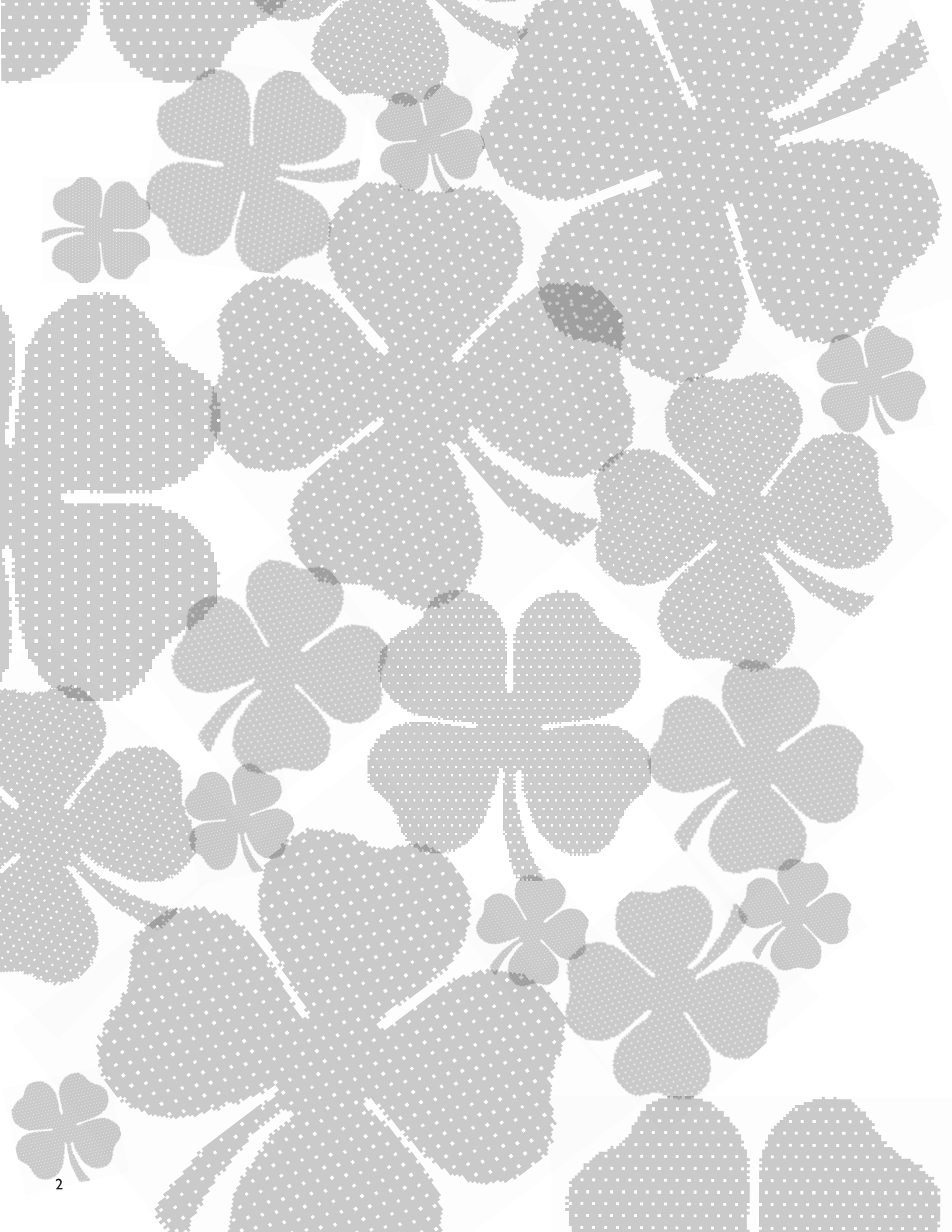




FACTS

about **4-H**







4-H is a dynamic non-formal education program

primarily for youth between the ages of nine and 19. Although 4-H is co-curricular (which means clubs can meet during the school day), it is also an out-of-school program.

