



New Jersey 4-H *Head + Heart + Hands + Health* Leader Training Series



New Jersey 4-H Camp

The Lindley G. Cook 4-H Camp has been providing quality camping experiences for youth since 1951. It is located near Branchville in Stokes State Forest, in the northwestern part of the state. Operated by Rutgers Cooperative Extension, it is open year-round and serves 4-H and non 4-H audiences.

Many activities are held at 4-H camp. 4-H summer and winter camps are the most common. Some county 4-H programs also schedule special camping events. In addition, schools and other organizations use the facilities for conferences and various other educational and recreational purposes.

Lindley G. Cook 4-H Youth Center for Outdoor Education provides youth and adults with a safe environment for fun, hands-on residential outdoor educational experiences; fostering independence, leadership development, respect, tolerance and positive self-esteem. This is accomplished under the guidelines of 4-H and Rutgers Cooperative Extension principles and missions.

Among the most important occurrences at camp is 4-H Summer Camp. Youth from all over New Jersey attend 4-H Summer Camp during the summer camping season in July and August each year. Each session runs for approximately six days.

The objectives of 4-H camp revolve around the four H's:

- *Head.* Campers learn to make good choices and gain independence. Camp builds strong minds, bodies, and character.
- *Heart.* Campers make friends from New Jersey and beyond. Friends keep in touch over the years and come back each summer together. Many campers return as counselors, completing the circle.
- *Hands.* Campers "learn by doing" by experiencing many new and exciting activities each day.
- *Health.* Campers enjoy a safe and healthy outdoor environment away from the routine of home.

4-H Summer Camp

4-H Summer Camp is open to youth, grades 3-10. Teens who have completed 9th or 10th grade may be eligible to apply for the Counselor-In-Training (C.I.T.) program. Participation in 4-H Summer Camp is available to all youth, whether they live in cities, suburbs, or rural communities.

Campers are assigned to cabins while at camp, usually with others of the same age group. Each cabin has at least one counselor. Facilities are equipped with bunk beds and mattresses. Camp has hot and cold running water, flush toilets, an infirmary, a lake for swimming and boating, a recreation hall, dining hall, nature center, and more. Campers are provided three meals a day, plus snacks. A well-balanced diet is prepared by qualified chefs and cooking staff. The cost of a week at 4-H Camp is very reasonable in comparison with other similar camping programs. Discounts are available for 4-H Members, multiple family members, and early registration.

The health and safety of campers is a major concern. The infirmary is adequately staffed, and waterfront personnel are carefully selected for their ability and maturity. 4-H camp is licensed by the New Jersey Department of Health under the New Jersey Youth Camp Safety Act. Many different activities are offered during the week at camp. They include crafts and workshops, recreation, and special activities such as campfires, hiking, etc. The facility has a director who oversees the operation of



the camp. During the summer, counselors and other staff are hired to work with campers and conduct interesting educational programs each week.

Promoting Camp

4-H camp is one of the most valuable learning experiences a youngster can have. Boys and girls who go to camp learn to appreciate the wonder and majesty of the outdoors and to associate with others of their own age. They learn and have fun at the same time. Despite the value of 4-H camp, it sometimes takes a little extra nudge from an adult to persuade a child to attend.

Here are some ideas to help kids and their parents become aware of and interested in camp:

- Invite someone from the county 4-H staff to visit your club and talk about camp. Or they may be able to put you in touch with a counselor who has been to camp.
- Although the cost of a week at 4-H camp is very reasonable, some families may need a little financial assistance. Consider planning club fundraisers to help 4-H'ers pay their way. You may also want to contact your county 4-H office to find out about the availability of camp scholarships for your 4-H members.
- Encourage 4-H members and families to visit the 4-H camp website at nj4hcamp.rutgers.edu.
- Check with your county 4-H office to see if there is a multimedia camp presentation available to show at one of your club meetings.
- Encourage your members and their parents to take a tour of the camp. Please contact the Program Director to set up a time and date. Or visit the camp during one of the spring community service days listed on the 4-H camp website.
- Hold a contest for the 4-H'ers who recruit the largest number of friends. Camp is even more fun when friends go together!
- Plan for your club to attend a 4-H Camp Information Night as one of your regular meetings or as a special field trip. Check the 4-H Camp web site or contact your county 4-H office in January or February for the dates and locations of the current year's information nights.
- As an adult 4-H volunteer, consider attending camp as a counselor. Counselors have a challenging but rewarding job. Your 4-H members will be comforted and proud to know you're attending along with them. Counselors attend camp free-of-charge. Each summer, outstanding individuals who have completed 11th grade (and above) may apply to attend camp for one week as Volunteer Counselors. L.G. Cook 4-H Camp has had a long and successful history of volunteers at camp, many of whom are former 4-H campers and C.I.T.'s.
- Encourage your members to read about camp in your county 4-H newsletter. Many counties devote special sections exclusively to camp.



Visiting 4-H Camp

Parents are discouraged from visiting camp while their children are in attendance. However, they are welcome to tour camp when they bring their children to camp or to make an appointment to visit any other time during the year. Your club might consider planning a field trip to visit camp. Your county 4-H staff can help you arrange a visit. In the meantime, your 4-H office probably has some brochures and other helpful information about 4-H camp.

Renting Camp

The 4-H camp may be rented for a weekend or a day. A reasonable fee is charged. If your 4-H club, family, or other group is interested in renting camp for a special event, contact your county 4-H staff for more information. You'll need to reserve early because camp is a busy place!

*Revised by Jim Tavares.
Written by Keith G. Diem.*



Did You Know...

The 1st National Club Camp was held in Washington DC in 1927. 4-H delegates stayed in tents on the lawn of the USDA property. The goal was to develop and recognize junior leaders in 4-H. It was also perfect timing as Congress was considering the Capper-Ketcham Act which was to provide new funds for Extension. 4-H Club work became part of law with the passing of this act.

In 1957 Club Camp was changed to National 4-H Conference.
NJ 4-H Youth attend this conference each spring.

For more information on New Jersey 4-H, please visit www.nj4h.rutgers.edu.

Cooperating Agencies: Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and County Boards of Chosen Freeholders. Rutgers Cooperative Extension, a unit of the Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station, is an equal opportunity program provider and employer.