



# 4-H VOLUNTEER TRAINING SERIES

## Selecting a Name for Your 4-H Club



### Naming a 4-H Club Is Both Challenging and Fun

Each 4-H club is a unique group of individuals who work together toward common goals. A club name should reflect the purpose(s) of the club, often relating to the project(s) the club participates in, or the geographic area where members live or the club meets. One of the first ways to develop a sense of belonging and youth engagement is allowing all of the members to participate in selecting a name for the club. Information in this sheet may help you guide the members in making a wise name choice.

4-H is an educational youth-development program committed to providing equal opportunities for youth. Be sure to keep this in mind when selecting a club name. As a part of the University of Florida Cooperative Extension Service, a publicly funded entity, 4-H cannot discriminate

on the basis of race, creed, color, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, or political opinions or affiliations. Therefore, please be sure that the club name you select is not biased for or against certain groups in any of these categories.

It is possible to overlook subtle insinuations that some club names might accidentally exhibit. For example, a 4-H club name that endorses a specific religious perspective or icon would essentially advocate one religion over others and create the impression that 4-H is not open to all regardless of their religious standing.

Creative or cute names for 4-H clubs are fine—but consider whether any potential club members might shy away from joining just because of a misleading name. To maintain a positive image for the entire 4-H program, club names should neither shock nor confuse the public.

### Some Examples to Consider

#### For a 4-H sewing club:

“The Sewing Susans” would obviously discriminate against boys, whereas “The Nimble Thimbles 4-H Club” might be a better idea. But make sure such a “cute” name wouldn’t be a turn-off to any members or potential members. Teens are particularly sensitive to cute names that may be better appreciated by younger kids.

#### For a 4-H gardening club:

“The Dirty Hands” would not be as appropriate as “The Green Thumbs 4-H Gardening Club” or “The Grow-Kids 4-H Club.”

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## Make Sure “4-H” Is in Name!

Make sure people know your club is a 4-H club by including it in the official name of the club.

Instead of the “Silver Spurs Club” or the “Silver Spurs Horse Club” it should be “4-H Silver Spurs” or “Silver Spurs 4-H Horse Club” or simply “Silver Spurs 4-H Club.”

## Making the Decision

The decision-making process for selecting a club name can be challenging. Just remember, this process may take some time for young people, depending upon their age. Help them create a process to involve all, even if it takes more than the first or second club meeting to finalize their choice.

Using the previous examples, help younger members understand the criteria for a club name. Think of many possible names. Let the members be creative in the way they generate or solicit club name possibilities. If the group is small, it might use simple brainstorming methods. If the group is large, the group might create a ballot box where youth and parents can place suggestions. A committee can review the ballots and make a list to have membership vote. Use the process that works best to involve all members.

Consider whether the names suggested meet the criteria. Again, depending upon the size of the group, this may be done by total club membership or a small committee at first. 4-H members should reach a consensus or use a vote by majority rule to make their decision. If this isn't practical, especially if the club is large, the club can simply accept or vote on a committee's recommendations.

## Summary

When a new 4-H club is being formed, choosing a club name can be a useful group experience in democracy and consensus building. The process also allows members to feel more personally connected to the club they helped name. The adult's role is to guide them in wise decision-making.

Most poor choices become obvious as you and your club carefully consider the club name. Just beware of the not-so-obvious possibilities! Therefore, when selecting a

club name, think about it carefully, be creative, and use a little common sense. To avoid confusion, try not to select a name currently being used by another club. When in doubt about a duplication or acceptance of a name, contact the county 4-H office for approval or suggestions.

