4-H Volunteers, Welcome to 4-H!

Welcome to the 4-H Youth Program! The 4-H volunteer is a very important person in the lives of boys and girls with whom you will be in close contact doing project work. You will gain untold satisfaction as you see boys and girls grow and develop. They will look to you as their friend, teacher, guide, and helper. Your job will be challenging and rewarding.

4-H is Important

Recent research has concluded family support and the advice of accessible parents help youth avoid negative influences. Youth involved in programs like 4-H tend to decrease problem behaviors such as violence and alcohol use and learn to set realistic goals for themselves. Youth need both parental involvement and indepth contact with other adults for advice and support.

Part of UNL Extension

4-H is the Youth Development Program of University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension. Nationally, it is part of the Cooperative State Research Education and Extension Service in the United States Department of Agriculture.

Definition and Purpose

4-H is a voluntary, informal educational program designed to meet the needs and interests of boys and girls. Its purpose it to educate. 4-H is a way to help young people learn life skills which help them function as intelligent, responsible members of society.

Learn by Doing

4-Hers learn through real life experiences. They acquire knowledge, make decisions, experience ownership, take responsibility in 4-H projects. 4-H is an action program where members watch, study, experiment, and accomplish.
Learning Together

Informal education through 4-H happens in three ways:

- **Cooperatively**
  Through the 4-H meeting, the member learns cooperation: friends have fun together while learning.

- **Individually**
  Through the 4-H project, the member learns individually. The member tries out the new knowledge in a real life setting.

- **Competitively**
  Through 4-H events, the member learns competitively. Work which has been completed is compared with work done previously and work done by friends. It is evaluated by widely accepted standards.

A Community of Learning

4-H creates a community for learning:

- “learning by exploring”

- “learning by doing”

- “learning by receiving feedback” when work is done.

A Family Affair

4-H centers in the home and family. Members and parents often attend meetings together. Work on projects takes place at home—in the yard or around the kitchen table—with guidance from Mom or Dad, an older brother or sister, a neighbor, friend, or other adult. 4-H members need the support and encouragement of their families. Growing together through 4-H enhances family strength.

Adapted from: *Piecing It All Together*. Etling, Melang, and Stanley. UNL Extension 4-H.