

Clark County 4-H holding basket fundraiser, still taking consignments for auction

Written by Janna Ross

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Great ideas come by those who are just looking for something, but they are not sure exactly what.

That is exactly what happened for Diane Graf and Ann Cristiani when they visited Indianapolis last summer.

"Ann and I were in Indianapolis looking at different options and we seen the baskets," Graf stated.

The baskets she is referring to is the newest fundraiser for the Clark County 4-H program.

The basket, a Friendship basket, designed by American Traditions Baskets, is hand-woven of hard maple and made in the United States. The basket is 11"x8.25"x5.5" and comes complete with a brass tag, cloth liner and plastic protector. The brass tag states "Clark County 4-H Fair, 2009 Collector Basket, 1st Edition" and features the 4-H logo. The cost of the fundraising basket is \$45.

American Traditions Basket Company is a family-owned business located in Canal Fulton, Ohio.

The first 50 baskets will be a numbered series and a limited number of baskets will be made.

The basket also comes with a free lifetime warranty. The warranty is for all registered baskets. Baskets may be registered online at americantraditionsbaskets.com/warranty.htm. A tag with the registration number will be provided with each basket sold. With your registration of the Friendship Basket you will also be entered into a free monthly basket contest held by the American Traditions Basket Company. The free basket will be drawn for on the 10th of each month.

The basket fundraiser is just one of the fundraisers held by the Clark County 4-H in order to raise funds for the program. All proceeds from the fundraisers benefit the upkeep of the 4-H fairgrounds facility and to provide the programs for the 4-H'ers.

"We are always asking for the community's support of the kids out there," stated Bob Allen, Extension Educator 4-H Youth Development.

"The funding goes into many things like project manuals," Allen continued. "We have over 70 areas and the manuals are \$5 to \$7 each. We are still providing those manuals free to the families."

The 4-H'ers can choose projects that range from animal posters, arts and crafts, crops, gardening, model building and sewing to scrapbooking, gift wrapping, weather, woodworking or automotive and many topics in between.

He added, "4-H is provided free for all kids and not all of the 4-H programs are farm related. Photography is one of the very popular projects. You can sign up for one program and learn something else by completing the project."

This Saturday the Clark County 4-H program will hold their biggest fundrasier of the year.

The annual 4-H Consignment Auction will be held at the Clark County 4-H Fairgrounds this Saturday, March 14. The auction will begin at 9 a.m. and feature tractors, farm equipment, bulldozers, backhoes, trailers and related equipment.

The community 4-H clubs are also very involved community service projects.

"The Jr. Leaders just held their Prom Aid, the Horse Club works with needy children, most clubs do something through the holidays that is typical to any youth organization," Allen explained.

Diane Graf, a volunteer with many years of support of the Clark County 4-H, stated, "It's just another way of showing the kids that they need to give back."

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Many of the clubs choose to use their fundraising money to sponsor a trophy at the Clark County 4-H fair.

The trophies for the project are awarded to the 4-H'ers during the Awards and Recognition Program held in late September.

Although many citizens just think about 4-H during the Clark County 4-H Fair, scheduled for July 11-18, there are many, many 4-H events and programs held throughout the year.

"4-H is a year around program," Allen stated.

The 4-H Board and volunteers are already looking for sponsors and donations for the Clark County 4-H Fair.

The Special Events Committee, who organizes the major entertainment at the fair, is also looking for volunteers and sponsors. Sponsors are needed for the Livestock Barns and you may also choose to sponsor a special event.

Sponsorships range from \$250 to \$5,000 with special features for each level of sponsorship.

You may also show your support of the Clark County 4-H program by purchasing an advertisement in their fair book. The 4-H Fair Book advertisements are also available ranging from a 2"x3" ad for \$35 to a 7"x10" ad for \$165. 4-H Fair Book advertisements receive a 10 percent discount if paid by April 10.

"We would like to invite everyone to be involved in the 4-H program. We are continuously building up and forming clubs. I welcome anyone who is interested to come and talk to me about starting a new 4-H club," Allen stated.

Graf has seen what 4-H can do as her children are products of the Clark County 4-H program.

"The kids learn new things and don't even realize it. They learn self-esteem and confidence that will help them with job interviews and things throughout their lifetime. They start one project and learn different aspects of things just by completing the one project," Graf stated. "The 4-H leaders want them to complete what they sign up for. They want them to finish the five projects they sign up for as opposed to signing up for 40 projects and only completing five of them."

The Clark County 4-H program is always looking for volunteers, sponsors and donations.

"I would challenge each person who was ever in 4-H or involved in any way to become a volunteer this year for the Clark County 4-H program," Graf concluded.

If you would like more information regarding the Friendship Basket fundraiser please contact Diane Graf at 812-248-0712 or 502-773-3714. Checks should be made payable to: Clark County 4-H Corporation.

If you would like to make a donation or sponsorship of the 4-H program please contact Bob Allen at the Extension Office at 256-4591. Donations to the Clark County 4-H program are tax deductible. Donation checks may be sent to: Clark County 4-H Corporation, 9608 Highway 62, Suite 1, Charlestown, 47111.

Allen concluded, "Any donation, big or small, would be greatly appreciated. We are all here for the same reason, the kids."

The Clark County 4-H program had 572 youth enrolled last year in 29 4-H Clubs anchored throughout Clark County.