



Arkansas Association of Extension 4-H Agents

May 2018

President's Notes

By Jackson Alexander



With summer quickly approaching, I know county O-Ramas are in full swing, and the anticipation of District and State O-Ramas is building. If your 4-H kiddos are anything like me, they can't wait to get outside, soak up some sunshine, and see their 4-H friends from all over our great state. This time of year is somewhat of a breather from all of our programs taking place in the winter and early spring months, but it's also a time to get my game face on in preparation for the late summer and fall.

In early April, I had the opportunity to attend the Public Issues Leadership Development Conference in Washington, DC and represent our association on the national level. I, along with my counterparts from AACES, NACAA, ESP, NEAFCS-AR, and our National 4-H Conference delegates, took part in a four-day leadership training and visited our lawmakers on Capitol Hill. The training allowed us to hone our Extension advocacy skills and gain a better understanding of the policy and funding process at the federal level. All Extension folks should rest assured that our agricultural, FCS, CED, and 4-H message was warmly received by our elected officials.

To keep in line with a federal theme, 60 Arkansas 4-H members recently took part in the Congressional Awards Arkansas Day of Service Event. Held in conjunction with Global Youth Service Day on April 21, these 4-H members gathered at the Arkansas 4-H Center to pack hygiene bags for military service members serving abroad and were later treated to a reception at the Arkansas Governor's Mansion, where they were greeted by Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson, U.S. Senator John Boozman, and former U.S. Secretary of Transportation Rodney Slater. The first event of its kind in Arkansas, the Congressional Awards event allowed 4-H members to see how their 4-H service and leadership could make an impact not only in their lives but also in the lives of others.

In the coming months, we'll be gearing up for O-Rama season, and we're excited about our 2018 theme "Go Wild for 4-H!" Remember,

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"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."

- Nelson Mandela

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O-Ramas aren't only a time to recognize the outstanding work of our 4-H'ers, but the Association will also recognize our 4-H Volunteer of the Year, County PA or Agent of the Year, and State Specialist of the Year, so don't forget to nominate one of our colleagues for their exemplary work by May 25.

Finally, this fall will be busy with county fairs, district fairs, and of course, the Arkansas State Fair, and it's exciting to see what projects our 4-H members will showcase at these events. Although there's lots going on, make sure to mark your calendars now for two very special events. This year, the state 4-H staff is excited to bring back our Fall Volunteer Leader Forums. Held in the Ozark, Delta, and Ouachita districts, these one-day events will be a great opportunity for you and your volunteer leaders to further your knowledge of delivering high-quality programming to our youth. Watch your emails for a date to be released soon! Even more exciting, the NAE4-HA National Conference will be held October 7-11 in Columbus, Ohio, and a number of your Arkansas Extension peers will be presenting posters and workshops or receiving awards. Let's show a strong contingency in Buckeye territory to support our friends and learn more about the exciting 4-H work taking place all across the country.

In the meantime, I hope each of you have a few moments to put on some sunscreen, turn off your email, and take a few minutes (or days) to chill. Our work is fast and furious, but it's always extremely rewarding. Thank you for all you do, and I look forward to seeing each of you around the state in the coming months.

Jackson

Top 5 Reasons to Start an In School 4-H Club

By Sara Beth Johnson



1. You reach kids you otherwise may not reach.

No transportation, no time, other commitments... all common responses we hear from people when asked why they aren't in 4-H. When you bring the program to them, these excuses don't apply! If you struggle with diversity in your program, this allows you to reach all ethnicities within a school district.

2. They meet during school hours - no additional nights or weekends for you!

Let's face it; we don't want to commit to anything else that is going to require after-hours work on our part. With school clubs, you meet generally between 8am-3pm!

3. Guaranteed contacts!

How many of you have planned an awesome program, bought all the supplies, just for no one to show up? I know I have! The great thing about school clubs is that you know kids will be there. Not only does this eliminate the frustration of planning a program that no one shows up to; it also makes planning much easier because you know exactly how many kids to plan for.

4. Recruitment

You will almost always have kids that want to be more involved. Use this opportunity to recruit in school club members into your other 4-H community clubs. Invite them to participate in your county wide activities, or compete in your County O'Rama. In our county, we've had great luck with in school members participating in day camps throughout the summer.

