

Recognition and Awards:

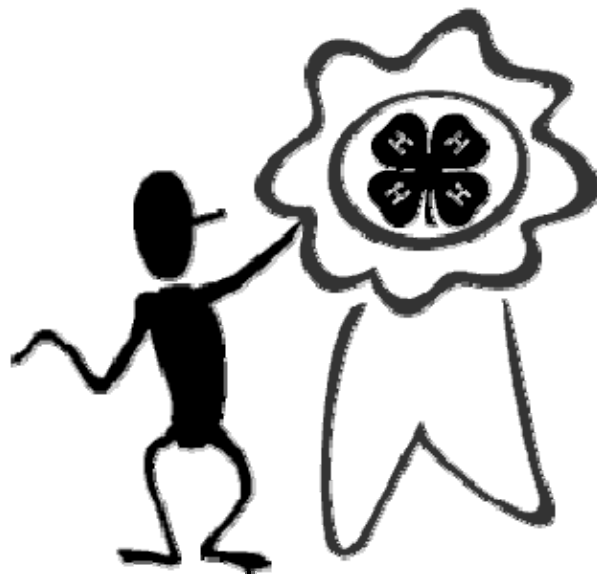
A PHILOSOPHY FOR 4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

RECOGNITION

Recognition in 4-H is the acknowledgement and affirmation of the personal growth of an individual or group.

AWARDS

Awards are things we give persons or groups to symbolize their recognition. Examples are a trophy, a scholarship, stickers, a special dinner, etc. Awards can also be a pat on the back or a smile.



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Introduction

The most important part of the 4-H Recognition Framework is that it provides for balance across all types of recognition. The model acknowledges young people for their continuing development of life skills, as well as project accomplishments.

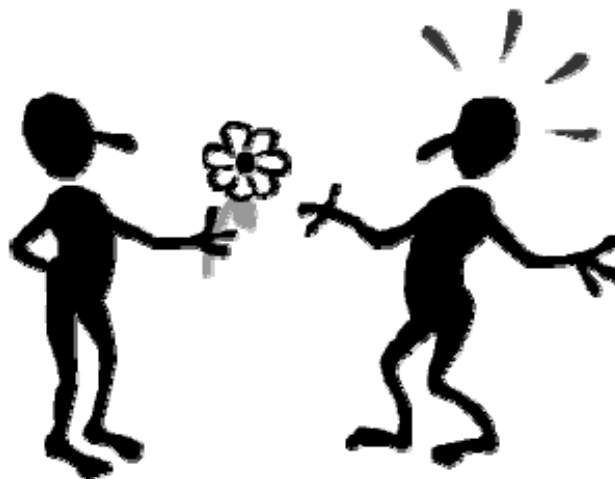
Basic Beliefs about Recognition

Recognition is the after-the-fact display of appreciation for a job well done. The following beliefs have served as a guide in the development of this document:

- Recognition is a basic human need.
- Recognition must build positive self-esteem.
- A balance between intrinsic and extrinsic recognition is essential.
- Recognition, when used in all of its forms, provides a balance of appropriate recognition for all people.
- Recognition should be a planned part of everyone's 4-H experience.
- Everyone needs to be recognized at some time.
- Recognition is more meaningful when it occurs soon after it is earned and in front of individuals significant to the person being recognized.
- Appropriate recognition for an individual varies depending on the person's past experience, family lifestyle, community and cultural heritage.
- Recognition motivates people to excel and take worthwhile risks.

