

As we begin the new 4-H year, now is the perfect time for 4-H members to begin working on their 4-H Memory Book for the 4-H year. Memory books include information about what a 4-H'er plans to do in their 4-H project and what they have accomplished, often with photographs of him or her and the project. They also reflect how the young person felt about the project, what they learned and their goals for the future.

When a young person begins their memory book, one of the first things they will want to do is identify their goals for their project. A goal is deciding what you want to do and learn in a 4-H project. A goal is a road map which helps you decide how to get to where you want to go. Goals have three parts that allow you to measure and check progress. They are:

1. *The Action* – How are you going to do something?
2. *The Result* – What are you going to do?
3. *The Timetable* – When are you going to do it?

For example, "I want to train my 4-H beef heifer to lead before county fair time" might be a goal for a youth enrolled in the 4-H Beef project or "I want to make three nutritious snacks by the June meeting" might be a goal for a youth enrolled in the Foods and Nutrition project.

When writing a goal you will want to be sure the goal passes the "control test". That is, do you have control over all parts of what happens? If you can answer "yes", you are ready to begin recording throughout the upcoming year in your memory book how you work towards this goal. Just a note... One goal new 4-H goal setter tend to think of that does not pass the "control test" is "I want to win a blue ribbon." You cannot control what projects other people bring or what the judge thinks. Your goals are more about your actions and learning. Remember... deeper learning and understanding along with better planned actions DO tend to bring more blue ribbons but the ribbon color is not the goal.

Memory Book pages are available at the UW-Extension office or online at <http://lincoln.uwex.edu/4-h-youth-development/4-h-community-club-programs/4-h-awards/awards-for-youth/memory-book-forms/>. On this page you find a "Memory Book Tips and Checklist" sheet to help you get started on your book. Individual forms that go in the book are available on this page in both pdf version to print out and complete or as a fill in version that you can then save to your computer to add to throughout the year. Awards are given to youth who turn in their Memory Books by September 1st that they receive during the 4-H Recognition Banquet held in October.

We encourage club leaders, project leaders and parents/guardians to utilize the memory book as another learning opportunity offered in the 4-H program. By using these pages, some of the skills you are helping youth build include:

- Good organizing and planning habits. Participants have to think of a logical sequence to complete a project, recognize personal priorities in completing the activity realize how to tell the story accurately and remember to save and include necessary information, such as prices of supplies and amount of time required to complete the project.
- How to evaluate the economic worth of an activity. Records require participants to figure out the amount of time and money spent on each project. Most also ask members to reflect on how much satisfaction or use they get out of the completed project.
- Improved written and oral communication skills, as member's record efforts and explain them to project leaders, club leaders, judges and other 4-H members.

Recently, we were asked if youth have to include a Memory Book page for every 4-H project they are enrolled in. This is not the case. Youth should complete and include a Memory Book page for the 4-H projects that they are the most active and involved in during the year. Youth get to choose which projects to include in their Memory Book.

Many 4-H alumni say that their memory books are the best scrapbooks they have of their 4-H experiences and sometimes their childhood.

If you have questions as you get started on your Memory Books, please contact Cherie or either of us at the Lincoln County UW-Extension office.

Debbie Moellendorf
4-H Youth Development Educator
and Department Head
deborah.moellendorf@ces.uwex.edu

Amanda Kostman
4-H Youth Dev. Program Advisor
and Family Living Educator
amanda.kostman@ces.uwex.edu

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