



SURVEY RESULTS

Community service:  
What 4-H youth groups do  
to make a difference

*"I pledge...my hands to larger service,  
for my club, my community,  
my country and my world."*

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## SURVEY RESULTS

### Community service:

#### What 4-H youth groups do to make a difference

Youth community service and service learning have become popular in the world of education and youth development. Research shows clear evidence of the value of service for both youth and community. For example, a Search Institute study of 47,000 youth in sixth through 12th grades found that those who serve an hour or more a week are less likely to engage in at-risk behaviors (Benson, 1993). Development theorists have found that experiences during adolescence help shape lifelong values, suggesting that early service results in long-term payoffs (Conrad and Hedin, 1986).

America's leaders have embraced the service movement. George Bush started the Corporation for National Service and a Thousand Points of Light Foundation. Bill Clinton launched Americorps, a national service program. In April 1997, Presidents Clinton, Bush, Ford and Carter met in Philadelphia for the Presidents' Summit on America's Future. The summit identified five goals to improve the lives of young people, the fifth being "opportunities to serve." 4-H has made a national commitment to that goal by declaring that it will involve an additional 300,000 youth nationwide in community service over the next three years. In "Youth Voices and Action," the National Advertising Council's public service campaign to promote 4-H, the mandate is clear:

*"Community service learning strengthens the skills and knowledge 4-H'ers are acquiring by actively combining their learning with service to help meet real community needs. Every 4-H participant is encouraged to take part in community service that fits his/her areas of learning, as an important feature of 4-H youth development."*

#### Study describes type and amount of youth service

Community service by 4-H youth is not new. In fact, it is such a trademark of Extension's youth development program that it is taken for granted. While we know an enormous amount of community service goes on in Extension-sponsored youth projects around the state – benefiting both participants and communities – there are no data to indicate the nature of this service, its prevalence or what participants think about it. In 1996, the state 4-H youth development office began a statewide survey to address these information needs.

4-H has made a national commitment to the goal of community service by declaring that it will involve an additional 300,000 youth nationwide in community service over the next three years.

The purpose of the survey is to describe the type and amount of community service sponsored by Extension 4-H youth development and the value of that service to youth participants. This initial study documents youth community contributions across the state, a prerequisite for any later evaluation of the impact of community service.

### **Survey: design, data collection & follow-up**

In the fall of 1996, UW-Extension designed a pilot survey and tested the survey in consultation with four 4-H youth development county agents. We adapted the survey from materials in "Beyond Leaf Raking: Learning to Serve/Serving to Learn," published by the Search Institute in 1993.

In October 1996, we sent survey packets to 82 4-H youth development agents in 69 Wisconsin counties. Materials included a letter from the state leader, instructions for conducting the survey, a sample cover letter to be sent to leaders of UW-Extension-sponsored youth groups (4-H clubs and other youth groups), and a filled-in example survey (see appendix A).

County agents distributed and collected survey forms and returned them to the state office. We asked leaders to report on any community service their group was involved in from September 1995 to August 1996. We defined community service as any planned activities (projects, programs) that benefit others outside the club or group.

In the spring of 1997, we entered data from the completed surveys into an ACCESS computer file then generated statistics, word searches and reports. We mailed county reports of survey results to each county for agents to share with participating leaders (sample in Appendix B).

Altogether, 48 counties responded to the survey, providing data from 566 groups. Nearly all the responding groups were 4-H clubs. These groups represent more than a fifth of the total clubs (2,692) in Wisconsin. Response to the survey was voluntary; we provided no additional mailings or incentives to increase response rate.

### **Leaders report wide range of projects, youth participation**

Leaders of the 566 groups responding to the survey reported 2,879 community service projects (Table 1), an average of five projects per group, with a range of one to 24 projects per group. Note: We made no attempt to clarify the "service" nature of projects. Rather, we respected the leader's perspective on service activities and included all reported projects and activities. Projects vary greatly, which helps explain the range in number of projects per group. Group size and orientation also influence project numbers.

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**Table 1. Number of community service projects (N = 566 groups)**

County	# Groups Responding	# Projects	# Projects Per Group	
			Average	Range
Bayfield	11	39	3.5	1 - 9
Calumet	11	35	3.2	1 - 9
Chippewa	16	78	4.9	2 - 13
Columbia	22	118	5.4	2 - 13
Dane	11	64	5.8	2 - 16
Dodge	21	123	5.9	1 - 14
Door	4	15	3.8	3 - 5
Douglas	7	27	3.9	1 - 8
Dunn	17	86	5.1	3 - 12
Fond du Lac	8	37	4.6	2 - 9
Grant	11	98	8.9	4 - 15
Green	13	45	3.5	1 - 7
Jefferson	6	30	5.0	1 - 11
Juneau	16	60	3.8	2 - 7
Kewaunee	7	32	4.6	1 - 9
La Crosse	13	57	4.4	1 - 14
Lafayette	15	59	3.9	2 - 15
Langlade	6	28	4.7	3 - 7
Lincoln	6	40	6.7	2 - 15
Marathon	19	88	4.6	1 - 9
Marinette	5	21	4.2	3 - 6
Marquette	7	25	3.6	1 - 8
Milwaukee	2	8	4.0	4 - 4
Monroe	5	23	4.6	2 - 7
Oconto	12	71	5.9	1 - 11
Oneida	4	8	2.0	1 - 5
Outagamie	30	167	5.6	1 - 15
Ozaukee	12	33	2.8	1 - 6
Pepin	5	35	7.0	2 - 10
Polk	11	65	5.9	2 - 11
Portage	14	63	4.5	1 - 7
Price	13	60	4.6	1 - 11
Racine	9	32	3.6	1 - 6
Richland	15	64	4.3	2 - 9
Rock	15	79	5.3	2 - 14
Rusk	7	34	4.9	1 - 14
Sauk	6	21	3.5	3 - 5
Shawano	20	155	7.8	2 - 16
Sheboygan	13	70	5.4	2 - 16
St Croix	13	103	7.9	2 - 15
Taylor	6	34	5.7	5 - 7
Vernon	20	107	5.4	2 - 11
Walworth	6	35	5.8	4 - 9
Washington	12	73	6.1	1 - 11
Waukesha	23	118	5.1	1 - 12
Waushara	7	83	11.9	7 - 24
Winnebago	12	24	2.0	1 - 4
Wood	22	109	5.0	1 - 10
<b>Totals</b>	<b>566</b>	<b>2879</b>		

Total participation in the reported service projects was 39,065, with age breakdowns shown in Table 2. This number reflects multiple counts of individual youth since members often participate in more than one project. Actual membership in these groups totals 16,794, or 34 percent of all youth in Extension-organized clubs or units in 1996.