In Louisiana, 4-H programs are administered through the LSU AgCenter and Southern University. On the national level, 4-H is administered through the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The program receives funding through federal, state and local tax dollars. The program also is classified as a nonprofit organization by the Internal Revenue Service. We have a National 4-H Council (in Chevy Chase, Md.), the state Louisiana 4-H Foundation in Baton Rouge and parish 4-H foundations across the state to which people can make tax-deductible contributions.

Volunteers who serve as 4-H leaders are considered lay faculty members of the LSU AgCenter. Through the parish extension office, these volunteers have access to research and resulting curricula that have the greatest positive impact on youth.

4-H is America's largest non-formal educational program for youth. More than 6 million youth participate in 4-H under the guidance of 600,000 extension-trained volunteer leaders. It's estimated that nearly 36 million American adults are former 4-H members.

Every state has a team of 4-H youth development staff and subject matter specialists as part of the university's extension service. Work in the parishes is directed by extension 4-H agents. Volunteer leaders are instrumental in providing direct leadership and educational support to youth in local communities.



4-H in Louisiana

4-H membership is available to all Louisiana boys and girls in grades four through 12.

Louisiana has thousands of 4-H members in hundreds of 4-H Clubs across the state. 4-H is conducted by the LSU AgCenter through its Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service. So, in a way, you're an LSU student when you join 4-H. Make the leap! Enter a whole new sphere of possibilities.

4-H Clubs

Since 4-H is co-curricular, most 4-H clubs meet once a month during the school day. Project groups within the school club may meet at another time during the month either in school or during out-of-school hours. Some clubs meet outside of schools.

A project club is a group of boys and girls working with an adult volunteer leader on a single project, such as clothing, horses or gardening. Some clubs are organized to include more than one project, such as a 4-H livestock club that includes members with projects in beef, sheep, swine, goats, dairy and poultry.

A few 4-H community clubs also are in Louisiana. Members of these clubs meet together for special programs. Members are enrolled in a wide variety of projects. The community club leader provides overall leadership, but other volunteers work with the members and their projects. After-school Adventure Clubs, much like community clubs, are being introduced in Louisiana. These clubs meet in after-school facilities.

4-H Projects

4-H members may choose from a number of different projects offered statewide, or they may develop their own projects with the help of an adult volunteer leader. Projects are grouped into three main areas that are mission mandates – SET (Science,

Engineering and Technology), Healthy Living and Citizenship.

4-H projects are built around three important principles: (1) subject matter knowledge and skills, (2) personal development and (3) social interaction among people of different backgrounds, experiences and ages.

Projects are real-life experiences that help 4-H'ers learn to make decisions. These decisions help members feel responsible for their own actions and lead to personal satisfaction. Members also develop good work habits and learn to work with others, sharing ideas and helping each other. Most project work is done in or near the home so the family can work and be together. 4-H is also about developing leadership skills and character.

4-H Activities

4-H is fun! Members not only belong to clubs, but may also participate in activities such as fairs, parish contests, achievement days and special area, regional and statewide events like Marsh Maneuvers, Wild Wood Wanderings, 4-H Summer Camp, LOST Camp, Jr. Leadership Conference, Challenge Camp and the annual 4-H University held on the LSU campus in Baton Rouge for all members. These activities are designed to supplement club and project experiences. They offer opportunities to learn knowledge and practice skills beyond the opportunities available in the local club. They also provide a means for members to meet 4-H'ers from other clubs, communities and parishes.

4-H Outreach

Because of its association with the land-grant university system, 4-H project curricula are content-rich in research and other useful information. The curricula complement classroom instruction by providing participants with a hands-on way to apply new knowledge, attitudes and skills. One educator described

4-H as a hidden treasure for helping to prepare students for LEAP testing.

4-H school enrichment programs consist of four to six sessions that each provide at least four and one-half hours of learning. The learning activities are presented by classroom teachers or community volunteers. School enrichment programs are relatively new.

Although school clubs are the major delivery system, Louisiana 4-H reaches young people in a variety of other ways. For example, 4-H is a part of the youth phase of the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP). This program is designed to teach basic nutrition to members of families with limited incomes.

4-H Develops Life Skills

What Are Life Skills?

