



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL,
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

Ohio State University Extension

Wayne County

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Dear 4-H Families,

Wayne County has one of the largest 4-H and Extension programs in the state of Ohio. However, you may not be aware that since 2009, the Wayne County Extension Office has faced several on-going budget challenges. Including 2016 our office has received level funding for the last 7-years. As you know during this time period the cost of doing business has not stayed the same. Many of our office expenses have increased. There have been increases in postage, printing and copy services, telephone, internet access, and many other areas. The most significant cost increases have occurred in the area of employee benefits primarily driven by increased costs for employee health insurance.

Throughout the last several years Extension staff have been and are continuing to find ways to reduce or off-set rising costs. Here are just a few examples:

- Staff paying a higher amount for their employee portion of the health insurance premium.
- Two positions in the Agriculture and Natural Resources program were not filled when vacancies occurred.
- Reducing the number and frequency of mailings through increased use of e-mail, social media, and the web to deliver important information to Extension program participants.
- Raising additional funds to support program costs through donations, workshop fees, sponsorships of meetings and events for certain Extension programs and seeking grants to support local programming when possible.

With level funding and increasing expenses, in an effort to balance the budget and maintain a strong and vibrant county 4-H program going forward, the Extension 4-H Advisory Committee and Extension staff have considered several options over the past year. After careful thought and consideration, the Committee has voted to support establishing a 4-H activity fee beginning in 2016. In addition, the Wayne County Agricultural Society (Senior Fair Board) has also voted to support the establishment of this fee. While this fee is new to Wayne County, approximately 70 counties across Ohio have had an activity fee in place for several years to supplement other local funding.

The activity fee will be used to directly benefit 4-H programming by helping to fund a permanent 4-H program assistant position that otherwise would be eliminated. Any remaining funds will be used directly to support other 4-H program costs. The activity fee will be \$10 for Cloverbuds, \$15 for 4-H members, and a maximum of \$50 per family. The fee will be due at the time of enrollment and paid to your 4-H club. Clubs will then turn in one check to the Extension Office for all of their members when the club submits enrollment forms at the Extension Office on April 1st. Additionally, clubs have the option to consider doing fundraisers to help cover a portion or the entire activity fee for their members.

There is also a financial hardship scholarship application process for those who need it. The scholarship application and criteria is available on our website at wayne.osu.edu. Applications should be submitted directly to the Extension Office by 4:30 pm on March 15, 2016 for those who choose to apply. The Senior Fair Board is donating to this scholarship fund and others are considering donations as well. If you know of individuals, families or businesses that may be interested in donating to the activity fee scholarship fund or to support any aspect of 4-H, please contact the Extension Office for more information. Our goal is to ensure that every child in Wayne County that wants to be in 4-H will be able to be in 4-H. Finally, we want to emphasize that the activity fee will only get us part way to the amount needed to keep the budget balanced and ensure we continue to have a strong 4-H program. Additional fundraising efforts will be needed and implemented. The Extension Office and 4-H Advisory Committee will keep you informed of those efforts and opportunities as we go forward.

Sincerely,

Members of the Wayne County Extension 4-H Advisory Committee

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