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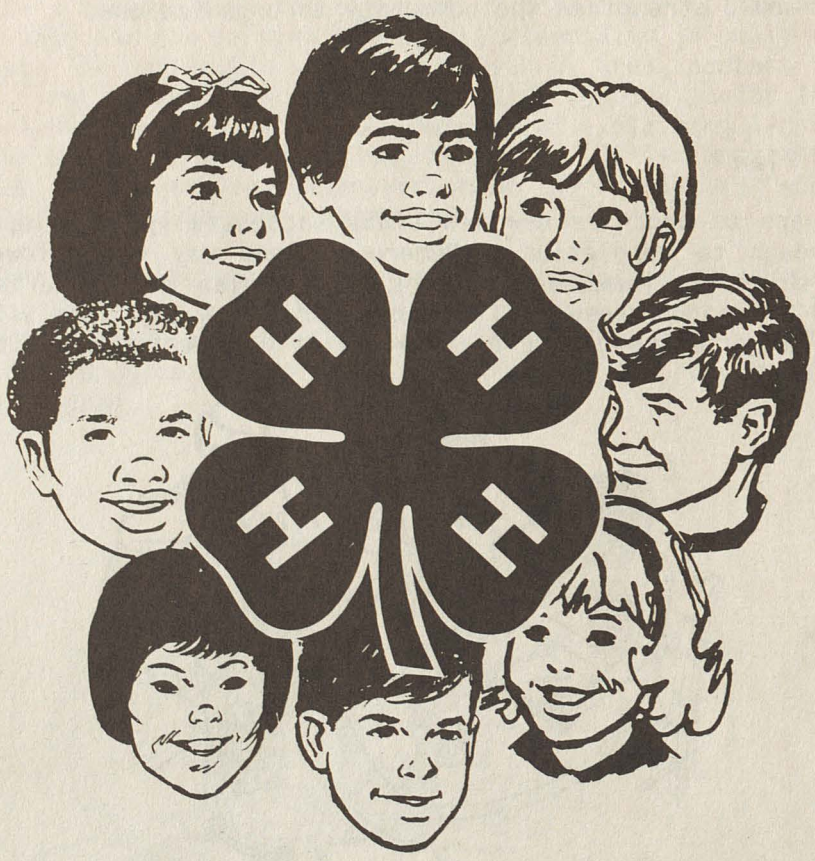
# Steps to Organizing a 4-H Community Club

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Juanita Reed  
Extension Specialist,  
4-H Youth Development

Agricultural Extension Service  
University of Minnesota



## STEPS TO ORGANIZING A 4-H COMMUNITY CLUB

Organizing 4-H clubs and offering 4-H experiences to more boys and girls is an important part of the county extension agent's job. Increased enrollment of boys and girls in our 4-H program will come about through strengthening membership of existing clubs and organizing new 4-H clubs in rural, rural non-farm, and city areas where clubs are not existing.

Traditionally, community 4-H clubs have been the primary method of involving youth in the 4-H program in Minnesota. The State 4-H Program Review completed in 1979 recommends that this continue to be the major method for 4-H participation. Counties should have as their goal 60% of their total 4-H membership in organized community 4-H clubs. Extension agents must take an active role in stimulating interest in a community for 4-H, encouraging existing clubs to recruit new members, and organizing new clubs in areas where true interest is shown. Once a club is organized, agents need to give organizational help and nurture to new leaders.

When does a new 4-H club need to be organized? Here are several indicators:

- \* A group of interested boys and girls approach you about organizing a new club.
- \* An adult expresses an interest in having a 4-H club in the community.
- \* Individuals express an interest in 4-H in areas where there is not a club
- \* The members of an existing club decide it is so large its membership will not be able to take in any new members; or the club is so large its members cannot receive maximum benefits from their 4-H membership.
- \* You or a local leader knows of an area that does not have a 4-H club and where it would strengthen the community to organize one.

### Develop a Plan

If you are to organize new 4-H clubs successfully, develop a plan and follow through to completion. Numerous plans may be followed, but the important things to remember are to choose a plan that is effective, that works, and that gets results. The usefulness of any plan you choose is successful only to its degree of flexibility in meeting new situations and circumstances.



