Idea Sheet

4-H PROMOTION IDEAS FOR COUNTY SITUATIONS

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Langlade County is a rural county of 19,000 people. Antigo is the largest town with 9,000 people. The 4-H program reaches 830 youth in 26 clubs with 270 adult leaders and 250 youth leaders. 4-H reaches 20.4 percent of 4,085 youth in Langlade County schools in third through twelfth grades. 4-H promotion is needed to help enroll more youth into the county 4-H program.

METHODS

The 4-H Expansion and Review Committee was formed to: 1) review current enrollment and location of clubs; 2) be certain that 4-H is open to all youth; 3) suggest areas where new clubs may be needed; and 4) suggest 4-H promotion activities.

The committee is composed of the Langlade County 4-H Board of Directors (nine adult and four youth leaders), one non-4-H minority person from each of the three school districts, and the 4-H and youth agent. The committee meets in May and the promotional plans for the next enrollment period (September 1 to April 1) are developed.

4-H PROMOTIONAL IDEAS

The agent contacts the local newspaper, shoppers guide, and radio station about 4-H promotion. Most of the promotion is done in the fall. The newspaper and shoppers guide contact donors to put ads in their paper for one day during National 4-H Week. The agent gives them the names of clubs and leaders to put in the ads for people to contact to join 4-H. The agent gives the radio station names and telephone numbers of 4-H leaders and members to contact to make short 4-H promos. The agent delivers "Join 4-H" brochures to businesses in September.
Older 4-H members contact grade school principals to set up a meeting with youth in grades three through six to promote 4-H. The youth contact the agent to give a talk and date of visit. The youth may use a 14-minute slide/tape presentation on 4-H in Langlade County that the agent produced. The slides show how clubs meet, 4-H projects, and county activities. After the slide presentation the 4-H members answer questions and may show their 4-H projects, then hand out "Join 4-H" brochures to interested youth. A letter is attached to the brochure for parents. The letter describes how parents can start a new club or get their youth into existing clubs.

A 4-H Poster Contest is held in June. The posters are judged and cash prizes awarded in the three age divisions. The members are asked to display their posters at schools, businesses, or churches during National 4-H Week.

The Expansion and Review Committee also promotes 4-H in the fall and tries to get new members in their clubs, as do 4-H members and leaders. The agent encourages 4-H families to get new clubs started by promoting the idea in the September and October 4-H family newsletters.

Other 4-H promotional ideas used in Langlade County were: 1) 4-H clubs replaced old metal 4-H road signs with new wooden painted signs; 2) the 4-H leaders association bought metal 4-H signs for each 4-H family; 3) 4-H older youth and leaders prepared a display of old 4-H pictures, ribbons, record books, and "Join 4-H" brochures for a booth at the fair; 4) the agent presented a slide show on 4-H to service clubs; 5) 4-H table mats were given to restaurants; 6) 4-H bumper signs were given to 4-H families; 7) 4-H club reporters prepared news releases of their club activities for the local newspaper; 8) two 4-H clubs held a 4-H promotion night at Elcho school and got two new 4-H clubs started; and 10) window displays were put in businesses during National 4-H Week. The agent also writes a weekly news column of 4-H activities to tell the public about 4-H.

SUMMARY

Through different types of 4-H promotional activities, 4-H enrollment in Langlade County has increased from 564 members to 830 members in a ten-year span. The type of 4-H promotion needs to be varied yearly to help reach new people. The 4-H activities by club, county, and state need to be told through news media to show youth and parents the many opportunities 4-H offers. With good 4-H programs and active promotion, the 4-H program should continue to grow.