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# Rock County 4-H New Family Handbook

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Welcome to 4-H!

*“A community of young people across America learning leadership, citizenship, and life skills.”*



**UW**  
**Extension**

University of Wisconsin-Extension



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Dear 4-H Families:

Welcome to the Rock County 4-H program!

We're glad that you've chosen to become part of 4-H! Your family is joining approximately 150,000 youth and 13,000 adults throughout the state of Wisconsin who are members and volunteer leaders in the 4-H program. In Rock County there are approximately 1,200 youth and 400 adult volunteers involved in 4-H, making it the largest 4-H club program in the state!

The purpose of this handbook is to acquaint your family with the various aspects of the 4-H program. You can read about 4-H in general, Rock County 4-H policies, the different types of leaders at the club and county levels, how 4-H relates to the University of Wisconsin-Extension and how the county fair relates to 4-H.

In addition to the New Family Handbook, there is another important source of information regarding the Rock County 4-H program. The monthly 4-H newsletter, "Cloverpatch", always contains the most updated information on upcoming events, activities and meetings. It's very important to read the Cloverpatch every month! If you are not receiving a copy of the newsletter, contact the UW-Extension office at 757-5696. The Cloverpatch is also available at the UW-Extension Rock County website: <http://fyi.uwex.edu/4hrock/>.

Finally, please don't hesitate to call us at the UW-Extension office if you have any questions about the 4-H program. We're here to help you in any way we can!

Sincerely,

Laura Vander Veen  
4-H Program Coordinator  
UW-Extension Rock County

## Frequently Asked Questions: The 4-H Program

### **What is 4-H?**

4-H is an educational youth organization that belongs to the members, their families, and other interested adults who serve as volunteer leaders. Professional leadership is provided by faculty and staff of the University of Wisconsin-Extension. Support for the 4-H program is a joint effort of local county government, the University of Wisconsin, and the United States Department of Agriculture.

### **What is the 4-H Emblem?**

The national 4-H emblem is a four-leaf clover with the letter “H” on each leaf.



### **What are the four H's?**

The four H's stand for Head, Heart, Hands, and Health. They represent the four-fold development in which members participate, which is illustrated by the 4-H pledge below.

### **What is the 4-H Pledge?**

The national 4-H pledge is as follows:

*“I pledge my Head to clearer thinking, my Heart to greater loyalty, my Hands to larger service, and my Health to better living for my Club, my Community, my Country and my World.”*

### **What is the 4-H Slogan?**

The 4-H slogan is “*Learn by Doing*”. This slogan describes the basic educational purpose of the 4-H program.

### **What is the purpose of 4-H?**

The purpose of 4-H is to provide learning opportunities for youth, volunteers, and parents that assist them in developing appropriate and essential life skills such as decision making, relating to others, communicating with others, and developing self-esteem. 4-H clubs, projects, and activities are all vehicles for teaching those life skills.

## **What is a 4-H club?**

Each 4-H member belongs to a 4-H club in the community or at school. Community 4-H clubs meet once a month; after school 4-H clubs meet once a week during the school year. Through club membership, 4-H members learn how to cooperate with others, how to make decisions as a group, and how to be effective leaders.

## **What is a 4-H project?**

Each 4-H member signs up for one or more projects, or educational areas. A project is a topic the member wants to learn about during the 4-H year. In addition to club meetings, members can attend small group meetings with project leaders held specifically for their projects. Through project work, 4-H members can learn responsibility and new skills in their projects.

## **What is a 4-H activity?**

All 4-H members can participate in a wide variety of 4-H activities, regardless of the project areas they have selected. Members can participate with their 4-H club in county activities such as music and drama, volleyball, and softball. Members can also participate individually in other county activities such as the Communications Arts Festival, 4-H camp, and many others. Registration information for these county activities can be found in the 4-H newsletter, the Cloverpatch.

4-H clubs also plan activities at the club level that are open to all club members. Through participating in activities, 4-H members learn communication skills, cooperation, and self-confidence.

## Frequently Asked Questions: Rock County 4-H Policies

### **What is 4-H membership?**

A child becomes a 4-H member by joining a community 4-H club or after school 4-H club. New members are welcome to visit 4-H club meetings and join 4-H at any time during the year. A list of clubs in Rock County and their meeting times can be found at the UW-Extension website: <http://fyi.uwex.edu/4hrock/> or you may call the office. Membership is open to all youth regardless of their ethnic background, race, gender, impairments, religious or political beliefs.

### **When can youth join 4-H?**

Youth in Kindergarten (5K), first, or second grade as of October 1<sup>st</sup> may join Rock County 4-H as Cloverbuds. Youth in third grade and up as of October 1<sup>st</sup> may join as regular members. Youth continue to be eligible for 4-H membership through one year beyond high school graduation and not to extend beyond the age of 19 as of December 31 of the enrollment year.

### **In how many 4-H projects may a 4-H member enroll?**

The number of 4-H projects a youth can enroll in is unlimited, however; the maximum number of projects which can be shown at the Rock County 4-H Fair is six (seven including Youth Leadership). All members MUST publicly show in ALL projects enrolled. Ask your club chair how to exhibit publicly in projects not entered at the fair.

