “community” or “Multi-project” club. Members of project clubs should be introduced to and included into other 4-H opportunities and experiences outside of the project focus.

What is a 4-H Club Meeting? - A 4-H club is where youth are introduced to a variety of topics and learn to conduct business by planning and carrying out service projects and activities. The educational content of a 4-H club meeting is determined by the common needs and interest of the members.

What is the purpose of 4-H Activities and Events? - Events and activities are an extension of 4-H Project Work. Their purpose is first and foremost education.

Events are typically competitive educational programs. Activities are educational programs without competition.

Local, county, district, and state events and activities provide opportunities to meet new people, make new friends, enjoy new experiences, and learn more about ourselves, our project work and the 4-H program.

Forms of Recognition - 4-H uses five types of recognition. Each supports, motivates and encourages in a unique way and provides a balanced approach to motivating different kinds of 4-H’ers.
1. Participation in the educational experiences.
3. Achieving standards of excellence. (Danish System of Blue, Red and White Award - Ribbons)
4. Excelling in peer competition (winners and losers, ranking system).
5. Demonstrating excellence in cooperation.

Developing Communication Skills – Communication is more than public speaking. 4-H has opportunities for everyone to develop their special talent whether it is writing, drawing, displays, posters, reports, or public speaking. All forms of communication provide the chance to:

• acquire and relate knowledge of subject matter
• learn to organize ideas in a clear manner
• develop self-confidence about owns abilities, skills and knowledge
• develop and display physical skills

Being a good citizen – Citizenship is the relationship between you and others - the way one thinks, feels and acts toward the family, other 4-H’ers, the school, faith group and other people in the community. Encourage new members to volunteer at the club level and through their project area.

Developing Leadership Skills - Allow members to explore the various faces of leadership, find the best fit for them as an individual and provide opportunities to get the knowledge and skills necessary to be successful in their chosen leadership role.

Leadership is much more than being an “officer.” Effective leaders start by being “participants” and good club members who regularly attend meetings and participate in activities planned by the club. As members gain knowledge about 4-H, the club and demonstrate responsibility they then combine their own unique talents and apply their skills to the various leadership teams serving the club. No “one” leadership role is more important than another. All youth leadership experiences are important to the growth of the individual and the club.

People generally remember:
10% of what they read
20% of what they hear
30% of what they see
50% of what they hear and see
80-90% of what they hear, see and do

“Learn by Doing” (Edgar Dale, 1969)
"Plan the Work" Calendar

The Plan the Work Calendar is a good way to teach new members how to manage their time and project work. Have them begin the year by penciling in known conflicts like family vacation, sports, band, etc., that will take away from time on 4-H project work.

Beginning with October, after fall enrollment, start outlining a plan month by month in general terms of what will be done each month.

Before the plan can be written the individual must determine what project(s) in which to enroll. With their “project area” determined each time the word “project” is noted in the table below, it is in reference to the individual parts or short-term goals of learning and applying skills and knowledge about that “project area.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>January</th>
<th>February</th>
<th>March</th>
<th>April</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Healthy Living Fair</td>
<td>Public Speaking Event</td>
<td>Leadership Project</td>
<td>Community Service Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 projects – 1 poster, 1 craft, 1 food</td>
<td>1 project</td>
<td>1 project</td>
<td>1 project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>June</td>
<td>July</td>
<td>August</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete medal form/record book</td>
<td>Attend Workshop</td>
<td>4-H Camp</td>
<td>Attend Awards Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 projects</td>
<td>2 projects – crafts</td>
<td>2 projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>October</td>
<td>November</td>
<td>December</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County Fair</td>
<td>Leadership Project - 4-H Promo event Tour</td>
<td>Community Service Project</td>
<td>Present speech at club meeting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 exhibits for Fair</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 project - speech</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example –

October: Leadership Project related to a 4-H promotional event. This is a simple thing to pencil in because National 4-H Week and Oklahoma 4-H month are held in October. There are opportunities to promote 4-H through displays, posters, flyers, speeches, etc. The tour will be a tour directly related to your chosen project area.

November: Community Service Project (This should be very simple to accomplish because November and December provide many opportunities for community service.) The one project to be completed is researching and writing a speech related to your project area.

December: Present speech at local club meeting, provided you planned a head and asked to be on the agenda.

January: Participate in a county event (i.e., Healthy Living Fair) by completing 3 projects. Two of the three will be related to your main project and the third will just be for fun.

February: Participate in county event (Public Speaking Event) with speech prepared in November, as well as, doing one more project related to project area.

March: Do 1 Leadership Project and 1 project related to project area.

April: Do 1 Community Service Project and 1 more project related to project area.

May: Complete Medal Form or Record Book.

June: Attend workshop (summer day camp, livestock judging camp, etc.) and complete 2 more projects.

July: Participate in a County Activity (Camp). Do 2 more projects that are crafts.

August: Participate in County Activity (Awards Program) and do 2 more projects.

September: Participate in County Event (County Fair), exhibiting the 12 projects made over the past 11 months (1-2 projects at a time).

At the end of the year the new member will have...

Participation in:
- 3 County Competitive Events – Healthy Living Fair, Public Speaking Event and County Fair
- 2 County Activities – Camp and Awards Program
- 2 Community Service Projects
- 2 Leadership Projects

Completed:
- 12 projects related to their main project area
- 2 Educational Activities outside of individual study – workshop and tour.
- 2 Public Speaking opportunities – local club and county level
- A medal form or record book for project area

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