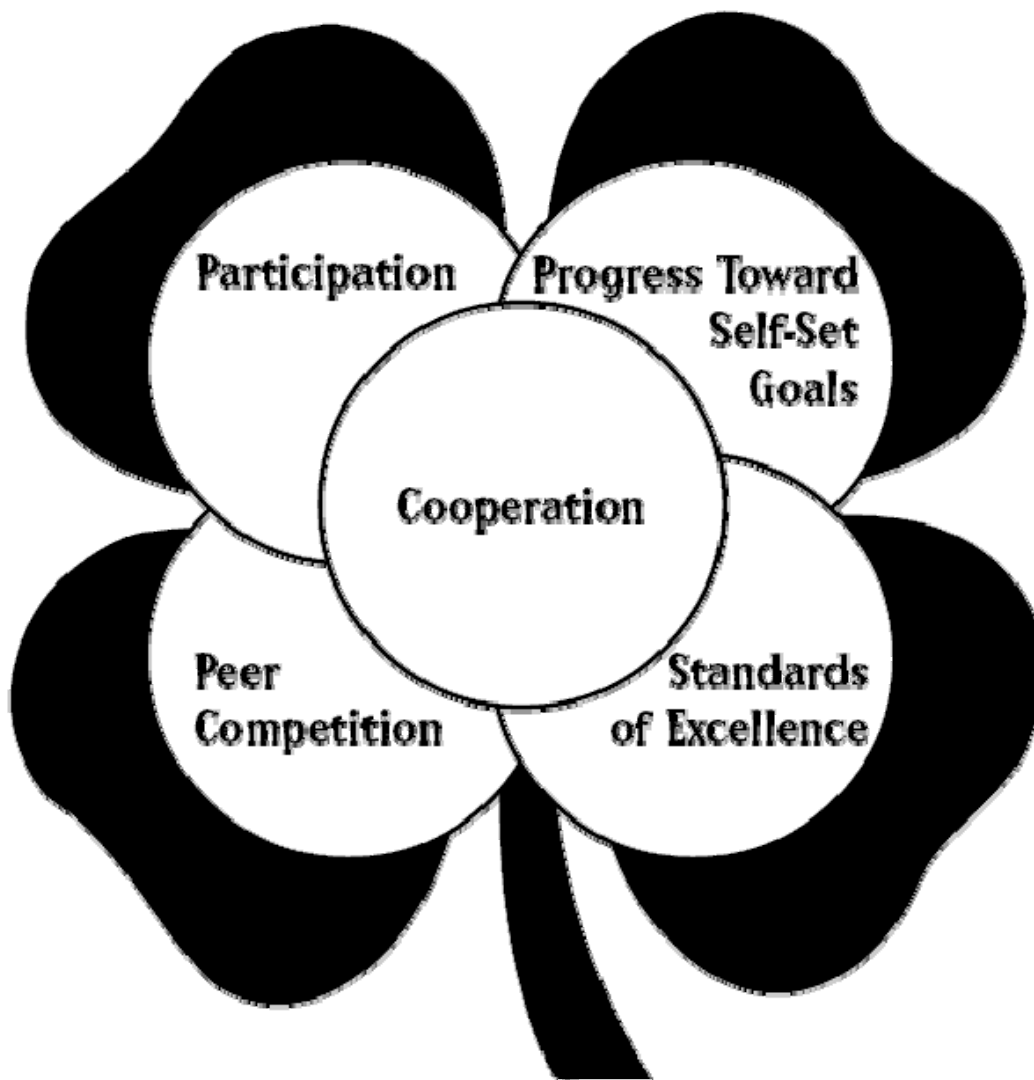
Recognition also:

- Can take many forms
- Requires adult support
- Should be offered in a balance of tangible and intangible forms
- Is given to **all** youth who are participating
- Includes an avenue for self assessment and reflection without the need for external rewards
- Supports individual choice in learning and participation



The Framework

The 4-H Recognition Framework addresses the five major reasons for recognition.



Source: Parson (1996), p. 1.

A comprehensive recognition program includes opportunities for recognition based on participation, progress towards goals, standards of excellence, peer competition and cooperation. Recognition should exist at club, country, state and national levels.

Principles

- Having many recognition and reward options makes it possible to acknowledge accomplishments in ways appropriate to the particulars of a given situation.
- Timing is crucial. Recognized contributions throughout a project or program year. Reward contributions close to the time an achievement is realized.
- Strive for a clear, unambiguous and well-communicated connection between accomplishments and the recognition received. Be sure people understand why they receive awards and the criteria used to determine awards.

5 TYPES OF RECOGNITION

1. PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES

- Participation recognition acknowledges attending, and participating, and successfully completing an experience or activity.
- Participation has simple requirements that are well publicized and known.
- Can be earned many times.
- Demonstrates that a person was there.
- "You are an important person and you have participated in a 4-H learning experience".

Examples:

Pins, T-Shirts, buttons, memorabilia of the event/activity, thank you or congratulatory notes to participants, names in the paper, certificate of participation, celebration marking the end of the program year.

2. PROGRESS (Towards Self Set Goals by Individuals or Clubs)

- Not limited to the outcome at the end of the project or effort. It can occur within the action process and can be stimulated with questions like "how are you coming along?" or "how is it going?"
- This form is particularly useful when several steps are involved in reaching a goal. Recognizing accomplishment of steps along the way can provide motivation to continue the effort.
- Adult need to help young people set realistic goals that are likely to result in successful outcomes. But self-set goals are just that, and youth will have the final decision as to what they will be. Here are some keys to understanding recognition of progress toward self-set goals:
 - It is used with all ages
 - Goals must be realistic and reachable
 - Progress is evaluated by both the youth and adult
 - Progress is measured using the young persons own goals and plans

Examples:

Ongoing verbal encouragement from leaders, written notes from leaders, goal sheets and checklists that help individuals keep track of progress, stickers, patches, awards, certificates, and plaques.

