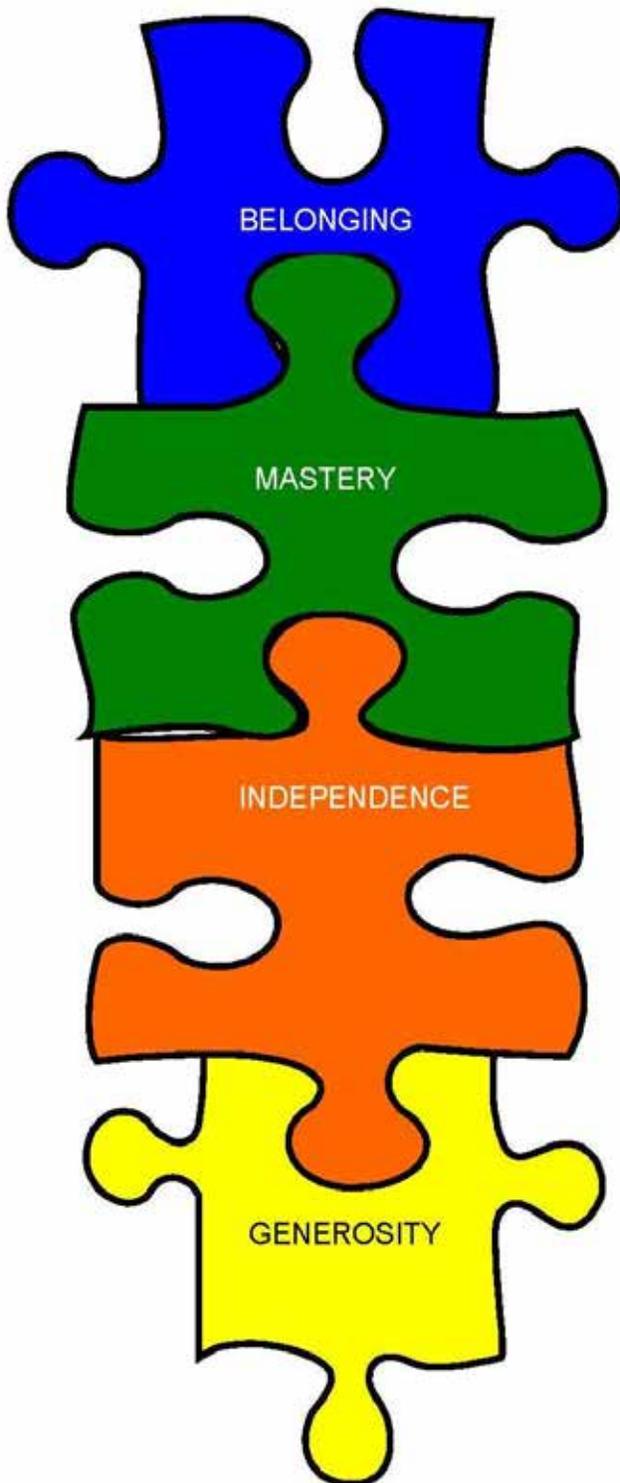




**2016 Buffalo County 4-H
Countywide Service Learning Project
Support for Drug Endangered Children**

4-H Youth Development Essential Elements & Service Learning



In 4-H Youth Development, our programs should be developed on the foundation of the four Essential Elements of **BELONGING, MASTERY, INDEPENDENCE** and **GENEROSITY**. When engaging in service-learning experiences consider the multiple way we can help foster youth learning and development throughout the process.

A research way to approach a service-learning project with 4-H members and leaders in your club is the PARE Service-Learning Model. It has four steps: Preparation, Action, Reflection and Evaluation. During the Preparation phase adults help youth consider about what service is most needed and work to develop a plan together in partnership. During this phase youth and adults practice elements of Belonging; strengthening positive, caring relationships between youth and adults and ensuring an inclusive, safe environment. When youth and adults complete the service and take Action there are multiple opportunities for skill development and mastery and ways for youth to see themselves as active citizens now and in the future. The Reflection step allows youth and adults to share experiences and lessons learned – which is an important method of engaging in learning and reflecting on experiences to change behavior. The final step, Evaluation, provides the chance for youth and adults to discuss successes and challenges in meaningful ways that build self-determination and practice decision-making skills. Throughout the entire PARE process there are ways for youth to belong, master, be independent and be generous.