**Table 2. Age and number of youth participants in reported projects**

Helping behavior declines as adolescents age, which explains, perhaps, why fewer older youth participate in community service.	<u>Age of youth participants</u>	<u>Number</u>
	8 years and younger	7,474
	9 years - 13 years	20,138
	14 years - 18 years	11,453
	TOTAL	39,065

These participation figures are consistent with research on service activities across age groups (Benson, 1993). Given their developmental age and abilities, younger children are limited in what they can do. Middle-school youth, grades six and seven (ages 11-13) in particular, have strong pro-social tendencies and would be expected to participate in more community service. Helping behavior declines as adolescents age, which explains, perhaps, why fewer older youth participate in community service. Participation parallels membership levels in UW-Extension-sponsored youth groups by age, with the highest membership among the 9 to 13 age group.

In some cases, all group members participate in the same service project. In other cases, only a few members participate. Usually, members participate in more than one community service project.

**What kind of service projects do youth participate in?**

Survey instructions define community service as "any planned activities (projects, programs) that benefit others outside the group. Activities include single-service events, a seasonal project or an ongoing project."

Leaders reported a variety of projects. We grouped projects according to theme and purpose to form the categories in Table 3. More than two-thirds of the projects focused on (1) support to the elderly, (2) community improvement, (3) helping the disadvantaged and (4) environmental improvement. Nearly every county had projects of these types. (For a summary list of reported projects, see Appendix C.)

**Table 3. Categories of projects**

Category	No. of Projects	%
<b>1. Helping the Elderly</b> Projects when the principal beneficiaries or participants are seniors or elderly. Ex: Seniors, nursing home activities	673	23
<b>2. Community improvement</b> Projects that support community quality, community activities, community-sponsored services. Ex: Fairs, parades, beautification --flower and tree planting, clean-up and repairs, helping other service orgs., sponsored horse show, dog classes.	482	17
<b>3. Helping the Disadvantaged</b> Projects are focused on the "needy" in the community or abroad. Ex: Toys for Tots, Food Donations, Adopt a Family, holiday meals	460	16
<b>4. Improving the Environment</b> Projects where the principal activity has an environmental impact or environmental education component. Wildlife is included in this category while beautification projects are not. Ex: Adopt a Highway, roadside clean-up, wild bird houses, water quality, Recycling, wildlife	346	12
<b>5. Supporting 4-H</b> Projects that promote 4H and membership, support club projects, inter-club activities and learning. Ex: parade floats, booths at the fair, informational meetings, riding clinics	207	7
<b>6. Dairy and Farm Promotion</b> These projects are primarily concerned with the promotion of dairy farming and agriculture. Ex: Breakfast on the Farm, June Dairy Days, Rural Life Sunday	191	6
<b>7. Health and Sickness</b> This category includes all projects relating to health issues, whether it is fund-raising for illness foundations, promoting sports events, or helping local hospitals. Ex: Hospitals, bloodmobile, charities concerned with chronic illness, marathons, health education	131	5
<b>8. Working with Children and Youth</b> Projects whose beneficiaries are other children and youth. Activities that directly related to 4-H and club work are under 4-H. Ex: Holiday parties, babysitting, face painting	105	4
<b>9. People facing Crisis</b> Projects address victims of natural disasters or individuals in the community (or overseas) facing crisis. Non-specific donations or fund-raising for Red Cross are included here. Ex: Disaster assistance, individuals in community facing crisis (illness, injury, financial), outreach to Bosnia	65	2
<b>10. Helping People with Disabilities</b> Projects that benefit the disabled including fund-raising for specific needs. Ex: Leader dog for the blind, handicapped in community, Special Olympics	56	2
<b>11. Promoting Safety and Healthy Living</b> Projects that promote safety and preventing violence. Alcohol-free events for teens are included in this category because the emphasis is on safety. Shelters and projects for abuse victims are included here rather than in the crisis category. Ex: Farm safety, abuse victims, alcohol-free activities for youth in community	51	2
<b>12. Miscellaneous</b> Multi-purpose fund raising efforts, projects that do not seem to fit in other category, unclear who benefits and/or missing data	44	2
<b>13. Meeting Place Thank Yous</b> Projects done primarily to thank sponsors or hosts . Ex: Hall clean-up	30	1
<b>14. Helping Animals</b> Humane society and animal welfare projects	23	
<b>15. Supporting Multiculturalism</b> Projects that expose participants to experiences or information about diversity and cross-cultural experiences and exchanges. Ex: Foreign exchange students, Hmong, migrants, UNICEF, Japan exchange	15	

Service projects for older adults are the most common type of project, accounting for nearly 25 percent of all community service projects.

In general, community service projects tend to benefit one of three entities: the general public, a special group or an individual. Some projects, such as community beautification and roadside cleanup, benefit everyone in the community. Other projects focus on a specific group such as nursing home residents, club members or the needy. Still other projects, such as adopt-a-grandparent or donations to an ill community member, concentrate on an individual. Some youth groups organize projects with other agencies or groups, but more often the youth group performs the activity alone.

