4-H Leaders Step Up to Leadership Roles

The Situation
Nancy Chaffin, Lemhi County 4-H Assistant has 20 hours per week and Shannon Williams, Extension Educator has 20% time to dedicate to 4-H programming. As per the Lemhi County 4-H Expansion and Review, new opportunities and programs were developed including the Lemhi Promise Community Coalition, the Lemhi Afterschool Program, the Youth Drama Program and the Lemhi County Fairbook (as a 4-H fundraiser). With the same time allotted, it was impossible to implement the new programs and continue traditional programs. When the situation was examined, there were two options available. The first was to not conduct the new programs, and just focus on traditional programs. The other was to drop some of the traditional programs and focus on the new programs. Either alternative would affect all 4-H members and leaders and their buy-in to the Lemhi County 4-H program.

Our Response
As County Chair, Shannon challenged Nancy to develop a list of programs with an itemized list of responsibilities. In March, Nancy and Shannon met with the 4-H Advisory Council and other 4-H leaders and presented the new 4-H opportunities and the benefits of each program. Shannon shared the time and commitment constraints of the Extension staff. She elaborated on the new leadership opportunities for leaders and benefits of leadership roles. Nancy then presented a list of traditional programs with potential dates, overview, and responsibilities a chairperson would have. The leaders were then asked if they would take a larger responsibility for these programs. Within minutes after reviewing the programs and responsibilities, the leaders enthusiastically teamed up and chose programs of interest to them.

Program Outcomes
Volunteer leaders took on responsibility for the 4-H Expo, the Demonstration Contest, the Speech contest, the Leader’s Council Pop Booth, the 4-H Exhibit Barn, Leader’s Council Officers, and 4-H Camp. They worked with Extension staff and coordinated responsibilities. Leaders were encouraged and supported in new ideas and as a result, brought new enthusiasm and energy to the activities.

As the 4-H year continued, there was a sense of adventure and excitement among staff and leaders.

4-H Leader Bobbie Meadville discusses her idea for a new sewing workshop. Lemhi County 4-H Leaders bring super ideas to the Extension staff on a regular basis.
The staff was energized because they were working on new and innovative programs. The leaders were excited because they were able to implement their ideas. Stress was reduced because it was a “team effort” and one person did not carry the whole load.

When the 4-H year was reviewed and evaluated, many 4-H leaders were already planning and choosing the programs they wanted to coordinate for the next year. They were also busy bringing new ideas to Extension staff for input. The Extension staff was active developing new programs and continuing to offer new leadership opportunities for youth and adults. Burnout is at an all time low.

**For More Information**

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