



SPRING 2011

FOR MEMBERS, VOLUNTEERS, LEADERS, AND FRIENDS OF 4-H

Budget Challenges

UConn Cooperative Extension is facing proposed budget cuts of 10% in both its state and federal allocations. Very judicious use of funds as well as success in writing grants has left UConn Extension better off than many other states. When Dean Greg Weidemann made the commitment to fill two county based 4-H positions last year, many states were incredulous UConn would do that. Across the nation other states are laying off staff and eliminating major programs like 4-H. Decision makers are asking Extension to prove its relevance. They are asking what 4-H is doing with its public funding to provide opportunities to all young people and improve communities from the city to the country. We have been able to do that in Connecticut by providing high quality programs in a variety of places and on a variety of topics. We have to report impacts and outcomes annually to the University and to USDA. What are not always seen are the personal stories that can make a huge difference with elected officials, who vote on the budgets. If you have personally benefitted from 4-H, and see your elected officials, please let them know how you have grown from participating in UConn Cooperative Extension. Invite your Senators and Representatives out to Extension and 4-H activities so they can see youth in action as leaders and taking part in meaningful, educational programs. That personal visit may mean the difference between a yes or a no vote on our budget!



CyberbullyNOT

Stopping Online Social Aggression

Cyberbullies use the Internet or cell phones to send hurtful messages or post information to damage the reputation and friendships of others.

How, Who and Why

Cyberbullying may occur via personal Web sites, blogs, e-mail, discussion groups, message boards, chat, instant messaging, or voice, text, or image cell phones.

A cyberbully may be a person whom the target knows or an online stranger. A cyberbully may be anonymous and enlist the aid of others, including online "friends."

Cyberbullying may be a continuation of, or in retaliation for, in-school bullying. It may be related to



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fights about relationships or be based on hate or bias. Some teens think cyberbullying is a fun game.

Teens might think...

- They are invisible, so they think they can't be punished.
- No real harm has been caused online.
- They should have a free speech right to post whatever they want, regardless of the harm caused.

The Harm

Cyberbullying can cause great emotional harm. The communications



can be vicious and occur 24/7. Damaging material can be widely disseminated and impossible to fully remove. Teens are reluctant to

tell adults for fear they will be restricted from online activities or the cyberbully will retaliate. Cyberbullying can lead to youth suicide and violence.

Responsible Management of Internet Use

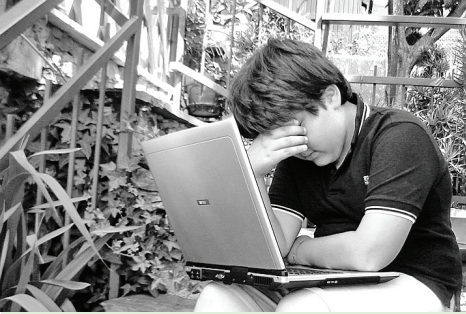
- Keep the computer in a public place and supervise.
- Find out what public online sites and communities your child uses and review what your child is posting. Emphasize that these are public places!

Prevent Your Child from Being a Cyberbully

- Make it clear that all Internet use must be in accord with family values of kindness and respect for

others.

- If your child is being bullied at school, work with the school to stop the bullying and make sure your child knows not to retaliate online.
- If you know your child has cyberbullied others, be very proactive in preventing any continuation. You can be held financially liable for the harm your child causes to another.



Prevent Your Child from Becoming a Target

- Make sure your child knows not to post information that could be used maliciously.
- Visit your child's online communities and discuss the values demonstrated by those who participate.
- Bully-proof your child by reinforcing your child's individual strengths and fostering healthy friendships.

Warning Signs

- Sadness or anger during or after Internet use.
- Withdrawal from friends and activities, school avoidance, decline of grades, and depression.
- Indications that your child is being bullied at school.

Action Steps and Options

- Make sure your child knows not to retaliate, to save the evidence, and to ask for help if he or she is having difficulties.