## Set the Stage

Before a 4-H club can be organized you may need to set the stage. Let people know what 4-H is, what the values are, and what is needed to have a successful 4-H program.

There are many ways leaders and extension agents can lay this groundwork. Here are some tips:

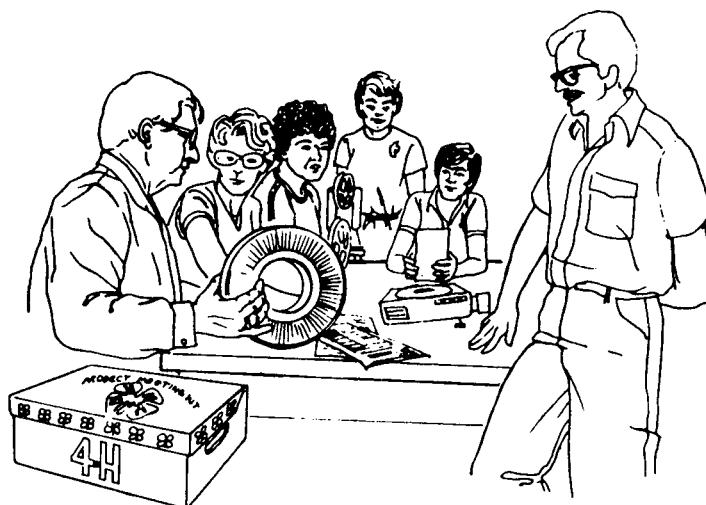
1. Talk to the parents, boys and girls, and other people in the community.
2. Visit the homes of possible members.
3. Make contacts through other community organizations.

Parent-Teacher Associations and extension homemaker groups are helpful in securing names of interested parents of children eligible for 4-H. Church groups, service clubs, and other civic organizations also offer opportunities for contacts and should not be overlooked. Volunteer to talk or arrange for others to talk on 4-H at community meetings.

4. Visit the local newspaper editor and discuss ways of publicizing 4-H member activities.
5. Place posters, displays, or exhibits in store windows and in schools.
6. Visit classrooms to describe and tell about 4-H.

An elementary school area, for purposes of organization, may be the community base for one or more new clubs, especially in small town or urban areas. In working in a particular school area, contact the school principal first. See if he or she will allow you and junior leaders to hold an orientation meeting for the purpose of explaining 4-H to prospective members and handing out brochures. It is important to stress that this is the only involvement of the school, for school officials are often concerned about this.

Another contact in the school setting is the director of community education. He or she may help you identify the key influentials in the community interested in education or may suggest ways that a short-term informational program may be conducted as a part of the community education program.



# 4-H

7. Conduct a day camp to show prospective members what 4-H is all about.
8. Conduct a short-term program (three two-hour sessions) to provide an opportunity for prospective members and families to experience 4-H.
9. Conduct Workshops of Expression or Art In The Park activities to interest boys and girls and parents in 4-H.

There are many ways to "sell 4-H" but experienced leaders tell us it is personal contact with the youngster and his parents that most often brings new members into a club.



### **Why Do Children Join?**

Looking at it from a youngster's point of view, he or she will want to join the club if:

- \* He or she has friends in the group or at least feels the club will be friendly.
- \* Parents are in favor of their joining the club.
- \* He or she is interested in what the club will be doing and the projects that are planned.

Any technique that will support these concerns and develop interest in the 4-H program should be utilized.



## THE FAMILY ORIENTATION MEETING

After successfully identifying prospective members and parents who indicate an interest, the next step is to call an orientation meeting for both youth and their parents. The purpose of this meeting is threefold:

1. Create an interest in 4-H -- sell the 4-H program.
2. Obtain a group decision on starting a club.
3. Establish a parent committee.

Who calls? Preferably a parent or other well-known community resident will call the meeting. An extension agent, program assistant, ambassador, or area service leader may call the meeting if parents or other community leaders prefer not to call.

Who attends? All prospective members and their parents should be extended an invitation to attend. You may want to devise special invitations specifically for this purpose.

This preliminary meeting is the key as it often sets the tone for future meetings. One way to insure success is to carefully outline the entire meeting, including songs, games, and detailed explanations of business matters to be discussed. One and one-half hours should be long enough for this meeting. It is essential that county extension agents or experienced 4-H members and leaders be present to give help to this family orientation meeting.