**Helping the elderly.** Service projects for older adults are the most common type of project, accounting for nearly one-quarter of all projects. They might be directed to seniors in the community or residents of nursing homes or senior centers. Activities include music recitals, playing cards, pet sharing, bingo, raking leaves, stacking wood, mowing yards, holiday parties, work days for shut-ins, delivering meals, nursing home visits, and adopt-a-grandparent or nursing home. Many clubs have ongoing relationships with senior centers and nursing homes. In some cases, individual youth have ongoing relationships with seniors.

**Promoting community improvement.** Youth often take part in activities that support community improvement. These activities have a "public good" orientation, benefiting the entire community. Such projects include flower and tree planting, community gardens, cleaning up and maintaining public spaces, collecting books for public libraries, supporting festivals and holiday events, partnerships with other community service clubs, and fund-raising for worthy causes by holding bake sales and car washes.

**Helping the disadvantaged.** A popular service project is helping individuals and families suffering from hunger, poverty or homelessness, both in the community and abroad. The most popular activities include holding food drives and helping at food pantries. Other frequently reported projects include toy drives, clothing donations, adopt-a-family or child, holiday donations (Christmas gifts, Thanksgiving meals and "Operation Easter Bunny"), Habitat for Humanity and fund-raisers with proceeds to help the disadvantaged.

**Improving the environment.** Environmental improvement is another popular service activity. Roadside cleanup, adopt-a-highway and recycling are the three most popular projects. Other activities include park, beach and trail cleanup and maintenance; reforestation projects; drain stenciling; wildlife habitat and preservation projects; and environmental education.

### **Projects include direct service & indirect service**

The majority of projects appear to have a **direct-service** orientation consisting of face-to-face interaction – such as visiting a nursing home or serving meals at a homeless shelter – between the youth and those who benefit. In some direct-service activities, the young person performs a task, such as tree planting or highway cleanup. Other activities have an **indirect-service** aspect where young people support those performing direct service by collecting canned goods for food drives or fund-raising for a worthy cause. Another category might be called **advocacy** and includes such activities as letter writing and public relations campaigns to influence public opinion (Smith, 1997). Although our survey did not ask for information on advocacy activities, it seems that few projects fall in this category.

### **Project frequency varies**

The majority of projects appear to be conducted annually. These include seasonal activities (Thanksgiving, Christmas, Valentines Day and Easter), community social events (fairs and parades), and annual donations and drives. Though not stated, we assume most groups conduct these activities year after year.

Other projects, such as helping a family in crisis or collecting donations for tornado relief, are done only once. Some projects require a long-term commitment, such as ongoing visits to a nursing home, park maintenance and highway cleanup. The survey did not evaluate the intensity of the involvement or the learning level of projects. We will need more research to understand these important aspects of youth community service.

### **Community service benefits youth & communities**

Considerable research shows that community service has value to young people. However, we wanted to know in what ways youth leaders thought Wisconsin youth and their communities benefit from service projects. Our survey included two open-ended questions with space for leaders to comment. Leaders wrote many lines describing the multiple benefits of service activities. Their comments revealed the following categories.

#### **Benefits to youth**

**Psychological development.** Leaders said youth gain empathy (understanding and caring about the feelings of others), self-esteem, sense of self, self-worth, pride, confidence and creativity from service projects. Many leaders wrote of the benefit of interacting with people of all ages, the value of intergenerational contact and the bonding that occurs through

Some projects require a long-term commitment, such as ongoing visits to a nursing home, park maintenance and highway cleanup.

“Learning about caring, sharing, responsibility for our land, community and the people we live with helps youth become responsible adults.”

– Monroe County leader

“Youth learn to be responsible, dependable and compassionate.”

– Taylor County leader

“Community service allows young people to give back to the community and see that they are an important part of the community.”

– Wood County leader

“Youth benefit by learning about responsibility, recycling, pride, and by working with seniors, their communication skills develop.”

– Calumet County leader

service activities with the elderly. As a Washington County youth leader said, “Service to the community permits individuals to feel good about themselves by helping others, which increases their self-esteem.”

**Social development.** Leaders emphasize that service activities teach youth to give of themselves. Young people gain satisfaction from helping others and serving the community. Service helps build pride in the community, leading to a sense of social connectedness and long-term commitment to the community and its values. Working toward common goals helps young people develop a work ethic and service-oriented values that carry over into adulthood. Service promotes social activism as youth develop a sense of belonging to something greater than the nuclear family. They learn that giving and receiving are equally enjoyable and that service can be fun. What’s more, they gain an appreciation for adults and seniors. A Columbia County leader summed it up this way, “Youth learn to work together to make things happen, and they have fun doing it.”

**Citizenship.** Leaders wrote that youth benefit from learning about responsibility and the skills needed to build a sense of community where people learn from and help one another. In performing community service, young people learn how a community works, about its structures, operations, influential individuals and groups, strengths and weaknesses. They learn how to identify and access community resources and get things done. Community service encourages young people to engage in community life. As a result they develop a sense of belonging and feel responsible for the community. In short, service projects, “help youth develop a sense of community and responsibility to that community,” said a Bayfield County leader.

**Intellectual development.** Leaders noted a variety of life skills youth gain by participating in service projects. Such skills include leadership, teamwork, cooperation, problem solving, organizational skills, public speaking, oral and written communication abilities, learning to share their talents, responsibility and follow-through, environmental awareness, and other social and personal skills. Youth leaders say service activities give young people a chance to practice civic responsibility while learning the skills needed to understand and resolve community problems.

### **Benefits to communities**

Besides benefiting youth, community service helps the community. Leaders said their communities benefit in the following ways from youth contributions.

**Economic benefits.** Many leaders commented on the economic value of youth contributing to their communities, in terms of monetary savings as

well as opportunities gained. Youth service projects help the community save money while providing activities and services that might otherwise not be possible. When youth service fills a community need, community resources become stronger. Likewise, creating community events and recreation keeps money in the community.

**Youth as assets.** Leaders commented on the negative image many people have of youth. But when residents see young people engaged in constructive activities, they gain a positive view of youth. Residents begin to see young people as community assets and learn to respect the needs of youth and their adult responsibility to them.

