Keeping it in Perspective

The County Fair is a big part and a highlight of many member’s 4-H experience. It’s important to remind members that it’s not just about the end result (the ribbon color they receive, how much the animal is sold for, etc.) but rather about the journey and experience as whole. In the excitement, and sometimes stress, of fair it’s easy to lose sight of that so why it’s valuable to remind youth, and adults, of this in preparing for fair in the next few months.

Communication is Key

Communication is a natural part of everyday living. Yet, we may find ourselves in situations where we feel misunderstood, especially in high stress situations or when in conflict.

When a conflict occurs, it is easy to forget to use good listening skills. However, good listening skills is one of the most effective tools to employ. Often, people are concentrating on ways to respond to the conflict and not what the other person is saying. Make an active effort to use listening skills, which may take a great deal of practice to truly listen to what someone is saying.

When individuals listen to each other, even conflict can be a constructive experience. When you listen to a person, you give him/her time to voice his/her opinions and perceptions. Also, this will give you the opportunity to ask for more information. By remaining calm and truly listening to the other person, you will have the opportunity to process the information he/she is telling you and work through the situation in the best way possible.

Choosing the appropriate time and place to have a discussion is one of the most important things to consider. If you have genuine concerns you would like to discuss with another individual, approach them in a way that encourages open, positive communication. Choose a time to discuss your concerns that is not immediately before or after a critical event, like judging/showing, and be sure that youth are not present or listening. If you confront an individual in front of youth or other adults, he/she may become defensive and it may be more difficult to resolve the issue. Instead, contact the individual and set aside a time to meet with him/her privately.

Demonstrate through your actions the importance of treating 4-H youth, other exhibitors, parents, project leaders, and judges with respect at all times. Show you care by staying positive, limiting criticism, showing enthusiasm, and demonstrating concern. Model appropriate actions and behaviors for others to follow.

The focus of the experience should be upon the youth’s learning, rather than focusing inappropriate attention on the adults through arguing. When adults argue publically, it sends a powerful message to the youth that the experience is more about the adults, instead of the youth. Allow the youth to exhibit and have fun without the adults inappropriately diverting attention away from their experience.

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Communication is Key—continued

When parents and project leaders communicate effectively and cooperate in teaching children important life lessons, the lessons will be clear to the children and all will have a positive, enjoyable experience.

Sources: Understanding Conflict: Listening skills and conflict, UW-Extension Conflict Education Team and Parents: Communicating with your child’s coach, Kendy Vierling, Ph.D., Oregon School Activities Association.

Action and Promotion Center

This is an opportunity to engage community members attending the fair in a hands-on activity and promote 4-H. Showcasing your project is a great fit. Each club is encouraged to organize a small group, 2-4 members (any age) and 1-2 adults, to cover one or two shifts and it’d be great to have projects organize a group as well. Shifts are two hours in length and available Tuesday, July 21-Sunday, July 26.

Action is the key to the success of the "4-H Action and Promotion Center." The activity should be hands-on and attract fair goers to your booth. The activity could be a science experiment, a matching game in which they learn about the body parts of an animal (or any other topic), art based, learning how to identify plants, animal interaction, etc. This is an opportunity to ask the youth running the booth what they’ve learned in their projects this past year and how they could teach others and share a favorite activity. Promotional materials will be provided.

The exact group members don’t need to be identified when signing up, but just the group contact. Sign up is being done through an online tool called Sign Up Genius. Click on the link below to sign up by June 30. If you need help signing up or have questions about the opportunity, contact Shelly Zancanaro, the County Ambassador Action and Promotion Center Chair at szanc103@yahoo.com or 262-483-1429. www.signupgenius.com/go/20f0a4fa4ab2ea6ff2-4haction

Livestock Barn Decoration

Remember to incorporate the Special Emphasis theme into any club livestock barn decorations at county fair. The theme this year is The Future of 4-H: Youth S.T.E.A.M. into Action. S.T.E.A.M. (science, technology, engineering, arts and math).

Project Award Applications and Scoring Rubric

This is a process for youth to be recognized for their outstanding work in 4-H projects. As a project leader, we encourage you to review the record book guidelines and rubric to see if you are providing opportunities for youth to meet project award criteria. For example:

- Are you offering opportunities for youth to give demonstrations at project meetings?
- Have you had conversations with youth about whether or not they met their goals for the year?
- Do youth have leadership and teaching roles within the project?

Check in with your project members and adult leadership team to make sure these opportunities are offered to youth so that they may be eligible to apply for a project award by the end of August.

Thank you for all you do for Washington County 4-H Youth Development