- Identify the cyberbully or bully group. Ask your Internet service provider for help.
- There are different ways that your child or you can respond to cyberbullying:
 1. Calmly and strongly tell the cyberbully to stop and to remove any harmful material.
 2. Ignore the cyberbully by leaving the online environment, blocking communications, or both.
 3. File a complaint with the Internet or cell phone company.
 4. Send the cyberbully's parents a letter that includes the evidence of cyberbullying. Demand that the actions stop and harmful material be removed.
 5. Seek assistance from the school.
 6. Contact an attorney to send a letter or file a lawsuit against the cyberbully's parents.
 7. Contact the police if the cyberbullying involves threats of violence, coercion, intimidation based on hate or bias, or any form of sexual exploitation.

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Author of *Cyber-Safe Kids*, *Cyber-Savvy Teens* and *Cyberbullying and Cyberthreats*

More info: <http://www.cyberbully.org>
and <http://www.Bullyinginfo.org>

Center for Disease Control (CDC) Injury Center has just released [*Measuring Bullying Victimization, Perpetration, and Bystander Experiences: A Compendium of Assessment Tools*](#). This toolkit provides people items to measure a range of bullying experiences. To learn more about youth violence and how you can prevent it in your community, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/>

Connecticut: Operation Military Kids

Mary Ellen Welch
Extension Educator, Family & Consumer Sciences

Have you ever wondered what it is like to be a military kid? Actually, military kids are a lot like other kids and have similar interests. They experience some differences too. Military kids

may live on military bases which are communities for a branch of the military. There are several United States branches of the military: the Air Force, the Army, the Coast Guard, the Navy and the Marines, the National Guard and the Reserves. In Connecticut, the U.S. Submarine Base in Groton/New London is the military base in our state and has the largest concentration of military youth and families.

Do you know any military kids – kids who have one or both parents working in the military, step-parents, adult siblings, aunts, uncles, cousins, – a member of their family whom they are close to who serves in the military? Chances are you do! When military kids have a member of their family who is mobilized, it creates major changes within the family. Mobilization is when a soldier receives orders to prepare or to get ready for war or an emergency. Mobilization may last for weeks or for months. In some cases, the soldier can live at home during mobilization. Just knowing that a parent or family member will be mobilized affects families. Kids miss their parents and family when they are away. Things like transportation to school and afterschool events, community events, sports, parties, youth group or club meetings, and faith communities can be more challenging when a loved one is away. Just being able to see your parent every day or talk to him/her means a lot.

Soldiers are also given a date when they will deploy. Deployment occurs when a soldier actually leaves to serve their country in active duty service. It may be another part of the United States or in another country. It can last from months to over a year. When this happens, families often develop new routines. If the soldier (a parent or other family member) drove the family places, then someone else must drive. If they helped their kids with homework, their kids should ask for help from someone else. Chores like shoveling snow, cooking, babysitting/caring for younger kids in the family, laundry, mowing the lawn, or help with practicing a sport or hobby requires support from others.

Over 10,000 military kids live all over Connecticut. You likely know military kids either from school, as neighbors, in clubs – just about anywhere you go.

4-H is a great organization to belong to if you are a military kid or if you want to get to know military kids. 4-Hers can support military youth and their families through the Connecticut Operation: Military Kids (CT OMK) Program. This is coordinated by the UConn Department of Extension, and military and non-



4-H Members (from left to right) Cody Valliere, Kathryn Wall and Jamie Murphy participated at the OMK booth in the New England Center Building at The Big E

military partners. 4-Hers can spread the word by participating in Connecticut OMK activities.

- Ready, Set, Go! Workshops help non-military community members to learn about military culture, the deployment cycle, resiliency in kids, and ways to build community support. You can learn ways to support military kids and their families through community resources. You could educate local community groups by public speaking, invite military kids to join 4-H, collect new items that can help military kids and their families know that others care, or you could invite an OMK speaker to come to your school to speak to teachers and students.

- Speak Out for Military Kids is a youth led, adult supported project that generates community awareness of issues faced by military families. 4-Hers can work together with military kids to develop public service announcements, videos, and community activities to educate others about military youth and families.

- Hero Packs are a great way to do something special for military kids! 4-Hers throughout Connecticut have filled back packs as a way of saying “thank you” to military kids. 4-H Clubs can contact CT OMK to host Hero Pack fillings or if they want to know the types of items to collect for inclusion in Hero Packs. For example, gift cards for stores or restaurants, journals, or teddy bears are often included. Age appropriate items are collected for junior hero packs for young children to 6 years of age, hero packs for 7 to 12 year olds, or hero packs for teens.