5. Networking

Most teachers love when you come to their classroom. It gives them a break from teaching, but

even better! Forming a relationship with teachers provides you with an opportunity to network with them, along with other people in the community. Networking is a great way to promote your program.

Grow 4-H through Racial and Ethnic Diversity

By Erica Williams



Did you know that by 2020 more than half of the nation's children (under the age of 18) are expected to be part of a minority race or ethnic group? America will soon be a minority-majority nation. Our clientele (young people ages 5-19) will be the most diverse generation of young people in the history of our state and country. Is your county 4-H program prepared to thrive in a multi-cultural environment?

One of the eight essential elements to positive youth development is an inclusive environment. One of the many needs of a young person is belonging.

As youth development professionals, we see first-hand how positive experiences in 4-H can completely change the trajectory for a young person. Shouldn't all young people experience belonging to a 4-H Club? How do we Extension professionals go about engaging and retaining young people from racially, and ethnically diverse communities in our 4-H programs?

Here are a few key questions to consider when you are working to reach racially and ethnically diverse audiences:

Marketing. Are the images of people in your 4-H marketing materials diverse? What images are you using to publicize who is a 4-H member or who can become a 4-H member? What underlying messages might the materials you use to promote 4-H in your county convey?

Leadership. Are you in for the long haul to grow your 4-H program through racial and ethnic diversity? Who are the adults volunteering to lead 4-H Clubs? Are these adults representative of the diversity in your county? Does your 4-H advisory board and county Extension council reflect the diversity in your county's communities?

Authentic Engagement. If you have a racially and ethnically diverse 4-H audience, how intentional are you in engaging them into the full 4-H experience? Are diverse young people attending workshops, o-rama, camps, or serving on planning committees? Is your approach to diversity authentic engagement or compliance engagement?

Let us all commit now to authentically engaging racially and ethnically diverse young people in our 4-H program so that 100 years from now 4-H will still stand as the largest, oldest and most respected youth development organization in America.

Our AAE4-HA Fundraiser is happening now!

Please spread the word and encourage your 4-H members, parents and volunteer leaders to purchase a t-shirt and/or a drawstring backpack. Money raised helps AAE4-HA sponsor 4-H record book & first timer's national conference scholarships. Use this link to order:

https://uaex.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_eQLpKbU9gBveGeV

Orders and payment are due to Sara Beth Johnson by May 18th.

What I Wish I Would Have Known

By Jeanie Rowbotham



While attending Tri District Conference and seeing half the room stand up for under 5 years of employment it was obvious that we have a lot of new agents in 4-H not to mention the new 4-H Program Assistants back in the counties doing 4-H work.

Being a more seasoned agent, I thought to myself what I wish I knew as a new agent. Here are the top five things I wish I knew as a new 4-H agent.



I wish I knew as a new 4-H Agent

1 Use your resources.

You do not have to re-invent the wheel. Lori Canada, 4-H Development Coordinator has some great 4-H science kits you can check out at the state office. Here is the link <https://sites.google.com/view/ar4hstem/home/stem-kits>. I have some kits I am happy to share as well, however; I do not have a website just email me and I will share my resources. Jeanie Rowbotham, Johnson County 4-H, jrowbotham@uaex.edu

3 Do what you like.

If you are interested in animal science that is great, build your program around that. Maybe you enjoy STEM education perfect do that. Or leadership is more your thing that works great too. If you are unsure, don't stress you have plenty of time to develop your interest and your interest can change.

2 Do not be afraid to ask.

For most of us (myself included) at no time in college did I take a class that told me exactly how to put on a county 4-H contest (chicken BBQ, dairy foods, county o-rama). I'd start with your county staff, ask how the 4-H contest has been done in the past. Then you may ask neighboring counties and state specialist who conduct those contests what they do. Then determine what works best for you. It is all about getting county youth involved and qualified to attend district and state level contests.

4 Build Relationships.

This one takes time but it is something to work on from day one. Each community and county has a vast number of people and resources unique to them. Find those people and get to know them. It can be a teacher, a 4-H volunteer, a quorum court member. If you find the right people, it can truly change your career.

5 Cut yourself some slack!

We were all new once and it takes a while to figure everything out. It is completely okay to not know everything the moment you walk into the office. It is okay to ask questions.... And I mean a lot of questions. We aren't judging you, I promise.





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