



Cornell University
Cooperative Extension

Why 4-H Clubs?



4-H Clubs have lasting impacts on youth

The 4-H Pledge
I pledge my **HEAD**
to clearer thinking.

I pledge my **HEART**
to greater loyalty.

I pledge my **HANDS**
to larger
service.

I pledge my **HEALTH**
to better
living for my club,
my community, my
country, and my
world

Youth today have an unprecedented array of sports, clubs, activities, lessons and entertainment options to choose from in their free time.

And for many youth, these activities will provide the **foundation** on which they develop their personalities and life skills.

For young people who choose to be part of a 4-H Club, research shows they are more likely to be **education-ally motivated**, have **higher self-esteem** and **communicate more maturely** than their peers.

A 2003 study of 4-H alumni showed that club membership improved responsibility, confidence, leadership, project and presentation skills. Members also learned to handle competition; feel more at ease in relating to new people and developed good



4-H Clubs offer the opportunity for life skill development, learning and friendship. Through hands-on experiences, youth gain skills they will use their entire life.

sportsmanship skills.

Subject matter skills taught in projects are the **foundation** for the youth development that occurs in 4-H. Learning to prepare meals, give a presentation, repair machinery, ride a horse and care for others are just a few of the skills taught in 4-H that can be of economic, social and/or personal value to youth in their future.

Youth and early adolescence is a time

of rapid change in young people. 4-H Clubs have the **opportunity** to strengthen family ties and create good citizens.



How 4-H Clubs meet the basic needs of youth

The four H's (head, heart, hands and health) represent four basic human needs: independence, belonging, generosity and mastery. Research indicates that youth whose basic needs are met in positive ways are likely to grow into active citizens and contributing members of their families and communities.

By combining project activities with opportunities to go to camp, publicly show their work, travel, host international youth and attend meetings and events at Cornell University, 4-H provides a framework on which young people can build self-confidence, responsibility and generosity.

Members of 4-H clubs are involved in a

long-term relationship with caring adults, who help them learn new skills and grow in ways traditional educational experiences aren't designed to do.

A positive 4-H Club experience can turn life around for an at-risk youth or bring a shy child out of their shell. It can also strengthen leadership skills or teach the importance of community service.

**Connect
now to
great 4-H
resources**



NYS 4-H Resource Directory

Head, heart, hands, health

HOME SEARCH BROWSE ABOUT CONTACT HELP

A way for staff, leaders, volunteers, teachers and youth to find and order great 4-H Resources

<http://www.cerp.cornell.edu/4h/>

<http://www.cce.cornell.edu/>



“4-H helped me grow from a shy girl into a productive young woman,” one 4-H member said. “I learned to be a leader and take on challenging tasks.”

4-H Clubs rising to challenges of the times

Leaders of 4-H Clubs in Orange County focus on the strong impacts they’re having on the lives of kids as they use creative approaches to grow club membership.

“Timing is a challenge. People are working more hours. There are also many single parents and families where both parents are working,” said Davis, who has worked in 4-H youth development for 29 years. “But the research shows that the long-term impacts of 4-H Club membership on a child’s life are so much greater than

what we can do with a one-shot education programs. So we keep working at it, finding ways to do it better.”

Orange County reaches over 2,000 children annually, through over 100 active clubs. Some of the clubs meet in an after school setting to meet the needs of busy families and others meet in neighborhoods or homes.

The success stories are numerous — a painfully introverted girl now a part of national judging teams in college, a teen in trouble now a successful father and pharmacist, a youth in love with

animals now a practicing veterinarian. Davis says his staff tries to educate parents about the benefits of 4-H compared to a traditional “drop-off” activity like karate lessons. “4-H is something you do with your child,” he said, explaining that the strongest clubs are those where parents are present or involved in leading projects.

“Our core goal is to get groups of kids together with caring adults to work on meaningful projects,” he said. “This experience has a profound impact on their lives.”

4-H Clubs connect kids to Cornell

Last year in New York State, more than 15,800 4-H volunteers helped over 458,788 young people gain leadership experience, learn new life skills, and give back to their communities through 4-H Clubs.

All of these clubs used resources created by staff from Cornell University and many members also visited campus for various club tours, programs and events.

lesson plans and curriculum for the more than 150 projects areas offered to New York State 4-H clubs, on subjects as varied as video game design and sheep shearing.

Cornell research is the basis for

For more Information:

To learn more about 4-H Clubs in New York State, contact Your county’s Cooperative Extension Office. Or contact:

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Clubs build assets

A landmark 1998 study by Cornell researchers showed that youth involved in 4-H Clubs in New York scored higher than other youth on a development asset test developed by the Search Institute of Minnesota. By questioning more than 100,000 youth, the Search Institute developed a list of 40 developmental assets necessary for kids to grow into healthy adults.

In the Cornell study of 3,200 youth, 4-H youth scored higher on all developmental assets than the youth in the Minnesota studies, even among youth involved in other similar activities. Some of the assets tested



4-H Members learn that teamwork, cooperation and confidence will help them to serve their community, their country and their world.

included educational aspiration, achievement motivation, the desire to help others, school grades, self-

esteem, decision-making and the ability to make friends.

<http://www.cce.cornell.edu/>