**Environmental benefits.** Everyone in a community gains from a clean, safe environment. Such an environment attracts visitors, which in turn builds economic strength. Environmental service projects help young people gain a sense of responsibility for the health of their community, state and country. Such projects also help educate the public about environmental issues and show others how to get involved.

**Social benefits.** Youth contributions allow communities to provide social events that help foster cohesion and meet citizens' needs, creating and strengthening community networks. Such activities also solidify young peoples' social ties to a community, giving them a stake in the future. What's more, youth service that addresses social needs adds to a community's safety net.

**Intergenerational interaction.** Leaders often mentioned the positive results of intergenerational interaction, whether between youth of various ages or between youth and adults of all ages. Activities among different age groups create bonds of respect and belonging, enriching the lives of all and fostering community spirit. Youth see themselves as part of a bigger whole. Moreover, interacting across generations helps youth understand and appreciate the older generation's history and role in a community's continuum.

**Educational benefits.** Communities benefit from the informal educational role youth provide through service. Many activities involve youth as informal educators, teaching others about the environment, community needs or the prevalence of rabies. The educational role may be intentional, such as when youth mentor other youth, teach a baby-sitting course or talk to groups about health issues. In other activities, the educational role is unintentional as when young people help build awareness and knowledge by holding alcohol-free events for area youth, or improve the environment through recycling, stenciling storm drains and building wildlife habitats.

"The community learns to respect the needs of youth and to listen to them."

– *Columbia County leader*

"Youth service accomplishes activities that the community would have to use tax dollars for."

– *Dodge County leader*

"Projects decrease intergenerational misunderstandings and misgivings."

– *Pepin County leader*

"Communities come to appreciate and value their youth as worthy citizens."

– *Dunn County leader*

"Learning how a community operates – on much volunteer time and not monetary rewards."

– Bayfield County leader

"When everyone pitches in to help, more things can be accomplished for the benefit of all."

– La Crosse County leader

"The community realizes that their youth are damed good and that not all carry weapons and are into drugs."

– Richland County leader

"Communities benefit from the energy and enthusiasm of youth, as well as fresh ideas."

– Chippewa County leader

**Civic involvement.** Leaders repeated over and over that community involvement produces responsible citizens. Diverse groups and individuals working together help strengthen a community. Participation exercises the democratic process, enhancing community life. Youth service becomes a model for organized and coordinated group involvement.

**Beautification.** Leaders also stated that gardening, landscaping, tree planting and park maintenance not only beautify the environment but enrich community life. Civic beauty fosters civic pride. In addition, these hands-on activities combine fun with civic responsibility.

**Agricultural promotion.** In Wisconsin, agriculture is a mainstay of the economy, which may account for the number of service projects that promote dairy and agriculture. Leaders said agricultural service projects build ties between the community and youth groups, strengthen the dairy industry and, as a consequence, the families and communities that rely on agriculture. What's more, such projects reinforce youths' agricultural roots, their ties to the land and farming as a way of life.

### **Evaluation & future research**

This survey indicates that community service programs involve more youth than any other type of Extension-sponsored 4-H program including the 4-H animal program, food programs or communications programs. Youth are making vast contributions to their communities in countless ways.

Survey findings also indicate that no two service projects are alike. They vary by purpose, age and number of participants, frequency, intensity and expected outcomes. Even when the stated purpose is the same, such as adopt-a-highway, for example, different groups will perform the project in different ways in different locations with different effects. In evaluating the impact of projects, we need to pay attention to the various ways groups implement projects.

### **Service means different things to different people**

Leaders who responded to the survey indicated that service can take place anywhere, anytime. We tend to think that "valuable" projects are ones that help the disadvantaged or have a "public" orientation that benefits many. However, leaders listed such activities as fund-raisers to support club activities, decorating a parade float, and organizing parties and events for younger children. One reason may be that community service means different things to different people. Words such as "service learning," "volunteerism" and "community service" may be used interchangeably but carry different meanings and expectations.

Traditionally, 4-H members participate in a wide range of volunteer efforts, performing "good deeds" for individuals and their communities. Community service implies a "public" good for the benefit of the community. Service learning, which has proliferated since the 1990 National and Community Service Act, is an evolving concept that includes experiential learning and reflection. We need more precise language and well-defined expectations of our community service activities. A growing research base exists to help define purpose, goals, processes and settings of various types of service activities.

### **Service projects vary in impact**

Research indicates greater impact for youth when they participate in ongoing service projects that allow them to build skills and values over time through structured opportunities for reflection. One-time projects can be significant depending on the nature and magnitude of the experience, though they tend to have less impact on the future helping behavior of youth or their civic, personal and social development.

While many activities appear to be one-time events, members may take part in many such activities throughout a year. How this affects pro-social behavior or development of a civic-minded, public work ethic is not clear. The survey does not differentiate between the frequency and intensity of service projects or the amount of intentional learning and reflection that takes place as part of a project. Simply participating in a service project does not ensure learning or effective service. Most reported projects seem to fit the "volunteer" category. However, restructuring or adding elements to some of the projects could move them into the "service-learning" category.

### **Implications for future programming**

1. Wisconsin 4-H groups are well-positioned to expand their youth volunteer tradition beyond familiar projects to a wider range of community service that might include partnering with other organizations, longer-term projects, and increased social responsibility and civic action.
2. Extension's link to county government gives 4-H groups an excellent opportunity to explore the connections between community issues, political process and policy development.
3. Adult civic clubs are a natural link for service-minded 4-H groups. Building long-term relationships between adult civic groups and community 4-H groups can add human and fiscal resources to community projects, provide opportunity for expanded youth-adult relationships and introduce youth to opportunities for continued community service as adults.

Wisconsin 4-H groups seem well-positioned to expand their youth volunteer tradition beyond familiar projects to a wider range of community service.

The role of youth in selecting, planning and implementing service projects is critical. Maximizing youth participation in these roles can greatly increase the youth development impact of the experience.

