

## Alberta 4-H Leaders' Conference – A Simply Fantastic Experience



*Red Deer* – On January 9, 2009, nearly 250 4-H leaders from across Alberta, along with a few guests from Ontario, British Columbia and Montana, swung open the doors of the Red Deer Lodge for the 66<sup>th</sup> Annual Alberta 4-H Leaders' Conference, which was hosted by the Northeast Region.

*"Leaders' Conference serves as a weekend to recharge and refuel our 4-H leaders,"* explains Leila Hickman, 4-H Specialist for the Northeast Region. *"We offer a variety of session topics and activities to make sure that leaders go back to their clubs with fresh ideas for activities and events, as well as innovative approaches to club meetings and conflict resolution."*



The choices were endless when it came to session topics, which included positive youth development, suggestions for healthy meal planning, navigating difficult conversations, maximizing personal success through mentorship, lessening a computer's intimidation factor, how to keep 4-H project material engaging to members and so on. With time dedicated to networking and mingling, leaders wasted no time in exchanging ideas and contact information, not to mention swapping stories, bonding over shared experiences and regaling over the benefits of the 4-H program.

*"Leader dedication is the backbone of the 4-H organization, which makes it incredibly important to ensure that our leaders' needs are not only met in regards to effective member-associated strategies, but also concerning their own wellbeing. We need to make sure that our leaders know how very valuable they are and how very valued their work is,"* Hickman asserts.

During the conference, Hall of Fame inductee, Sharon Uhrich was honoured at the banquet; the Alberta 4-H Council awarded Edith Zawadiuk the Golden



Clover Award for all of her work with 4-H; sponsors were recognized for their generosity; the Premier's Award Recipient, Myranda Stewart had the opportunity to speak; the laughter generated by Steve Stubblejumpski's antics on Friday evening; and the insight gleaned from Tyler Hayden's keynote address on Sunday morning, "Livin' Life Large, the weekend swept by at whirlwind speeds!



*"The enthusiasm here is infectious," comments Donna Carter, who is a leader with Elk Island 4-H Light Horse Club and has attended Leaders' Conference for the past 30 years, consecutively. "As leaders, it's important that we take the time to participate in these types of experiences, for our own development as well as for the benefits that the members reap from us having been here."*

The 2009 Alberta 4-H Leaders' Conference was sponsored by Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development, AMA Insurance, ATB Financial, EnCana, Lammler's, Olds College, Viterra and UFA. Conference Supporters were as follows: Alberta Recycling Authority, Columbia Awards, Canadian Association of Petroleum Landman, 4-H Foundation of Alberta and Talbot Marketing.

