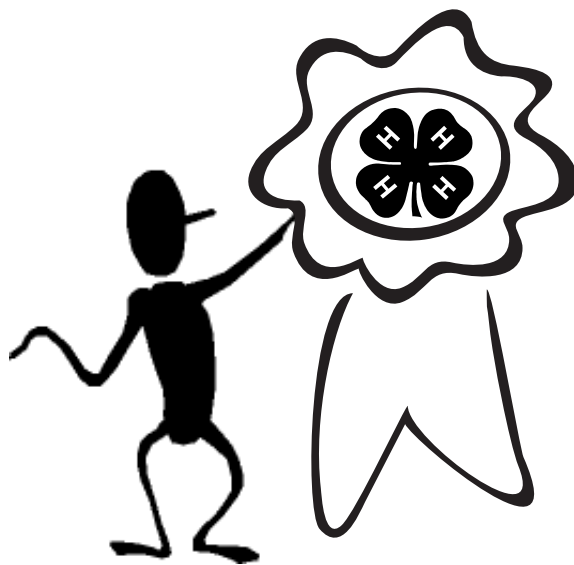


Volunteers are not paid — not because they are worthless, but because they are priceless.

An organization is only as great as the people in it and the people are only as great as the organization allows them to be.

# Michigan 4-H RECOGNITION HANDBOOK



MICHIGAN STATE  
UNIVERSITY  
EXTENSION

Bringing Knowledge to Life

11/2002

“Work is love made visible” — Kahlil Gibran

Recognition drives the human engine.

“We make a living by what we do, but we make a life by what we give.”—Winston Churchill

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# Thank You

The Michigan 4-H Recognition Task Force was formed to take a comprehensive look at all aspects of 4-H recognition and to explore ways to strengthen, enhance, and expand recognition opportunities for adults and young people in Michigan 4-H Youth Development programs

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A special thank you to all of these people for the time, insights and effort they gave to bring this project to completion.

Thanks also go to Priscilla Martin and Marian Reiter, State 4-H Office, for their assistance with editing and layout of this document.

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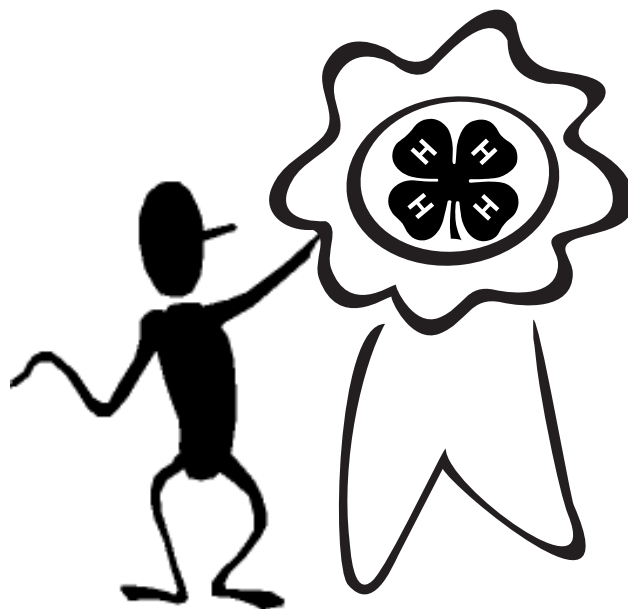
# Recognition and Awards: A Philosophy for Michigan 4-H Youth Development

## Recognition

Recognition in 4-H is the acknowledgment and affirmation of the personal growth of an individual or group.

## Awards

Awards are things we give persons or groups to symbolize their recognition. Examples are a trophy, a scholarship, stickers, a special dinner, etc. Awards can also be a pat on the back or a smile.



.....

# Introduction

The 4-H Recognition Framework (see page 4) provides all individuals with an opportunity for self-assessment, reflection and rewards to motivate and increase self-esteem in all settings. Michigan 4-H Youth Development has adopted this framework as the guide for recognition across our youth and volunteer programs.

The most important part of the 4-H Recognition Framework is that it provides for **balance** across all types of recognition. The model acknowledges young people for their continuing development of life skills, as well as project accomplishments. It

rewards volunteers for providing effective leadership in the area of positive youth development, regardless of the role the volunteers play within the 4-H system. In developing this document, the Michigan 4-H Youth Development Recognition Task Force spent significant time researching literature on recognition and the many recognition models that exist in volunteer organizations across the country. We hope Extension staff and volunteers find it useful as they develop and improve recognition programs in their counties, 4-H clubs and groups.

.....

# Basic Beliefs About Recognition in 4-H Youth Development Programs

Recognition is the after-the-fact display of appreciation for a job well done.

The following beliefs have served as a guide in the development of this document.