Life skills are tools we use for coping with daily circumstances, making important decisions and enhancing the quality of our lives. Life skills help people in social, academic and career settings throughout their lives. 4-H youth development programs have a long tradition of providing individuals with the means for developing life skills. 4-H agents, volunteer leaders and parents contribute to this tradition.

Individuals must be able to make decisions affecting their daily lives and their futures. They must be able to build mutually beneficial relationships and become productive members of society. They must be able to plan, solve problems, manage resources and communicate to succeed in life and contribute to their communities.

The 4-H Youth Development Program enables youth to gain social skills by working with others, learning through projects and spending leisure time with

peers and adults. Youth develop interests and abilities through project work, doing community service-learning activities and through practicing leadership responsibilities. Exposure to diverse learning activities helps youth to discover lifelong interests for leisure activities as well as exposure to possible career choices.

Character Education in Louisiana 4-H

The LSU AgCenter's 4-H Youth Development Program began its efforts to teach character education in 1996. In 1997, 4-H was awarded state funding. The plan 4-H is implementing begins by creating classrooms of character, then schools of character and finally, communities of character.

The Louisiana 4-H character program is structured on the character education guidelines, character virtues and desired academic and behavioral outcomes identified by The What Works Clearinghouse of the U.S. Department of Education and Louisiana Department of Education. The "Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education," of the Character Education Partnership, provide the methodology guidelines and the "Six Pillars of Character," of Character Counts! are the character framework.

The emphasis of the 4-H and school character education program is to prepare both youth and teachers to present a lesson on one of the six pillars of character (trustworthiness, responsibility, respect, fairness, caring and citizenship) each month, plus another lesson on decision making. Teachers are encouraged to reinforce the pillar in their classes during the month.

The 4-H staff developed additional support curricula including: "Showing Character" for parents and livestock members; "Communities of Character" for total community involvement; "LEAP Lessons," which are 10-minute lesson plans on character that relate to the state standards; "Ethics in Sports" for youth league coaches and officials and "Workplace Ethics."

4-H Mission Mandates

For generations, positive youth development has been achieved in 4-H through three mission mandate areas: Science, Engineering and Technology (SET); Healthy Lifestyles; and Citizenship. Mission mandate efforts will be grounded in the essential elements of youth development: engage youth and adult volunteers in ways that take into account national trends in volunteerism; emphasize proficiency in program design and evaluation; and create effective organizational systems with a focus on reaching new and underserved audiences.

Volunteer Leaders

Adult volunteer leaders are the mainstay of the 4-H program. Each year nearly 7,500 adults volunteer their time and talents to help Louisiana 4-H members. In addition, nearly 4,000 teens serve in volunteer roles.

4-H leaders learn along with 4-H members as extension agents and specialists keep them informed about new information and research. Not only do leaders learn more about the subject they are teaching, they learn about teaching techniques and working with people. For this reason, 4-H is often referred to as an adult education program as well as a youth education program.

Although most volunteers lead clubs or project groups, Louisiana 4-H offers other leadership roles. Some volunteers may serve as community coordinators, assisting extension agents in recruiting and organizing 4-H work in a particular geographic area. Others are resource leaders, sharing their skills with club leaders. Still others share their talents as activity leaders for camps and special programs or committee members involved in program planning with 4-H staff.

The extension staff provides training and support for volunteers and is responsible for program direction and the educational aspects of programming.

Volunteers are the key to program delivery as they transmit information and share their skills in direct contact with youth.

The Four Hs

The four Hs stand for Head, Heart, Hands and Health, representing the four-fold training and development that 4-H members receive. “Head, heart and hands” was a familiar phrase with public speakers in the early 1900s. With these three words, educators expressed the liberalizing of conventional education (the three Rs) to include practical arts (the three Hs).

The three Hs were adopted by program organizers to reflect the educational theme of 4-H. A fourth H, for Health, was added several years later. Together the four Hs symbolize the development of: the Head, to think, plan and reason; the Heart, to be concerned with the welfare of others, accept the responsibilities of citizenship and develop positive attitudes; the Hands, to be useful, helpful and skillful; and Health, to practice healthful living, enjoy life and use leisure time productively.

