

Holmes County 4-H Youth Development Activity Fee

Holmes County Ohio State University Extension's 4-H program has thrived for years. The 4-H youth program would not be successful without the dedication of caring and passionate volunteers, such as yourself. Our youth are growing into caring, contributing, and responsible citizens because of you and your impact on their life. However, with recent budget situations our 4-H program is suffering and Holmes County 4-H needs to recover some costs in order to keep the county 4-H Youth Development program operating.

Background

The Holmes County 4-H Youth Development program has operated strongly for many years. However, budget cuts in 2008 and 2009 have created a strain on the delivery of all program areas, including the 4-H Youth Development program. In the past, 4-H members and volunteers have been able to participate in the program and received information, programs, and opportunities for no or very little cost. However, with the 2009 budget cut of 53% (\$80,000), which is on top of a 2008 budget cut of 43% (\$112,000), the OSU Extension Office can no longer support the program in the manner that it has been supported in previous years. In the years since this budget crisis, county funding has increased small amounts each year; however it still remains well below the amount necessary to fund full staff and program materials.

Decision

In order to continue the 4-H Youth Development program in a similar manner as previous years, a county activity fee of \$10.00 per member will now be collected for each 4-H member (excluding Cloverbud members) with a maximum fee per family of \$25.00. This activity fee will support program and enrollment communication, fair preparation, educational programs, staff and 4-H activities. The current budget allows for minimal communication, printing, and program costs. In order to continue the strong 4-H program that Holmes County has, we need to be able to print various items, communicate with families and conduct general program management. A survey completed in 2008 of other Ohio 4-H Youth Development programs revealed that a large number of counties have some type of fee associated with participation in the 4-H Youth Development program. Holmes is not the first county to have to associate an activity fee with 4-H Youth Development program participation.

This activity fee may seem harsh, but we want to be able to continue providing positive educational experiences for our young people. This \$10.00 activity fee will allow the program to continue providing positive opportunities to the youth who are involved in the 4-H program. Clubs can work together to reach their \$10.00 per member fee by doing club fundraisers, or individuals can pay the \$10.00 per member fee themselves.

This was not an easy decision, yet a necessary one if our 4-H Youth Development program wishes to continue. Please know this decision was not made in haste.

Logistics

The \$10.00 activity fee will be due June 15 each year to allow clubs time to raise/collect the dollars. Each year after 4-H enrollment is complete, 4-H clubs will receive a computer print out that lists all the primary 4-H members of your club. The youth on that list are the ones that the club will need to pay the activity fee for. If your club is having individual members pay their own activity fee, those fees need to be turned in to the primary club leader. This means that the club leader is responsible for either 1) collecting the \$10.00 from each member or 2) working with the club on a fundraiser to raise the \$10.00 activity fee. For clubs who may have a problem meeting the June 15th deadline, please contact the OSU Extension office to make arrangements. For youth who are in multiple clubs, they only need to pay one \$10.00 activity fee. The activity fee needs to be paid through your primary club, not each club you are involved in.

Holmes County 4-H Youth Development Activity Fee F.A.Q. Sheet

This F.A.Q. sheet was designed to accompany the document titled “**Holmes County 4-H Youth Development Activity Fee: Implemented March 2009**” and to answer any questions not addressed by the original policy.

I have multiple children in 4-H. Do I have to pay the activity fee for each child?

The answer is yes, up to a maximum of \$25.00 per family. The activity fee will be utilized for 4-H education and activities, as well as program management and support.

If a parents wants to write a check for the activity fee, who should the check be made payable to?

Since the activity fee is being paid on a club basis (no individual payments to OSU Extension please), the check needs to be made payable to the individual 4-H club. The 4-H club will then make one check out for the activity fee for all 4-H members in that club. In situations where the club does not have a bank account, a money order or cashier’s check for the entire club is acceptable.

My child is in two 4-H clubs. Does he need to pay the activity fee in each club?

No. The activity fee is for the county 4-H program, not the club level. Youth should only pay the activity fee to their primary club. In the event a child is in multiple clubs, the 4-H member needs to communicate to his/her clubs that he/she already paid the fee through the primary club.

Is this activity fee for advisors too?

No, this activity fee is just for 4-H members. It does NOT apply to Cloverbuds either.

Will this fee increase in future years?

Just as we are uncertain about future funding, we are uncertain if we will need to increase the activity fee. We do not anticipate raising the fee, however future budget will play a role in this decision.

Where will the activity fee income be housed?

Since the bulk of the activity fee income will be utilized for staff, postage, copying, and program supplies, the income will be deposited into the Holmes County OSU Extension general fund.

If I choose drop out of 4-H because of the increased cost, can I return my project books?

Yes, if they are in original condition and have not been written in. Killbuck Savings Bank continues to support the cost of project books and we will reuse the book for another member.

What are surrounding counties doing to handle budget cuts?

During the process of implementing the county activity fee, we reviewed a survey conducted in 2008 of other County 4-H programs. A majority of the 88 counties have some type of fee to help offset such costs as supplies, publications, postage, etc. Several other counties are embarking on major fundraisers to keep their programs moving forward.