**What Is 4-H?**

4-H is America's largest non-formal educational program for youth, annually reaching approximately 6.5 million young people. The 4-H mission is to help youth become self-directed, productive and contributing members of society. The educational program helps children develop inquiring minds, learn practical skills, strengthen decision-making abilities, improve communications and interpersonal relationships, and ultimately share their skills and experience in leadership roles. Through hands-on, learn by doing activities, children establish real-life goals and develop important life skills enabling them to become competent, productive citizens.

Today's 4-H program is for all youth - both rural and urban from all racial, cultural, economic and social backgrounds. It reaches children in a variety of ways: as members of organized community 4-H clubs, as participants in special interest groups, or through school enrichment programs. As members of the Florida 4-H program, youth are provided opportunities for a multitude of awards, trips and scholarships. They participate in these recognition programs through enrollment in 4-H projects which can range in subject matter from the environment to entomology or from bicycles to beef.

**Parental Role in 4-H**

In order for your child to obtain the maximum benefits and rewards from 4-H membership, you as a parent must be involved. It is not necessary for you to act as a 4-H leader to have an impact. Simply attending activities as often as possible, and exhibiting interest in your child's project(s) will greatly enrich his/her 4-H experience. Beyond this, you may wish to assist the club leader by acting as a project, activity, or support volunteer. Ask your child's leader how you can best fit in. There is a minimum level to which we ask you to participate, and this is found on the enclosed Enrollment Form. Please take the time to read each item before signing and returning. I am confident that you will find great personal satisfaction from your family's involvement in the 4-H program.
Lake County 4-H Activities & Opportunities

The following is a brief description of the many 4-H opportunities available to you during the 4-H year. The types of activities you will be involved in will vary with your age & personal interests. Read through each one to see what it has to offer. Your 4-H club leader or the 4-H office can answer any further questions you may have regarding participation.

**Demonstrations:** Show & Tell about a 4-H project or activity. Each member should do at least one demo in a club meeting during the year. County 4-H Demonstration Events competition is held in the Winter for members who wish to compete for awards. County winners advance to District competition. SR (age 14-18) district winners advance to state competition.

**Public Speaking:** Competition is open to all 4-H members to speak on the category of their own choosing. In addition, a separate horse public speaking category is provided specifically for the horse project area.

**Fashion Revue:** All Clothing Construction Project members are encouraged to model one or two outfits. These items may also be entered in the fair. Clothing Selection Projects may be modeled as well.

**Share-the-Fun:** Talent competition is held in the fall. Acts, may be instrumental, vocal, dance or dramatic & include 1-5 participants from the same age-division.

**Camp:** 4-H members attend 4-H Camp Ocala one week in the summer. Camp Ocala is located north of Altoona on Hwy 19. Any 4-H member who is at least 8 years old by Sept 1 of the 4-H year is eligible to attend. Partial scholarships are available to members who have completed the minimum criteria established (ask 4-H leader for specific criteria). Campers participate in a variety of educational & recreational activities.

**Marine Science Institute:** Held at various locations throughout the state for 4-H members enrolled in the marine science project who desire to learn more about the subject. This specialty camp offers many hands-on experiences.

**Shooting Sports Camp:** Learn safety & skills of shooting sports. Participants are trained in the use of air rifles, air pistols, shotguns, & archery. Must be at least 10 years old to participate.

**Florida 4-H Congress:** Congress is the culmination of local, county & district competition in events for SRs (ages 14-18). The week at the University of Florida is filled with competitive events, leadership development, career exploration, & planned educational & recreational activities. State Program Area & Scholarship Awards are presented as well as recognition for event winners. State 4-H Council meets during the Congress. Scholarships are provided to the two Team Leadership Council delegates, district event winners, county Fashion Revue winner, & volunteer leaders. Partial scholarships may also be available to other SRs wishing to participate as well.

**National 4-H Week:** Held during the first full week of October each year. Clubs are encouraged to prepare & display posters to promote 4-H, present programs for civic clubs, organizations, etc.

**Awards & Recognition Program:** A special time to recognize 4-H members & club achievement. The program is held at the Lake County Agriculture Center in the Bob Norris Auditorium.
Team Leadership Council (TLC): The TLC is charged with making decisions regarding county-level activities & providing leadership to these activities. Educational programs are presented which encourage the development of leadership skills. In addition, the TLC sends delegates to District & State Council as representatives of Lake County 4-H. All 4-H members 11 & older are strongly encouraged to participate. Each club should elect delegates to represent them at TLC. All SR 4-Her's interested in attending State 4-H Congress, State 4-H Legislature, or Washington Focus should plan to attend. TLC meets the first Monday of every month, no meeting in Dec or April.

Florida 4-H Legislature: Members 14-18 & involved in TLC may participate in a mock legislative session held in Tallahassee each July. Delegates serve as lobbyists, reporters, or legislators & sponsor, debate, amend, & vote on bills in the actual Florida State House of Representatives. At least one year of attendance at State Legislature is required in order to be eligible to attend Citizenship-Washington Focus. Scholarships are available to delegates.

4-H Citizenship-Washington Focus: Members 14-18 years old may be selected to participate in this intensive citizenship experience in Washington, D.C. in June. Lake County requires that delegates be TLC participants, & should have attended State 4-H Legislature in a prior summer. Partial scholarships provided by Lake County 4-H.

Lake County Fair: Held in April each year. 4-H members who join before Jan of the current 4-H year may exhibit projects according to a printed exhibit list available from the County office. All non-livestock exhibits are displayed in the 4-H Building for judging & public viewing. Livestock exhibits are housed in tents in a nearby location.

Florida State Fair: Held in Tampa mid-February. Members may exhibit livestock, rabbits & home economics projects & may model in Youth Fashion Show.

Central Florida Fair: Held in Orlando in April. Members may participate in Fashion Show, Consumer Judging, Aquatic Science, Horse Bowl, Electronic Game Boards, Citrus Trees, & livestock projects.

County 4-H Horse Shows: Generally held in the Fall & Winter. Includes 4-H canter & walk trot classes. Participants must be 8 years old by September 1 of the 4-H year to participate. Horse members wishing to compete at the Area 4-H horse show must participate in the Winter Qualifier Show & turn in a horse project registration by Jan 1st of the 4-H year.

Area D 4-H Horse Show: Clarcona Horseman's Park, held in late April or early May. See above for requirements.

State 4-H Horse Show: Held in Tampa in July. Members who qualify at the Area D Show may participate. State Qualifiers may go on to the Regional Show.

Horsemanship School: Bring your own horse for five+ days of intensive horsemanship instruction both in the arena & in the classroom. Held at Camp Welaka during the summer months.

Please check out our website for more info: http://lake.ifas.ufl.edu/4-H/ or call 352-343-4101 ext: 2724 Thank you for your time & consideration & I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Hodges Extension Agent 1. 4-H Youth Development

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