

Extension Education  
Amy Stanley News Column  
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## Fall Activities for Clubs and Families

By Amy Stanley

When the weather finally starts to cool down and leaves start to change colors, you've finally made it to the best season of the year in my opinion. The colors, the crisp air, the pumpkins.....fall is a fabulous season. Crisp leaves, apple picking, hayrides, and pumpkin patches are all the signs that indicate a change of seasons in our county. Although we can usually tell fall is upon us by the change in temperature and the fun festivals coming into town, do we really know exactly when fall begins?

The start of fall is actually marked by an astronomical event known as the autumnal equinox, also called the fall equinox. It is the astronomical start of fall in the Northern Hemisphere and spring in the Southern Hemisphere. The word equinox is derived from Latin, meaning "equal night". On each equinox, the sun shines directly on the equator and the length of day and night are said to be equal. This year astronomers have determined it will begin Saturday, September 22, 2018 at 7:54 pm, according to the NASA Almanac.

Consequently, the 4-H year begins in the fall. Our 4-H leaders and members should renew their 4-H membership beginning October 1st. Because it is the start of a new year, fall is a great time for 4-H clubs to start planning together what the members want to do for the year. This could be an opportunity for youth to share their thoughts and voices about topics or projects they might want to explore with their club this year.

To get you started I've compiled a list of fun activities for clubs and families that will ensure you have the best fall yet:

- **Start a gratitude journal**, gratitude brings abundance.
- **Develop extraordinary service projects** that reach people in need.
- **Carve pumpkins or paint pumpkins.** Explore the different parts of a pumpkin and discuss why each part is important. Talk about pumpkin uses and research the history of pumpkins.
- **Visit an apple orchard with your club.** Explore the orchard and see how producers store their apples in crates. If the orchard makes cider, get a tour of where they make cider and a sample. If you can't get to an orchard, you can still talk about apples. Talk about the nutritional value of apples and why an apple a day keeps the doctor away. Do an apple sampling party and try different types of apples to find your favorite.
- **Go on a hayride.** This is a great time of year to explore a field or take a ride in the woods. Observe all the colors, tracks or other signs of wilderness you might see. Discuss different ways wagons were used in the past and different ways we use them today.