
Bexar 4-h FISHING & shooting sports

LETTER TO THE PARENTS

August 16, 2007

Dear Parents,

With as many years, the phone calls and emails that I have received over time that many of you would like to know a little more about me and this club before you sign your children up. As a parent, I understand this, and hope that this letter will answer all your questions. If it does not, PLEASE do not hesitate to call me at home anytime and I will answer any remaining questions.

First, to answer how I am qualified to start this club and serve as the Club Manager. I am a certified instructor with Texas 4-H Shooting Sports, International Bowhunter Education Program (IBEP), National Rifle Association (NRA), the National Archery Association (NAA), Texas Parks and Wildlife Hunter Education (TP&W-HE), and the National Muzzleloading Rifle Association (NMLRA). I currently serve as Chairman for Texas 4-H Rifle, Pistol, Muzzleloading and Hunting Championships, Chairman of the Texas 4-H Shooting Sports Rifle Committee, member and officer of Texas 4-H Shooting Sports Foundation, Rifle Instructor for Texas 4-H Shooting Sports State Training Team, and Vice-President of Southwest Shooters. I am also currently certified as an NRA Training Counselor in all disciplines. I am qualified to serve as a project leader for all the project groups in this club; however, as Club Manager, I choose to take a back seat. I will be watching the project groups and activities to ensure that they are executed to 4-H standards. I am also certified to train additional project leaders for all projects except Archery, and will arrange for a local State Certification class. If you have any further questions about my qualifications, please contact Dr. Ron Howard, Director of Texas 4-H Shooting Sports at (979) 845-5961.

Next, how did I get involved with all of this? I was asked by Dr. Howard to start a 4-H Shooting Sports Club in the Austin area in 1992. At that time I felt that my obligations to the other organizations I was an instructor for were too much to take on this new activity. In 1994, after hosting the Texas 4-H Rifle and Pistol Championships (then known as 5 STAR) matches at the Austin Rifle Club Range, and watching over 250 participants (under the age of 19) out shoot even the best adults that I know, I became sold on the idea. Of all the participants, none of them came from the City of Austin or Bexar, Travis, Williamson, or Hays Counties. This was very disturbing when you consider the number of children that live in the area. It was my goal then to send a group of kids to the competition in 1995, which meant starting a club. After that weekend, I worked with several other Club Managers and Dr. Howard very closely to set up that first club. The club is modeled in a fashion that Dr. Howard and 4-H Shooting Sports suggest. In March 1995 I held the first leaders meeting to see what interest was out there. Then in April 1995 we held the first members meeting and signed up 8 members. We did send 4 members to the Texas 4-H Rifle and Pistol Championships in 1995, 2 of which placed in their events. At the close of the 1995-1996 year we had 30 members signed up to the club.

This club is open to ANYONE in Bexar County between the ages of 8 (or in 3rd grade) and 18. We also have a Clover Club open to siblings and close friends who are in Kindergarten through the time they can enter as a regular member of the club. The clover kids can participate in a limited set of activities, but we intend to keep them fully involved.

Now that I have answered the two questions I am asked the most, let me answer some of the other questions I have been asked over the years. A little about 4-H, 4-H is a national organization devoted to helping the youth of America better themselves. It is NOT all about livestock, while in Texas this is probably the largest general group. There are 4-H clubs for automotive, cooking, computer science, forestry, photography, sewing, and many other activities. As a 4-H club, we can have project groups in any of these areas; however, this particular club will focus on sport fishing, shooting sports and wildlife projects. Your child is allowed to compete at any 4-H competition in any of the areas available as a member of this club, not just the Fishing & Shooting Sports competitions and projects. Participation in other areas is actually encouraged. 4-H offers scholarships and other learning opportunities to your child as they grow, and I encourage every family to take advantage of these, and as they come available you will be informed of them in the club and county newsletters as allowed. For more information on 4-H you should contact the Bexar County Agent at (210) 467-6575.

As for the safety of your children. It is understandable and natural to be concerned for their safety when participating in any of the project groups. I can assure you that all the project leaders for each project group are certified instructors in the project area they have chosen and that they have agreed to the standards that 4-H shooting Sports holds for all project leaders. This is a requirement of the club by-laws. Each project leader has already attended a 4-H Shooting Sports Instructor Workshop to ensure that they are familiar with the way 4-H intends for each project group to be run. I can assure you that I will do my best to attend these workshops as well; as a member of the State Training Team, I must attend them as an instructor.

We are also asking that as a parent you become actively involved with your child's new hobby. I don't expect you to become a project leader or that you attend any of the 4-H Shooting Sports Workshops, however most parents do eventually do this. I do ask that you attend the practices and work with the project leader to help in any way that you can. You will be asked to work with children other than your own. By 4-H standards, parents are not supposed to instruct their own children. There is often some tension and anxiety to perform when your parents are watching over you. We are here to ensure that the kids have fun and succeed, and your support is always needed. This club is NOT intended to become a baby-sitting service for parents to get a couple of hours of quiet time; this club has a goal to improve the family as well as the child.

A little about the time commitment involved. This club like most 4-H clubs will be run like any club or extra curricular activity your child may join. The club will be run by the officers that the members of the club elect each June. Each club member will be required to attend the club meetings each month. The project groups should meet once a month for 1-2 hours, you do not have to attend all of them, but you should attend at least one a month. And like any club at school, your child will be expected to participate in any club fundraiser or service project. Your child will never be required to attend any competition or compete if they do not choose to do so. This is a learning experience for each child and we strive to ensure they have fun.

The club will also carry 4-H insurance on ALL its members. Payment of this insurance will be taken out of the membership dues each year. The other portion of the dues not used to pay for insurance will be used to cover all operating costs. The Bexar 4-H Fishing & Shooting Sports Club is a 501(c)(3) (not-for-profit) club and its books are subject to audit under the current State 4-H rules.

As an adult interested in you child you have a unique opportunity to help keep this club running. Even if you are not interested in serving as a project leader or even helping the project leaders as an adult leader, there are other areas where your talents could be used. We need adults to serve as committee advisors for membership, finance & fundraising, newsletter, programs, the banquet and historian. Or simply help the club get organized for a competition we are participating in or hosting, by arranging for transportation, lodging, meals, etc. If you are interested in serving as a committee advisor, or helping in any way, PLEASE do not hesitate to contact me and tell me your talents and interests.

I hope I have answered all the questions that you have and have not raised any new ones. I look forward to working with all your children and with their friends. This is a unique opportunity and I am looking forward to the challenge. Please come and join me in this new adventure.

Sincerely,

Jennie Dietrich
Bexar 4-H Fishing & Shooting Sports
Club Manger