

Morehouse Parish 4-H Advisory Leadership Council Meeting

March 26, 2013

LSU Ag Auditorium

The Morehouse Parish 4-H Advisory Leadership Council Meeting was held at 11 a.m. on Tuesday, March 26, 2013 at the LSU Ag Auditorium. Terry Erwin, Morehouse Parish Chair, welcomed members to the meeting. He introduced Lauren Edwards, Morehouse Parish 4-H Agent, and Terri Crawford, Northeast Region 4-H Coordinator.

Lauren Edwards invited Council members to introduce themselves and identify their affiliation with 4-H. Council members present were: Vicki Adams, Kelly Gunter, Pam Little, Clay Moore, Tammie Moore, Sheriff Mike Tubbs, and Joe Womack. Members that agreed to serve, but could not attend were: Jeff Churchwell, Karen Diel, Loe Dunn, Pinkie Simpson, Bailey Willis, and Jana Wilmore.

Edwards emphasized the importance of each member's contribution to the Council. Members were selected for their role as leaders in the community, having a genuine interest in the 4-H program, and experience or knowledge of issues affecting youth in the parish. Members' responsibility to serve as advisors and ambassadors for the Morehouse 4-H program was also discussed.

Terri Crawford described the purpose of the Advisory Leadership Council Meeting. The meeting served as a mechanism for obtaining input from the community to guide 4-H programming decisions. Service on the Council is an opportunity for members to have a leadership role in local 4-H efforts. The meeting also served to create public awareness of the value of extension and its 4-H programs.

Crawford provided an overview of the LSU AgCenter, including historical significance and ties to existing legislation. She described the mission of the program, emphasizing the importance of educating local citizens. Members were reminded to refer to the mission, bearing in mind the "education" piece to 4-H's role in serving youth.

Members were then asked to create a list of issues facing youth in Morehouse Parish. Terri Crawford facilitated group discussion as a compiled list was created to include all identified issues. The list included: drugs/drug awareness, peer pressure/bullying, post-high school education and workforce preparation, cooking skills/nutrition, organizational skills, parental support, communication skills, manners/etiquette, litter reduction, character building and ethics, and agriculture appreciation.

Crawford asked the group to consider what issues were of the most importance for the youth of Morehouse Parish. Members were encouraged to vote on those issues they considered most important. It was determined that post-high school education and workforce preparation was the most pressing issue to be addressed in the coming year. The topics of communication skills and manners/etiquette were combined to be considered as the secondary focus. Agriculture appreciation was also emphasized.

Together, the group went on to discuss ideas for increasing 4-H enrollment and participation in the parish. These ideas included: expansion of the 4-H shooting sports program, targeting junior high and high schools, advocating for opportunities to reach youth during the school day, providing activities that appeal to today's youth, appointing a volunteer whose primary focus is to engage older youth, recruiting prospective leaders and providing appropriate training.

The group also formulated a list of avenues for promoting 4-H opportunities to older youth. Suggestions included: school and community announcements/newsletters, newspaper articles, monthly highlights of 4-Hers, social media, publicity with outdoor adventure groups, networking with church youth groups and school guidance counselors.

Following the group discussion, Terri Crawford informed members of the process for addressing each of the issues that were identified. Issues will be incorporated into 4-H Club meetings, workshops, and events for the 2013-2014 school year. Council members may be asked to provide additional advising or volunteer with related events.

The Council agreed to meet at least annually to review progress and make plans for additional efforts. A six-month follow up meeting was suggested for October 2013. In the mean time, members were encouraged to contact Lauren Edwards with further comments and suggestions. The meeting concluded at 12:30 p.m.