



NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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4-H...A Long History, A Great Future

4-H members and 4-H volunteers across New Jersey and the nation will celebrate National 4-H Week starting next Sunday, October 2 through Saturday, October 8.

4-H is the Cooperative Extension System's dynamic, informal, educational program for young people. 4-H programs reach over 6 million young people across the United States. The program combines the cooperative efforts of youth, volunteer leaders, state land-grant universities, federal, state, local governments and the United States Department of Agriculture.

The mission of the Cooperative Extension System in conducting 4-H programs is to assist youth in acquiring knowledge, developing life skills and forming attitudes that will enable boys and girls to become self-directing, productive and contributing members of the world. The 4-H program focuses on developing knowledge and skills, learning how to deal with stress and learning to help others.

The 4-H roots are deeply planted. The first 4-H emblem design was a 3-leaf clover, introduced sometime between 1907 and 1908. From the beginning, the 3-H's signified Head, Heart and Hands. In 1911, at a meeting of club leaders in Washington, the present 4-H design was adopted by approving the fourth H, Health.

Otis Hall, State Leader of Kansas, was responsible for the original working of the 4-H pledge. At the first National 4-H Club Camp in 1927, the state 4-H leaders officially adopted the 4-H pledge. The pledge read:

"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."

The addition "and my world" to the last line in 1973 has been the only change to the pledge in over 80 years.

The 4-H pledge is a symbol of the devotion generations of America's youth have given to the 4-H program. Its words embody the goals of 4-H. The pledge is the heart of a special union...the union between 4-H members, who learn and grow through 4-H programs; the staff, both volunteer and Extension, who make 4-H a reality for young people throughout the nation; and the growing family of 4-H supporters and partners who make it possible.

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 on the New Jersey 4-H Youth Development Program visit the New Jersey 4-H website at www.nj4h.rutgers.edu.

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