



Kids' Community

4-H Youth Board Seeds Community Projects

(NAPSA)—When it comes to making really big decisions, 4-H member Cerenity Miller knows how to be a leader and run the show. She's a member of the 4-H Adventure Central Youth Board in Dayton, Ohio, a group of young people charged with doling out grant money to worthy community youth organizations.

At age 11, Cerenity may be one of the youngest of 15 board members but she takes the job seriously. "I want to make sure that someone will use the money responsibly," she says of the \$500 grants that go to such local projects as a high school beautification club that wants to plant flowers and trees or a dance group's idea for a youth workshop.

Adventure Central, the 4-H youth education and development center in Dayton, is one of hundreds of diverse 4-H Afterschool facilities across America. The JCPenney Afterschool Fund is the national presenting sponsor of 4-H Afterschool.

The seed money for Cerenity's board comes from grants to the Dayton Center from foundations and corporations that want to promote youth/adult partnerships. The Youth Board, made up of kids ages 11-17, was created to find ideal places to distribute the money. It's one way 4-H touches communities.

Advised by the Center's director, the board is learning lessons in philanthropy and leadership. The young board members first designed an application and set deadlines for proposals. Projects, they said, should involve the interaction between youth and adults from nonprofit organizations like schools, churches and community centers.

Cerenity and her fellow 4-H members meet weekly to discuss



Eleven-year-old Cerenity Miller helps disburse grant money for community projects.

grant proposals from a variety of groups that want to make a difference in their urban community. Then, the board members decide who gets the funding.

Youth philanthropy programs such as Adventure Central's Youth Board are being developed throughout the 4-H system across the country, providing young people with unique training and experience in community service that will last a lifetime.

"I feel like I am doing something very important, and people look up to me," Cerenity says proudly.

Chances are, it's just the beginning of her leadership and community service involvement, wherever life takes her. Cerenity is one of seven million kids in 4-H, a community of young people across America who are learning leadership, citizenship and life skills.

To learn more about 4-H Afterschool or to join 4-H youth development clubs and programs, visit 4HUSA.ORG (www.4husa.org). You may find your own community of friends in the 4-H adventure.