



Exploring 4-H at Home

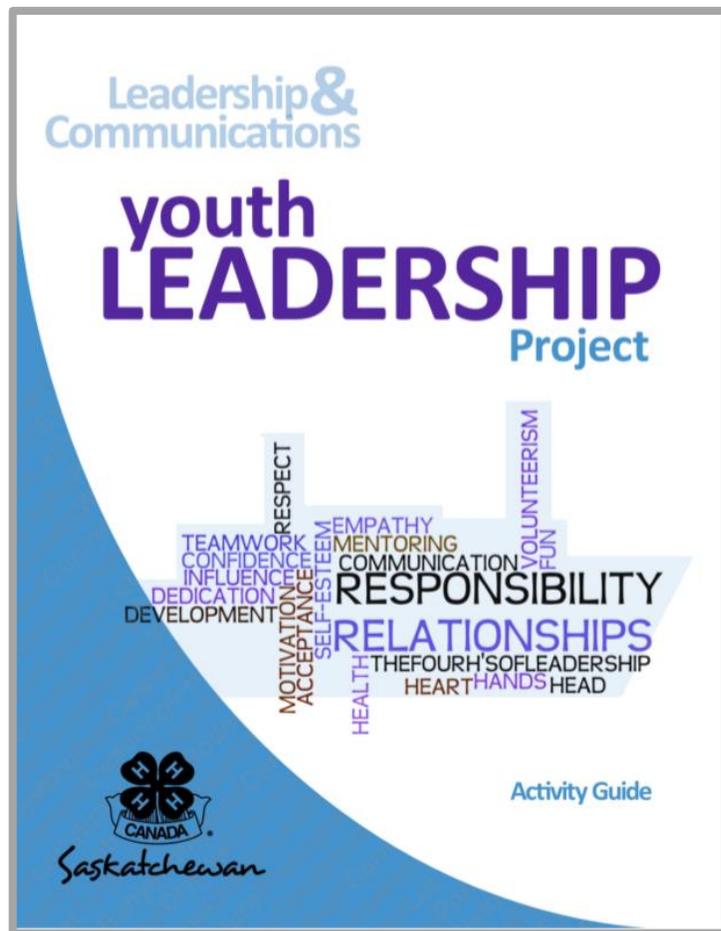


Community Engagement
and Communications

Pillar: Community Engagement and Communications

Project: Youth Leadership

Activity: Civic Engagement



Introduction

An important part of leadership is being aware of what is happening in your community. From a small village all the way up to a big city, there are always decisions to be made. In this activity, we will discuss different ways to learn about what is going on in your community.

Forms of Leadership

Before you know what decisions are being made, you have to know who is making them! We will only focus on local leadership in this activity. Here are some examples:

- City, Town or Rural Municipality
- Municipal Committees
- Community or Neighbourhood Association
- School Board
- Student Council
- Volunteer Groups

All of these groups have some responsibility in keeping the community running. They may do this through passing laws, creating new programs, fundraising money or reaching out to local citizens (that's you!).

Current Events

When people represent others or are in charge of making decisions, they usually want people to know what they are doing. This may be because they want the opinion of others or because they want continued support. They may run ads, give out leaflets or talk to people on the street.

In addition, news organizations can help to make sure that those who make decisions are doing a good job, while also promoting those who are quietly making a difference in their community. Your family may subscribe to a local or regional paper or magazine.

Getting Information

Now you are going to do some research about what is happening in your community. Pick three topics and prepare a report to your family or friends. Ask and then answer the following questions:

- What** is happening?
- Who** is involved?
- Why** is this important?
- Where** is this happening?
- When** will a decision be made?
- How** will this happen?

Here are some sources. Always make sure that you use multiple sources so that your information is correct:

Websites: many governments and organizations put information on their website. This may be listed under “Announcements”, “News” or “Updates”.

Mail: have you received any political mail recently? Has an official talked about their accomplishments?

Newspaper: there may be a special section dedicated to local events. You can also check the advertisements and/or classifieds – sometimes information can be posted there.

Community Bulletin Board: some places have a bulletin board with information about local events. It may be maintained by your community association or municipal government.

Word of Mouth: although this is less reliable because people could be sharing their opinion with you, not just necessarily the facts, talking with people in your community is a good way of learning what is happening, especially on a very local level.