4. The service-learning cycle, involving an experience-reflection-conceptualization transfer, should receive special emphasis in 4-H service activities.

5. 4-H groups need to ask themselves whether their service projects address root problems or perpetuate inequity; whether they promote self-reliance or paternalism and dependency.

6. The role of youth in selecting, planning and implementing service projects is critical. Maximizing youth participation in these roles can greatly increase the youth development impact of the experience.

7. The role of adults as partners in service projects is crucial. Adults can ask the questions that lead to reflection, facilitate youth participation and serve as important role models for community leadership.

8. In evaluating activities, it's important to consider the many factors that influence project effectiveness. The challenge is to apply what we can learn from the research literature and our experience in Wisconsin to ensure that youth service really does make a positive difference – for youth participants and their communities.

### Summary

Youth contributions are a significant component of 4-H in Wisconsin. Extrapolating these survey findings to the state as a whole suggests that Extension 4-H youth groups participate in more than 10,000 community service projects a year. Observations of volunteer leaders indicate the vital impact these projects have on both youth participants and community recipients. Considerable research confirms the great potential youth service has for both youth and community development. While there is wide variation in the purpose, intensity and educational quality of the reported projects, it is clear that youth community service is a very important activity for many 4-H clubs and groups. Additional questions remain about the long-term impact of these contributions, but it is obvious from this study that 4-H is actively engaging large numbers of young people in the work of improving their communities.

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**Appendix A: Survey materials mailed to counties**



4-H Youth Development Programs

DATE: October 14, 1996

TO: 4-H Youth Development Agents

FROM: Greg Hutchins  
Assistant Dean and State Program Leader  
4-H Youth Development

As part of our four-year evaluation plan, we are initiating a statewide survey to document the scope of community service to share with key stakeholders. This is not a survey to assess impact or benefits of these activities so it does not include questions of that nature. Such an outcome evaluation may be undertaken as a second phase. The immediate interest and need is to describe the type and amount of community service activity conducted by Extension 4-H Youth Development. Your help in this effort is extremely important.

You will find everything enclosed to complete the survey. We've pilot tested this survey in several counties and hope you will find it easy to conduct. However, if you have any questions, please contact your District Liaison. We are also expecting the results of this effort to be very useful in the National 4-H Advertising Campaign to be unrolled in June 1997 that focuses on youth contributions, "Youth Voices and Action."

We all know that there is an enormous amount of community service work done by 4-H. This survey will provide us with some real data about these contributions that we can use with stakeholders. With this information we can more accurately and confidently tell this great untold story about 4-H.

Thanks for your help.

Enclosures

## **INSTRUCTIONS FOR CONDUCTING THE *COMMUNITY SERVICE SURVEY***

### Who to send the survey to?

- Identify 1 (one) leader for each youth group - the individual most likely to know about the group activities and most willing to respond. We hope to obtain 1 response for each youth group.

Include ALL youth groups that you work with: 4-H community clubs; county 4-H youth organizations, and ALL other UW-Extension organized youth groups you work with beyond the 4-H community club structure, such as Youth Futures and Friends Helping Friends.

### What to do?

- Duplicate the *Letter to Leader* on county letterhead and the three sheets, including the example, making one set for each leader. Note that one sheet is copied back-to-front.
- Place county name in top right-hand corner of sheet before duplicating.
- Personalize the letter: write in the leader's name, sign your own name. Include the date.
- Enclose a pre-addressed stamped return envelope with each mailing.
- Keep a list of all leaders you mail the survey to.
- Collect responses by November 8, 1996. Check their names off as you receive the completed forms. You may have to call and do some reminding to ensure a 100% return.
- Send the completed forms to the state office by November 15, 1996 [637 Extension Building, 432 N. Lake St., Madison, WI 53706-1498]
- Make copies for your own use before sending if you wish. In any event, look at your results and start to make sense of your data. What do you notice? What are any surprises? How much educational activity and learning is going on in these activities?

We will analyze your county results and send you the results by mid December. Along with the results, we will send you additional information about ways to use the information, including a sample one-page summary sheet to highlight your results and the state totals.

LETTER TO LEADER

Date

Dear

As part of our need to show accountability and describe the work which we accomplish around the state, we are undertaking a survey of all clubs and youth groups sponsored by Cooperative Extension to document the nature and scope of **youth contributions to their communities**. We know that our clubs and groups are helping their communities in many ways but we need to document our contributions systematically and share it with others. This is part of a statewide effort. We will use our county results with our own groups and decisionmakers as well as add our information to the state total to describe the magnitude of youth contributions across Wisconsin. Your assistance is vital. We are hoping that every youth group will want to be included.

In the attached materials, you will find two (2) sheets to fill-in and return plus an example. When completing the form, please include any community service your 4-H club or youth group was involved in from September 1995 - August 1996. We are defining community service as any planned activities (projects, programs) which benefit others outside the club or group. These activities might include single service events, a seasonal project or be an on-going project.

Please complete the attached form and return it to me by November 8, 1996.

Thank you for your continued work and support of our youth.

Sincerely,

# EXAMPLE

County Brentwood

## YOUTH CONTRIBUTIONS TO THEIR COMMUNITIES

Your name Mary Club Total number of leaders 2

Name of group Brentwood's Best Total number of members 17

Type of group:  4-H club  other, specify \_\_\_\_\_

Include all service projects involved in during the year, September 1995-August 1996

Name of Service Project	Project Purpose/Description	Number youth involved (age)			Frequency of activity *
		8&under	9-13	14-18 Total	
1. Adopt-a-nursing Home	regularly visit nursing home to establish ongoing relationship with sick person	10		10	1 visit every 2 weeks
2. Hospital bird feeders	build 10 bird feeders and place around local hospital	5	5	10	once - 1 meeting to build feeders + 1 meeting to setup
3. Rabies clinic	bring health officials, vets and community together to learn about rabies		Club	17	Annual
4. Recycling	manage recycling center for 1 month each year (4 Saturdays); separate materials and load	10	5	17	4 Saturdays
5.					
6.					