The 2016 Countywide Service-Learning Project is Support for Drug Endangered Children (DEC)!

The 2016 Buffalo County 4-H Countywide Service-Learning Project is to support drug endangered children who are removed from their homes in partnership with child protective services and law enforcement by providing infants, children and teenagers with a comfort bag. The 4-H Leaders' Association is challenging every 4-H Club in Buffalo County to get on board and actively participate in this year's countywide service-learning project in their own way.

The goals of our service-learning project are:

- Work together within 4-H clubs and across Buffalo County
- Develop new 4-H project skills
- Perform community service to meet a local community need
- Strengthen leadership skills and youth-adult partnerships
- Show empathy (compassion) for others

Countywide Service-Learning Working Calendar:

- § **November 2015** – 4-H Leaders discuss service-learning projects and select project with most opportunity to meet 4-H goals and DEC needs
- § **December 2015** – DEC project officially launches; 4-H Clubs are provided with Service-Learning Guide and begin work in their own clubs
- § **January 2016**– 4-H Clubs will learn more about DEC and the unique needs of drug endangered children then make plans for participating in countywide service-learning project
- § **February 2016 - April 2016** – 4-H clubs will conduct service projects working in partnership between youth and adults.
- § **April 2016 – June 2016** – 4-H youth and adults will have opportunities to hear from DEC members at 4-H clubs or on a countywide basis
- § **June 2016 – August 2016** – 4-H clubs will turn in products and complete reflections equaling 50 comfort bags countywide
- § **September 2016** – 4-H Leaders Association will host media campaign about the success of our efforts with DEC and the learning that took place as a result of our actions



Who are Drug Endangered Children in Buffalo County?

Buffalo County Health and Human Services and the Buffalo County Sheriff's Office teamed together in 2014 to initiate a Drug Endangered Children (DEC) Team in Buffalo County. The DEC Team is a collaboration between social workers and law enforcement officers with the mission as follows:

"The purpose of the DEC Team is to collaboratively intervene on behalf of children who have been exposed to drug-endangered environments and are unsafe in those environments. DEC team members will cooperate with each other so that parents/caretakers are vigorously and effectively prosecuted for child endangerment/abuse/neglect in addition to charges resulting from their illegal drug activities. We will be diligent in the protection of these children and will coordinate with the necessary treatment and after-care providers for all family members so they all have an opportunity to live a drug-free life."

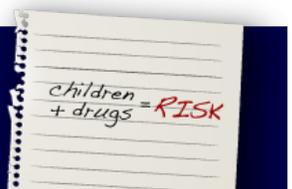
A drug endangered child is a young person under the age of 18 who lives in or is exposed to an environment where drugs are illegally used, possessed, trafficked and/or manufactured and, as a result the child experiences or is at risk for experiencing child abuse or harm. You may not know who is drug endangered in your neighborhood and likely cannot identify them just by seeing them, but Drug Endangered Children live in every community in Buffalo County.

When a child is removed from a home where drugs are or have been present, it is common that they have to leave all of their belongings behind. The reason they must leave their all of their clothes, toys and favorites behind is because of third-hand drug exposure. Certain illegal drugs have a vapor or particles that club to surfaces throughout the home including children's bedding, furniture, stuffed animals, pet's fur and even in their own hair. As a result, children can ingest the drug vapors through their skin or by touching contaminated surfaces. Those drug vapors and particles are not easily removed from surfaces and fabrics therefore, children must not take anything with them.

As expected, when a child is placed away from their home with none of their most comforting items they may be very upset. This can be a stressful time for a child and the DEC Team wants to help alleviate some of the anxiety for children, youth and teenagers. With donations from area businesses and organizations like 4-H, the DEC Team provides each child with a comfort bag upon placement out of home. The bag contains a variety of donated items such as a new pair of pajamas and clothes, toiletry items, a book, a toy and more. Items should be new or uniquely handmade so that youth are able to feel more comforted from the gifts and are not identifiable or targeted at school and in the community.



