

Crafty Cats 4-H Club Emphasize  
**Community Service Projects**

The Crafty Cats 4-H Club has had the privilege of participating in several community service projects over the past several years. We would like to tell you how we decide on projects, what the projects are that we have participated in, and how community service projects have impacted our lives.

Our leader, Mrs. Cheryl Wood frequently opens up the floor at meetings for ideas of what we would like to do as a community service project. We are strongly encouraged to participate in community service projects. Mrs. Wood stresses the importance of service to others. Club members make suggestions in areas of interest. We talk about what opportunities for service are possible. A vote is taken to decide on the service project.

Here are some of the projects we have done. One of the very first community service projects that our club participated in was sewing walker caddies for the residents at the Thomas Fitzgerald Veteran's Home. We also made a fall craft for them to display in their rooms. Our club visited the Veteran's Home and handed out the caddies and crafts. It was so fun to talk to the veterans and listen to their life experiences. President George W. Bush sent a response to the Crafty Cats with a photo acknowledging the service project completed by our club. Another community service project was planting flowers and cleaning up the grounds at a Catholic retreat center just north of Elkhorn, NE. We filled planters and flower beds full of beautiful flowers that we had brought to the retreat center.

For the past three years, the Crafty Cats 4-H Club has assembled boxes for Operation Christmas Child. Club members brought personal hygiene items, wash cloths, and toys for boys and girls of different age groups. The shoe boxes were filled full of all of the items and wrapped with Christmas wrapping paper. The father of a club member who works in association with Operation Christmas Child collected the boxes for delivery to children in a country in Central America. Our club has picked up trash at Eugene T. Mahoney State Park around a lake and walking trail on the north side of the park. This year our club collected trash along a walking trail in northwest Omaha. We picked up trash from Standing Bear Lake to 144 Street and Maple Street. Our club earned \$50 for doing this project. We then used the \$50 to do another project later in the fall. That project was buying food items for Camp Fire USA snack packs. The snack packs are backpacks that are filled with food for children who do not have food to eat over the weekend. Children pick up the backpacks full of food for the weekend each Friday, and return the backpack on Monday.

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The backpack is reused each week. The Crafty Cats not only used the \$50 for food, but handed out fliers in the neighborhood of Stone Creek in northwest Omaha, asking for specific donations of food for the snack packs. People generously gave food, and many sacks of donations were picked up and then delivered to the Camp Fire USA organization by our leader, Mrs. Cheryl Wood. These are some of the community service• projects that we have been involved in. Another area of service that we are encouraged to participate is in completing citizenship projects for the fair. Many club members have made gift baskets of personal hygiene items for women at the Lydia House and Open Door Mission, snack packs for Camp Fire USA, donations to the Nebraska Humane Society, and shoe boxes to Operation Christmas Child to name a few. The projects are then delivered after the fair to the place they are intended to go to. There are so many things that you can do to make a difference.

Our 4-H club leader, Mrs. Wood always encourages us to do community service projects. Doing these projects helps us build character, leadership, and develops unity and friendships within the club. It is a great feeling to do something for someone else. We should bless others with the abundance we have been blessed with. That does not necessarily mean monetarily, but may require only your time and effort. We would like to encourage all 4-H clubs to do a community service project this year. You will be encouraged by the impact that it has in your life and on your club, and by the difference that you make in your community, your country and your world.

Submitted by Johanna Jones, President of The Crafty Cats & Jennifer Jones