

4-H curriculum available to meet all interests

It is a brand new 4-H year and that means Oklahoma 4-H'ers have many different opportunities ahead of them. Through positive youth development and hands-on, experiential learning, the 4-H Youth Development Program plays a vital role in enhancing young people's lives.

Cathy Allen, 4-H curriculum coordinator at the State 4-H Office on the Oklahoma State University campus, said 4-H curriculum gives volunteer leaders a solid foundation from which to help today's youth develop into caring, responsible adults in a fun and educational manner.

"The philosophy in 4-H is our members retain more information and have more fun when they are part of the learning process. And that's exactly what our research-based curriculum does," Allen said. "All our curriculum products contain this element of experiential and hands-on learning. And, the curriculum offered is as varied as the interests of our club members. There's definitely something for all interests."

All materials are available on the Oklahoma 4-H website at <http://4h.okstate.edu/literature-links/lit-online/oklahoma-4-h-literature-online>.

Volunteer leaders are such an important part of the learning process and activity guides and curricula can help them structure club and special interest meetings, as well as other learning opportunities, as they work with youth.

"We have three primary mission mandates that include science, engineering and technology; healthy living; and citizenship, and we offer multiple opportunities in each of these areas," she said. "The youth activity guides are filled with fun, engaging experiences that cultivate abilities youth need for everyday living as they progressively gain knowledge about subjects that are of interest to them."

Because one of the goals of 4-H is to develop youth into positive role models and productive citizens, there is leadership and personal development curriculum available. Other subject areas, which contain several learning opportunities, include animal science and companion animals, plant science and entomology, environmental science, family and consumer sciences and communication and expressive arts. There is even a category directed specifically toward Cloverbuds.

Allen said National 4-H curricula also are available and all are designed to provide the highest quality positive youth development experiences and professional development training to help 4-H staff, volunteers, teachers and community partners reach more youth more effectively.

"This material is reviewed and recommended by the National 4-H Peer Review process, which signifies excellence in providing hands-on learning experiences for youth and excellence in training and guidance for facilitators," she said. "The Oklahoma State 4-H Office has multiple copies of all manuals and by going through your local county educator, copies of curriculum can be checked out for 30 days."

Check out the National 4-H Curriculum at <http://4-h.org/parents/curriculum/>.

In addition to the available 4-H curriculum, OSU Cooperative Extension also offers more than 5,000 research-based fact sheets on just about any topic you can think of. These fact sheets offer a wealth of information that can be used on their own, or as supplemental information for club meetings or workshops. The fact sheets can be found at <http://pods.dasnr.okstate.edu/docushare/dsweb/HomePage>.

“Our mission is to help our volunteer leaders succeed and thrive while advancing academic knowledge in positive youth development across Oklahoma,” Allen said. “Having these resources available at their fingertips is just one way to help make that possible. We have the best leaders in the country who continue to make the best better for our members.”

###