

· NATIONAL 4-H ·
HEADQUARTERS



The mission of National 4-H Headquarters is to advance knowledge for agriculture, the environment, human health and well-being, and communities by creating opportunities for youth.

We seek to promote positive youth development, facilitate learning, and engage youth in the work of the Land-Grant Universities and USDA to enhance their quality of life.

The educational foundation for our programs lies in:

- Science, Engineering and Technology tied to agricultural and environmental issues
- Healthy Lifestyles tied to human health and well-being
- Citizenship tied to the activities of people with institutions and government for the common good.

Our youth are expected to:

- participate in learning communities
- determine goals for their own hands-on learning
- engage in significant leadership
- perform community service

Life skills are emphasized within the context of meaningful hands-on experiences which require some form of exhibition at their completion. Older youth members are expected to serve in leadership roles shaping the program for younger members.

HISTORICAL NOTE:

4-H Youth Development is an educational movement, which was created to help youth understand their dependence upon nature's resources and to value the fullest development of hand, head, and heart. It originated in the early 1900's as "four-square education" with its four main ideas including educational development, fellowship development, physical development, and moral development.

For more information, visit the National 4-H Headquarters official website at <http://www.national4-hheadquarters.gov>.

The 4-H Youth Development Ideals

4-H Youth Development creates opportunities for youth:

To experience INDEPENDENCE I pledge my head to clearer thinking...

Youth need to know that they are able to influence people and events through decision-making and action. By exercising independence through 4-H leadership opportunities, youth mature in self-discipline and responsibility, learn to better understand themselves and become independent thinkers.

To experience BELONGING I pledge my heart to greater loyalty...

Youth need to know they are cared about by others and feel a sense of connection to others in the group. This "fellowship" has always been an important part of a 4-H experience. 4-H gives youth the opportunity to feel physically and emotionally safe while actively participating in a group. Current research emphasizes the importance for youth to have opportunities for long-term consistent relationships with adults other than parents. This research suggests that a sense of belonging may be the single most powerful positive ingredient we can add into the lives of children and youth.

To experience GENEROSITY I pledge my hands to larger service...

Youth need to feel their lives have meaning and purpose. By participating in 4-H community service and citizenship activities, youth can connect to communities and learn to give back to others. It's clear that these experiences provide the foundation that helps us understand the "big picture" of life and find purpose and meaning. Community service projects allow 4-H club members to see that their effort to help others is important and valuable. Youth learn that they do not live in a secluded world, but instead it is indeed a global community, which requires awareness and compassion for others.

To experience MASTERY I pledge my health to better living...

In order to develop their self-confidence youth need to feel and believe they are capable and they must experience success at solving problems and meeting challenges to develop their self-confidence. By exploring 4-H projects and activities, youth master skills to make positive career and life choices. To do so, youth must have access to quality research-based content and have the opportunity to learn by doing. Additionally, youth need to have a safe environment for making mistakes and getting feedback, not just through competition but also as an ongoing element of participation. Finally, youth need the breadth and depth of topics that allow them to pursue their own interests.