



# The Prairie Professional

A Newsletter for KAE4-HA Members

Winter 2013

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## A Word From Our President:

Dear KAE4-HA Members,

One of my highlights this past spring was seeing my favorite singer-songwriter, Mary Chapin Carpenter, in concert. She described a vivid dream that led to her song "New Years Day" and the line from it that echoes in my head this time of year, "I dwell in possibility on New Years Day."

New Years is my favorite holiday. It avoids the stress and retail drive of other holidays and revels in a moment of celebratory drama when the clock strikes twelve. After the bells and whistles of that moment come moments of contemplation as we look at and plan for the year to come.

As youth development professionals, we are always looking ahead to the next event, the next opportunity for our youth and volunteers, to the next idea that will strengthen our programs and our skills. This is where we "dwell in possibility" and where I encourage you to include KAE4-HA in your planning for the New Year. The strength of our association lies in your involvement. Take a moment to review the committee you've chosen ([http://www.ksre.ksu.edu/agent\\_association/p.aspx?tabid=53](http://www.ksre.ksu.edu/agent_association/p.aspx?tabid=53)) and make a commitment to making the possibilities happen for your committee in 2014.

The possibilities widen from there during our spring meeting in conjunction with the Youth Development PFT professional development conference April 14-16 at Rock Springs 4-H Center.

May your New Year celebration joyous as we look forward to dwelling in the possibilities of 2014.

Sincerely,

Jill D. Martinson

KAE4-HA President

## Meet the Members:

It was suggested with so many new faces in KAE4-HA that we focus on a few of our members each month, so my goal will be four per newsletter. I know this will not cover everyone but it will get us started.

### Sarah Maass, Central Kansas District



I was raised on a dairy and wheat farm outside of Kingfisher, Oklahoma. I am an only child and I was a member of the Okarche 4-H Club in Kingfisher County for 11 years. In 2001, I graduated from Oklahoma State with my Bachelor's Degree in Family Relations & Child Development. After starting my Master's Degree at OSU, I decided to transfer to the University of Florida to pursue a degree in Family, Youth and Community Sciences, where I completed my degree in 2004. In 2011, I started to pursue my Ph.D. at Kansas State University in Life Span Human Development, and I hope to complete this degree in two more years.

Once I finished with my MS, I started my career in Extension as the 4-H Youth Development Agent in Lyon County. After three years in Lyon County, I had the opportunity to become the 4-H Youth Development Agent in the Central Kansas Extension District. I've been with CKD for almost 7 years. 4-H has always been an organization that I have held near and dear to my heart. My favorite part of this job is being able to watch youth and adults grow through their involvement in the 4-H program. I've always had a passion for life skill development, and through this program, I've had the opportunity to see youth and adults develop and continue to develop those life skills.

I enjoy baking, sewing and playing the piano in my spare time. Homework is usually a "spare time" hobby now too. To attempt to balance life and work, I enjoy the occasional mental health day with friends, I make a point to take a vacation every year, and I try to utilize professional scheduling whenever possible.

One of my favorite quotes comes from my FFA advisor, "No Deposit, No Return!"

### Amy Sollock, Edwards County FCS



Hello! I'm Amy Sollock, FCS/4-H Agent in Edwards County (Kinsley). My husband and I have been married for 3 years, and this past March we gave birth to our baby boy, Everett Blake, who is now 10 months old. I also have a 9 year old step-son, Jace, who spends the summer and holidays with us, but lives near Brownfield, TX during the school year. I grew up an hour Northwest of Chicago in Cary, IL and graduated from the University of Illinois (Go Illini!). After moving to Kansas in 2004, I spent 3 years as the Trego County Agent (WaKeeney) and then decided to go back to college for my master's degree at Oklahoma State (Go Pokes!). I came back to Kansas and worked in Ford County as a 4-H agent and have been in Edwards County since 2011. Hope to be here for a long time!

I love Extension because of the flexibility and variation from day to day. I enjoy each aspect of my job, from family and consumer sciences to community development to 4-H youth development. My favorite part of the job is working with volunteers...from club leaders to board members, I really enjoy working with dedicated adults. If I had to pick a favorite 4-H event, I'd pick camp:) I absolutely love seeing the kids gain a sense of independence and forming a relationship with the outdoors.