### Before the Meeting

- \* Arrange for the meeting place.
- \* Arrange for someone to be chairman of the meeting. It might be an older 4-H member, a junior leader from another club, or a prospective leader or agent.
- \* Prepare the setting and have someone designated to arrive early to check physical arrangements (heat, ventilation, chairs). If possible, set up display of project materials and pictures.
- \* Plan recreation; prepare name tags.
- \* Assemble enrollment materials and promotional publications.
- \* Outline the meeting carefully with the chairman.



# 4-H

Here is a sample agenda:

## The Ice Breaker

Greet each person personally or be certain someone else does. Provide name tags if any within the group do not know each other. A game or something for the youngsters to do as they arrive is important. Encourage getting acquainted. See Fun and Games, 4H-BU-0077, for ideas.

## When All Have Arrived

1. Call to order
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Welcome everyone. Explain what will be done at this meeting.
4. Opportunities in 4-H
  - a. Explain what 4-H is and how 4-H is organized: club projects and activities. Suggested visual: slide set 4-H Is and Isn't, 4H-SS-4251.
  - b. Explain what it means to be a 4-H member:
    - \* Will enroll in one or more projects.
    - \* Will participate in club meetings.
    - \* Will need to do some work at home (may need parent help).
    - \* May participate in 4-H events.
    - \* Will have fun.
    - \* Will belong to an international youth organization.
  - c. Explain the role and expectations of parents.
5. Discuss Project

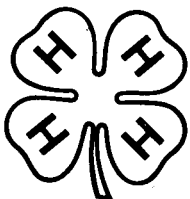
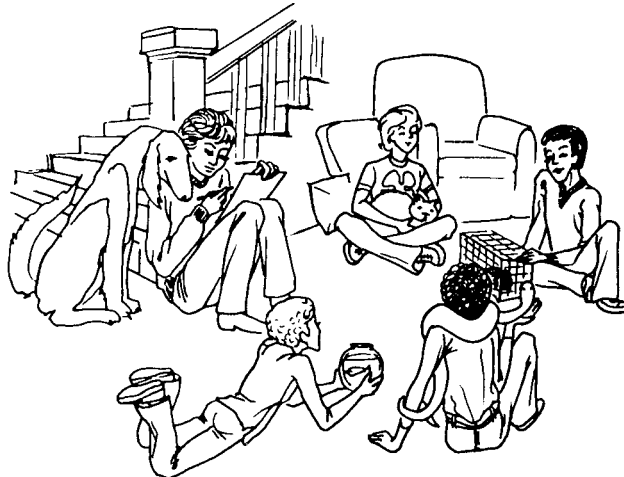
Have examples of project material. Junior leader might discuss what they've done and show examples or pictures.

## 6. Determine Interest in Organizing a Club

At this point you are ready to find out these things from the group:

Are the boys and girls and their parents definitely interested in organizing a 4-H club? Remember that the decision must be theirs, since they will be responsible for the club. If yes, establish a parent's committee to act as an advisory committee to the club and assist in obtaining the organizational leader and the necessary project leaders. Ask for volunteers. If no parents volunteer, end the meeting by saying, "There apparently is not enough interest in the club to warrant organization." This approach will usually bring volunteers. Then arrange for the organizational meeting.

7. Recreation
8. Refreshments



## Follow-up

After the family orientation meeting, the agent should meet with the parent committee to explain the committee's responsibilities, outline the leadership needed for the club and suggest how leaders should be recruited.

Responsibilities of the parent committee include:

1. Assisting in selection of the organization leaders.
2. Finding project leaders for the projects in which the club members are interested. Leaders should be selected as soon after the orientation meeting as possible. Boys and girls are eager to get started at this time; don't let the enthusiasm die.
3. Locating a place where the club can hold its monthly meetings. The committee also should set the date and time for the first monthly meeting and notify club members.
4. Assisting organization leader with enrollment at first meeting.
5. Planning recreation and light refreshments for the first meeting.

