

4-H Recognition and Awards

From the beginning, recognition has been a part of the 4-H educational program. We use recognition to encourage and support learning. It is one way we help young people to become capable and competent people. In addition, we use recognition to build positive self-esteem and self-reliance.

It is important to remember that different people have different needs in terms of recognition. Some 4-H'ers prefer extrinsic awards like winning a prize or getting recognition from someone. Others seek intrinsic personal recognition, like status or the self-satisfaction of having done a good job.

For example, Mary wants to win a trip to the state fair, so she works hard on her photography project and enters her photos in a contest. On the other hand, Billy works just as hard on his photography project and does not plan to have his pictures judged. Knowing that he has taken photos that express his feelings about wildlife rewards him. Both 4-H'ers are motivated to excel, but in different ways. Billy and Mary have learned similar skills and something about themselves—they just respond to recognition differently.

Recognition is a tool that 4-H volunteers can use to help each member have a satisfying experience in 4-H work. Recognition takes many forms - pins, ribbons and trips are only a few of the ways that recognition can be given. *If recognition is to provide real satisfaction, it should be the result of genuine effort on the part of the 4-H member.* Members should set their own goals. Adult goals may not mean too much to them.

When 4-H'ers attempt something, they should receive appropriate recognition. To be more effective in using recognition, we need to review some basic beliefs about recognition that are based on research. Let's look at some basic beliefs about 4-H recognition. They are:

- Recognition is a **basic human need**.
- Recognition must **build positive self-esteem**.
- A balance between **intrinsic** (intangible) and **extrinsic** (tangible) recognition is essential.
- Recognition should be a **part of all 4-H learning experiences**.
- Appropriate recognition **takes many forms**.
- **Adult support** is essential.
- **All 4-H'ers need to be recognized** at some time.
- Recognition is more meaningful when it occurs **soon after it is earned** and **in front of significant others**.
- **Appropriate recognition** for individual 4-H'ers varies with their stage of development, past experiences, family lifestyle, community and cultural heritage.
- Opportunity for **self-assessment and reflection** are needed to allow youth to learn and grow.
- 4-H'ers should be permitted to exercise **individual choices** in learning and participation.
- A **balance** of all forms of recognition is essential for 4-H programs at all levels.

National 4-H Recognition Model

Recognition is one way to help young people become self-directed, productive and contributing citizens. 4-H uses five types of recognition. Each supports, motivates and encourages young people in a unique way. This model presents a balanced approach to effectively using recognition as a way of motivating 4-H'ers. A balanced recognition program is needed in the local club or group, at the county level, and on the state and national levels.



1. Participation in educational experiences.
2. Making progress toward self-set goals.
3. Achieving standards of excellence.
4. Excelling in peer competition.
5. Demonstrating excellence in cooperation.

Participation

Participation is a type of recognition that emphasizes the importance of commending young people who have been involved in 4-H educational experiences. For some young people, especially beginners, low resource and those with disabilities taking part in a 4-H learning experience is a significant accomplishment. All youth find this recognition meaningful. This is the first step in building positive self-esteem. (Examples: stickers, pins, certificates, participation cards, news articles, t-shirts, caps.)

Progress Toward Self-Set Goals

An important part of 4-H is helping young people learn to set goals and then planning ways they can achieve their goals. From time-to-time, help them check their progress toward the goals. The challenge is to help young people set realistic goals and then recognize them for making progress toward the goals, no matter how small or large the accomplishments. Recognition is an important way to help them feel good about progress toward their goals. Recognition also encourages them to continue to work toward their goals.

The key to part of this recognition is young people working cooperatively to review their work with concerned and caring adult(s). Feedback is essential. Talking face-to-face to give feedback is best, but if it is not possible, give written feedback. Remember that a youth's potential and available resource affect the goals set, progress made and the growth that the young person demonstrates. (Examples: positive private and/or public feedback, pins, memorabilia, certificates, stickers, and handwritten notes.)

Achieving Standards of Excellence

An important goal of 4-H is to teach skills to young people that they can use now and later in life. Standards of excellence help 4-H'ers to evaluate the skills they are learning. Standards of Excellence can be useful for products (animals, skirts, pumpkins, etc.) and skills (speaking, demonstrating, decision making, etc.) The standards of excellence often are printed on a judge's scorecard.

4-H competitive events are used to provide youth opportunities to have their work compared with standards. The Danish Award System consists of awarding blue-red-white ribbons without ranking within the ribbon groups. All 4-H'ers who meet the standards are recognized. When a champion is named or exhibits are ranked within a group, then the experience becomes competitive. (Examples: ribbons, certificates, 4-H memorabilia, project equipment or supplies.)

Peer Competition

This recognition results where individuals seek to be the best or do better than the other competitors. There are winners and losers (those who were not the best). 4-H members who are not first or champion can learn to improve their skills, but often the emphasis placed on the winner overshadows what others have done, learned or achieved. The use of a first, second and third place ribbon is considered peer competition.

The desire to win is a strong motivator for some, but not for all people. Often young people who are not motivated by competition don't take part in competitive programs or drop out. (Examples: medals, trophies, plaques, scholarships or media reports.)

Cooperation

The main goal of 4-H is to help young people become self-directing, productive and contributing citizens. We are helping them to learn to work cooperatively in an increasingly interdependent global world. Recognizing young people who work together to learn and achieve goals is a natural part of our recognition model.

When young people work together, they examine their own skills and abilities and explore solutions beyond their own ideas. At the same time, they affirm their own self-concept. They are learning how to succeed in today's world where business is turning to group efforts to involve all levels of workers in the decision-making process. (Examples: ribbons, certificates, newspaper articles, community recognition like highway clean-up signs, special trips for the group.)

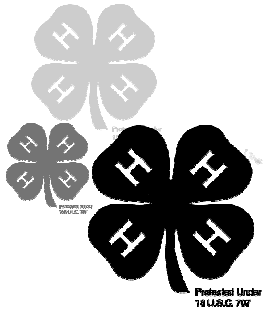
**A club and county program should work toward having
a healthy blend of all five forms of recognition.**

Using Recognition

A pat on the back, a telephone call, a note card, a chance to preside, a pencil or small token, an appearance on an adult program, an opportunity to help plan, publicity, responsibilities as a volunteer, a ribbon, a certificate, a scholarship or a trip are all ways to recognize a 4-H'er who has done a good job. Recognition should be in proportion to the quality of the achievement.

Additional Information

Some forms of 4-H recognition are formal and require a medal form, record book, resume and/or application. To learn more about local, county and state awards programs visit with the respective county Extension office or visit the state 4-H webpage at <http://www.clover.okstate.edu/fourh/>.



Review Questions Unit 2F

Name _____ County _____

Address _____ Zip _____

Club _____ Phone _____

E-mail Address _____ Date Completed _____

A minimum of three (3) 4-H Parent-Volunteer Self Study Lessons may be completed as one of the four necessary trainings required to maintain active status as a Certified 4-H Volunteer. The completed review questions from each lesson must be filed annually by the date specified by your county office.

Define the difference in intrinsic and extrinsic rewards?

Briefly define each of the 5 forms of recognition in the National 4-H Recognition Model. Give an example of each form of recognition used in your club and county program.

Participation:

Progress Toward Self-Set Goals:

Achieving Standards of Excellence:

Competition:

Cooperation:

What are forms of recognition you use with 4-H members and other volunteers?

Extension Office Use Only Date Received by Extension Office _____ Reviewed by _____