My new favorite thing to do is spend time with Everett...I LOVE being a mommy! I also enjoy cooking and baking, spoiling my nieces and nephews and both my husband and I love to travel.

Learn how to set limits! Unless its absolutely necessary, I refuse (most of the time) to take work home with me. I also use my vacation days. When I started Extension, someone wise reminded me that no one would praise me for not taking them or give me any money back for not using them. So I use them without any guilt! =)

My guilty pleasure is reading silly celebrity magazines, like US Weekly or In Style. Rarely do I get control of the remote...but when I do, I'll watch Scandal, Real Housewives of New Jersey, or reruns of Friends. I do enjoy a good western movie, like Tombstone or Lonesome Dove.

## **Deryl Waldren, NW Area 4-H Specialist**



Deryl Waldren. I was born in and grew up in Tribune, KS, on a wheat farm with a cow-calf operation. I was an 11-year 4-H member, 8-year volunteer 4-H leader, and am into my 33rd year in Extension. I have worked in Kansas, California, Colorado and Germany in my Extension/4-H career. I have been the NW Area Extension 4-H Specialist since 2006. I have two undergraduate degrees from KSU - Journalism and Mass Communications and Agronomy. I have a Masters in Communication – Instructional Technology from California State University – Chico. I have an older brother, Vernon who just retired after a 37-year career with Nebraska Extension/4-H. My mom, Mildred, still lives on the family farm in Tribune, and has been an active volunteer 4-H leader in Greeley County 4-H for 64 years.

I really like being the NW Area 4-H Specialist. It's a good fit for my skills. I like helping area Extension Agents with their questions, programming, conflict and in many other areas. I also enjoy the statewide portion of my job: Ambassador Program, Global Citizenship, SpaceTech, and the Wheat Show and Wheat Variety Program, to mention a few.

Travel, genealogy, gardening, reading, and cooking are how I spends his personal time.

I have a Month-At-A-Glance Calendar for several years in advance. As things come up that I want to do, I mark them in my calendar and protect the dates, so I don't get zapped later. I look at this "balance" as a work in progress. Sometimes we balance well, other times we fall off the "wagon" and have to sort it out, and catch back up with the wagon to find the balance again. It's a constant daily struggle to find balance even after 33 years.

Quote: "Children are the world's most valuable resource, and its best hope for the future." John Fitzgerald Kennedy, 1963, Movies: Forrest Gump, Field of Dreams, TV: NCIS, The Big Bang Theory Books: Dan Brown books and the Robert Langdon series.

## **Candis Meerpohl, Shawnee County**

Hello My name is Candis Meerpohl and I am the 4-H Youth Development Agent in Shawnee County. I am in my second year as agent and previously was the 4-H office professional. I was born in Dodge City, KS and grew up in Hanston, KS. I am the youngest of three children and was a member of the Pawnee Pioneer 4-H club. My favorite 4-H projects were ceramics, photography and sewing.

My husband Kelly and I have been married for six years and we have two children and two dogs. Kelly doesn't claim the dogs.

My favorite part of my job is the variety! I enjoy working on different projects throughout the year and never knowing what new opportunity will be coming into my inbox. I also love getting out of the office and working with the youth and volunteers. I often find that if I'm in a bad mood it has just been too long since I have been with the kids. They remind me why what I do in the office is so important. A club visit is an instant energy boost!

When I am not as work I am chasing my two boys Daryl 5, and Alex 1. Once they go to bed I pull out the knitting needles or spinning wheel and play with my yarn or fiber. When it gets warm enough I also like to run, I am a very fair weather runner.

I think making a schedule before your week begins is helpful. I put exercise, chores and knitting on my schedule just like work events. If you don't make your personal life a priority no one else will.

My favorite read is "Get Fuzzy" comics. I have almost all of the collections and keep them on my night stand. My favorite TV show is "Big Bang Theory" and the only movies I watch anymore are cartoons. Right now "Kung Fu Panda 2" gets a lot of play time on the DVR! That is probably why my favorite quote is when Daryl walks around the house chanting "Inner Peace, Inner Peace, Inner Peace." :-)



## A Few Words from the Diversity Committee:

### Special Education 4-H Clubs

A reflection by Beth Drescher

I was fortunate to be invited to start several elementary in-school “4-H clubs” for children who are physically and/or mentally handicapped and/or emotionally unstable and/or developmentally delayed. Over the years I have come to enjoy my time with these challenged children tremendously, and think I have gained more from the children than they have received from me!