ADDITIONAL SPACE PROVIDED ON REVERSE

\* Indicate how often this activity occurs during the year: one time, weekly, monthly, bi-monthly, every 3 months, annually, etc.

County \_\_\_\_\_

### YOUTH CONTRIBUTIONS TO THEIR COMMUNITIES

Your name \_\_\_\_\_  
Total number of leaders \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of group \_\_\_\_\_  
Total number of members \_\_\_\_\_

Type of group: [ ] 4-H club [ ] other, specify \_\_\_\_\_

Include all service projects involved in during the year, September 1995-August 1996

Name of Service Project	Project Purpose/Description	Number youth involved (age)			Frequency of activity *
		8&under	9-13	14-18 Total	
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
6.					

ADDITIONAL SPACE PROVIDED ON REVERSE

\* Indicate how often this activity occurs during the year: one time, weekly, monthly, bi-monthly, every 3 months, annually, etc.

County \_\_\_\_\_

County youth Extension programs have and continue to serve their communities in many ways. Please offer your thoughts on the following two questions:

1. What are your reasons for doing these projects/activities?

2. What do you see as the benefits for youth and for communities from these activities?

Benefits for youth:

Benefits for communities:

Please list 3 members of this group that we might contact if further information is needed

NAME

Phone number

1. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

THANK YOU SO MUCH. Your input will help our total state youth development effort

**Appendix B: Sample of county survey results**

# Bayfield

Group Name	Group Type	Number of Leaders			Number of Members	
Woodland Workers 4-H Club	4-H	16			25	

Project	Description	8 and Under	9 - 13	14 - 18	Total	Frequency
Fat tire Festival	Work as volunteers	0	5	7	12	Annual
Christmas Cookies	Prepare plates of cookies	3	10	8	21	Annual
Christmas Parade Float	Prepare a float and participate in the Christmas Parade	4	7	7	18	Annual
Adopt a highway cleanup	Keep a 2 mile stretch of highway 118 clean of trash	0	5	5	10	Annual

### Reasons

provide activities which help members gain an understanding of the importance of community service and promote 4-H

### Youth Benefits

helps them gain the satisfaction of helping others or the community. The highway cleanup seems to instill pride in having a clean highway as they are particularly alert to any garbage left on their section.

### Community Benefits

accomplishes activities that the community would otherwise need to hire workers.

Group Name	Group Type	Number of Leaders			Number of Members	
Pine Creek	4-H	3			27	

Project	Description	8 and Under	9 - 13	14 - 18	Total	Frequency
Halloween party	Organized party for area children and families	1	15	11	27	Annual
Christmas program	Performed for parents, grandparents, and any one else interested in community	1	15	11	27	Annual
Adopt a highway cleanup	Clean a seven mile stretch	1	15	11	27	Annual
Town Hall grounds cleanup	Clean grounds and paint playground equipment in summer				0	Annual

### Reasons

### Youth Benefits

### Community Benefits

Group Name	Group Type	Number of Leaders			Number of Members	
Pioneer's	4-H	10			18	

Project	Description	8 and Under	9 - 13	14 - 18	Total	Frequency
Easter baskets to seniors	Decorated eggs and bought treats and filled baskets	0	6	4	10	Annual
Adopt a highway	Clean trash 1 mile E/W of town to make town look better and more welcoming	0	7	0	7	Annual

**Reasons**

learn good citizenship, care about our environment and others

**Youth Benefits**

The youth realize a feeling of satisfaction in serving the community through roadside cleanup. learned littering is wrong and hopefully won't be litterers and willing to pick up someone else's mess. learned caring through baskets

**Community Benefits**

Communities see so much negative actions by gangs and vandals. seeing our youths cleaning the roadside reminds the public there are still alot of good kids.

Group Name	Group Type	Number of Leaders			Number of Members	
Clover Valley	4-H	3			5	

Project	Description	8 and Under	9 - 13	14 - 18	Total	Frequency
Adopt a park	Helped cleanup beach and shelter of Siskiwit park	0	8	0	8	two times annual
Cornucopia dinner	Worked in dining room and cleanup	0	1	0	1	one time

**Reasons**

adopted park as 4-H project to keep clean for visitors

**Youth Benefits**

gives youth pride in helping keep the area neat for visitors coming to Cornucopia and locals picnicing

**Community Benefits**

makes place more attractive for visitors to come and enjoy the park

Group Name	Group Type	Number of Leaders			Number of Members	
Friends Helping Friends	Friends Helping Friends	1			16	

Project	Description	8 and Under	9 - 13	14 - 18	Total	Frequency
Friends Helping Friends	Prepared and led personal/social activities w/ elementary students	96	100	0	196	Monthly during academic year

**Reasons**

encourage middle school students as role models and leaders in a peer help program

**Youth Benefits**

involvement in social/personal skill building activities, encouraging relationship w/ older students

**Community Benefits**

building a network of support people in individuals' lives, create greater and deeper bonds of love and belonging; thus, a stronger community

Group Name	Group Type	Number of Leaders			Number of Members	
4-H Service Learning Club	Juvenile Court Intake	5			12	

Project	Description	8 and Under	9 - 13	14 - 18	Total	Frequency
Adopt a highway	Collect trash on county highway				0	one time
trail maintenance	Assist Park Service on Sand, Oak, and Basswood islands	0	0	10	10	one time for 3.5 days
Long Island Beach cleanup	Assisted Park Service in beach clean up	0	0	5	5	one time
Washburn Museum cleanup	Assisted museum staff w/ cleaning exhibit space				0	one time
City of Washburn Parks and Recreation Department	Painted little league dug out, park bench, and retaining walls				0	one time

**Reasons**

help youth pay back community for their delinquent behavior, provide training in life skills especially self esteem, provide positive adult role models for youth

**Youth Benefits**

learns of community operations, raises self esteem and completes obligations to the court