- Recognition in 4-H is a strategy for helping people become more capable and competent. Through the acknowledgment, affirmation and positive reinforcement of each person's effort, feelings of competence and capability increase and participation continues.
- Recognition is a basic human need.
- Recognition must build positive self-esteem.
- A balance between intrinsic and extrinsic recognition is essential.
- Recognition should be a planned part of everyone's 4-H experience.
- Appropriate recognition takes place in many forms.
- Everyone needs to be recognized at some time.
- Recognition is more meaningful when it occurs soon after it is earned and in front of individuals significant to the person being recognized.

- Appropriate recognition for an individual varies depending on the person's past experience, family lifestyle, community and cultural heritage.
- Recognition motivates people to excel and take worthwhile risks.
- Recognition fosters self-appraisal skills in young people by providing a strong foundation for them to engage in self-reflection and self-praise without the need for external rewards.
- Recognition, when used in all of its forms, provides a balance of appropriate recognition for all people.

Recognition is a key aspect of youth and volunteer development. When used effectively and appropriately, it encourages and supports learning in all parts of our lives. It is broader than competition, but can include competitive aspects. A comprehensive recognition program includes opportunities for recognition based on participation, progress towards goals, standards of excellence, peer competition and cooperation.

Age-appropriate recognition should encourage, support and enhance the lifelong educational

process. It should include opportunities for volunteers and young people of all ages and all years of participation. Additionally, it should recognize many levels of accomplishment, and it should exist at club, country, state and national levels.

Recognition for young people and adults is important in all parts of the 4-H program. Research has shown that successful recognition efforts address the following eight principles:

### **Principle 1:**

Emphasize success rather than failure.

### **Principle 2:**

If the person being honored likes public recognition, deliver recognition and reward in that way.

### **Principle 3:**

Deliver recognition in a personal and honest manner. Avoid providing recognition that is too slick and overproduced.

### **Principle 4:**

Tailor recognition and reward to the unique needs of the people involved. Having many recognition and reward options makes it possible to acknowledge accomplishments in ways appropriate to the particulars of a given situation.

### **Principle 5:**

Timing is crucial. Recognize contributions throughout a project or program year. Reward contributions close to the time an achievement is realized. Time delays weaken the impact of most recognition.

### **Principle 6:**

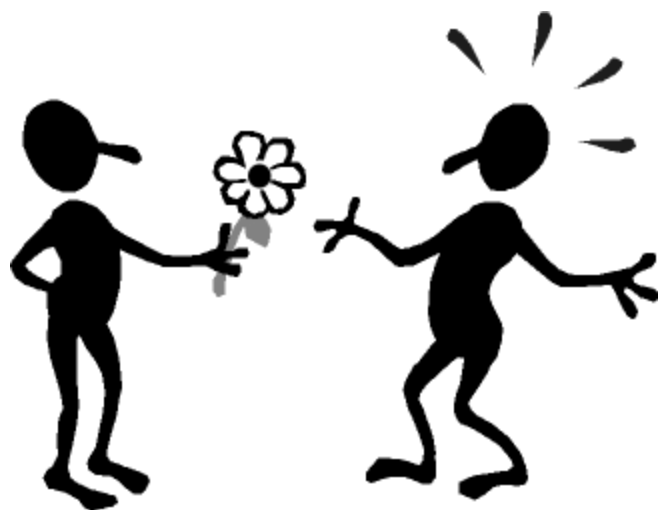
Strive for a clear, unambiguous and well-communicated connection between accomplishments and the recognition received. Be sure people understand why they receive awards and the criteria used to determine awards.

### **Principle 7:**

Plan recognition that is in proportion to the achievement. Be consistent in recognizing all when they contribute in comparable ways although the type of recognition may differ.