Every 4-H member must enroll in at least one project.

### **What are the achievement requirements?**

In order to achieve, or meet the membership requirements for the year, the 4-H member must complete the following:

- Exhibit publicly (at the Rock County 4-H Fair or a club meeting), in each project enrolled
- Submit a completed record book or Year End Summary (YES) to the club
- Attend a minimum of three regularly scheduled meetings of his/her 4-H club

4-H clubs may not set additional requirements for achievement. 4-H members that do not achieve will be able to join for one year on a probationary basis, meaning they enroll in only one project. See the full Rock County 4-H Policy at the UW-Extension Rock County website.

## Frequently Asked Questions: Rock County 4-H Leaders

### *Club Level:*

#### **What is a club chairperson?**

A club chairperson is an adult volunteer who serves as the general leader of the 4-H club. The club chairperson is responsible for the organizational aspects of the club and serves as the liaison with the county 4-H leadership. Club chairpersons advise youth in making decisions for the club and may delegate tasks to other leaders and parents.

#### **What is the Club Advisory Board?**

The Club Advisory Board is a group of volunteers who support the club chairperson and assist with his or her responsibilities. Club Advisory Board members also advise the youth in making decisions, running club meetings, and planning club activities.

#### **What is a project leader?**

A project leader is an adult volunteer who helps 4-H members as they learn, make and do things in a specific project. Project leaders hold educational meetings with groups of 4-H members or with individual members at the club level.

#### **What is an activity leader?**

An activity leader is an adult volunteer who is responsible for organizing and conducting club activities such as music or drama, softball, and community service activities.

#### **What is a club officer?**

A club officer is a youth who has been elected by the club members to fill a specific role as an officer of the club: president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, and so on. Each club officer has specific duties and responsibilities related to planning, running meetings, and other club operations.

#### **What is a junior leader?**

A junior leader in a specific project is an older 4-H members who has several years' experience in that project. The junior leader assists the project leader in teaching older youth about the project.

## *County Level:*

### **What is the 4-H Leaders Council?**

The 4-H Leaders Council is composed of the Senior Council and Junior Council. Together, this group of adult and youth volunteers sets policies, makes decisions, and raises funds for the county 4-H program.

Junior Council also plans and conducts county activities. Monthly Junior Council meetings are open to any 4-H youth in grade 7 or above.

Monthly Senior Council meetings are open to any 4-H adult volunteers. and meet on the fourth Monday of the month except in July and December.

### **What is the Executive Board?**

The Executive Board is composed of the officers of the Junior and Senior Councils. The Executive Board meets monthly to plan the council meetings and is advised by the 4-H Youth Development staff.

### **What is a project committee?**

4-H project committees are adult and youth volunteers who are responsible for projects at the county level. They plan and conduct educational meetings and activities in specific projects that are open to any youth in the county enrolled in those projects.

### **What is a key leader?**

Key leaders are experienced adult volunteers who serve as subject matter resource people for project leaders, members and parents in a few specific projects. They are available to assist with project meetings and help members on an individual basis.

### **What is a 4-H parent?**

4-H parents are a very important part of the 4-H member's experience. Parents are encouraged to attend club meetings, project meetings and county events with their children. Parents are also encouraged to volunteer to help with club activities and events whenever possible.

Regardless of the level of active involvement, it is very important for the member to have their parent's support. Children need their parents to support their commitment to 4-H, the decisions they make and the goals they set. The 4-H member will have a much more positive experience with the support of parents!

Please refer to the 4-H Parent's Guide in this handbook for more information.

## Frequently Asked Questions: UW-Extension

### **What is University of Wisconsin-Extension?**

UW-Extension, or UWEX, is a “campus” of the University of Wisconsin system that is found in all 72 Wisconsin counties. UW-Extension administers educational programs in the community: 4-H Youth Development, Family Living Education, Community Resource Development, and Agriculture/Agribusiness. See the Rock County UW-Extension website, <http://rock.uwex.edu/> for more information.

### **What is an Extension agent?**

Extension agents are university faculty and staff members of UW-Extension. In Rock County, each of the program areas is assigned to at least one Extension agent. Although the primary responsibility for the county 4-H program rests with the 4-H Youth Development staff, other Extension staff in Rock County work with specific aspects of the 4-H program.

### **What is the role of 4-H Youth Development staff?**

The 4-H Youth Development staff administers the county 4-H program. They provide educational leadership for the program, serve as advisors to the Leaders Council, and assist key leaders and committees in providing educational opportunities for youth and adults.

### **Where are the Rock County UWEX Offices located?**

Rock County maintains two UW-Extension offices (Janesville and Beloit) and employs the support staff. The 4-H Youth Development department is located at the Janesville office in the Rock County Courthouse. The address is 51 S. Main St., Janesville, WI 53545. The office phone number is (608) 757-5696.