**Community Benefits**

Community recognizes the positive attributes of youth and receives help w/community projects

Group Name	Group Type	Number of Leaders			Number of Members	
Whispering Pines	4-H	8			22	

Project	Description	8 and Under	9 - 13	14 - 18	Total	Frequency
Christmas cookies to seniors	Baked cookies and wrapped to give to seniors				0	two times annual

**Reasons**

fun and activities w/ mixed ages

**Youth Benefits**

giving and receiving are equally enjoyable

**Community Benefits**

seniors never tire of the smiles of youth

Group Name	Group Type	Number of Leaders			Number of Members	
Friendly Valley	4-H	11			26	

Project	Description	8 and Under	9 - 13	14 - 18	Total	Frequency
Adopt a park	Cleaned Big Rock Park ,performed in conjunction w/ garbage pickup				0	annual
Face painting	Provide entertainment for children at three different area events	0	3	2	5	three times
Roadside cleanup	Pick up roadside trash surrounding meeting area of Bayview Town Hall				0	annual
Quilt raffle	Helped offset medical expenses incurred by former member, quilt and afgan made by member				0	once-throughout the year doing different jobs

**Reasons**

promote an awareness of the world around us, and how we as individuals can either have a positive or negative impact on it

**Youth Benefits**

knowing that if you are a kid that you can make a difference, teamwork makes activities go faster and more pleasant, helping others can bring a feeling of good about yourself

**Community Benefits**

clean roadside and parks, youth that is aware of impacts on the environment, youths that are positive role models, youths that will use these experiences and lessons as stepping stones into adulthood

Group Name	Group Type	Number of Leaders			Number of Members	
Cable Badgers	4-H	1			2	

Project	Description	8 and Under	9 - 13	14 - 18	Total	Frequency
Fat Tire Festival	Parking area volunteers				0	annual
Cable Sidewalk sale day	Made and sold popcorn concessions		10		10	annual
Valentines for seniors	Made cards for seniors		10		10	annual

Halloween carnival for Lions Club	Assisted Lions Club w/ youth carnival games	10	10	annual
Community Christmas caroling	Caroled in Cable vicinity		0	annual
Cable beautification	Weeded flower beds and cared for areas		0	three times annual
Lions Club July 4th Celebration	Sold concessions and helped at youth carnival booths		0	annual
Adopt a highway	Picked up trash		0	three times annual
Anti-Tobacco program	Made posters to educate public		0	Unspecified

<b>Reasons</b> helps develop a sense of community in our youth organization, promotes a community minded citizenry	<b>Youth Benefits</b> creates sense of belonging and pride in self as well as community, also neighborhood camaraderie	<b>Community Benefits</b> tomorrow's citizens are yesterday's youth, it lends an extra hand in projects designated by community, it takes an entire village to raise a child
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Group Name	Group Type	Number of Leaders			Number of Members	
Two Valley	4-H	3			21	

Project	Description	8 and Under	9 - 13	14 - 18	Total	Frequency
Christmas Food drive	Brought food for food drive instead of exchanging gifts	1	8	9	18	annual
Christmas Cookie exchange	Baked cookies and mixed for variety then distributed to shut-ins, neighbors, and grandparents	1	8	9	18	annual
Spaghetti dinner at St Florian's Catholic Church	Served luncheon to have the seniors meet our youth and work together		1	1	2	annual
Card party	Had party in early afternoon to avoid night driving for seniors, donated doorprizes		3	4	7	annual
Lunch for County Board meetings	Served lunch as community service and asked for money donations, did for 4-H PR as well		2	5	7	when asked by board members
Community dinner	Volunteered club to help serve dinner for Benoit CC		1	1	2	one time

<b>Reasons</b> get youth more involved in community, learn that 4-H is a community project and not a secluded club, learn about our senior community members who gave their time while they were younger it's a sort of payback time, visit lonely seniors	<b>Youth Benefits</b> making them see how a community works, going beyond the family unit to find work, meeting people in area and extending family unit, giving is just as rewarding as receiving	<b>Community Benefits</b> getting 4-H exposure to community, despite sports we have hard working youth that don't make headlines daily, learning how a community operates on much volunteer time and not monetary rewards
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## **Appendix C: Summary list of all reported projects**

## **Appendix C: summary list of all reported projects**

### **Support to the elderly**

1. Adopt a grandparent. Help a senior citizen on an ongoing basis.
2. Rake leaves, do yardwork, plant and maintain flowers for those unable and for nursing homes.
3. Drive seniors to store, doctor or church; run errands for seniors or shut-ins.
4. Help with community senior dinner.
5. Decorate meals-on-wheels trays; help deliver meals-on-wheels.
6. Host a card party for seniors.
9. Remember birthdays with gifts, cards and parties.
8. Build bird feeders and houses. Keep feeders filled.
9. Participate in Senior Citizen Day.
10. Help with Lifeline picnic.
11. Take treats and visit seniors and shut-ins.
12. Collect canned food for shut-ins.
13. Form a birthday club at a nursing home.
14. Put on a talent show, music recital, play, ice cream social or carnival for nursing home residents and their families.
15. Do craft projects, play bingo and cards with nursing home residents.
16. Collect magazines and books for nursing homes.
17. Share county fair projects with those unable to attend fair.
18. Make tray favors, placemats and table decorations for nursing home.
19. Make bedsheet covers; donate personal and health care items to residents.
20. Help with nursing home fund-raisers.
21. Celebrate holidays with senior citizens by decorating their homes; caroling; making holiday food baskets, baking Christmas and Valentine's Day cookies; making Christmas, Easter and Valentine's Day cards; and hosting parties.

### **Community improvement**

1. Volunteer to help with community festivals: set-up, clean-up, direct traffic, sell food, make window displays to publicize.
2. Support and participate in community parades.
3. Clean-up or beautify public area or Town Hall; donate items to Town Hall.
4. Build benches for town square or fairgrounds; plant trees around the community.
5. Help with community dinners.
6. Participate in Memorial Day services.