### **Principle 8:**

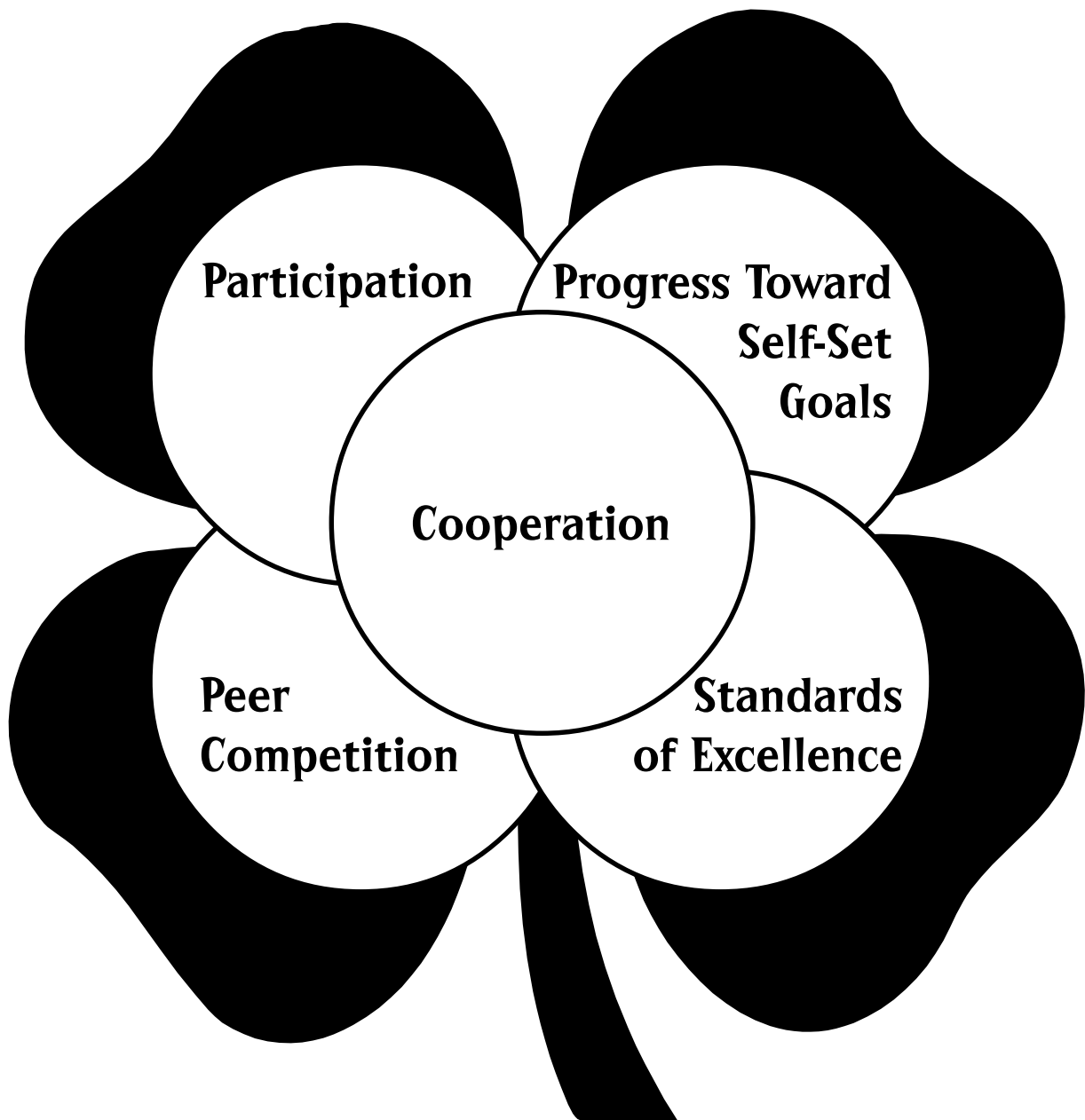
Recognize recognition. That is, recognize people who recognize others for doing what's best for the organization and the members they work with.



---

# The Framework

The 4-H Recognition Framework addresses the five major reasons for recognition.



**Source:** Parsons (1996), p. 1.

.....

# Recognition: A Very Important Part of the 4-H Experience

Recognition is a topic that is often discussed but not always addressed in ways that truly make a difference in the lives of the children and adult volunteers we work with in our 4-H programs. It is a way of saying “thank you” and giving a tangible item along with words. To volunteers, recognition signifies that someone notices and someone cares; to young people, it indicates that someone considers them and their activities important; to the rest of the organization, recognition creates role models and communicates standards.

Many times, our conversations about recognition center on debate about the value of competition in 4-H. Some people believe that recognition programs need to have a competitive element to be valuable. Others believe that competition is basically “bad” for kids and we should not be encouraging competitive activities in 4-H. In reality, the truth is a balance somewhere in the middle.

Recognition is a key aspect of youth and volunteer development. When used effectively and appropriately, it encourages and supports learning in all parts of our lives. It is broader than competition, but can include competitive aspects. A comprehensive recognition program includes opportunities for recognition based on participation, progress toward goals, standards of excellence, peer competition and cooperation (Parsons, 1996.) This is true for both adults and young people.

## Recognition for Participation

For some young people and adults, participation is a meaningful accomplishment. It can be a first step in improving self-esteem and encouraging individuals to continue to set new and higher goals. Examples of recognition for participation can include pins or certificates of completion for first-year

members and volunteers, celebrations marking the end of the program year that include all members and volunteers, thank-you or congratulatory notes to program participants, or publicly announcing (at meetings or gatherings) the names of individuals who participated in some special event.