**NATIONAL ALLIANCE
FOR DRUG ENDANGERED CHILDREN**



Drug Endangered Children Comfort Bags

Information for developing DEC Comfort Bags:

- ✓ Our goal of 50 bags total countywide (approximately 4 per club)
- ✓ Encouraged to have one or more of the items be handmade
- ✓ Remember we need comfort bags for a variety of ages (infant to teenager) so include comfort books and toys for a large spectrum of developmental needs
- ✓ Items should be of interest to young people and either be new or modern handmade
- ✓ Keep in mind that drug endangered children are stripped of all the belongings that make them feel safe and comfortable and are likely going to live in a new home and possibly a new school. Remember to include items that can help them feel calm and important.
- ✓ This is a link to Annie Lisowski's Pinterest page called "[Service Learning DEC Comfort Bags](https://www.pinterest.com/anniejo30/service-learning-dec-comfort-bags/)" with pre-approved ideas (cinch sack patterns, bookmarks, sock monkeys, pillow designs and more) for the comfort bags: <https://www.pinterest.com/anniejo30/service-learning-dec-comfort-bags/>

(You are welcome to follow or like the page on Pinterest. If you would like to add an idea to the Pinterest page please email to annie.lisowski@ces.uwex.edu).



Each Comfort Bag Should Contain the Following as Outlined:

- Ø Cinch sack, tote with closure, or backpack
- Ø Pillow and/or blanket
- Ø Stuffed animal or special pillow
- Ø New book and handmade bookmark
- Ø Coloring book and crayons, crossword puzzle book with neat pen and/or mini-game
- Ø Special non-perishable treat (gum, toddler cereal, lifesaver gummies, etc.)
- Ø Unique personal item(s) (lip balm, nail polish, small Kleenex, etc.) (Not toothbrush and toothpaste as these have already been secured from Midwest Dental)
- Ø Optional: homemade scarf, hat, socks or other personal item (not shoes or clothing)
- Ø \$25 for shoes and clothes (monetary contribution only as these items need to be new and individualized for each youth) Checks can be made out to Buffalo County 4-H Leaders and will be distributed to DEC at the end of the project.
- Ø Special note from one child to another
 - Script for special message: "I care about you and hope that this gift will make you a little more comfortable while you experience a lot of changes in your life."

Service-Learning Reflection

What is reflection?

Reflection is a method of reviewing how service-learning experiences impacted communities on many levels – countywide for service recipients, within a 4-H club and amongst 4-H members themselves.

Why use reflection?

An effective 4-H leader is one that not only cares for fellow 4-H members, but is also a good teacher who helps others learn as part of service. Reflection is a big part of the *Experiential Learning Process* and is a valuable way to help 4-H'ers think about what they have learned; improving the chance that they will grow and develop from your community service-learning projects.

Reflection can help 4-H members...

- Think about what they have done and learned during a service event
- Suggest ways that the activity was successful or ways it can be improved
- Come up with ideas of how they can use what they learned in other areas of their life
- Share their ideas and feelings with others
- Tell how important their participation in the service project was to them

Activities for Reflecting on Service-Learning for DEC:

1. Ask members to consider what it might like to wake up in the middle night and receive the message that they have to leave all their belongings behind. Have youth create a drawing in pictures and symbols that represents:
 - How they may feel and what they may be thinking
 - What they would wish for and what action they would take
 - Who they envision would help them and how
2. In a group, evaluate your service-learning experience by responding the following questions. Remember to consider the Essential Elements and the PARE Service-Learning Model in your discussion. Ask:
 - Why did you choose to participate in DEC service-learning?
 - What was the most powerful part of your contribution?
 - What did you learn about yourself and others?
 - What was the impact of the service project?
 - What did the project teach you about second hand drug exposure and the impacts for young people and their families?

