



EDITH ZAWADIUK – 2009 Golden Clover Recipient

Edith Zawadiuk started with the Department of Home Economics in 1957, and was responsible for the homemaking and gardening 4-H clubs in her county, which encompassed the townships of Thorhild, Smoky Lake, St. Paul, as well as the Local Improvement District of Lac La Biche and the Municipal of Bonnyville. Edith continued to work in some capacity of government for a total of 36 years, and despite working under various job titles and assuming different roles and responsibilities, Edith remained a resident in Alberta's Northeast region.

At the start of Edith's career, the Alberta Wheat Pool was in the habit of donating garden seed shrubs, which would prove to grow into plum and apple trees, to the local 4-H clubs. In addition to gardening projects, clothing clubs took off soon after Northern Alberta got rural electricity, which allowed for the switch from the treadle to the electric sewing machine. This switch created the possibility for club members to learn about pattern modifications and allowed for members to apply their skills to handicrafts as well.

So popular were these clubs and so dynamic was Edith's leadership that some project members are yet to stop *learning to do by doing*. Every year, a group of three former 4-H members invite Edith to be the judge of their yearly "Achievement Day," which has evolved into a gardening and landscaping extravaganza that takes place at the immaculately-groomed Good Fish Lake First Nation's Reserve grounds.

Edith can easily date her involvement with the 4-H organization: it began exactly 20 years after the commencement of St. Lima's Beef Club's, a club that Edith was an active supporter of. For the club's 70th year of celebration, Edith was invited to come as their guest speaker. She was also named a honorary lifelong club member.



(l to r): Sherry Howey, Alberta 4-H Council President presents a plaque to Edith Zawadiuk as the recipient of the 2009 Golden Clover award



Edith accepted the Golden Clover award at the 66th annual Provincial 4-H Leaders' Conference held at the Red Deer Lodge, Red Deer on January 9, 2009



If all of the aforementioned events weren't testament enough to Edith's commitment to the program and to her believe in its benefits, then the real testament comes during a trip to the Kherson-Odessa region of Ukraine, which she made under the title of Extension Home Economist with the World Monetary Bank. It was there that her desire to see the 4-H organization grow was really capitalized on.

During a roundtable discussion that Edith was participating in while in the Ukraine, she was asked *"what do young people do in Alberta?"* To which Edith quickly answered, *"They take 4-H, of course!"*

When a Credit Union representative who was sitting in the audience during the Q & A session heard this, her interest was peaked. Soon, the rep and Edith collaborated and Edith presented to a panel of Credit Union reps about the 4-H programming and projects, about the motto and the visions, about the values instilled and the goals realized, and before long, the panel of reps were sold on 4-H as well.

When Edith left Ukraine in 2002, there was a possibility of two clubs: quail and gardening; however, the issue of where members and clubs would get the seeds from that are necessary for a garden club proved to be a bit of an obstacle, and so a clothing/handicraft project was started in the place of the gardening, and the quail went ahead as planned.

It wasn't long after returning home that Edith, through contact that she kept up with the then-administrator of the Ukraine-based 4-H program, was informed that a seed distributor from Japan had offered to donate the seeds that the garden club members required.

In 2005, when Edith returned to the Kherson-Odessa region for 4-H Ukraine's version of Leaders' Conference, there were 14 4-H clubs. Edith went around and visited each club, from clothing to rabbit to quail, and was struck by the similarities between Ukraine's structuring of the projects and the clubs and Alberta's approach to 4-H programming. Both boasted active parent involvement, a strong public speaking component, close geographic location between clubs and the inclusion of skits and singing into club meetings and activities.

Across the Kherson-Odessa region, 4-H clubs have continued to form, projects have continued to develop, membership has continued to grow and enthusiasm for the program continues to be strong. Thanks to Edith's work with the 4-H program, from St. Lima to the Ukraine, youth around the world are experience the 4-H benefit, firsthand.



Edith Zawadiuk's dedication to and advancement of the 4-H program was recognized on January 9 at the 66th annual Leaders' Conference when she was awarded the Alberta 4-H Council's Golden Clover Award. The Golden Clover Award proves to recognize an individual or a group who has exhibited outstanding leadership skills, all the while initiating a special contribution such as an innovative idea, program, activity or event that has made a significant difference to 4-H in Alberta.

"I share this award with all members of 4-H, on an international, national, provincial, regional district and club level. I am proud of the program and what it offers the youth of today, and I am happy to have helped others become aware of the programs' benefits and possibilities. It still does my heart good when I run into a former member," Edith comments, "and they still greet me with, "Hello Ms. Zawadiuk." I have met so many amazing and wonderful people in the 50 years that I have been part of the 4-H organization."



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