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Message from Dorothy

Dear 4-H families and volunteers,

This month, hundreds of 4-H’ers from around the state will participate in one of our five 4-H Building Leadership and Understanding (BLU) youth leadership conferences.

The annual regional youth conferences are planned and facilitated by our Minnesota 4-H State Ambassadors. The ambassadors use a youth-teaching-youth approach to teach their peers about leadership and engage participants in hands-on activities, games, small group discussions, and a dance during each event. This year’s topic is called, "Find Your Element.” The focus will help youth explore how they can live out the passions in their lives. The 4-H BLU conferences are one important way that we provide youth with hands-on opportunities to learn and practice leadership skills.

If you aren’t familiar with 4-H BLU, or the statewide 4-H Youth Exploring Leadership and Learning Outloud! (YELLO!) youth conference in June, I encourage you to explore these wonderful leadership opportunities for youth (and adult volunteers!)

Go to our web site at www.4-H.umn.edu/events/blu/index.html and www.4-H.umn.edu/events/yello/index.html.

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Are You Looking for Work Experience in the Youth Development Field?

This year, we are offering 54 county-based 4-H summer intern positions throughout the state of Minnesota. Internships will provide an excellent opportunity to learn more about University of Minnesota Extension and explore job opportunities in 4-H Youth Development. Most positions will be for ten or eleven weeks, with flexible starting dates.

Candidates must have a high school diploma, and at least two years of undergraduate study is preferred. Candidates must apply on-line through the University of Minnesota job site. The application materials will include a standard application, resume, cover letter, list of three references and a college transcript. The summer intern positions are posted at www.extension.umn.edu/about/employment/. The application deadline is February 15.

For more information, please contact Michele VanDyke at mvandyke@umn.edu.

2016 Project Bowls

Check out the 4-H Project Bowl website at www.4-h.umn.edu/events/project-bowl/ for rules, resources, and more information. Volunteers are still needed for Judge and Moderator positions. If you would like to be considered, please contact Cheryl Stephenson at cherryls@umn.edu.

Regional Bowl dates and locations are:

- **March 5:** Foley
- **March 12:** Hastings
- **March 19:** Bemidji
- **March 19:** Redwood Falls
- **April 2:** Snow Date
- **April 16:** State Bowl (Sauk Rapids)

Sincerely,

Dorothy M. Freeman
Associate dean and state 4-H director

2016 Shooting Sports & Wildlife Spring Leader Certification Training: Two Sites!

The Minnesota 4-H Shooting Sports and Wildlife Program Development Committee invites you to attend the 4-H Shooting Sports and Wildlife Leader Certification! The committee recommends that leaders attend the entire certification weekend every five years. Now is your chance to attend!

The training is designed for adults and youth (9th grade and older) that lead or would like to lead training in shooting sports or wildlife. Classes will be offered in the disciplines of coordinator, archery, rifle/pistol, shotgun, muzzleloading, and wildlife. This training meets the 4-H project leaders' requirements for certification and recertification. Although there is range time allocated in the schedule, the majority of the training is classroom work to become an effective instructor, not to practice your own shooting skills.

**April 23 – 24**
St. Mary's Church and Kanabec County Gun Club, Mora.

**April 23 – 24**
Worthington Regional Office, Worthington

Registration materials can be found at www.4-H.umn.edu/events/shooting-sports-certification/. Deadline to register is April 8. Disciplines fill quickly, so make sure registration forms are sent in early!
Exploring Agriculture Career Day – February 15

On Monday, February 15 (Presidents' Day) 4-H youth in grades 8 and up are invited to attend an exciting day at the University of Minnesota! It's time to discover the opportunities awaiting you in the world of agriculture! From finance, advertising, teaching to engineering...these jobs and many more are waiting for future employees just like you! Come discover your interests, hear from panelists working in agriculture positions, take a short tour, enjoy a mini career fair, and learn what you should do to prepare yourself for college. There will be a college financial planning presentation at 1:30 p.m. in the North Star Ballroom. The cost for the day is $15 per participant and includes lunch. Parents are welcome to attend as well, with the cost of $5 for the lunch.

**Check-in:** 8:45 – 9 a.m.  
**Location:** University of Minnesota – St. Paul Campus, North Star Ballroom - Student Center 2017 Buford Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55108

Find your inspiration, register today! See the Registration form for all details!

**Registration Deadline:** Monday, February 8

We already have a Carver County 4-H volunteer who is willing to help with carpooling to campus! If you are willing to drive or would like to have your 4-H'er join a carpool, please contact Allie.

