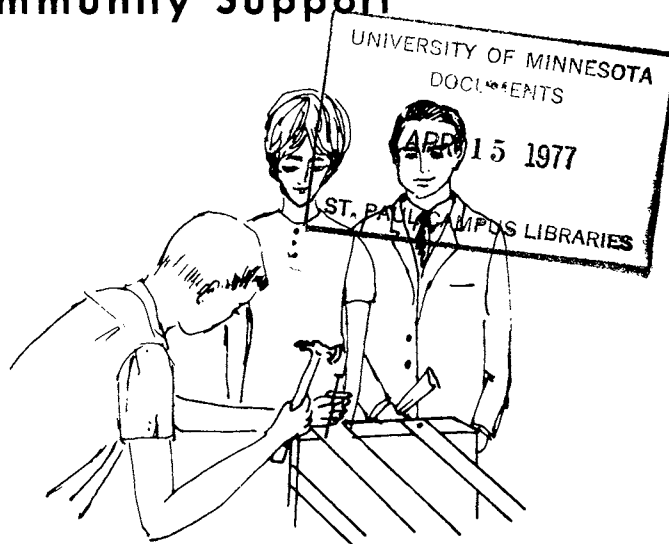


No. 6—Parent and Community Support

I am a parent. My name is Edith Keller. I like kids. My girl, Myrtle, is in 4-H now. She likes to sew. My boy, Joe, is waiting for spring so he can plant his 4-H garden. This winter he has made a storage box for toys from old wooden crates.

Tommy tries to help Joey build, but Joey says he gets in the way. Tommy is 8 now and is waiting for another birthday. Then he'll be old enough to join 4-H. Little Elizabeth is only 4, so she'll have to wait a long time.



I was glad when the Homemakers' Club wanted to help start a 4-H Club. I told Mrs. Jennings and Phillip Harris that I would help, but no one has asked me. Lots of other parents would help, too, if they were asked.

Mrs. Jennings and Mr. Harris are doing a good job with the 4-H'ers. But it's a lot of work for them, and we could all help.

I would be glad to have the 4-H Club meet here at my house. We don't have much space, but kids don't care if they sit on the floor. My kids play on the floor a lot. If there are too many to come here, I could help with a meeting at the school or the hall. If they want me to, I'd serve the lunch at a meeting. I think it's best if each of the families serves lunch at certain meetings. Myrtle said they usually have cookies and something to drink.

My husband has been helping Joey with his shop project. He could help teach some of the other boys at the same time he's helping Joey. He works in construction in the summertime, but when it's cold they're not busy. He's glad to have something to do and has plenty of time in the winter.

Some day when I see Mrs. Jennings in church, I think I'll ask her if we could have a potluck supper for all the 4-H families. Maybe we could find out how the parents can help the 4-H Club members.

(Later)

When the potluck was held at the school, the 4-H members gave a program. Some gave talks about what 4-H is and what they have learned. Joey gave a demonstration. He showed how to use and take care of the tools he used when he built his storage box.

While we were eating, I talked to some of the others. We thought we should have a parents' committee to help the club if it was all right with Mrs. Jennings and Mr. Harris. They said we would have a better club if all the par-

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ents were as interested as we were. Five of us are on the committee. We're going to meet next week to talk about ways parents can help 4-H. We've got a lot of ideas already.

Jimmy Jones said he thought all the parents should be interested enough in their own kids to help them. "Parents have to know about the projects," he said, "then they can help the boys and girls decide what to take for projects. They'll know, too, if members should be in beginners, juniors, or advanced."

Martha Smith said she thought parents should help the club with planning. She said when she was in another community the 4-H Club had meetings every month. They had some project meetings, too, like when all the beginners in the foods project worked together with a project leader.

"Those 4-H'ers were the busiest kids I knew," she said. "They were always doing something and this helped get the rest of us busy. Maybe the parents could help plan something for the community."

I had some ideas that I'd been thinking about, too:

Parents could help with the achievement program and the fair.

Parents could be recognized along with the members.

The extension agent might write a letter to the parents of new club members. It would help them feel welcome.

Would it be too much for the leaders to visit with the parents about their 4-H boys and girls?

Parents can help with a lot of things and don't like to only do the "chores."

They need to be complimented for the support they give. Thank-you's are important.

If the 4-H did things to help the community, I bet the community would pay more attention to 4-H.

Let's do some service to the community, like fixing up the park.

We could visit the nursing home.

How about our club working with the J. C.'s on the bicycle safety program?

The 4-H Club in this community got off to a good start, thanks to the interest of this mother. She pointed out many ways in which parents can help the club program and ways the club could be a real force in the community.

Research has found that most parents who know about 4-H will help with club work if they are asked. There's plenty for everyone to do. Sharing leadership with the parents will help lighten your load and leave more time for you to do many things that you can do best.

References: 4-H Leaders' Handbook, p. 9

REPLY FORM

After you have read the unit on Parent and Community Support, please fill in this form and return it to the extension office. Thank you.

1. Take another look at the story of parent and community support. List as many ways as possible that parents can help your club.

2. In what other ways have parents helped your club?

3. List your questions and comments about parent and community support of 4-H.

Your name: _____

Address: _____

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