## Frequently Asked Questions: Rock County 4-H Fair

### **How does 4-H relate to the fair?**

The Rock County 4-H Fair has a long and rich traditions of being called a “4-H Fair”. All fair exhibitors must be youth and many are 4-H members; however, any youth who is enrolled in Rock County FFA, FHA, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, or an education department may also exhibit. The Rock County 4-H Fair is actually a youth fair or a junior fair.

### **Who runs the 4-H Fair?**

The Rock County 4-H Fair Board is the sole governing body of the Rock County 4-H Fair. The Fair Board is independent on the UW-Extension Office.

### **What is a fair superintendent?**

A superintendent is an adult volunteer who is in charge of a specific department at the fair. Superintendents may or may not also be leaders in the 4-H program. As superintendents they are accountable to the Fair Board, not to the UW-Extension office.

### **Where is the Rock County 4-H Fair office located?**

The fair office is located on the Craig Avenue side of the Rock County Fairgrounds in Janesville. The address is P.O. Box 170, Janesville, WI 53547. The phone is 755-1470. All questions relating to the fair or anything in the Fair Premium Book should be directed to this office.

## UW-Extension Office

(608) 757-5696

Monday through Friday 8 a.m. – Noon, 1 p.m. – 5 p.m.

<http://rock.uwex.edu>

### **Contact the UW-Extension office for:**

- Achievement Banquet Forms, Lists, and Certificates for Clubs
- Activity Registrations, Fees, and Information: Volleyball, Softball, etc.
- Audio / Visual Resources for Club and Project Meetings
- Award Forms and Selection: 4-H Résumé, Project/Activity Awards, Outstanding Leader Awards, Junior Awards, Clover Awards, and Community Service Awards
- Award Trips Fees and Information: State 4-H Youth Conference, Space Camp, Citizenship Washington Focus, National 4-H Conference, National 4-H Congress
- Calendar of 4-H Events
- Camp Registration, Fees, and Information
- Cloverbud Program Information.
- Club Chair Training and Materials
- Communication Arts Festival Entries and Information
- Computer Lists of Club Members and Leaders
- County Achievement Program Awards and Information
- County-wide Project Meetings
- Enrollment Forms, Fees, and Information
- Insurance for 4-H Clubs
- Leader Orientation Schedule and Materials
- Leaders Council Meetings: Junior and Senior Council
- Literature and Educational Materials for Projects
- Music and Drama Festival Entries and Information
- Cloverpatch Newsletter Address Changes
- Record Book, Year End Summary Forms and Guidelines
- Risk Management for 4-H Clubs
- State Fair Entries
- Youth Protection Program Forms and Information
- Scholarships

## Rock County 4-H Fair Office

(608) 755-1470

ALWAYS call first!

[www.rockcounty4hfair.com](http://www.rockcounty4hfair.com)

### **Contact the Rock County 4-H Fair office for:**

- Face to Face & Honey Judging Recipes (Foods & Nutrition Project)
- Fair Association Membership and Meeting Information
- Fair Entry Blanks, Information, and Questions
- Fair Entry Tags and Backtags
- Fair events held prior to the fair: Cat Show, Archery Shoot, Gun Shoot, Rocket Launch, Aircraft Fly, Bicycle Events, Small Engine Judging, Horse Show and Pony Show
- Fair Passes and Ticket Information
- Fair Premium Books
- Fair Premium Checks
- Fair Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, and Junior Superintendent Lists
- Fair Trophies and Ribbons
- Fur and Feather Sale Forms and Information
- Meat Animal Sale Forms and Information
- Style Revue Sheets

## Parent's Guide for 4-H

### **At Home:**

- Encourage your child to take an active role in the club. Help him or her set priorities about activities and events by scheduling time wisely.
- Get to know the youth and families in your club. Volunteer to help with project meetings and other get-togethers or help with car-pooling to other locations.
- Let your child know you're interested in his or her 4-H experiences and projects. Help set priorities and goals based on your child's needs, interests, and time. Encourage him or her to follow through with commitments by attending meetings and completing tasks and assignments.
- Be available when your child needs you for information, guidance, and support. Make sure he or she knows you're there to help when needed. However, refrain from completing 4-H projects, record book, award forms, and other tasks yourself.
- Praise your child's efforts and progress on projects or other experiences. Focus on what's being learned instead of putting all the emphasis on winning.
- Help your child learn that "doing your best" is more important than "being the best."
- Avoid criticizing or blaming your child for not winning blue ribbons or being selected for awards. Instead, look for ways to help him or her cope with disappointment.

### **At 4-H Club and County Events**

- Participate with your child in 4-H club meetings and other club and county events.
- Stay in touch with your child's club and project leaders. Let them know you appreciate the time and effort they're contributing.
- When possible, volunteer your time and talents to lead or assist with projects and other club and county 4-H events.
- Work with other 4-H parents, adults, and youth leaders to make sure 4-H policies, rules, and procedures reflect what's best for the youth.
- Support your 4-H Youth Development staff's effort to emphasize and promote the educational value of 4-H events and activities.
- Work with other 4-H parents and volunteers to make sure competitive events will be handled in a manner that's healthy and beneficial for all youth involved.
- Let 4-H leaders and others know you are appreciative of their efforts by providing positive and constructive feedback.