



4-H Quick Tips - 4-H Awards Programs

One of the most popular 4-H recognition opportunities is the annual 4-H Awards Program or banquet.

PURPOSE:

Recognition of achievements by 4-H'ers. Keep this central in your planning. The "VIP" treatment should be given to each 4-H'er. Recognition of donors, leaders, special guests, etc. should be secondary to the recognition of 4-H'ers.

TIME TABLE:

Award Programs are held successfully all through the year. Many are held in the fall during National 4-H Week. Whenever you plan a program, the following time table suggestions will be helpful:

One Year in advance:

Put Awards Program in Plan of Work, begin taking photos or videos, establish a system for keeping up with individual 4-H'er achievements, secure sponsors and set your budget.

Three months in advance:

Order all awards; confirm date (check school & community calendars); reserve location; form committees, make a list of major responsibilities, and assign leaders, agents, and 4-H'ers. Possible committees include: Program, Entertainment, Facilities, Publicity, Registration, Decorations, Refreshments/Food, etc. Select theme, invite speaker, letter certificates; order plaques; and order invitations. Develop guest list. Make any special music and entertainment arrangements.

Three weeks in advance:

Send invitations (four weeks in advance gives time for reply and adjustments in food, two weeks makes it easier for them to remember); send program to printer; check food; double check all details.

One week in advance:

Have a telephone committee to call 4-H'ers and parents to remind them of the program or use an internet service that makes calls / reminders for you.

LOCATION:

Location is very important. Strive for the best

facility available; the condition of the facility will have an impact on the image you project. This is a 4-H event! USE 4-H EMBLEMS! The location should be easy to find and convenient to most participants. All participants should feel comfortable with location.

The audience must be able to hear and see; check out the acoustics and seating before booking a location.

Some suggested locations are: High School Auditorium or Lunchroom, Hotel Meeting Room, Vo-Tech/College Auditorium, Dining Hall or Community Center.

BANQUET / RECEPTION

The program format should be planned to meet your county traditions, budget, and expectations. A nice reception might serve your needs well. Three basic formats are:

1. Meal sponsored by donor.
2. Meat, beverages and bread provided with parents bringing covered dishes.
3. Reception with nice finger food and punch.

Volunteers can play a key role in food preparation; school personnel can also assist.

PRINTED PROGRAM

The program should be attractive and include highlights in your county program. Be certain the 4-H emblem is very visible. List 4-H'ers' names in program. Include some current information on your county 4-H program. Involve 4-H'ers in deciding the cover design and the overall theme of the program.

AWARDS

Many awards can be ordered from the State 4-H Office, Rock Eagle Trading Post, and National 4-H Supply. Special plaques, trophies, and ribbons are available from many sources.

A good way to speed up a program is to package all awards for a 4-H'er in one envelope. Line 4-H'ers up in the order they will be recognized and only call out names of members present (facilitate this by

having everyone check in). Special awards include 4-H Key Award, "I Dare You Award", Achievement awards, Citizenship awards, Teen Leader awards, Honor Society type awards, Volunteer Recognition, etc.

Present any scholarships at the awards program. Highlight exceptional awards & achievements such as D.P.A., animal shows, District Officers, State Winners, etc.

The manner in which an award is presented is more important than the value of the award. Provide a script for anyone assisting with the program. If possible, use principals, legislators, donors, key volunteers, judging team coaches, all 4-H staff, etc. to assist in the presentation of awards.

DO

- Strategically locate guests with 4-H'ers.
- Provide name tags for special guests & donors.
- Let 4-H'ers run the show.
- Accurately pronounce names.
- Publicize before the event.
- Make photos for newspaper and website after program.
- Invite Junior and Senior District Officers and State Officers.
- Provide your 4-H'ers with list for thank you notes.
- Decorate.
- Use a printed program.
- Script everything.
- Conduct a rehearsal with the 4-H'ers one week or so prior to the actual program.
- Invite all County Extension Staff to attend.
- Keep records on awards from year to year.
- Use a 4-H'er such as a District or State officer as the speaker or someone who knows what 4-H is all about.
- Do a slide show that spotlights many 4-H'ers.
- Be certain that you include all 4-H'ers that should be recognized.
- Invite VIP's.
- Have a theme and carry it out with decorations and special activities at the program.
- Use exhibits in area.
- Make a list of supplies to bring (flags, banners, exhibits, registration lists & materials, name tags, pencils, etc.).
- Have a back-up plan for the unexpected (weather, speaker no-show, committee member follow through, etc.).
- Have a 4-H Awards program even if you present some awards at school recognition

ceremonies. 4-H'ers deserve their own special event.

DO NOT

- Go over two hours.
- Charge 4-H members to attend.
- Mispronounce names.
- Announce names of 4-H'ers that are not there.
- Forget to send head table or special guests through serving line first.
- Show an hour of slides that feature only two 4-H'ers.
- Forget 4-H Flag.
- Forget to evaluate the event so that improvements can be made from year to year.

SPONSORSHIP

Award programs can be excellent opportunities to use donors; the donor gets excellent visibility for their investment. Some potential sources for dollars are:

- Individual Sponsors/Donors for a project
- Banks
- Civic Clubs
- Community Groups
- EMC
- Local Leader Group
- Farmers /Agribusinesses
- Businesses with related projects

HAVE A 4-H PROGRAM GOOD ENOUGH TO SHOWCASE. GOOD LUCK!

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