



Oklahoma 4-H Youth Development Program

Building Leaders for Tomorrow

Instilling and developing leadership capabilities in youth and adults.

AGE LEVEL - Beginning

CONCEPT OR SKILL – Leadership roles and opportunities to develop skills – committee member, committee chair, helper, sub-committees, officer

LIFE SKILL(S) – Hands – Teamwork

Head – Marketable Skills

BEHAVIORAL INDICATOR – Like to help and want to demonstrate new skills. Imitate older boys and girls.

ACTIVITY 26: “Build a Machine”

THINGS TO KNOW:

There are many ways for club members to serve their group outside of being an elected officer. Early in their career help members to see that there are steps to be taken and skills to be gained before becoming an officer. As they gain confidence and develop their skills they move on to more challenging leadership roles.

A logical transition for developing leadership skills is 1) participating in an activity, 2) volunteering to help at an activity, 3) serving as an active committee member, 4) being a committee chair or sub-committee chair, and 5) serving as an officer.

It can be difficult for children to envision a finished puzzle without a picture on the box, but they know each piece has a place it fits to make up the big picture. Youth often live “in the moment,” and need help from older mentors in learning to plan for the future and being able to recognize that the small roles they play in their club are important to both them as an individual and the group as a whole.

The following activity is a fun way to working together as a group, as well as an opportunity to experience how decisions are made by a group. “Build a Machine” uses physical activity to illustrate and help youth understand that the work of each individual is important to the group as a whole.



Materials Needed: None, although it is a fun variation to supply the group with balls, rope, plastic noodles or similar prop items.

Do: Instruct your group that they are all world-renowned inventors who have been called together to build a new machine to better the planet. Using their bodies (and any props you may give them) they must create and demonstrate a machine, as well as explain how the machine will improve life on Earth. Everyone in the group must be a physical part of the machine and have a different task to accomplish within the larger workings of the machine.

Reflect: 1. How did your group organize? 2. How did you make decisions about the purpose of the machine and its design? 3. Were there people who took charge? Did they involve people in the decision making, facilitate discussion or tell you what to do? 4. What kind of communications took place in your group? What would have made for better communications? 5. Would the machine work as well if some of the parts were missing?

Apply: 1. Is it important to take a big project and break it into smaller jobs? Why? 2. What qualities are important for a committee or club to be successful in planning and conducting projects? 3. Name some small yet important jobs/roles necessary for our club to function well. Do you think we miss these pieces of “our machine” when the pieces are left out? 4. Is every leadership role important no matter the size or amount of responsibility? Why?

Source: Lester, Chuck. Camp Director, New London County 4-H Camp, Connecticut.