

idea corner

4-H for the Deaf

At the North Carolina School for the Deaf (NCSD), several parents and students expressed a need and a desire for a course that would teach proper gun and hunter safety to the youth attending the school. To meet the need, a 4-H special interest Gun and Hunter Safety Course was organized. Besides 4-H and NCSD, four other local agencies were used to help implement the program: Western Piedmont Community College, North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, Morganton Police Department, and the Valdese Police Department.

Three men from the police departments served as the instructors. They were certified as Gun and Hunter Safety instructors by the hunter safety officer of the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission. Two teachers at NCSD and one parent of a deaf child acted as the instructor's interpreters. A 4-H member served as an instructor's assistant.

All the students had six hours of classroom instruction and had to pass the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission exam to successfully complete the course. The students who passed were given the opportunity to participate in range work that included shooting .22 rifles and 12-gauge shotguns. Range work wasn't a requirement of the course, but the sponsoring committee felt it would benefit those who wanted to participate.

Seventy-three NCSD students attended the six hours of classroom instruction. Fifty-five students (18 girls, 37 boys) successfully completed the

course. These students participated in a graduation ceremony at Western Piedmont Community College. All 55 were awarded a Certificate of Achievement from 4-H, a North Carolina Wildlife Commission Gun and Hunter Safety Patch, and a wallet-size Certificate of Completion for the course. After the ceremony, the students were given a tour of the community college.

4-H Certificates of Appreciation were awarded to all the instructors and interpreters, as well as representatives from the Continuing Education Department of Western Piedmont Community College, NCSD, and the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission. Their support and dedication to the program helped make it successful. Other 4-H courses in skiing and outdoor survival are now being planned with students at NCSD.

REAGAN AMMONS
*Associate Agricultural Agent
North Carolina State
University
Morganton, North Carolina*