

## **Are you thinking about becoming a Project Leader next year?**

You don't have to have had teaching experience, only a willingness to jump in and share your time with youth. The most common way our 4-H volunteers become Project Leaders, is that a child or adult approaches them and tells them that there is a need to fill. Maybe an existing leader has left or maybe the youth in the club have a particular desire to learn about something.

## **What resources are available to help me?**

**4-H Project Literature** (also called curriculum)—you can get project literature in a variety of ways: your club might have some, you can borrow it from the Lending Library at the 4-H office, you can purchase it from the State 4-H Office or you can find it on the Internet. Our county 4-H Office also has “learning labs”- kits containing posters, videos, and other activities to aid learning. We have the following learning labs: beef, dogs, goats, horses, poultry, rabbit, sheep, swine, small engines, and plant identification. Only leaders are permitted to check them out.

**Other people in your Club and County**—There are a number of people in your county who would be willing to share project ideas and tips with you: project leaders from other clubs, 4-H Office staff, and older youth in the project, just to name a few.

**ANR Catalog and Public Libraries**—Additional resources can be obtained from the University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources Catalog. You can shop for items here: <http://anrcatalog.ucdavis.edu/InOrder/Shop/Shop.asp>. Also, check with your local public library to find out what resources they may have or that you can acquire through inter-library loan.

**Websites**—California 4-H is continually adding more information and activities to their website. Visit this site at [www.ca4h.org](http://www.ca4h.org). You may also wish to check out website from other states' 4-H programs. We recommend using a search engine to find project resources- just type in “4-H” and the project you are doing- you will be surprised at all there is out there!

**Volunteer Leaders Conferences**—Review each issue of your county's newsletter to learn about training sessions for project leaders offered at the State 4-H Volunteer Leader Conference held every other year. Periodically statewide conferences focusing on specific project areas are offered in addition to sessions at the volunteer conferences. You can also exchange ideas with other leaders at statewide events, such as Presentation Day or the State Livestock Judging Contest.

**Field Trips**—Youth always enjoy the opportunity to see firsthand how things are done and how they work. Consider taking your project group on a field trip or tour of a local business or company to enhance their project experience. An example would be taking your diary members to a cheese factory or your foods group to a local bakery.  
**Local experts**—Bring in a local “expert” to share their ideas and experiences with your group. One example would be asking a Master Gardener to share information on choosing perennials or trimming shrubs at one of your project meetings.

**Proficiencies**—Our County started a proficiency program to encourage youth in their projects. Proficiencies are checklists you should be able to complete during the course of a project- they show youth's understanding of the project material. Projects have up to 3 levels of proficiencies, and youth make complete up to 2 proficiencies each year. Please see your club leader, your club's proficiency chairperson, or the 4-H Office for more information on this program.

**Internet**—many project leaders volunteer because of a special interest in a project area, and they are looking for more guidance on working with youth. Many States' 4-H websites have information on this: California's is [www.ca4h.org/volunteer/training](http://www.ca4h.org/volunteer/training), and another good one is Missouri's- <http://dldc-course.ext.missouri.edu/umc/4h-volunteers>. The sites offer “lessons” how kids develop, learning through experience, and managing groups. So...jump right in and remember, *the most valuable thing you can give to a child s is time!*