The agent or club organizer needs to be prepared to explain the club leadership structure and responsibilities of each leader. Describe specific leader responsibilities accurately and precisely. The more specific the role assigned to a leader is, the higher the probability that a person will accept it. When a person is asked to be a leader, he should be told what his specific duties or responsibilities are, when and where he can secure help, and how long he is expected to serve.

## **THE ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING**

If an organizational leader is selected at the parent's meeting, it is important that you visit with him or her before the next meeting. Counsel with him or her regarding responsibilities as a 4-H leader. Provide him with essential tools for getting the club organized -- leader's handbook, program planning, enrollment and officer information. Work with the leader to develop an agenda for the first meeting.

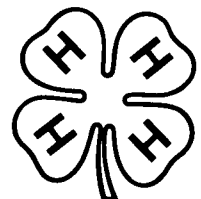
A suggested agenda might include:

### **The Ice Breaker**

Greet each person personally or be certain someone else does.

Provide name tags if any within the group do not know one another.

Have a game or some activity for the youngsters to do as they arrive.



## **When All Have Arrived**

### Business Meeting

1. Call to order.
2. Flag pledges.
3. Roll call.
4. New business.
  - a. Nominations for officers -- president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, news reporter. Secretary and treasurer can be combined if the club is small.  
(Once officers are elected, let them assume the responsibilities for carrying on the remainder of the meeting.)
  - b. Nomination for club name -- encourage the members to use their imaginations. Be sure the leader knows the names already used by other clubs in the county. Appoint a "Name the Club" committee if necessary.
  - c. Discuss the proposed program for the remainder of the 4-H year. Appoint a planning committee to complete the planning process using ideas generated by the group.
  - d. Enrollment and project selection -- assist members in selecting projects and filling out the enrollment cards. Make certain an accurate enrollment of projects is recorded on the official enrollment form, 4H-FS-0028. Project materials may be distributed if the agent has them along.
  - e. Introduce leaders and have leaders give announcements.
  - f. Announce time, meeting, date, and place of next meeting.
  - g. Assign next meeting responsibilities.
5. Program

Include short project features or discussion of projects that will be most appropriate for the club.
6. Recreation
7. Snacks



### **ORIENTATION/ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING**

In some cases the first meeting will be an organizational meeting rather than a final orientation meeting, particularly if there has already been some definite commitment made by parents in establishing a 4-H club and an organizational leader or leaders identified. In that case the agenda for the first meeting would be a combination of points covered at the orientation meeting and the organizational meeting.

## When All Have Arrived

1. Welcome everyone, explain what will be done at this meeting.
  - a. Explain what 4-H is and how 4-H is organized -- club, projects, activities. Suggested visual: slide set 4-H Is and Isn't.
  - b. Explain what it means to be a 4-H member:
    - \* will enroll in one or more projects
    - \* will participate in club meetings
    - \* will need to do some work at home (may need parent help)
    - \* may participate in 4-H events
    - \* will have fun
    - \* will belong to an international youth organization

## 2. Discuss Projects

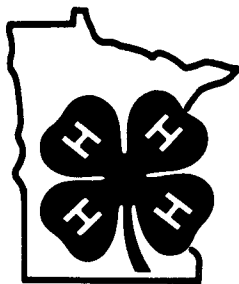
Have examples of project materials. Junior leader might discuss what they've done and show examples or pictures. 4-H Is, 4H-BU-0021, is a good resource.

## 3. Selections

- a. Name for club -- use your imagination, check to be sure the name is not used by another club.
- b. Officers -- president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, news reporter. You may wish to wait until the second meeting if the members do not know each other well.
- c. Project -- find a project that interests the group; make final selections at the next meeting. Announce date, time, and location of next meeting.

## 4. Recreation

## 5. Refreshments



## Follow-Up

An informal discussion with the parents could be most helpful after the first meeting. Knowing what parents hope to have their children gain from 4-H can be helpful to you in planning the yearly program.

Emphasize with the parents that 4-H can help with their parenting role. 4-H is a youth program, where young people should have every opportunity to learn by doing. This means conducting their own meetings, carrying out their projects as best they can. At the same time these young people need help, encouragement and support from parents and leaders. Help needed will vary according to the individual.

