

'Be A Good Role Model' Is Time-Proven Formula For Leadership

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McCLURE (Mifflin Co.) — Her message may not be loud, but it is clear and important — and she doesn't get paid to preach it from a podium around the country. She's lived it. After 28 years of working with children and youth as 4-H community leader, Vivian Mowery near McClure, Mifflin County, is retiring. Her experience of almost three decades can be rolled up into one crucial message for anyone working with children and youth — be a good role model.

"The things we say and do have a lasting, lifetime effect on the lives of young people. The life you set as a role model for a young person is extremely important," Mowery confirms.

It would take hours to sort through the 4-H records Mowery has kept to see how many lives she has touched during those years. She was first approached by former 4-H community leader Helen Wright about being a flower garden project leader. As membership increased, Mowery took on other clubs — sewing, quilting, and Children Can Be Fun. A short time later, Wright stepped down and Mowery was asked to be community leader of a group of less than 20 kids.

Through the years, Mowery saw membership increase to a high of 110 community club members. To be a good role model and leader, Mowery put the safety of the children first, lived what she believes are essential values for leaders (or for anyone), and looked for the potential in each child. That's Mowery's time-proven formula for good leadership.

As for values, Mowery believes you start with good sound Christian doctrine to direct you to lead other people.

Then you add good character and integrity. "You can lead others with, for example, working skills. If children see their mom and dad working, they're going to work. It's the same with 4-H kids (what they see in their leaders). If a person respects you, they'll do for you."

For Mowery, honesty ranks high on the leader-quality list too. "We always taught our children that whatever you do, you live with the decision you make," says Mowery, speaking of her and her husband Ken's three children, Ken Jr., Laurel Archey, and Lan-

ette Battles.

But Mowery taught these principles by living them. When a former 4-H member was seriously injured in an accident, Mowery wanted to help in some "small" way. She initiated a fund-raising auction to help offset the family's medical bills. With tremendous community support, organizers saw donations and help pouring in from churches, individuals, businesses, 4-H'ers and many others. It turned out to be a Friday night and all-day Saturday event at the Mifflin County Youth Park — shadowed by the news that the little girl had died. But Mowery's desire to help in a "small" way turned into a full-fledged community effort that raised \$9,655 for the family.

At community club meetings, Mowery shared her leadership responsibilities with everyone, thus developing potential talents in others. "At the beginning of the year, February or March, leaders, parents, officers, members and even the little ones, met to plan the upcoming year. Ideas came from everyone. I'm a firm believer in delegation of responsibility. Members would take on certain tasks such as helping to set up future meetings and programs. Then we had a kick-off meeting. The extension office would send out cards and the 4-H news reporter would advertise it. We'd have booklets, too, listing upcoming events and meetings. Everyone knew what was going on." And all ideas had parent approval first.

Doling out responsibilities for Mowery wasn't done at random. "I feel for the development of that 4-H member, a leader must support and encourage them, give them as many opportunities as possible to develop the talents they have. I always looked for that in them. I felt it was important to get to know that individual. I try to see potential and develop that, things that might have remained dormant in a child."

But why 4-H?

"It's a wonderful educational program," Mowery states. "4-H opens the door for you to be involved and to have some opportunities and meet a lot of people you wouldn't normally meet. If a child becomes actively involved, there's lots of things to do such as Achievement Days, Dress Reviews, being a camp counselor, Dale Carnegie courses, and much more."

Being a good leader involves hard work and dedication. Over the years, Mowery served as room chairperson at a leaders Forum at Penn State, been a judge for Demonstration Days in both Juniata and Centre Counties, helped at 4-H camp Penn Roosevelt when needed, served two five-year terms on the Extension Committee Board and two two-year terms as secretary, served as Exhibit Hall Coordinator at the Mifflin County Youth Fair, attended home economic and agricultural meetings, attended Pennsylvania Cooperative Council Extension Association meetings while on the Extension Board, chaperoned field trips including a county exchange with 4-H'ers from Wisconsin, attended the Extension annual meeting in State College, attended Legislative State Extension Capitol Days in Harrisburg, and toured the Agricultural Science and Industries Building at Penn State.

"I was running on reserve power then," Mowery admits, then goes on to talk about the changes she has seen over the years.

"I've been blessed to see the overall development of the 4-H program, to see local extension agents retire and new ones come on board. It's been a privilege and an honor."

Mowery's decision to retire from 4-H was not a easy one. Many laughingly told her she was the reason why the green building roof collapsed (due to snow) at the Mifflin County Youth Park — she wasn't supposed to get out of 4-H yet!

Giving up 4-H leadership was a hard decision, but looking ahead, Mowery sees things she wants to do. Her husband retires from Standard Steel in two years. Mowery helps run their 100-acre farm that includes their state licensed custom slaughtering and processing business. From October through the end of March, Mowery processes 200-300 deer and beef — six days a week. She also has her eye on the pond below their farm for fishing, may finish some quilt tops, repair some antiques, and get started on some calves to raise for beef.

"I might have a couple extra minutes to work on these now," Mowery said.

Mowery's years as a 4-H leader are packed with memories of skits, demonstrations, fashion shows, swimming parties, picnics, meet-



With 28 years of service as 4-H project leader of the Decatur 4-H Club, Vivian Mowery reflects on leadership qualities when working with children and youth.

ings, ice cream socials, corn boils, roller skating, and much, much more. But Mowery will never forget her main purpose as a leader -

that 4-H is more than working on a specific project for the fair. It is working toward a finished product in the child.

You Ask ? ? ? ? ? ? You Answer

In response to readers' questions, this column is for readers who have questions but don't know who to ask for the answers. In the past, many readers sent non-cooking requests to Cook's Question Corner, a cooking column on page B 8.

"You Ask — You Answer" is for non-cooking questions. The concept is the same: When a reader sends in a question, it will be printed in the paper. Readers who know the answer are asked to respond by mailing the answer, which will then be printed in the paper.

Questions and answers to this column should be addressed to You Ask — You Answer, Lou Ann Good, P.O. Box 609, Ephrata, PA 17522.

QUESTION — A. Nolt of New Holland would like to know the words to the complete poem that was recited in the 1920s when her father-in-law went to school. The poem contains these lines: The carpenter's house is falling down. The preacher's kids are the worse in town....

QUESTION — Marie Lorah, Box 299 R.D. 3, Tamaqua, Pa. 18252, is looking for water glasses with pictures of owls on them.

QUESTION — Romaine B. answell Sumerdale, would like to know who manufactured the Webalco electric skillet.

QUESTION — Robin O'Brien, Reading, would like to know some economical cleaning solutions to be used on everything from cleaning wooded floors to fiberglass tubs.

QUESTION — A reader would like to know how to keep bees away when holding outdoor picnics.

ANSWER — Nancy Kring, Johnstown, wanted to know where to purchase Pennsylvania Dutch signs, cookbooks, and memorabilia. Thanks to Karen Kinnaine, who writes that these items are available at Shartlesville General Store, P.O. Box 212, Shartlesville, PA 19554.



Reflecting on change. Mowery eyes the pond for fishing on their 100-acre McClure farm — something she's had little time to do in her 28 years as a 4-H leader.