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## OSU Extension News

Hands to larger service is the third line of the 4-H pledge. Community service is an integral part of the 4-H program as it teaches youth and adults to be a part of something larger than themselves, to give back to their community, and to help others. All of these are skills and characteristics we strive to teach our members and volunteers. Each year our members and volunteers give countless hours of service through individual and club-based service projects.

As clubs are developing their projects, we encourage them to be service-learning projects. Service-learning is taking a community service project and going one step further to learn about who and what you are doing. An example of this would be the lid project that Junior Leaders completed two years ago and we are again collecting lids for to donate to Canter's Cave 4-H Camp. Not only did the youth collect and sort lids, but they learned about why the lids couldn't be recycled locally – there isn't a market for them and recycling is a business. They learned about the different types of plastic and what goes into the landfill, and then they also went out and educated others as they asked people to donate caps and lids.

Not every project a 4-H club and members participates in needs to be a service-learning project, but it is encouraged because it takes it a step further to educate and have a more hands-on experience. This helps make more meaningful purpose for both those giving and receiving.

As with everything in 2020, COVID-19 has severely limited our clubs on what service projects they have been able to complete. In response to requests from clubs for ideas, we have worked with an employee of a local nursing home to develop a list of ideas that may be possible for both individuals or groups to complete. These are limited to 4-H'ers! Especially this year with the restrictions on visiting nursing homes, residents are disconnected from their loved ones and valued visitors. Feeling connected through community support can help these individuals feel remembered and help brighten their spirits.

Before starting any project you should contact the facility you are wishing to work with to see what their current policies are. Every facility is different and has different needs.

- Adopt a Senior - contact a facility and ask if there is a resident you can adopt and what their Christmas list is.
- Send a Card - make homemade cards or buy cards and personalize them.
- Donate Activity Items such as crossword puzzles, coloring books, colored pencils, large print books, word searches.
- Create Decorations that can be hung on doors or windows such as wreaths, snowmen, and snowflakes.
- Virtual Christmas Caroling or Concert - Virtually visit and sing carols or play an instrument.
- Recorded Greetings - Record messages or songs and send them to facilities for them to share with residents.
- Virtual Visit with a phone call, Zoom, Facetime - whatever platform works. Ask to be paired with a resident and get to know them.
- Fulfill Their Wish List - Ask for the facility's wish list and purchase items to donate.

This is not an extensive list, but a few ideas. We are also aware that Ohio Valley Manor is accepting donation items that they will distribute to their residents and other facilities across the county. Unwrapped items can be dropped off at their activities or therapy departments.

Other ideas for service projects are to collect plastic caps and lids under 8 inches and drop them off at the Extension Office. Adopt a child from a giving tree. Donate to the local toys for tots. Contact local law enforcement and fire departments to see if they need items that they provide to individuals. Donate food and personal care items to local pantries. The list is endless, but hopefully this helps you pledge your hands to larger service, to help someone else's health and better living.

The 4-H program is part of the Ohio State University Extension services. For more information on the 4-H program and how to get involved, contact the Brown County OSU Extension office at 937-378-6716. Due to COVID-19 our office is operating under reduced hours by appointment only. We are available by phone daily from 8am – 4:30pm M-F. You can also find more information on our website [brown.osu.edu](http://brown.osu.edu) or follow Brown County 4-H on Facebook at [facebook.com/brownco4h](https://facebook.com/brownco4h). A list of canceled and postponed events is listed on our website.

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