This is a good time to solicit help you need for the rest of the year. Some of the parents may be willing to serve as leaders of projects or activities, others may be happy to provide transportation, special help. You may want to use parent interest forms to determine interest.

## SO...THE NEW CLUB IS ORGANIZED, BUT REMEMBER, FOLLOW-UP IS IMPORTANT

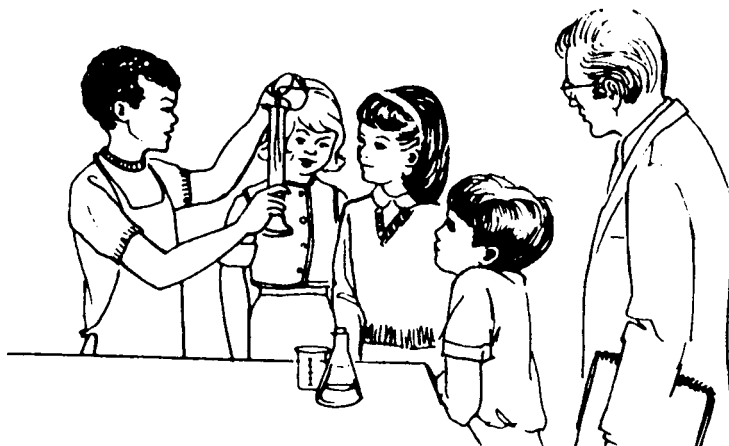
Visit with your new leaders from time to time. Find out how they are getting along. Chances are they will have a variety of questions when you call. You may need to attend the first two or three meetings of the club; or work with the planning committee as they plan the yearly program. Answer their questions. Let them know you are interested. Your work with this new club isn't over and you hope it never will be.



### Hold New Leader Training Meetings

New leaders expect to be and need to be trained for their responsibility. Plan your new leader training program early and inform the new leaders of scheduled meetings. Make it understood that they are expected to attend. New leader training may be held on a county-wide basis or as area meetings or as kitchen conferences. The technique is not important as long as it meets the needs of the new leaders and helps them be successful.

Credit is given to 4-H publications from Nebraska, South Dakota, for portions of this bulletin.



APPENDIX A

Worksheet For 4-H Family Orientation Meeting

Use this guide for planning and conducting your family orientation meeting.

COMMUNITY 4-H FAMILY ORIENTATION WORKSHEET

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_ Place \_\_\_\_\_

Before the meeting:

To be done by:

Arrange for meeting place.

\_\_\_\_\_

Arrange for someone to be chairman.

\_\_\_\_\_

Plan recreation; prepare name tags.

\_\_\_\_\_

Prepare the setting. If possible, set up a display of project materials and pictures showing project work or club activities.

\_\_\_\_\_

Assemble enrollment materials and promotional publications.

\_\_\_\_\_

At the meeting - agenda:

To be done by:

Get acquainted recreation for early arrivals.

\_\_\_\_\_

Call to order.

\_\_\_\_\_

Pledge of Allegiance.

\_\_\_\_\_

Welcome and introductions.

\_\_\_\_\_

Purpose of meeting.

\_\_\_\_\_

Opportunities in 4-H (creating interest).

\_\_\_\_\_

Discussion projects.

\_\_\_\_\_

Group discussion (question-answer).  
Decision about forming club.  
Selection of parent committee.

\_\_\_\_\_

Recreation.

\_\_\_\_\_

Refreshments.

\_\_\_\_\_



## APPENDIX B

### Guide For the 4-H Club Organizational Meeting

#### Before the meeting:

Arrange for meeting place.

Plan agenda.

Plan recreation.

Plan and prepare refreshments.

#### To be done by:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

#### At the meeting:

Ice breaker, recreation for early arrivals

Order of business:

1. Call to order.

2. Flag pledges.

3. Roll call.

4. New business:

a. election of officers.

b. group discussion on club name.

c. appoint "name the club" committee.

d. appoint program planning committee.

5. Introduce leaders.  
Announcements by leaders.

6. Set next meeting date, time, place.

7. Assign next meeting responsibilities.

8. Adjournment.

9. Program: enrollment project  
selections.

10. Recreation.

11. Refreshments.

#### To be done by:

\_\_\_\_\_

Organizational leader

\_\_\_\_\_

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