## Progress Toward Self-Set Goals

This important type of recognition is often overlooked in 4-H. Recognition for progress toward self-set goals gives us the opportunity to help participants set realistic goals at the beginning of the program year, periodically review their work with them and give face-to-face or written feedback, and recognize them for making progress. Goal setting is an important skill for both young people and adults. As the popular saying goes “If you don’t know where you are going, how will you know when you get there?” Teaching program participants to plan effectively is an important life skill. Be sure to offer opportunities for participants to build this skill throughout their 4-H involvement. Goal sheets and checklists — that help individuals keep track of progress — are valuable tools to help individuals recognize progress toward self-set goals.

## Achieving Standards of Excellence

This type of recognition is most useful when evaluating success related to products produced or skills gained. It is most commonly linked to a competitive event. An example most people in 4-H are familiar with would be the Danish system of awarding blue, red and white ribbons at the fair. A true Danish system is evaluation against a standard of excellence that is the same for both young

people and adults. In 4-H, we use a modified Danish system. It recognizes excellence against a standard that is adjusted according to age and years of experience. When recognizing individuals for achieving standards of excellence, it is important that these standards be visible, achievable and relevant to experience.

## Peer Competition

Competition is the most visible kind of recognition in 4-H. Competition is highly motivating for some individuals, while others have no interest in it. 4-H has a long tradition of offering competitive events as a part of our program, especially those activities linked to county fairs. The State 4-H Awards Program is another competitive event that challenges our older young people to compete for state-level awards in more than 30 different project areas. Ribbons, trophies, plaques, scholarships and certificates are common forms of recog-

nition in competitive events. As a volunteer leader, it is important to be aware of the value your members place on competition. We often hear the argument that “kids need to learn how to compete to be successful in the real world.” While competition is a tradition in American society, it is not the answer for everyone.

## Cooperation

Young people and adults should be recognized for working together to learn and achieve goals. This allows individuals to examine their own skills and abilities, and explore solutions beyond their own ideas. Community service and other leadership opportunities are great ways to encourage individuals to participate in cooperative learning experiences. Plaques, certificates, scholarships, letters of reference for portfolios and pins can all be effective forms of recognition in this area.

---

# Recognition and Motivation

David McLelland’s (1962) research helps us understand why one person values one kind of recognition while another person views the same reward as worthless.

- **Achievers** like tangible rewards that specifically mark accomplishments. One example of recognition is a plaque that notes a great number of hours served, funds raised, etc. Achievers often respond well to letters in their personnel file.
- **Affiliators** like recognition that highlights relationships they have established. They like to be rewarded in the presence of family and friends. They often love personal letters from leaders, supervisors, etc.
- **Power-motivated** people like recognition that allows others to be influenced to the benefit of the cause or vision. They respond to articles about themselves in periodicals that tell the story of 4-H and invite others to become involved.

Seeing recognition as multifaceted and subtle, we need to take care to provide both a volunteer environment that is rewarding in itself and also formal and informal recognition for specific accomplishments.

### If the motivator is:

### Achievement

### Reward him or her with...

- Certificates of accomplishment at stages (e.g., 5, 10, 15... hours, years, steps reached, projects completed, people served)
- Concrete perhaps physical - projects with a recognizable and reachable end
- A place to put or mark completed projects
- Public recognition
- Reference letters
- Letters of appreciation to his or her boss or family



**If the motivator is:**

## **Affiliation**

**Reward him or her with...**

- Thank you's
- Small gifts
- A social get-together
- Name badges
- Team projects
- Special T-shirts made for events
- A public listing (maybe with pictures) of all volunteers
- Sentences that use "we" or "us" rather than "you"

**If the motivator is:**

## **Power**

**Reward him or her with...**

- Public praise and recognition for his or her work
- Leadership roles
- Titles or rank insignia
- Opportunities to talk to others about the cause
- Photos of him or her with the executive director
- A VIP "\_\_\_\_\_ of the Year" award
- A request for his or her advice
- Attention, openness, use of some of his or her ideas

---

# **Recognition Ideas**

For recognition to be memorable and meaningful, it is necessary for it to touch peoples' lives. A heartfelt compliment, a sincere thank you, recognition at a meeting, a handwritten note, a certificate of appreciation or a symbolic gesture say more than any amount of flamboyant glitz. With these kinds of recognition, we must remain consistent for organizational purposes. If one individual is rewarded, all must be rewarded for equal work or achievement. This helps with organizational relations and also relations between staff and volunteers.

When a volunteer or member goes above and beyond, it is only logical to recognize and reward him or her. Reinforcing such an accomplishment encourages improvement and it also serves to invite the volunteer or member back for another opportunity.