As you may imagine, special education 4-H Club meetings do not look at all like 4-H community club meetings. The “club meetings” are actually lessons that I teach, usually coordinating my topic with what they are learning in school. However, each meeting begins with the 4-H pledge and includes the same personal skill development that is found in any 4-H activity. These kids know that they are 4-Hers—and they are proud of it!

With experience I have learned a few things that make it easier for me to teach effectively in special education classrooms. If you have a similar opportunity (and I hope you do) my ideas may be helpful, but of course you will need to adapt your approach to your personality and situation. Here are some ideas to think about:

If you can, find a teacher in each school to be your main point of contact. He/she can work with the principal and other teachers to make sure that your time with the children is well spent. My contacts arrange the daily schedule (I teach more than one class in each school), coordinate 4-H lessons with what the kids are learning in school, and are great cheerleaders for 4-H with school staff that is not involved in special education.

Make the lessons fun for the children. Two years ago our first 4-H meeting of the year was a brainstorming session. I am still working through the list that was generated and the kids love knowing that I am using their ideas!

Make it hands-on for ALL the children. If everyone is involved in doing something appropriate, there will be a lot fewer behavior problems.

I often have the kids work in pairs or trios, which is hard for them. However, it teaches them to communicate, work together and stay focused on the activity. Be prepared to SHOW them how to work together. They probably won't know.

Let the children know what you are going to do before you do it. You don't have to tell them every detail, but a broad outline is very helpful. Special education children are easier to work with when they know what's going on. Surprises are not a good idea.

Ask the adults in the room for help. My favorite phrase is “We'll need adult help with this”. In the Wichita school district, there are usually two or three para-professionals in each classroom of 6 to 12 elementary-aged children. Most are glad to help, once they know what you want them to do.

If something isn't working well, move on or change how you are doing the activity. I can't count the number of times that my perfectly envisioned lesson plan has bombed! I always make sure I have an idea in the back of my mind and the supplies packed, just in case.

Observe and support school rules. If they are having a fire drill, then you should go out too. If they

don't allow talking in the hall, then don't. It's a good thing to be a good example. The kids will most definitely be watching what you do.

Don't show surprise if a child has a melt-down—get out of the way and let the school staff deal with it. If possible, continue working with the other children in the classroom. They have seen it before and won't be much affected unless you get flustered.

Let the school staff take the lead on discipline. There may be a lot going on with children in the classroom that you don't know about. However, it is perfectly acceptable to state your needs, such as: everyone sitting down, voices off or hands in their laps.

Don't be afraid to give and receive hugs but let the children make the first move, especially if you don't know them well.

Be a consistent and frequent visitor. I usually go to the special education classes once a month during the school year. The children in my local schools often stay in the same classes for several years and they remember 4-H because they see it regularly.

Relax and have fun with the kids! After all is said and done, that's what they (and you!) will remember.

If you have the opportunity or desire to work with special needs classrooms or groups I would highly encourage you to do so. It has been one of my favorite parts of the 4-H program.



# TRADITION & TRANSFORMATION

2014 NAE4-HA Conference  
Minneapolis, MN



**Mark your calendars now and start planning to attend the NAE4-HA Conference in Minneapolis, MN October 26-30, 2014**

**This is a great opportunity to bring home new ideas, network with other 4-H Youth Development colleagues across the states. Be sure to apply for the first timers scholarship and the 4-H Day with the Lady Cats Scholarship to help with expenses.**

## KAE4-HA Awards



The membership recognition committee is pleased to announce that all award applications will be completed on-line. Once we choose the Kansas Winners then their applications will be forwarded on to the Regional Level and hopefully the National Level. A webinar is available at <http://www.nae4ha.com/awards> on how to apply and use the on-line program. Hopefully this will help you as we switch from the paper applications to the online version.

### NAE4-HA FIRST TIMER APPLICATION

Communicator Awards

Service Awards

Specialty Awards

### 4-H Day with the Lady Cats Scholarship

All current KAE4-HA members are eligible to apply for this scholarship. One \$500 scholarship will be awarded to a member attending the 2014 NAE4-HA in Minneapolis, MN October 26-30, 2014. In order to apply for this scholarship please complete the following information and return to Robyn Deines, [rdeines@ksu.edu](mailto:rdeines@ksu.edu) by March 1<sup>st</sup>. Question responses must not exceed 2 pages, for complete application.



