

### The Educator Role

A judge is defined as a person qualified to give an opinion, decide on relative worth, or determine the winner in a contest or competition. An educator is a person who develops knowledge, skills, mind and character in others. A good 4-H judge effectively combines these two roles into one significant educational experience.

4-H is an educational program with a goal of developing young people into contributing adults. Children join 4-H to have fun, make new friends, and learn new things about topics of their choice. One reason why the 4-H program is so successful is because children choose projects in areas that interest them. They are engaged in their learning. Participation in a project provides many of the necessary experiences needed by youth to develop in positive and healthy ways. The creating, sharing, exhibiting, and judging of these projects is one of the most meaningful parts of 4-H.

The project evaluation process helps young people develop an understanding of standards and learn from their mistakes. It helps them develop a working understanding of goals and encourages continued engagement in learning by using incentives and competition (See *The Oregon 4-H Judge: Danish Merit System* for more information). The judging process allows for possible success for all participants by having classes for exhibitors in different stages of development, and judging to a standard encourages earnest effort on the part of the exhibitor. (See *The Oregon 4-H Judge: Judging to a Standard* for more information.)

A judge is asked to give an honest and fair evaluation of the exhibit. They have been hired because of their expertise in the field. They are challenged with determining placing and providing an educational experience for exhibitors in a fairly short period of time. Therefore, proper preparation is needed. Time spent prior to the event in preparation will ensure effectiveness and impact. Come prepared to judge by knowing the latest information before arriving at the event. Spend the time needed to stay informed and relevant in your area of expertise; know the latest trends and research. Study the project criteria and be familiar with the project manuals. Know the standards for the projects being judged. (For more information see *The Oregon 4-H Judge: Tips for Judging*.)

Remember, the project display is not an end in itself, nor does it illustrate all the learning that takes place in a 4-H project; it displays only a portion of what the member is capable of doing. A great time for youth to share about their learning outside the exhibit is during interview judging. (See *The Oregon 4-H Judge: Interview Judging* and *The Oregon 4-H Judge: Tips for Interview Judging* for additional guidance.)

A judge's evaluation of work or performance serves as a guide for improvement and serves as a way for youth to learn the valuable lesson of accepting constructive criticism of one's work graciously. Youth also learn that judging results reflect a personal opinion based on a predetermined standard and that evaluation will vary among judges-- a lesson in "real life". The judge serves as a representative of the 4-H program and of the real world.