Recognition is delivered in two ways:

- **Publicly** in meetings, at 4-H gatherings, in 4-H newsletters, in correspondence to the 4-H community, on a county 4-H Web site, on news releases and with framed certificates.
- **Privately** through a thank-you card, in person with the volunteer or member, in an email message.

The following page contains other suggestions for ways to recognize accomplishments within the categories outlined earlier in this document. The ideas can be incorporated into club, county or state program activities. Use the information to review your club, county or state-level recognition opportunities to see if they include appropriate recognition options for the members and volunteers you work with.

# Recognition Ideas

Form of Recognition	To Recognize...				
	Participation	Progress Toward Self-Set Goals	Achieving Standards of Excellence	Peer Competition	Cooperation
Verbal acknowledgment or public thank you's	✓			✓	✓
Thank-you notes or letters	✓			✓	✓
Letters (copy to commissioner or legislator)			✓		
Certificates	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
"Hall of Fame" nominations	✓				
Awards (e.g., Most Improved, Completion of _____ of the Year")	✓				
Pins	✓	✓	✓	✓	
County project medals		✓	✓	✓	
Plaques		✓	✓	✓	✓
Ribbons				✓	
Medallions				✓	
Trophies				✓	
Promotional items (e.g., mug, tote bag, etc., from National 4-H Supply)	✓		✓	✓	✓
Gift certificates or monetary awards	✓	✓		✓	✓
Memory books	✓				
Savings bonds				✓	
Show blankets				✓	
Director's chairs				✓	
Written resource materials or project supplies		✓		✓	
Scholarships (e.g., MSU 4-H scholarships for trip or college, scholarships for Kettunen Center workshops, scholarships in an award area)			✓	✓	✓
Trips	✓			✓	✓
Write-up (perhaps with picture) in local newspapers, county newsletter or "Michigan 4-H Today" or announcement over the radio or on television	✓	✓		✓	✓
Recognition from the mayor, city council or county commissioners					✓

# 60 Ways to Show Someone You Care

Recognition is sometimes as simple as letting someone know you care about him or her. The following is a list of simple things you can do to let the people you work with – youth or adult – know they're important (adapted from Roehlkepartain, 1998)

1. Notice them.
2. Learn their names.
3. Look in their eyes when you talk to them.
4. Ask them about themselves.
5. Remember their birthdays.
6. Set boundaries that keep them safe.
7. Be honest.
8. Be yourself.
9. Notice when they're absent.
10. If possible, present options when they ask for advice, not just single solutions.
11. Send them a letter or postcard.
12. Answer their questions.
13. Tell them how terrific they are.
14. Create a tradition with them and keep it.
15. Learn what they have to teach.
16. Use your ears more than your mouth.
17. Make yourself available.
18. Show up at their concerts, games and events.
19. Apologize when you've done something wrong.
20. Allow them to make mistakes and help them learn from those mistakes.
21. Give them lots of compliments.
22. Catch them doing something right.
23. Say thank you.
24. Ask for their opinion.
25. Encourage win-win situations.
26. Let them solve most of their own problems.
27. Help them become experts in something.
28. Be excited when you see them.
29. Praise more; criticize less.
30. Be consistent.
31. Admit when you make a mistake.
32. Tell them how proud you are of them.
33. Let them know you appreciate their efforts.
34. Help them learn something new.
35. Be understanding when they have a difficult day.
36. Appreciate their personalities, with all their strengths and weaknesses.
37. Trust them.
38. Ask them to help you.
39. Give them your undivided attention.
40. Believe in them.
41. Give them immediate feedback.
42. Include them in conversations.
43. Respect the choices they make.
44. Delight in their uniqueness.
45. Inspire their creativity.
46. Accept them as they are.
47. Create a safe and open environment for them to learn.
48. Make decisions together.
49. Help them take a stand and stand with them.
50. Encourage them to help others.
51. Cheer their accomplishments.
52. Allow them to be themselves and celebrate the uniqueness of each person.
53. Tell them what you expect of them.
54. Welcome their suggestions.
55. Encourage them to think big.
56. Introduce them to new experiences.
57. Talk directly together.
58. Expect their best; don't expect perfection.
59. Empower them to help others.
60. Love them, no matter what.

# Certificate of Appreciation

Is presented to

\_\_\_\_\_

For your sincere dedication to the

\_\_\_\_\_

**Your time and efforts have made a difference in the  
people's lives you have touched.**

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

---

# Formal and Informal Thank-You Letters

Thank-you letters provide an important, tangible record of appreciation. It is important to send letters in a timely manner following events or recognitions. The components of a formal thank-you letter usually include:

- MSU Extension letterhead.
- Basic letter format.
- Explanation of what the volunteer did or accomplished.
- Formal thank you.
- Signature of the person in charge of the volunteer effort (e.g., Extension agent, project coordinator, club leader or committee chairperson).