3. ACHIEVING STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE:

- Recognizing accomplishments as they compare to a predetermined standard, is a more extrinsic form of recognition
- The standard used to measure success is established by an outside source or specialist and serves as a measuring stick. Recognition is determined by how closely performance matches that measuring stick

- To use this form of recognition, adults must assure that the standards are clearly defined and the youth are well informed about them. Young people must know what they are working toward.
- Standards measurement involves a judging system, and rating categories are often used. 4-H uses a ribbon placement system in recognizing the achieving of a standard of performance
- Recognition based on a set of standards, measures quality of work and not a comparison to the performance of others. Judges must be well informed of the standards, and they must be impartial and diligent about not comparing work to that of other youth.

Examples:

Ribbon placing based on the Danish System,

4. PEER COMPETITION

- There are some qualifications that must be discussed with this form of recognition as it supports positive youth development. The quest to be a champion can be a strong motivator for some youth; however, it is not a motivator for all youth.
- For youth under age 12 who are not yet skilled abstract thinkers, the ability to deal with the ambiguities that may accompany competitive judgment calls are not in place. In addition, because they are maturing at very different rates comparison to peers can negatively influence their concept of their own potential. Recognition based upon competition with peers is not recommended for youth under the age of 12.
- The desire to win may overpower the desire to learn from the experience. It is easy to confuse the means with the ends when striving for recognition through competition. Youth development professionals must help youth remain focused on the experience rather than the competition, and prepare youth for both winning and not winning.
- Rules and procedures must be clearly spelled out, so that everyone knows exactly what will be judged and how that judging will take place.
- Competition can be high risk and can bring with it stress, conflict, hard feelings, and disagreement. Negative stress and conflict can be reduced or eliminated by making sure that everyone involved understands exactly what is going to be expected.
- As these factors would indicate, competition should be optional. It is a good avenue of recognition for some youth but does not serve as a positive motivator for all youth.

Examples:

Awards, trophies, plaques, and scholarships.

5. EXCELLENCE IN COOPERATION

- There is a belief out there that *competition* brings out the best in us. In reality *cooperation* brings out the best in us. We need to talk about that with our youth as we become a more interdependent society.
- Cooperation involves all the youth in a group and provides opportunities to be involved in group-identity issues, and attempt to find solutions with the group.
- Cooperation is measured against mutually agreed upon goals, and supports looking at a variety of ideas.
- Recognition for cooperation gives attention to the way a group works. Leadership skills that promote the involvement of everyone in the group are supported.

- The ultimate goal of cooperation is not recognition. Conflict that occurs around recognition for cooperation will be around the procedures for working together rather than over who has done the best work.
- Everyone in the group is recognized when measuring cooperative efforts.

Examples:

Everyone in the group is recognized: name in the paper, plaques, certificates, scholarships, letters in Portfolios, pins, Community Pride Award.

Recognition Ideas

Form of Recognition	To Recognize...				
	Participation	Progress Toward Self-Set Goals	Achieving Standards of Excellence	Peer Competition	Cooperation
Verbal acknowledgment or public thank you's	✓			✓	✓
Thank-you notes or letters	✓			✓	✓
Letters (copy to commissioner or legislator)			✓		
Certificates	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
"Hall of Fame" nominations	✓				
Awards (e.g., Most Improved, Completion of _____ of the Year")	✓				
Pins	✓	✓	✓	✓	
County project medals		✓	✓	✓	
Plaques		✓	✓	✓	✓
Ribbons				✓	
Medallions				✓	
Trophies				✓	
Promotional items (e.g., mug, tote bag, etc., from National 4-H Supply)	✓		✓	✓	✓
Gift certificates or monetary awards	✓	✓		✓	✓
Memory books	✓				
Savings bonds				✓	
Show blankets				✓	
Director's chairs				✓	
Written resource materials or project supplies		✓		✓	
Scholarships (e.g., MSU 4-H scholarships for trip or college, scholarships for Kettunen Center workshops, scholarships in an award area)			✓	✓	✓
Trips	✓			✓	✓
Write-up (perhaps with picture) in local newspapers, county newsletter or "Michigan 4-H Today" or announcement over the radio or on television	✓	✓		✓	✓
Recognition from the mayor, city council or county commissioners					✓