Name:

Unit /Dept:

Mailing Address:

Phone:

Email:

Years in Extension:

Years in KAE4-HA:

- 1) Share committee work and other contributions you have given to KAE4-HA during the last year.
- 2) Describe how NAE4-HA conference fits into your 2014-2015 professional development plan.
- 3) Identify how you will utilize information and resources gained from this conference in your local program.

## Fort Hays Judging Contest/4-H Space Tech Project Day



Need a Judging Contest to fill in where the State FCS Judging contest is leaving a void in your schedule. The Fort Hays Judging Contest is open to all Kansas 4-H members 7-18 years of age. The contest is held Saturday, March 22<sup>nd</sup> from 10 am to 1 pm at Albertson Hall, on the Fort Hays State University Campus. Registration is \$3 per person, payable that day.

There will be contests available in the following areas:

- ◆ Crops
- ◆ Horticulture
- ◆ Photography
- ◆ FCS
- ◆ Entomology

Starting at 1:00pm there will also be Livestock Judging at the Livestock Pavillion. This year we have also added a Space Tech Adventures Project Day to the schedule. There will be hands on activities from 10am to 4:00pm. 10:00 to Noon Sessions will be: Rocketry Leaders, Lego Robotics and Astronomy. 1:30 to 3:30pm Sessions will be Advanced Rocketry, Junk Drawer Robots and Maps & Apps.



## Effective Delegation Skills *from Everyone Ready*

Do you feel like you are treading water rather than making any real headway with your program. Not only is this frustrating, it eventually wears us thin and can lead to work dissatisfaction, increased stress and even health problems in extreme situations. Now more than ever, having a good knowledge of skills involved in delegating some of our daily tasks to others is a critical tool for leaders at all levels.

Further, whenever we develop a volunteer position we are delegating some portion of our organization's work to a volunteer. This means that each staff member or leadership volunteer is confronted with the daily question of how to share tasks in the best way.

It is easy to give out work assignments – anyone can do it! What's not so easy is the ability to be able to delegate in an effective manner. Delegating in a non-effective manner is counter productive. Not only does it reap poor results, it will also actually take up even more of your valuable time as you expend energy trying to resolve the problems that result from a dysfunctional delegation experience.

**Delegation is a proactive approach to reassigning tasks and assignments in a coordinated and considered manner with clear, expected and, where possible, measurable outcomes.**

There will always be parts of your role that only you can do, and these may well be the things you don't enjoy. Giving others the jobs you simply don't like is not delegating – its dumping!

- ! Delegation does not abdicate your responsibility for ensuring a task is done properly. If something goes wrong it will still be your head on the chopping block!
- ! Delegation is not about replacing workers, but rather about expanding and enhancing the available workforce and resources an organization already has.

While delegation is an important time management strategy, it should not be approached as a “be all and end all” solution. Effective delegation should always be considered in the context of how it fits as a part of other time management practices.

Delegation has a ripple effect. You get needed help...others become more engaged in the project.... the synergy of several perspectives elicits better ideas and services to clients grows... and so on. But delegation is also an approach/avoidance situation. Do the benefits outweigh the barriers?

### **Benefits:**

Effective delegation can benefit an organization at many levels:

- The person who is delegating gets extra available time
- The person receiving the new tasks has the opportunity to build new skills or refine existing ones.
- The agency itself gains cohesiveness through increased team building and gains efficiency through planning effective use of its resources.
- Clients of the agency receive greater quality services.
- More people are informed about how work is done and therefore the organization is not as dependent on a single staff or volunteer carrying all the information in his/her head.

On a personal level some of the direct benefits of being an effective delegator are:

- Less stress and frustration
- allowing you to feel in control
- “growing” and developing others
- having a greater sense of achievement
- more time for planning the “big picture” items

### **Barriers:**

No one really denies the value of delegation, so why is it so rarely done? For one thing, initially it takes MORE time! Effective delegation often means that in order to



save time one needs to invest time, first in seeking a suitable person to whom to delegate and , second, in ensuring the allocated tasks are properly and appropriately handed over to the designated person.