The components of an informal thank-you letter may include:

- Thank-you card bought in a store (such as 4-H note cards) or an electronic card from the Internet.
- Can either be typed or written out.
- Appropriate colors or colorful graphics.
- Statement saying “thank you” or expressing appreciation of service.
- A small gift certificate.
- A 4-H sticker or other small token of appreciation.

Be creative!

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# Other Recognition Ideas

Extension Specialist, Pat Fultz (n.d.) with the Kansas State University 4-H Youth Programs developed all of the following ideas. The first three use many of the same items and, therefore, we consolidated them. You can include any items from the list in any of the packages.

## Volunteer Essentials Kit

Each individual receives a small colorful bag, with “Volunteer Essentials” printed on one side and printed information about the items enclosed on the other side.

## Stress Management Kit

Each individual receives a colorful bag (use appropriate graphics [e.g., illustration of someone holding the whole world on his or her shoulders]) with “Stress Management Kit” printed on one side and information about the items enclosed printed on the opposite side.

## Success Kit!

Place a few items along with a note of explanation in a small bag or box to present to each volunteer or member.

Some ideas to include in any of these kits are listed below.

- A rubber band... to remind you to remain flexible **or** to remind you to stretch your ideas and your mind to new limits so you will continue to grow.
- Smarties...because you are smart.
- Post-It Notes... to keep communication flowing.
- An Almond Joy... because sometimes you feel like a nut.
- Paper clips... to keep you organized or to help you hold things together.
- Bubble gum...to revitalize the child within.

- Hugs and Kisses... because you are valued or to remind you that you are loved or to remind you that everyone needs a hug, kiss or a word of encouragement everyday.
- A teamwork quote... because teamwork is so important.
- A Snickers... to remind you to laugh.
- A pencil... to write down all your good ideas.
- Confetti... to remind you to celebrate even the smallest successes.
- A penny... to give you the extra “cents” everyone needs **or** to remind you of the value of your thoughts, big and little! Share them with others.
- A lollipop... to help you lick your problems.
- A caramel... to help you “chew the fat” with friends.
- A stick of gum... to give you a stick-to-it attitude.
- A pin... to help you pinpoint problems.
- A piece of string... to help you tie up loose ends.
- A Lifesaver... to keep you from drowning in everyday problems or to remind you to think of your friends as “lifesavers.” They care about you and want to help you through the stressful times that occur in your life.
- A lemon drop... to remind you “when life gives you lemons, make lemonade.”
- A tissue... to remind you to see your own tears and needs as well as others.
- An eraser... to remind you that we all make mistakes and they don’t have to be permanent.
- A toothpick... to remind you to pick out your own and others’ good qualities, and to be tolerate and accepting of the differences among people.
- Stars... to acknowledge your many accomplishments!

## Candy Bar

Cover the paper wrapper with fun, funky paper on which the following is printed:

- Front: THANK YOU! You have been so sweet!

- Back: Thank you for... (use a different font for each vertical column.)

C	H	O	C	O	L	A	T	E
o	u	p	a	p	a	c	a	m
u	m	e	n	t	u	c	l	p
n	o	n	d	i	g	e	e	a
s	r	e	o	m	h	p	n	t
e	s	r	i	t	t	t	t	h
l	s	s	e	a	s	y		
			m	r	n			
						c		
							e	

## Prescription for Success

Each person receives a small bottle, filled with small colored candies, and plugged with a cork top. The colorful label includes the following (use different colored ink and appropriate graphics for each respective remedy!):

- Top line: “Rx -Take yourself or share with others when needed.”
- Green: Teamwork
- White Speckle: Smiles and Laughter
- Yellow: Strength
- Orange: Leadership
- Pink: Communication
- Blue: Sharing
- Red: Service
- Purple: Fearlessness

## Leadership Garden

Each individual receives a bundle of seed packets. At the top of the bundle is a small piece of paper — printed in color — entitled “Leadership Garden” and with the words “Take good care of the garden!” Use special scissors to trim the edges of the paper in fun shapes!

The bundle is comprised of small envelopes containing real vegetable seeds. Printed in color on the front of the envelope is the information shown below that is appropriate for each respec-

tive vegetable. Be sure to use some fun graphics to illustrate each of these veggies, too!

- **Plant five rows of peas**

- Preparedness
- Politeness
- Promptness
- Patience
- Perseverance

- **Plant four rows of turnips**

- Turn up for teamwork
- Turn up with a smile
- Turn up with new ideas
- Turn up with real determination

- **Plant five rows of lettuce**

- Let us be faithful
- Let us be loyal
- Let us be unselfish
- Let us be thoughtful
- Let us be loving toward others

- **Plant three rows of squash**

- Squash gossip
- Squash criticism
- Squash indifference

## More Appreciation Ideas

Here are some more ideas for ways to show appreciation to volunteers and members.

