

Washington State 4-H Advisory Board



WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION • 4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Committed, Caring, Involved Adults and Teens Shape 4-H Program

By Betsy Fradd

4-H Youth Development

It's not listed in the requirements but people on the Washington State 4-H Advisory Board possess at least three distinct attributes when volunteering their considerable amount of time, talent, and energy. **Creativity** to be consistently open to new ideas for youth and adults. **Assertiveness** to promote those ideas toward implementation and, third, an intrinsic, **heart-felt knowl-**

edge of Washington State University Extension's premier youth development program—4-H.

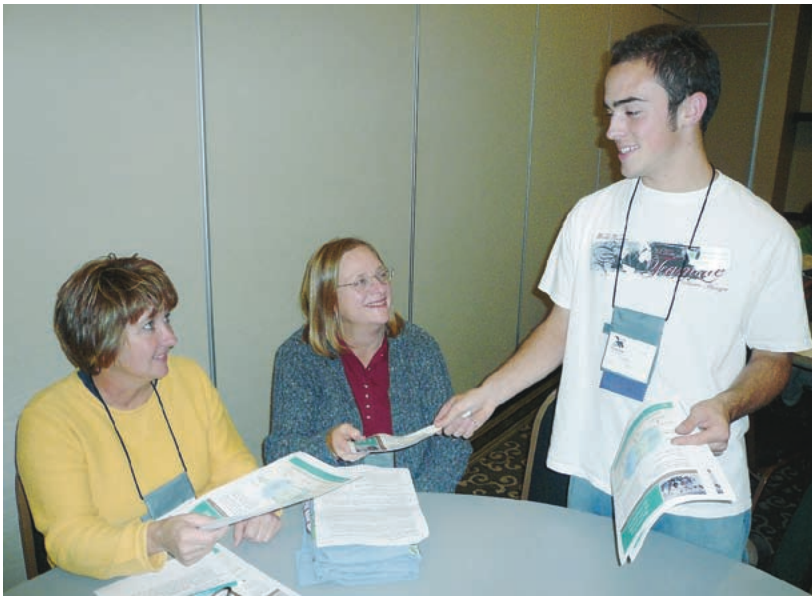
The twenty-six board members include three adult 4-H volunteers and two teens from each of the four districts. Two representatives from the 4-H Challenge Program, School Age Care, 4-H Staff Association, along with the 4-H State Program Director fill out the roster.

Current Board President Don Ballard has been involved with 4-H for fourteen years and served in a number of leadership positions at the club, county, and district level. "The Washington State 4-H Advisory Board pro-

vides communication between counties and helps to set the tone and direction of the state 4-H program," explained Ballard. His favorite part of 4-H is being involved directly with those it serves. "Working with the youth and watching them evolve into outstanding, skilled, and self-confident adults is truly rewarding," said Ballard.

The 4-H Advisory Board is also responsible for providing educational opportunities to the largest gathering of 4-H volunteers at the annual State 4-H Forum. Workshops, training sessions, and speakers provide new or updated information on projects that leaders can immediately imple-





ment with youth in their counties. Other accomplishments include the Washington State Alumni and Friends Association, the Washington State 4-H Hall of Fame Awards and Recognition Banquet, rewriting the Teens on Boards and Councils publication, and providing the extensive list of 4-H projects and descriptions on CD.

Joy Wilken is completing her second three-year term on the Board. "I have seen the impact that volunteers on the Advisory Board can have with change or at least help rethink goals brought to the table," said Wilken. "Instead of just talking about things we think need to be changed, each committee has set obtainable goals within each year to take action. While I always appreciated knowing I was being heard, this has made me feel my investment of time on the Board was even more valuable," added Wilken.

Being a part of the evolving 4-H program is long-time Board Treasurer Chuck Todd. Now in his 17th year in that position, Todd appreciates knowing the broader picture of how 4-H operates in Washington. "The Board's major addition to the 4-H program is providing a diverse forum for discussion of the direction of the program with the State 4-H staff. This provides a really accessible group to discuss and move the program forward," said Todd.

At the heart of 4-H are the youth. Caleb Klein, an assertive, quick to smile, 16-year old from Lincoln County, values new leadership and challenges while serving on the Board. "I was surprised at how quickly the group got to know each other," said Caleb. Attending the Board meetings has been yet another opportunity to broaden his involvement in youth/adult partnerships. "People on the

Board share my passion and excitement for our 4-H community. I've learned that people, adults and teens, will both encourage and clash with your ideas," explained Caleb who takes information from board meetings and relays it to youth at local and state-wide events.

The 4-H Advisory Board also serves as a liaison to County 4-H Educators and Councils. As new ideas are introduced or challenges discussed, board members are encouraged to share this information in their districts and return district input to the Board. Other Board roles include enhancing the financial base of the State 4-H program and serving in an advisory capacity to the State 4-H Ambassadors program.

The State 4-H Advisory Board is the embodiment of the 4-H motto: **To Make the Best Better!**