- Our Mobile Technology Lab (MTL) helps military kids stay connected to their military parent or military relative while they are away. It is also used by military and non-military groups who want to send messages to military kids, thanking them for their sacrifices. It consists of laptop computers, a digital camera, a video recorder, a printer and scanner, software and materials. 4-H Clubs can arrange to use the MTL to conduct specific activities or your group may have a creative idea you wish to try. This year, the MTL is being used at all CT OMK Camps.

Since 2008, 4-H Clubs have volunteered their time to help military kids. They have participated in Ready, Set, Go Trainings, made Speak Out for Military Kids videos and cards with the Mobile Tech Lab, and stuffed Hero Packs. The New London County 4-H Teen Ambassadors participated in Ready, Set, Go! Training and volunteered at OMK booths in the New England Building at the Big E. We are looking for 4-Hers to volunteer for OMK at the Big E in the fall of 2011 at booths, and by doing presentations on the stage in the New England Building. There are three OMK camps in Connecticut offered for military kids this year.

Contact lisa.marcinkowski@uconn.edu , 860-885-6106 or mary.welch@uconn.edu , 860-885-2829 if you are interested in participating in any Connecticut Operation: Military Kids activities.

If you would like to connect with and support military kids and families in your community, Connecticut Operation: Military Kids would like to hear from you!

4-H Science Corner ~

The Science of 4-H

4-H has traditionally been known for agricultural, animal, foods, and consumer science projects. The project areas connected with these broad categories continue to be popular and strong. Now, however, both 4-H members and leaders are delving more into the science behind their specific project area. What makes bread rise? Are there good as well as harmful bacteria? What combinations of grain should be fed to an animal, and why? In addition to traditional 4-H project areas, new projects that focus on science and scientific careers are being formed in areas such as robotics, GIS-GPS mapping, digital technologies, and more. Recently a 4-H Science Advisory Team was

The *Connecticut 4-H Newsletter* is a publication of the Cooperative Extension System. 4-H Youth Development Program which provides educational and current information to 4-H members and volunteers.

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Hartford County 4-H Camp
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formed to help formulate a multi-year plan for the direction of Connecticut 4-H Science. This group, consisting of Maryann Fusco-Rollins, Jann Tanner, Sarah Bailey, and Linda Horn, will focus on locating both financial and activity resources to start new programming areas as well as researching new learning opportunities for youth and volunteers and determining ways to assess how we learn 4-H science in the Connecticut 4-H Program. The team will be putting together a suggested plan for growing more 4-H science opportunities in Connecticut 4-H for the next several years.



4-H FIRST Team, The Nuts and Bolts of Fury from JFK High School in Waterbury

The newest and current focus of growth in Connecticut 4-H Science is the robotics project area. Several new 4-H robotics clubs as well as after school groups are being formed throughout the state. They are using the LEGO Mindstorms robotics kits to learn about engineering, technology, and math while they create robots and program them with laptops. In addition, they will be using the new 4-H Robotics curriculum which will be available very soon. As more youth participate in this project area, opportunities for them to come together and have mini-competitions or display and demonstrate their project at 4-H fairs will increase, giving these youth the same opportunities as those in more traditional project areas. Training for using the LEGO Mindstorms kit was held in January for 4-H staff and volunteers; additional trainings will be held in the future to train more people and to learn more about programming.

4-H Robotics teams also were created in high schools throughout Connecticut this year through a grant Linda Horn received from National 4-H and the J. C. Penney Foundation. Eight high school 4-H Robotics Clubs/FIRST teams have been established throughout the state and are located in Bridgeport, Waterbury, New Britain, Middletown, Torrington, Simsbury, Storrs, and New London. The alliance between 4-H, FIRST, and J. C. Penney provides the opportunity for 4-H to establish high school level clubs which are also FIRST teams and to move into this new area of science and technology.

4-H Science provides opportunities for youth to engage in the process of discovery and exploration in science, engineering, and technology. Robotics is one new way Connecticut 4-H youth are discovering new knowledge and skills in a fun environment.

4-H is a community of young people across America learning leadership, citizenship, and life skills.