- Attach a strip of magnetic tape to the back of a small box of raisins and attach a small note "Thanks for raisin' all those funds!"
- Attach a note to a bag of mixed nuts, stating, "We would go nuts without your support!"
- Wrap votive candles in cellophane and tie them with ribbon, attaching a note stating "You light up the lives of so many!" **or** "You lighten our load by volunteering."
- Involve young children in creating thank-you posters with poster board and crayons or markers. These hand-drawn posters can be given to donors, businesses and others partners to hang in their office lobbies or building entrances.
- Involve young people in painting *terra cotta* pots to give to volunteers. On the rim of the pot, paint "Thank you for helping us grow." Inside, place packets of flower seeds and a certificate. Tie a few strings of raffia around the top and have the young people present the pots to the volunteers!
- Take a yellow work glove and stuff it full (to the fingertips) with fiberfill. Using ribbon, tie it closed around the wristband. On the palm side of the glove - using a craft paints of different colors - paint a variety of shapes (e.g., heart, star, 4-leaf clover) and small dabs of paint on each finger and thumb. In the palm, paint in big letters "Thank you!" surrounded by more small dabs of paint. Then attach a note to the ribbon that says, "Give Yourself A Hand!"
- To a small container of Play-Doh, attach a label that says "Thank you for making a commitment to shape the future of our youth program/ organization!" Put a 4-H sticker on the top of the lid.
- Tape, staple or somehow attach a small plastic toy dinosaur to a round circle of colored construction paper on which is printed "Dino-mite job! Thank you for all you do!"
- Using colorful ribbon, tie a note to a pair of sunglasses. On the note, print a special message that includes the person's first name, followed by "Thank you for all your work as Committee Chair/Leader. Your leadership and energy have helped to make our organization/program so bright we gotta wear shades!"
- Present a state, city or county map (that has a four-leaf clover taped on the front on it) to someone who has been involved in your program's strategic - or long-range - planning process. Personalize the clover by: (1) printing the name of the individual on one leaflet and (2) beginning with the left-hand leaflet and going across to the right-hand leaflet, print the words "Thanks for helping 4-H/ our program/organization map out tomorrow". Then have a child or a program representative sign his or her first name at the bottom or on a remaining leaflet.

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# Sample Press Releases

## News Release #1:

### National Volunteer Week Salutes Volunteers in *(State)*

*(Hometown, State)* – Each year, thousands of volunteers in *(state)* donate their time and energy to make their communities a better place to live. These volunteers will be among the millions across the country to be spotlighted during National Volunteer Week, *(insert dates)*.

One group that relies heavily on volunteers is the *(county)* 4-H program. This year, *(total number)* volunteers - both young and old — have served as club leaders and project leaders for the *(number)* 4-H clubs in *(county)*.

*(Add quote from 4-H youth specialist about impact of volunteers on the 4-H program.)*

Volunteers spend numerous hours working on tasks such as helping organize an event at the county fair, helping a child with a 4-H project or leading a community service project.

*(Add quote from a 4-H volunteer.)*

Club volunteers are only one group of leaders across the state who are instrumental in carrying out the mission of the *(state)* Cooperative Extension Service. These volunteers are involved in every aspect of the county Extension service including determining the needs of the residents, planning programs, securing resources and evaluating programs.

The *(county)* Extension Council is one example of this. The *(number)*-member board - consisting of elected and appointed citizens - works with the county Extension staff to plan and oversee Extension activities.

*(Quote from another county Extension staff member.)*

The work of Extension volunteers is continuous. Every day a volunteer is lending a helping hand to make Extension programs beneficial to the residents of *(county)*.

**Source:** *Mary Jo Williams, State 4-H Youth Development Specialist, University of Missouri*



## News Release #2:

# Family Volunteering Benefits Everyone

“The increasing trend of volunteering with family members is great for the family, for the people and the causes they help, and for the future of the community” says

\_\_\_\_\_ (name), \_\_\_\_\_ (position).

National survey results provided by the Independent Sector, a coalition of nonprofits, foundations and corporations based in Washington, D.C., document the increasing popularity of family members volunteering together. The results also show that family volunteering is having an impact in several ways. The study, conducted in 1998, found 28 percent of all respondents reported volunteering with other members of their families, and 51 percent of those who were volunteering had done some of their volunteering with a family member. The latter percentage – up three points from the 48 percent reported in a similar 1995 Independent Sector survey – has increased steadily since 1991 when 41 percent volunteered with family members.