4-H Emblem

The national 4-H emblem is a green four-leaf clover with the letter H on each leaf. The design, attributed to O.H. Benson, an Iowa school superintendent, was adopted as the national emblem in 1911. Congress has twice passed legislation since that time protecting the 4-H name and emblem. Similar to a copyright, this protection means that the 4-H name and emblem cannot be used without being authorized by the Secretary of Agriculture and national program leaders at USDA, the state director of extension, state 4-H program leaders and 4-H agents.

4-H Colors

Green and white are the 4-H colors. Green is emblematic of springtime, life and youth; white symbolizes high ideals.

4-H Motto

The 4-H motto is “To make the best better.” Proposed by Carrie Harrison, a botanist with the U.S. Bureau of Plant Industry, it was adopted in 1927 when the 4-H pledge was introduced.

The 4-H Pledge

I pledge

My Head to clearer thinking (line 1)

My Heart to greater loyalty (line 2)

My Hands to larger service and (line3)

My Health to better living (line 4)

For my club, my community, my country and my world.

In repeating the pledge, members raise their right hands to the side of their heads when speaking line 1; lower hands to the heart when speaking line 2; extend hands, palms upward, when speaking line 3; and stand straight when speaking lines 4 and 5.

The pledge was adopted in 1927 during the first National 4-H Club Camp in Washington, D.C. Otis Hall, state 4-H leader in Kansas, was responsible for the original wording, which remained unchanged until 1973 when the words “and my world” were added.

How It Began

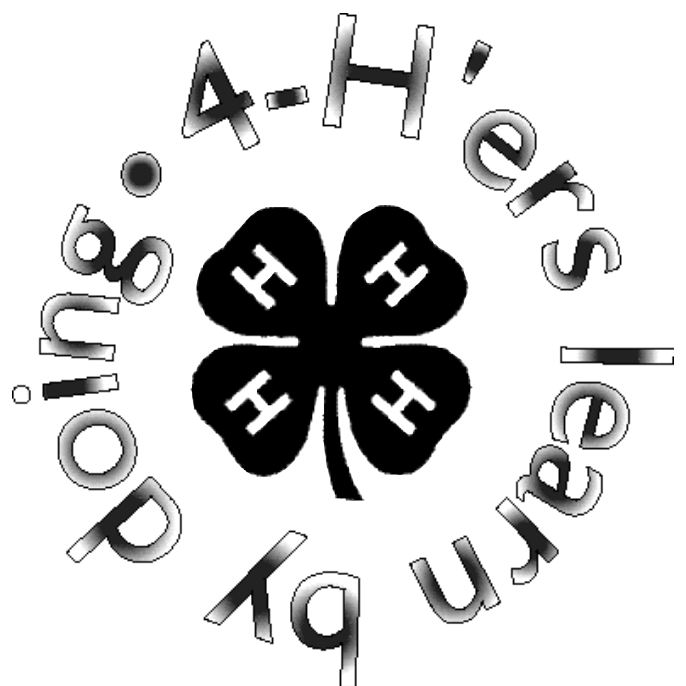
What is now 4-H began in 1902, when boys’ and girls’ agricultural clubs seemed to organize in many different places at the same time. These early efforts were associated with rural schools or through “Farmers Institutes” organized by agricultural colleges to bring the latest scientific information to farmers and their families. The first states to become involved were New York, Ohio, Texas, Nebraska, Illinois and Oregon.

In 1914 the U.S. Congress passed the Smith-Lever Act, formally establishing extension work on a cooperative basis among the U.S. Department of

Agriculture, the state land-grant colleges and counties in each state. Funds were included for youth programs that became known as 4-H in 1924.

After Smith-Lever funds became available to Louisiana State University in 1914, Extension was given the responsibility for club work under an agreement with the state Department of Education. At that time, boys’ and girls’ industrial clubs were re-directed along the lines of 4-H in other states. Boys enrolled in projects in clubs, and girls enrolled in sewing, cooking and canning clubs.

A dynamic growing organization, 4-H has expanded steadily over the years. Since 1914, more than 40 million youth from the United States, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and Guam have participated.





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