

The 4-H program is unique in that it is the only youth development organization with oversight and sponsorship by the federal government. 4-H is administered by the United States Department of Agriculture, through the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, partnering with Land-Grant Universities. K-State Research and Extension local governing units administer the Kansas 4-H program.

“I pledge my Head to clear thinking, my Heart to greater loyalty, my Hands to larger service, and my Health to better living, for my club, my community, my country, and my world.” This is the 4-H pledge that our local 4-H members recite each month and strive to live up to the challenges.

The four H’s in the pledge - Head, Heart, Hands, and Health – represent the four values and basic human needs of Independence, Belonging, Generosity and Mastery that members work on through fun and engaging projects and programs.

Youth mature in self-discipline and responsibility by developing leadership skills through managing and thinking opportunities created in projects and club meetings. Projects selected by 4-Hers require them to make decisions and complete actions exercising **Independence** with the ability to influence people and events. This “clearer thinking” represents the first “H” in the clover leaf 4-H emblem.

Relating and Caring are life skills developed with the second “H” representing the Heart. 4-Hers show care for others in sewing scarves to brighten a cancer patient’s day, collecting food for food pantries to help those in need, and letting our American soldiers know that they are appreciated by sending letters and care packages. Youth feel a sense of **Belonging** by making a difference in someone’s life.

The third “H” for Hands has 4-H members donating their time, talents, and energy in Giving and Working through community service projects. Donating cookies for the Bloodmobile, picking up trash in parks, creating Valentine’s and May Day Baskets for shut-ins are just a few of the many projects that 4-H members complete in their communities. A value for **Generosity** and giving back to others is learned with youth feeling a meaning and purpose in their lives.

Health represents the fourth “H” that develops skills in Being and Living. Research has proven that youth involved in the 4-H program develop self-confidence in making healthy choices by developing a sense of **Mastery** in gaining skills for positive career and life choices.

Members fulfill the Mission Statement that “4-H empowers youth to reach their full potential, working and learning in partnership with caring adults.” Positive Youth Development through the 4-H program develops youth that are active citizens and contributing members of their families and communities.

This past year has challenged our youth, parents and leaders to become more resourceful in accomplishing these tasks as 4-H members. The values and basic needs are the ‘real reason’ our youth should be involved in the 4-H program.

Encourage your youth to participate in the nation's largest youth organization and America's foremost youth development initiative. Contact Patsy Maddy at the Twin Creeks District Extension office by calling 785-877-5755 or send an email to pmaddy@ksu.edu

'4-H Values'

"Chasing Clovers"

Patsy L. Maddy

Twin Creeks Extension District
4-H Youth Development Agent