



## **So you've volunteered and have been selected to be a new 4-H leader!**

### **Congratulations!**

You're starting an interesting, challenging and rewarding experience. Because we know you have lots of questions about this new venture, we believe you'll find the enclosed information helpful.

It's often said, "It is better to develop a child than to mend an adult." This, in a nutshell, is the main objective of the 4-H program. In 4-H, volunteer leaders encourage youth to gain knowledge and learn through their project work and club activities. Members learn life skills like planning, decision making and resource management through their project work. Club meetings are learning laboratories where members develop social skills. Through clubs, members learn how to communicate and work with others, practice their leadership skills and develop strong character. Through community service activities, members learn how to be responsible citizens who contribute to their communities. Research tells us that youth involved in volunteer activities remain involved as adults.

Members improve their communication skills through club interaction, 4-H record keeping and presentations. They also develop positive attitudes about themselves and others, learn basic health and safety practices and acquire educational and vocational experiences. Each year members are challenged to set higher goals, to become more knowledgeable about their projects and assume greater leadership responsibility within the club and the County 4-H program. All of this does not happen at once, but develops gradually as members continue their involvement in 4-H with the guidance of their volunteer leader.

Your responsibility is to help 4-H members learn specific skills. 4-H members have fun with projects while "learning by doing." Most people remember more if they actually experience something and have an opportunity for some "hands-on learning." Learning takes place within the learner. It is not something that is done to the learner. We encourage skills that will be useful to the young person now and in the future. We help each member develop good habits, experiment with new ideas and practice problem solving skills. By doing this, we help them become self directed, productive and contributing, compassionate members of society.

A major goal is to teach 4-H members how to think, not what to think. We help develop creative thinking in young people by giving them a chance to make decisions on their own. They'll learn from their own choices. Another goal is to recognize and encourage each 4-H member so he or she feels noticed and important. The most significant recognition that can be given to members is praise and attention. Let them know they are important and what they have done is worthwhile.

