Adding Community Service to Your Camping Program

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Abstract
Camp Planning Idea – Community Service - for County Agents and Camp Directors

Youth need to connect to their communities and learn how to give back to others and what a better way than COMMUNITY SERVICE.

Essential Element - Generosity
As you plan your 2007 camping program focusing on the four Essential Elements of 4-H: Belonging, Mastery, Generosity, and Independence, you will try to incorporate educational sessions, skill gaining opportunities, and many other activities that will shadow the Essential Elements.

National 4-H Headquarters refers to Generosity as: Young People need to feel their lives have meaning and purpose. They need opportunities to connect to their communities and learn how to give back to others. As part of this process, youth gain an understanding of others' needs and learn how to respond to these needs.

Camping Opportunities
Camp is a prime opportunity to open the doors for youth to explore the world of community service. As Camp Director, you have the chance to involve youth in many forms of community service.

• Camp Facility Projects
• Nursing Home Projects
• Adopt-a-Highway
• Operation Wildflower
• Recycle Projects
• Supporting Military Projects
• Hospital Projects

Selecting Projects
All community service projects need to be localized for your community and camping program. Of the examples given not all will work with all camping programs. When you are planning your camp community service project(s) you need to assess your community’s needs, time frame allocations during camp, skill level and materials required, along with the number of additional adult volunteers needed.

When selecting what you want to do, remember the most important aspect – FUN! You want the community service project to be an educational learning opportunity for the campers, however, at the same time you need to make it fun and interesting. The project will need to capture the attention of the campers in two ways: 1. they want to connect with their communities and 2. they want to learn more about the community service project.

Continuing Outside of Camp
Let the community service project(s) during camp be the kick-off to several community service projects held throughout the 4-H year. Each season brings an assortment of community service project ideas.

• Winter – snow removal, caroling, volunteering at nursing homes, hospitals
• Spring – planting flowers, painting, cleaning town/city parks
• Summer – mowing lawns, reading program at schools and/or libraries
• Fall – raking leaves, serving dinners, collecting items for local food banks, etc.