7. Support the County Fair; work on the fair committee; make signs; help with fairgrounds maintenance and clean-up; provide volunteers to sell food.
8. Work on community restoration project and historical sign maintenance.
9. Support the public library with donations, books, posters and fund-raising.
10. Clean up and maintain cemetery.
12. Provide baked goods or dairy treats for community events.
13. Set-up and clean-up at school functions.
14. Raise funds for community projects and services by sponsoring bake sales, car washes, aluminum can collecting, fish fries and cook-outs.
15. Help other voluntary organizations with fund-raisers.
16. Share pets in petting zoos at local events.
17. Form a music or drama group and perform at community events.
18. Check vendors in and help sell at Farmer's Market.
19. Host a community card party.
20. Serve as "Helping Hands" in the community.
21. Volunteer as ushers for local outdoor theater.
22. Make buttons to promote local children's museum.
23. Participate in community Christmas activities such as caroling, community decorating, Christmas programs and cookie exchanges.

### **Helping the disadvantaged**

1. Work on food drives for food pantries; volunteer at local food pantry; sell holly and mistletoe to raise money for food pantry.
2. Help local seniors in return for food pantry donations.
3. Grow garden and donate food to pantry.
4. Contribute to Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter food basket projects.
5. Give food or baked goods to local families in need; help serve free meals in community.
6. Help raise money for world hunger relief by publicizing, helping with, and participating in CROP Walk.
7. Hold a scavenger hunt to collect items needed by local social services.
8. Make clothes for dolls distributed by social services.
9. Participate in clothing drives; work in thrift shops that serve the needy.
10. Send winter clothes to Russia, send used shoes to South America, send home and school supplies to Haiti, and send boots to African youth.

18. Help with prairie and wetland restoration projects.
19. Plan nature exploration activities for children.
20. Lead environmental education workshops for children.

### **Supporting 4-H**

1. Participate in community parades to show club spirit.
2. Raise funds for club with concessions sales, raffles, animal shows, etc.
3. Review riding skills for 4-H youth with riding clinics.
4. Recruit new members with bowling or rollerskating outings.
5. Purchase books related to 4-H for Public Library.
6. Put up and take down animal cages at the fair.
7. Educate public about Coggins testing and 4-H.
8. Decorate downtown windows for 4-H promotion.
9. Fix up 4-H camp for summer use. Attend camp as a club.
10. Send care packages to former members at college.
11. Record radio ads for National 4-H week and sell them.

### **Dairy and farm promotion**

1. Participate in June Dairy Month community activities.
2. Help with "Breakfast on the Farm" dairy promotion.
3. Participate in Farm Progress Days.
4. Learn beekeeping from Future Farmers of America.
5. Provide petting zoo for County Fair.
6. Donate time and money to upgrade animal facilities at fairgrounds.
7. Get involved with "Rural Life Sunday" activities.
8. Open 4-H family farms for school children tours.
9. Give dairy promotional packets to new mothers in the hospital.
10. Return county farm orchard to production.

### **Health and sickness**

1. Educate public on health issues with a poster campaign.
2. Raise money for health charities with a bike-a-thon, bowl-a-thon or dance.
3. Help with local sporting event or race.
4. Make hospital visits; bring or send cards; make decorations.

5. Help with Red Cross blood drives.
6. Learn First Aid and/or CPR as a club activity.
7. Contribute time and/or money to Ronald McDonald house.
8. Protect public health with a rabies clinic.
9. Volunteer at local hospital or health center.

### **Working with children and youth**

1. Organize and host activities and parties for various holidays.
2. Volunteer in school "buddy" programs.
3. Participate in a baby-sitting course.
4. Provide baby-sitting at community events.
5. Celebrate parents with Mother's and Father's Day contests for children.
6. Publicize and promote Big Brothers and Big Sisters program.
7. Raise and donate funds for national children's charities.
8. Help with school fund-raisers.
9. Organize summer activities for youth.
10. Volunteer at local library or children's museum.

### **People facing crisis**

1. Raise money for local battered women's shelter.
2. Give money to families facing personal loss or illness.
3. Write letters to overseas military.
4. Collect supplies and funds for tornado disaster relief.
5. Help with tornado clean-up.
6. Donate baby items to home for single mothers.

### **Helping people with disabilities**

1. Establish outreach to residents in Rehabilitation Centers and county homes.
2. Organize entertainment and activities for local mentally retarded association.
3. Raise funds for organizations helping handicapped: i.e. cerebral palsy and Special Olympics.
4. Provide a foster home for a seeing-eye dog.
5. Start a horseback riding program for people with disabilities.
6. Participate in community programs for the disabled.

### **Promoting safety and healthy living**

1. Publicize and participate in Farm Safety Day.
2. Organize alcohol-free events for area youth.
3. Raise funds and donate supplies for local women's shelter or domestic abuse center.
4. Order safety material about youth and autos, distribute material at car dealers.
5. Volunteer to participate in mock disaster drills.

### **Miscellaneous**

1. Provide child care at PTO meetings.
2. Make money donations for various good causes.
3. Provide entertainment at various community functions.
4. Write letters to military personnel.
5. Collect aluminum can tabs for fund-raising.

### **Meeting place thank-yous**

1. Clean up and beautify meeting place.
2. Make donation of needed item for meeting place.
3. Plant flowers and/or plant trees at meeting place.
4. Mow lawn and do yard work at meeting place.

### **Helping animals**

1. Work in local animal shelter.
2. Volunteer at the Humane Society.
3. Participate in animal shelter food drive.
4. Raise funds for the Humane Society.
5. Make paper logs for the Humane Society to use as bedding.

### **Supporting multiculturalism**

1. Learn about and contribute money to foreign exchange students.
2. Raise money for UNICEF.
3. Send money to a Russian mid-wife.
4. Adopt a foreign child through one of the send-money-every-month groups.
5. Donate money to support church missions overseas.

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