

ELDERLY OUTREACH PROJECT DETAILS | 2021

Brought to you by the Post Rock District 4-H Community Action Team

March 21, 2021 Update from the Team: The Community Action Team has extended the deadline for the Elderly Outreach Project to the end of the current 4-H year (September 30, 2021). While the details below describe the Team's idea of a valuable elderly outreach project, they recognize clubs may determine another way to support elderly during the pandemic. Rather than see clubs not complete the project, they have expanded the objective to allow funds to be focused toward any elderly outreach project identified by the club. If a club does not want to complete any elderly outreach project, the check needs to be returned to the local extension office as soon as possible. Funds not used for an elderly outreach project will return to the Community Action Team. The Team would appreciate hearing an update from each club as they complete their project. Please email photos, videos, and a summary to Jaden (jadenhuehl@icloud.com) or Nora (nrhoades@ksu.edu).

Overview: "A person's most useful asset is not the head full of knowledge, but a heart full of love, an ear ready to listen, and a hand willing to help." This saying is exemplified through the 4-H youth on the Post Rock District's 4-H Community Action Team. The team identified that many communities have suffering elderly citizens who are unable or unwilling to leave their homes due to the Covid-19 pandemic. These citizens need assistance to get essential needs such as food, toiletries, and medical items. They also are cut off from friends and family with little or no social interaction.

The team of youth devised a plan to help each 4-H club in our district, which consists of Jewell, Lincoln, Mitchell, Osborne and Smith counties, identify elderly citizens in their local communities. 4-H members will focus on building intergenerational relationships as each club completes this outreach project. The 4-H clubs are challenged to prepare personalized care packages and provide assistance to meet individual needs such as running errands and buying groceries. They also are encouraged to address physical, mental, and emotional needs as well.

Identify Elders: Each 4-H club is asked to identify five (5) independent-living elders living in the community and surrounding rural area of the club's members. These elders may be living completely alone or a couple who are unable to see friends, family, and have their essential needs met. Identifying elders could take place through club discussion, reaching out to local churches/ministerial alliance to get ideas, asking other civic organizations, etc. The Community Action Team hopes to serve 85 elders through this project by the end of April 2021!

Contact Elders: Club members will reach out to the elders to let them know that 4-H is interested in helping them out during this difficult time. Member will have a conversation to learn what they are challenged with the most and identify who the club may provide assistance. It is likely that each elder/household will have unique needs.

Plan Care Packages: Plan out a care package to help address the needs of each elder/household. A care package may include groceries, personal care items, cleaning supplies, etc. No alcohol or tobacco may be included. You may also include a note explaining how the 4-H club may be contacted if the elder needs assistance running errands, getting groceries or other supplies.

Funding Care Packages: The Community Action Team has applied for funding to assist with the project.

Each club will be issued \$180 to use to serve their identified elders. On average, this is \$36 per care package; however, we want clubs to have a conversation with each elder to identify what their unique needs are. Someone's care package may need to be \$10 and another \$40; it just depends on the unique needs of everyone. If the needs exceed the \$180 provided, clubs will do the best they can with the funds available or consider using other club funds to further advance the project. The club may also be able to advocate on behalf of the elder, to connect them with a food bank, ministerial alliance, second-hand store, local retailer, etc. to meet their needs.

Receiving Funds: The Jewell County 4-H Council is serving as the fiscal agent for the project. Contact Nora Rhoades, nrhoades@ksu.edu, with club contact information. Then, a check will be mailed, made out to the 4-H club for use to complete the project. Those receiving funds will be asked to report with photos and success stories about the impact made in the community!

Special Notes in Care Packages: One of the lesser expensive, but incredibly valuable components of each care package will be handmade notes, crafts, etc. to demonstrate to each elder how much they are cared for and thought about during this challenging time. 4-H members are creative, so coming up with some great ideas for this piece should be something a 4-Her of any age can get involved with.

Building Care Packages and Delivery: Clubs can determine the best way to build the care packages and deliver them. It may work best to assign committees or families to different elders, or to complete as a whole group. Regardless, each youth and adult working on the project **MUST** wear a face covering at all times when working on the project with people that do not live in the same household. Do not participate if you are feeling ill or have been directed to quarantine/isolate by a local health department. Wash hands frequently and sanitize appropriately so that all parties involved, including the recipient, feel safe with the care package. When delivering care packages, strive to use a front-porch drop style of interaction, using physical distancing and face coverings to ensure the elders are not exposed to any illnesses.

Questions: Contact Jaden Huehl, Elderly Outreach Project Leader at jadenhuehl@icloud.com or (785) 420-0438 or Nora Rhoades, Youth Development Agent at nrhoades@ksu.edu or (785) 378-3174



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