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## County 4-H leader receives Outstanding Leader award

**Littleton, Colo.** — For the past 14 years, 4-H volunteer leader Marilyn Wentz of Strasburg has been donating her time and energies to helping kids achieve their best.

As a volunteer leader for the Antelope Crossing 4-H Club, Wentz has helped hundreds of kids develop their own passions, including her own two daughters. This year, Wentz was honored by the Colorado 4-H program with an “Outstanding Leader Award” at the 4-H Leadership Development Conference Jan. 30.

Shaylen Florez, the Arapahoe County 4-H program coordinator, nominated Wentz for the award. She noted that the club leader shows her commitment by helping 4-H members to learn positive life skills, maintaining strong communication with families and volunteers, and finding creative ways to engage more youth in the community.

Those efforts have made a clear impact. The Antelope Crossing 4-H Club is one of the largest clubs in Arapahoe County, averaging more than 50 members and up to 20 leaders annually since it was established in 2002. The club offers a wide variety of projects to youth ages 5-18, including horse, horseless horse, sheep, swine, beef, goats, clothing, photography, cake decorating, cooking, dog, gardening, leathercraft, poultry, art and veterinary science.

“Most 4-H clubs focus on two or three projects, but Antelope Crossing is fortunate to many great project leaders, so we can offer lots of options to our members,” said Wentz. “This award really is a tribute all those volunteers who have helped out and invested in our club’s members. We would not be where we are as a club without all the great project leaders and supportive parents.”

Wentz also received recognized from Arapahoe County Volunteer Connections for earning the Presidential Service Award, a national honor issued by the President’s Council on Service and Civic Participation to volunteers who have served more than 100 hours in one year.

“Marilyn clearly shares her passion for community service, and we thank her for her years of commitment to developing skilled, civic-minded youth through Arapahoe County 4-H,” said Arapahoe County Commissioner Frank Weddig.

Last year, Antelope Crossing 4-H Club organized a six-week after-school program called “Barnyard Fun” through the Strasburg Recreation Center, bringing in a different animal each week. Every year at the holidays, members collect canned goods for a local charity and write letters to deployed military personnel.

The Club also organizes an annual Fall Festival to raise interest in 4-H, offering free activities, snacks and live animals for the public to enjoy.

Wentz was a 4-H member for 10 years as a youth and was a delegate to Costa Rica in 1981 with the International 4-H Youth Exchange Program. She saw the opportunities that 4-H can offer at a local and global level and decided to share those with kids in her community.

“4-H is about helping kids develop into leaders and make a difference for the next generation,” said Wentz. “Through their projects, youth learn responsibility, public speaking, how to work in a group and the discipline it takes to complete something.”

Arapahoe County 4-H Club members will display their completed projects at the 2011 Arapahoe County Fair, July 20-24. Local clubs will begin accepting new members in October. For more information on getting involved as a member or leader, please call the 4-H office at 303-730-1920 or visit [www.arapahoeextension.org](http://www.arapahoeextension.org).

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**To download photos, click on the following link:** <ftp://www.co.arapahoe.co.us/pub/CM/Photos/4-H>

**Wentz Headshot.jpg:** Marilyn Wentz of Strausburg was honored for 14 years of leadership in the 4-H program with an “Outstanding Leader Award.”

**Wentz with Youth.jpg:** Wentz leads more than 50 youth in the Antelope Crossing 4-H Club, where she also serves as the project leader for the Sheep Project.