

# Strengthening 4-H Volunteer Leadership

## The Situation

Cass County 4-H Youth Development programs are delivered primarily through volunteers. These volunteers are critical partners to the overall success and impact of the 4-H Club experience. Training for volunteers is needed so they understand and learn how to incorporate the Essential Elements of 4-H into their clubs so they are providing a quality club experience for youth. The Essential Elements of 4-H are Belonging, Independence, Generosity and Mastery or as we refer to them as the Big 'M' of positive youth development.

## Extension Response

The Cass County 4-H youth development program provided training opportunities for volunteers to develop leadership skills and learn best practices needed so they can plan a quality club experience for youth. These volunteer trainings are being conducted to train leaders how to manage an effective youth-driven 4-H club. The North Central Region 4-H Volunteer e-Forum training series was facilitated and local training topics were also taught.

The training topics covered were:

- Essential Elements of a Quality Club Experience—Taught by Cass County 4-H Youth Agent
- You've Got 4-H Parents! Now What?
- Consumer Choice Judging Basics
- Engaging Teens & Older Youth
- Tools for Kids Giving Talks & Demos at the 4-H Club Meeting—Taught by Cass County 4-H Youth Agent
- Using Technology to Enhance Your 4-H Experience
- Parliamentary Procedure
- New Cloverbud Curriculum Introduction

- Speech, Demonstration, Expo and Consumer Choices Training— Demonstration portion taught by Cass County 4-H Youth Agent
- Club Officer Training
- National 4-H Science Experiment: Maps & Apps—Taught by Cass County 4-H Youth Agent
- State 4-H Volunteer Project Training -- a team of youth & adult volunteers was identified to participate from our county.

## Impacts

Volunteers identified Belonging as the Essential Element they would focus on by implementing the following:

- New Family Coordinator to mentor new families
- Develop and utilize committees
- Involve youth more in the meeting planning
- Engage older youth with more responsibility in decision-making

## Feedback

One volunteer said, "I will step back and let the youth take more responsibility in running the meetings and turn more decision-making responsibilities over to the older youth."

An important lesson that another volunteer said she learned from the training was how important it is to help make kids and parents feel that they are part of the group.

## Contact

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