M4-HAVA 2016 Annual Conference

Please consider attending the 31st annual Minnesota 4-H Adult Volunteer Association Conference being held **March 17-19** at the Bigwood Event Center/Best Western Inn in Fergus Falls, Minnesota. This year’s theme is Keen, Green, and Lean in 2016.

The M4-HAVA Conference is a great place for volunteers to learn about what is happening throughout the state and new trends going on in 4-H. You will meet other volunteers who are really excited about 4-H, leave with an arsenal of new activities and ideas from the 32 workshops offered to take back and share with your clubs and counties, and recognize outstanding volunteers and clubs during the annual banquet.

For more information on registration for the 2016 M4-HAVA Conference, Blue Ribbon Awards, and Membership visit [www.4-H.umn.edu/volunteer/m4-hava/](http://www.4-H.umn.edu/volunteer/m4-hava/).

Judging 4-H Exhibits at Minnesota County Fairs

Minnesota 4-H depends on the skills, talents and dedication of hundreds of adults who judge 4-H projects at county fairs across Minnesota. In support of 4-H judges, Minnesota 4-H offers online training, toolkit resources and more. To learn more, or if interested in becoming a 4-H judge, visit [www.4-H.umn.edu/county-fair/judges/](http://www.4-H.umn.edu/county-fair/judges/).

2016 4-H Rube Goldberg Challenge: Crush and Recycle a Can!

The 2016 4-H Rube Goldberg Challenge is to create a machine that will crush an empty aluminum soft drink can and put it into a recycling container!

The third annual challenge asks teams of youth to design overly complex contraptions that accomplish this year’s designated task using everyday items that interact in a series of chain-reactions. Teams compete in contests at their county fair, and then will be eligible to compete at the Minnesota State Fair.
Teams are encouraged to register by May 15 and get started on their machines!

To learn more about the 4-H Rube Goldberg Challenge and how to register, go to: www.4-h.umn.edu/events/engineering-design-challenge/index.html.

NOTE: No paper registration this year. Team leaders, members and youth coaches will sign up through 4HOnline accounts. Adult volunteer leaders must register before their team members can register.

What Do Minnesota 4-H First-Year Member Parents Have to Say?

In October 2015, the first-year member parent survey was administered to parents of new members in the 2014-2015 program year. We do this survey annually to learn more about the experiences of our families new to the 4-H program. This survey asks parents to give feedback on items such as how welcoming their experience was, if their child had opportunities for learning, and if policies were challenging.

What did we learn this year?

- Overall parents and youth feel welcomed into the program.
- A quarter of parents felt that enrollment and membership policies were challenging.
- 94% of parents said the topics their child worked on were of interest to them.
- 80% of parents agreed that their child became really good at something they worked on.
- We have a large number of youth who are experiencing 4-H for the first time in their family. Over 45% of our survey respondents had never had exposure to the 4-H program in their family history.

Currently teams of educators are looking at this information and thinking about how we can improve the 4-H program to help all our members.

Thank you first-year member parents for responding to this survey!

Grade K - 5 Clover Project Exploration Mornings

Clover Project Exploration Mornings are back by popular demand! Are you ready for a fun-filled morning full of hands-on activities? Clover Exploration Mornings will be from 9 a.m. – noon and we will play games, make treats, and sing songs. Each month we will focus on different 4-H projects and you will leave with a completed beginner project ready for the fair. We hope to expand to the next level on projects when interest is shown. Space is limited so reserve your spot early. Cost: $5 for 4-H members and $10 for non-members. This program is geared towards youth in grades K – 5. Older members are invited to help be teen leaders.

Saturday, February 13, 9 a.m. – noon

Would you like to learn more about Performing Arts, Demonstrations, Share the Fun and speaking in front of a group? We will be playing improv games, putting together a beginner level demonstration, and learning more about the Performing Arts Judging Day.

Saturday, March 12, 9 a.m. – noon

We will be starting our own indoor Fairy Garden that will have time to grow and be ready for the county fair. We will learn how to force bulbs for an early spring surprise.

Beef ID Day

The 2016 Beef ID Day will take place on Saturday, February 6, from 9 a.m. – noon at the Fair Grounds. Please note you must attend if you are bringing beef to the county fair. Please
call 952-492-5384 to let us know you are coming. We don’t want to keep our volunteers any longer than needed, so weighing of animals will stop once all who RSVP’d are finished. The snow date for Beef ID Day will be the following Saturday, February 13.

AnSc PDC Meeting Tuesday, February 9

The AnSc PDC Meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 9th with a youth only meeting at 6:30 p.m. and the regular meeting to follow at 7:00 p.m. We will be talking about show books, county fair planning, and schedules. Please watch your email for supporting documents for the meeting.