Family volunteering increases the help available to community causes. It makes more volunteer hours available in the community now and throughout the lifetimes of the children involved.

\_\_\_\_\_ (Name) notes that there is substantial evidence that when children volunteer (with adult family members) their adult volunteering behavior is influenced. Seventy-two percent of the volunteers in the 1998 survey reported they were active volunteers as children. Eighty percent of the volunteers saw family members helping others when young. When they'd seen both parents volunteer, the trend was even more likely to continue as adults.

Volunteering with family members is associated with increased volunteer time (4.3 hours per week versus 3.5 hours for those who didn't volunteer with family). They were also more likely to volunteer at regularly scheduled times (45 percent versus 33 percent).

Volunteering with family members can help strengthen the family, \_\_\_\_\_ (name) said. Youth can develop an understanding of the issues of those in need, gain a belief that they can make a difference in the community, and build skills and explore careers, while having positive experiences with their family members. Most families enjoy spending the quality time together.

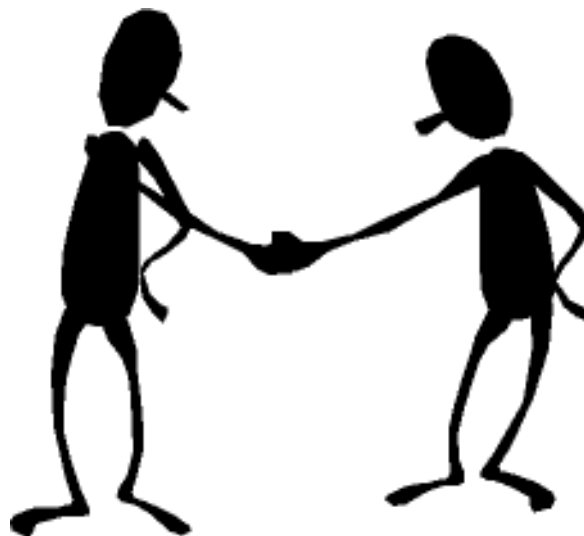
Independent Sector's publication, *America's Families Volunteer*, contains recommendations for groups that want to take advantage of this growing theme in volunteerism. Organizations should recognize that over half (53 percent) of family volunteers found out about the opportunities through an organization, group or job site where they were associated. Religious organizations were the most significant. Thus, organizations seeking to recruit families should work through these groups. Nearly half of the volunteers were asked to be involved. Thus, one strategy is to have current volunteers ask other members of their families and organizations to which they belong. Obviously, to make family volunteering a reality, volunteer roles will need to be revisited. For example, options for various age groups working together will be needed. Hours and lengths of volunteer assignments may need to be adjusted. Tasks will need to be described so that parents can judge how well their family members fit in.

For more ideas on family volunteering and to obtain the *America's Families Volunteer* publication, visit the Independent Sector Web site at <[www.independentsector.org](http://www.independentsector.org)> or telephone (888) 860-8118.

**Source:** Mary Kay Munson

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# The Important Things Are Not Ribbons

There once was a boy, won ribbons, mostly blue  
Came home from the fair, with a big trophy too.  
With a voice glad and proud, he said to his dad,  
“’Tis the very best year that I’ve ever had.”  
Said his very wise Dad, “Son, I’d like to hear,  
Why you think this was such a fine year.”

“Why, Dad you know, all the prizes I’ve won;  
How I’ve come out on top, in most things I’ve done.  
Just look at the ribbons that hang on my wall  
And think of the money, I’ve made since last fall.  
From premium checks, and a big auction price  
You can’t help but think cash and ribbons are nice.”

But the man said, “My son, you’re not thinking right,  
Blue ribbons, ‘tis true are better than white;  
But ribbons will fade and trophies grow old,  
Money’s soon spent, and fame soon grows cold.  
The important things, son, are not ribbons or pins,  
And sometimes it’s really the loser who wins;  
Now here are the things, most important, it’s true  
Your 4-H experience has accomplished for you.”

“You’ve seen how a business meeting is run  
This knowledge will help you in years to come.  
You’ve conquered the fear of addressing a crowd,  
You’ve learned how to stand up and talk nice and loud.”

“Patience you’ve learned, in your projects, too,  
As well as your skills, that will always help you.  
You’ve learned to cooperate with majority rule,  
To give in with grace and not be a fool,  
Who must always have his very own way.  
Be it in club work, in school or at play.  
You’ve learned how to lose, without making a ‘beef’  
You know the judge judges to her best belief.  
You’ve learned how to win, without boasting too loud,  
A kid can lose friends, if he’s overly proud.”

“These are the things, most important to you.  
You’ll remember and use them all your life through.  
They’ll help you become a mighty fine man,  
They’ll do more for you, than any prize can.”

—Anonymous