

# Welcome Packet for New 4-H Club Members



## Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Camden County

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Dear New 4-H Family,

Welcome to 4-H, the youth development program of the Cooperative Extension Service. With over six (6) million participants nationwide, 4-H provides youth with positive learning experiences that help build character, while developing knowledge and skills that prepare them for the future.

4-H programs are offered in every county, in every state, in the nation. Locally, hundreds of children, in grades kindergarten through one year out of high school, participate in the 4-H program through club involvement, special interest programs, and school enrichment programs

As you become more and more involved with 4-H, you will continue to have new opportunities – even beyond Camden County – because 4-H events occur at the county, regional, state, national, and even international levels! But all the fun starts at the club level. We encourage your family to become active with your 4-H club.

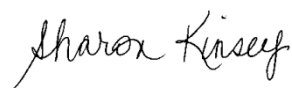
Your club leaders and parent volunteers will guide your 4-H club with the support of the Camden County 4-H staff.

Your club leaders and the 4-H staff are here to support your family as you explore the exciting world of 4-H. Feel free to contact me if you have any questions. Please know that we welcome your new ideas and contributions.

Being a 4-H member will be a great opportunity to learn, grow, and have fun. It is also a responsibility. Each year, we will verify active membership. As a parent, it is your responsibility to notify us if your child decides to leave 4-H or change clubs. If you have any questions, please contact our office at 856-216-7130 x 2.

Welcome to our 4-H family!

Sincerely,



Sharon Kinsey  
Camden County 4-H Agent



## PARENT & GUARDIAN ROLES

First and foremost, 4-H is a family program – a place where adults and their children can learn and grow together. In 4-H, you as the parent or guardian, are very important, and you are always invited and encouraged to participate in all 4-H club activities. We recognize every family's schedule is different and you may not be able to attend every club function, but there are many different ways that you can contribute to your child's 4-H group.

We hold the following expectations for 4-H parents or guardians:

- Provide transportation for your child to and from 4-H events.
- Attend 4-H club functions with your child whenever possible. Children who are Cloverbud age (K-3rd grade) should always have a parent or guardian attend meetings with them.
- Guide your child as they select a 4-H project to explore and help them develop goals that are challenging, but also realistic. Encourage their project work by making it a family learning experience.
- For the most up to date information, go to the website, scroll down and click on 4-H then Events and select County or State Events.
- Attend 4-H Leaders' Association meetings during the year to learn more about 4-H opportunities for your child and provide input on 4-H programs. Meeting dates and times will be communicated to families throughout the year.
- The 4-H staff will provide county wide training on project records, presentations, and other core 4-H learning experiences. By understanding more about these 4-H programs, you can help your child excel and take advantage of all that 4-H has to offer.
- Attend the end-of-year Achievement Program with your child, (the countywide awards program is held in December) as a family. Recognition always means more to children when their families are there to share it with them.
- Update enrollment in ZSuite each year - <https://4h.zsuite.org/>



## 4-H FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**What are the four “H’s”?** The —H’s stand for: head, heart, hands, and health. Club members recite the 4-H pledge at meetings.

**What is the 4-H Pledge?** I pledge, my head to clearer thinking, my heart to greater loyalty, my hands to larger service, and my health to better living for my club, my community, my country, and my world.

**What is the 4-H motto?** —To Make the Best Better

**What are the 4-H colors?** The 4-H colors are green and white.

**How did 4-H begin?** 4-H began in the early 1900’s as corn clubs for boys and tomato canning clubs for girls. Although the program has changed a lot through the years, it has always been a program designed to help children become productive members of their communities. The national program celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2002.



**Do I have to live on a farm to join 4-H?** No, although 4-H began as a program for rural children, today’s 4-H is available for all children regardless of where they live.

**Do boys and girls attend different clubs?** No, all 4-H clubs are open to both boys and girls.

**How old do you have to be to join a 4-H club?** Children can join a 4-H club as soon as they begin kindergarten, and they can stay involved until they are one year out of high school.

**What are the age divisions for competitive events?** A child must be at least in 4<sup>th</sup> grade in the current program year to compete in any 4-H event. Many 4-H events allow younger youth, ages kindergarten through third grade, to exhibit and receive participation ribbons.

Most competition is held in the following age divisions: (Juniors) 4<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> grade and (Seniors) 8<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> grade. However, the age categories do vary from program to program. Always carefully review the registration information for 4-H events.

**What does it cost to join a 4-H club?** There is no membership fee to join a 4-H club. However, 4-H club members may set club dues. All club dues remain in the club treasury.

**Do parents and guardians attend meetings with their children?** Yes! 4-H is a family program. Parents/guardians are encouraged to attend club meetings and 4-H events with their child. It is a great way for families to learn and grow together. A parent, guardian or adult helper (such as a Big Brother/Big Sister) must be present at each club meeting for youth who are in grades k-3.

**Does 4-H have a web site?** Yes, we have a web site. The url is:

<https://camden.njaes.rutgers.edu/4h/>

This is a great site to learn about 4-H, and it has links to state and national 4-H web sites.