There are other barriers, too, that affect our individual degree of comfort in sharing the work – especially when we are delegating to volunteers. They include:

- Many of us have a fear that , if we don't do something ourselves, it won't be done to the same standard as we would do it.
- Closely related is the disconcerting fear that someone else may do it better than we can. No matter what, it will definitely be done in some different ways.
- It's a challenge to carve out pieces of a big job – finding ways that various people can share some of the work in manageable, time-limited chunks. This actually demands that we are organized and knowledgeable about the exact sequence of steps involved.
- We worry that volunteers might not follow through and we'll be left at the last minute having to do it ourselves anyway.
- In light of the time needed to prepare the train someone else, it seems easier or faster to do it ourselves in the first place.

### Things to Think About

In the same way that organizations and volunteer programs are all unique, we cannot expect that the implementation of delegation practices will work the same in every agency. Effective delegation will need to be tailored and will depend on a wide variety of factors including:



- ▶ current workloads
- ▶ anticipated future workloads
- ▶ the support of senior management and other staff
- ▶ available resources and appropriate personnel to delegate to
- ▶ appropriate organizational culture
- ▶ the willingness and comfort of the person delegating to make it work

#### Consider these factors as you think about delegation:

- # Think about the members of your current work team (paid and volunteers). Are there people within this group to whom you would feel comfortable delegating some of your key tasks?
- # Do others in your organization already use delegation effectively as a part of their work practices? Are they people you could approach for pointers, and what do you think you might be able to learn from their experiences?
- # Do you have a sense of which parts of your job take up the most of your time? Have you ever kept a time diary? Do you get caught up in trivial matters that expand a lot of time but achieve few results? Are you a procrastinator?
- # Which parts of your job are central to your role? That is, what are the things you do that you could not delegate?
- # Are there specific areas of your job that you struggle with that may benefit from the input of another person?
- # If you were able to free up a quantity of time, what areas of your current (or planned) work would you like to spend even more time undertaking or improving? Set yourself some Goals

#### Successful Delegation will involve:

- ▶ taking account of the interests of all stakeholders, service recipients, the organization and volunteers
- ▶ trusting in the ability of others and providing training to ensure successful completion
- ▶ a willingness by volunteers to accept the responsibilities that delegation brings
- ▶ deciding on what duties and responsibilities to delegate
- ▶ ensuring that volunteers know the task, the desired outcome, the limits of the task in terms of activities and funding, feedback, available resources, what to expect from the volunteer manager
- ▶ monitoring the process, evaluating the outcome and incorporating insights into the future decisions.



# Pinterest

Pinterest is one of my favorite time killers, but most of the time it seems it is work related and finding new ideas on how to do what we do differently. So here are some “pins” that I borrowed off of some of our members “boards. In case you don’t have time to search on your own, or Pinterest is not your thing!

## The Reading Nook:

- ❑ **How to Design and Deliver Great Training** by Alan Matthews
- ❑ **Know What You Don’t Know** by Michael A Roberto (How great leaders prevent problems before they happen)
- ❑ **Visual Meetings: How Graphics, Sticky Notes, and Idea Mapping Can Transform Groups** by David Sibbet

## Small Thank You Ideas



## Project Ideas

### Match-A-Leaf Tree Game

Match the words with the corresponding picture.

maple  
birch  
ashberry  
oak  
chestnut

Take forestry kids to a park that has a variety of trees. Give each child a bag of leaves and have them venture around the park matching their leaves with the trees and the names that you have posted earlier.



- |                               |                        |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| Day 1: self portrait          | Day 16: what i ate     |
| Day 2: what i wore            | Day 17: on the shelf   |
| Day 3: clouds                 | Day 18: in my bag      |
| Day 4: favorite color         | Day 19: where i slept  |
| Day 5: someone i love         | Day 20: what i read    |
| Day 6: childhood memory       | Day 21: pretty pattern |
| Day 7: something new          | Day 22: trees          |
| Day 8: technology             | Day 23: sunset         |
| Day 9: faceless self portrait | Day 24: a smile        |
| Day 10: something i made      | Day 25: sunflare       |
| Day 11: something fun         | Day 26: something old  |
| Day 12: close-up              | Day 27: after dark     |
| Day 13: from a distance       | Day 28: daily routine  |
| Day 14: flowers               | Day 29: purchased      |
| Day 15: my shoes              | Day 30: in motion      |