Dog Club/PDC

The next Dog Club/PDC meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 16, at 6:30 p.m. at the Prior Lake Library.

Camp Counselors Wanted!!!

We are already starting our search for Camp Counselors for Camp Patterson Youth Camp in June! Please complete the application and return to Katie no later than 4:30 p.m. on Friday, February 26th.

4-H Unplugged! Winter Leadership Retreat

All youth in grades 9 and up are invited to spend a weekend at the Chi Rho Retreat Center in Annandale, unplugged from stress and technology, learning winter survival skills, leadership skills, proper dinner etiquette and creating a clear vision for your young adult life! We’ll spend time just hanging out by the fire, playing broomball, and eating lots of food!!

Highlights include:
• Survival Session with expert Mason Grove
• Etiquette Dinner with Katie Schneider and 4-H Staff
• “Living Your Dream” keynote session with State 4-H Citizenship and Leadership Coordinator, Jacquie Lonning
• Lots of unplugged socializing with youth from across the state!

The retreat is February 26 – 28 and the cost is $85. Registration forms are due to the Extension Office no later than 4:30 p.m., Friday, February 19.

Calendar

FEBRUARY

1 Registration Deadline for Project Bowls
1 Registration Materials Available for Shooting Sports and Wildlife Spring Leader Certification Training
6 Beef ID Day at Fair Grounds 9 a.m. – noon
6-7 BLU at St. Cloud Holiday Inn and Suites
8 Exploring Agriculture Career Day Registration Due
8 Deadline to Register for Shooting Sports and Wildlife Spring Leader Certification Training
8 Lego-Robotics Meeting, Extension Office, 6:30 p.m.
9 AnSc PDC Meeting, 6:30 p.m. Youth Only, 7 p.m. Regular Meeting
13 Clover Project Explore Morning, Performing Arts, 9 a.m. – noon, Extension Office
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Exploring Agriculture Career Day on Campus, 8:45 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Application Deadline for 4-H Summer Intern Positions</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Youth Application Deadline for State 4-H Beef Show Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Lego-Robotics Meeting, Extension Office, 6:30 p.m.</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>Full Application Materials Available Online for Summer 2016 Citizenship Washington Focus</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>Dog Club PDC Meeting, 6:30 p.m., Prior Lake Library</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Registration Deadline for 4-H Unplugged! Winter Leadership Retreat</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>Lego Robotics Meeting, Extension Office, 6:30 p.m.</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>Deadline to Apply for a Camp Counselor Position at Camp Patterson</td>
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<td>26-28</td>
<td>4-H Unplugged! Winter Leadership Retreat – Annandale, MN</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>Lego-Robotics Meeting, Extension Office, 6:30 p.m.</td>
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<td><strong>MARCH</strong></td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Regional Project Bowl, Foley</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Deadline to Register for SS&amp;W Spring Leader Certification Training</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Regional Project Bowl, Hastings</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Clover Project Explore Morning, Fairy Gardens and Indoor Gardening, 9 a.m. – noon, Extension Office</td>
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<td>17-19</td>
<td>M4-HAVA 2016 Annual Conference, Fergus Falls</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>Regional Project Bowl, Bemidji</td>
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<td>Regional Project Bowl, Redwood Falls</td>
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<td>2016 Youth Day at the Capitol</td>
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<td><strong>APRIL</strong></td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Regional Project Bowl Snow Date</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Livestock PDC Volunteer Training Webinar</td>
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<td>Deadline to Register for Shooting Sports and Wildlife Leader Certification Training</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Share the Fun and Performing Arts Day Information in March Newsletter</td>
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<td>9-14</td>
<td>National 4-H Conference, Washington, D.C.</td>
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<td>State Project Bowl, Sauk Rapids</td>
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<td>23-24</td>
<td>4-H Shooting Sports and Wildlife Spring Leader Certification Training, Mora and Worthington</td>
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<td><strong>MAY</strong></td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Dairy Animal ID Deadline</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Deadline to Register for 2016 4-H Rube Goldberg Challenge: Crush and Recycle a Can!</td>
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<td><strong>JUNE</strong></td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>County Fair Entries Due</td>
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<td>Demonstration Night</td>
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<td><strong>JULY</strong></td>
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<td>2-9</td>
<td>Summer 2016 Citizenship Washington Focus</td>
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<td>12-13</td>
<td>County Dog Show</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>Fashion Revue/Clothing Judging, SCALE</td>
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</tbody>
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21  4-H Building/Foodstand scrub party
23  Barn Set-up, 9 a.m. – noon
26  General Project Entry Day
27-31 Scott County Fair