## CLUB OFFICERS

Cloverbud clubs (youth in grades K-3) do not have elected officers. They often rotate club helpers who assist the club leader. This is a more age appropriate leadership experience for our younger members. Clubs with members who are 4<sup>th</sup> grade or older will elect officers to help lead the club. Most clubs elect the following officers:

**President:** presides at the club meeting using parliamentary procedure, works to ensure that all members get a chance to share their ideas and participate in the business meeting.

**Vice President:** greets, introduces and thanks guests and speakers at club meetings; and presides at the club meeting using parliamentary procedure in the president's absence.

**Secretary:** keeps accurate minutes of the business meeting, keeps accurate attendance records, and writes letters and thank you notes on behalf of the club.

**Treasurer:** keeps accurate financial records for the club, and turns in records to his or her club leader at the end of the officer's term.

**Reporter or Historian:** keeps track of news articles about the club and may keep a scrapbook about the club. May write a monthly article about the club's activities for the *Clover Connection*, the 4-H newsletter, and helps promote 4-H club activities. The reporter may also serve as a club photographer, and develop a short slideshow about the club for Achievement Night.

**Health Officer:** plans healthy snacks and activities for club meetings.

Before your child runs for a club office, discuss the responsibilities of the office and make sure he or she is prepared to fulfill those duties. Keep in mind:

- All club officers need to attend Officers Training to learn how to fulfill their officer role. They will receive information that they can take to every club meeting.
- Clubs will re-elect officer positions when youth fail to fulfill the requirements of their office.

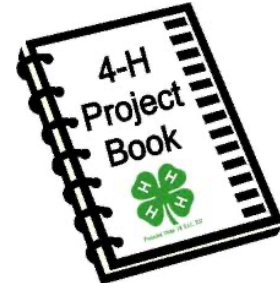




## 4-H PROJECT BOOKS

Project work is an important part of 4-H for members who are in grades 4-13. A 4-H project may be a project that the 4-H club works on as a group, or a project that the individual 4-H member chooses to explore. Youth should join a club that works on projects that reflect his or her own interests. Keep in mind that completing a record book helps youth develop skills in:

- Setting and completing goals
- Keeping records
- Creative writing
- Organization
- Leadership
- Citizenship
- Community service
- Development of skills and knowledge in project area



4-H project books are available online at: <https://camden.njaes.rutgers.edu/4h/record-books.html>  
Click on 4-H and then Resources and tab down to Members. The project book is intended for youth, not parents, to complete.

## PUBLIC SPEAKING

**Club Level:** All 4-H members, even Cloverbud members in grades K-3, are encouraged to start developing their public speaking skills by giving club presentations. The club presentations are not judged.

A club presentation is a simple talk about a topic of interest to the member. Depending on the child's age and previous experience, the talk may be very, very short, or last for up to 15 minutes. The time is not important. The important thing is that the club members begin to feel comfortable speaking in front of a group in a supportive, non-competitive environment.

As the child gains experience and confidence, he or she will want to give a more thorough club presentation that includes all three components of a speech – an introduction, a body, and a summary. Children may want to use posters, power point slides, or other props to help them share information. It is always more interesting to see, rather than just listen to a presentation.



**County Level:** The county level presentations are for all youth to do public presentations on a county level. Cloverbud age youth in grades k-3 may exhibit, and are not judged. They will receive a participation ribbon, comments, and a certificate. 4-H members in grades 4-13 books are judged individually on the Danish system and each will receive a blue ribbon (excellent), red ribbon (very good), or yellow ribbon (good). Members in grades 8-13 who receive an excellent at the county level are eligible to go on to the state level public presentation contest.

### **4-H ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM**

This is a county-wide 4-H awards program to recognize the accomplishments of all Camden County 4-H club members from the previous 4-H year. It is typically held in early December each year. All 4-H club members and their families are encouraged and welcome to attend.

### **4-H AMBASSADORS**

The mission of the Camden County 4-H Ambassador program is to empower teen 4-H members with the knowledge, skills, and aspirations necessary to be effective advocates for Camden County 4-H Youth Development. Teens are taught about leadership so that they may serve as positive role models for younger youth; build meaningful partnerships with other teens, adult volunteers, and 4-H professionals; and promote the 4-H mission in Camden County.



### **THE HAUNTING**

Held in mid-October each year, this event brings youth from all of Camden County 4-H clubs together to make Lakeland come alive! The Haunting is a haunted walk where 4-H members create spooky scenes and scare attendees. It is the biggest 4-H fundraiser each year.

### **ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR SENIOR 4-H MEMBERS**

**South Jersey Teen Conference** - Held each spring, this annual event brings 4-H members in grades c-13 together to practice leadership, citizenship, and cooperation and is coordinated by the 4-H Youth Development Program as a youth-adult partnership with youth working directly with 4-H staff to plan and conduct the conference.

**Citizenship Washington Conference** – CWF is a leadership program conducted by the National 4-H Council for youth in grades 9-12. This program, held each spring during the IGNITE Conference, brings youth from various states together in Washington, DC.

**National 4-H Congress** – This unique leadership opportunity for 4-H members in 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade focuses on leadership, youth empowerment, community service, career development, and cultural diversity. The event brings over 1,200 4-H members to Atlanta, GA over Thanksgiving weekend. One to three delegates are nominated from each county in New Jersey to attend this national event.

Visit our website at: <https://camden.njaes.rutgers.edu/4h/>