



NEWS RELEASE

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Name, Title

Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station - Cooperative Extension of _____ County

Phone: _____

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

4-H: BUILDING CHARACTER AND COMMUNITY

One of the ingredients of a successful individual is good character, and building good character is one of the key components of the 4-H Youth Development Program.

Character development is primarily the responsibility of the parent, but it takes an entire community to raise a child. No parent, educator, religious or youth organization can do the job alone. The importance of character must be taught and constantly reinforced through clear expectations and consequences as well as through the good example of many adult role models.

The New Jersey 4-H Youth Development Program is a member of CHARACTER COUNTS!sm, a national coalition of more than 500 youth and civic organizations that promotes character development in youth and adults. Many county 4-H staff have been trained and certified in Character Development by the Josephson Institute of Ethics. Not only have they been encouraging volunteers and 4-H club members to model character, but have been instrumental in providing teacher training and other school programs on character education.

CHARACTER COUNTS!sm is based on the Six Pillars of Character: Trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, citizenship. What does it mean to model these six Pillars?

- **Trustworthiness:** Be honest, be a person of integrity, be loyal, be reliable, build a good reputation, don't repeat gossip or say things that will hurt the reputation of others.
- **Respect:** Treat others with respect, be tolerant of differences, follow the Golden Rule, be considerate, use good manners, deal peacefully with disagreements, and don't use foul language.
- **Responsibility:** Do what you are supposed to, follow through on commitments, be accountable, think before acting, consider the consequences, persevere, be self-disciplined, use self-control, do your best.
- **Fairness:** Follow the rules, be open-minded, listen to others, do your part, share, don't take advantage of others or unfortunate situations, give credit where due.
- **Caring:** Be kind and compassionate, express gratitude, forgive others, help others, show you care by your actions, be a peacemaker.
- **Citizenship:** Obey laws and rules, respect authority, cooperate, do your share to make your community better, stay informed, vote, protect the environment and those who cannot protect themselves.

The structure of the 4-H program places great emphasis on these traits, as young people are encouraged with a learn-by-doing approach to take on new responsibilities and become contributing members of the community.

4-H'ers are also encouraged to participate in community service projects and take an active role in making their community a better place in which to live.

4-H: BUILDING CHARACTER AND COMMUNITY-add 1

National Character Counts Week is October 19-23. In recognition of this week, the _____ County 4-H Program will be conducting _____ *describe workshops, programs or event to be conducted.*

Training for educators, professionals and administrators on character education can be scheduled by calling the _____ County 4-H Office at _____ phone number _____. Workshops are conducted by a certified Character Counts trainer and a New Jersey Department of Education Professional Development Credit Provider.

School enrichment programs on character education for local elementary schools are also available. To schedule a program for your school, contact the _____ County 4-H Program at _____ phone number _____.

The 4-H Youth Development Program is part of Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station Cooperative Extension, 4-H educational programs are offered to all youth, grades K-13, on an age-appropriate basis, without regard to race, religion, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, disability, atypical hereditary cellular or blood trait, marital status, domestic partnership status, military service, veteran status, and any other category protected by law. For more information about 4-H, contact the _____ 4-H Program at _____ or visit the _____ County 4-H website at _____.

The 4-H pledge reflects this commitment to character: "I pledge my head to clearer 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."

4-H is NOT about winning. It's not about doing better than others. 4-H IS about doing the best you can. It IS about being the best you can be. It IS about making this world the best it can be.

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