SERVICE-LEARNING

Service-learning is an educational method where students learn and develop by engaging in action service that meets the needs of a community. Service experiences are coordinated with a community service program or school, as well as the community. It includes structured time for youth to reflect on their service experience and influences lifelong learning.

Service learning is a four-stage process: preparation, action, reflection, and celebration.

Community Need
- The service-learning project meets a genuine community need. More information can be found in the Toolkit in Identifying a 4-H Service Project.
- The collaboration includes multiple partners who benefit from the project.

Youth Voice
- Youth assume active leadership roles in choosing and planning the service project.
- Youth plan and implement the reflection, evaluation, and celebration.
- Youth take on roles and tasks that are age appropriate.

Planning
- An understanding of service learning is developed. A sample 4-H Service Learning Planning Guide is available in the Toolkit to assist in the planning process.
- Project planning includes training, team building, and project orientation.
**Integrated Learning**
- The service learning project has clearly articulated knowledge, skill, or value goals that arise from the curriculum.
- Skills learned in the community setting are integrated back into the curriculum.

**Action**
- Both the youth and the community achieve significant benefits.
- Youth understand how they can impact their community as a result of the service learning project.

**Reflection**
- Opportunities for youth to reflect should occur before, during, and after the service learning project. The reflection should connect the service experience with the curriculum. In the Toolkit sample *4-H Reflection Activities* are available.
- Youth will employ critical thinking skills that will help them grow on a personal, social, and intellectual level.

**Evaluation**
- All partners, especially youth, should measure progress toward the learning and the service goals throughout the project.

**Celebration**
- An opportunity for all partners to be recognized for their accomplishments should be included. This also serves as closure for the project.