

What's It All About Anyway?

The 4-H cloverleaf symbol is a well-recognized emblem but have you ever stopped to think about what is behind the emblem? The purpose of 4-H extends well beyond the county or state fair and each H of the emblem represents an integral part. Providing educational strategies and opportunities for youth, in partnership with adults, to develop life skills is truly the goal of 4-H.

I pledge my HEAD to clearer thinking – The first line of the 4-H pledge speaks to the importance of developing critical thinking and problem solving. This is a skill that can be modeled by adults and mentors but must be practiced by the youth to improve.

I pledge my HEART to greater loyalty - This section of the pledge is all about self-discipline, integrity and communication. Making time to work on projects, care for livestock and complete record books are activities that reinforce self-discipline. Handling successful and not-so-successful events and being responsible for your own projects builds integrity. Communications skills are relevant in every field, every job and every relationship. Practicing communication skills with fellow 4-H members, club leaders, judges and the community are necessary as this doesn't come naturally or easily for everyone.

I pledge my HANDS to larger service - The third line of the 4-H pledge speaks to service and servant leadership. Raising people who are comfortable and willing to accept leadership roles in organizations is crucial for the continued growth and success of our communities. Not everyone, however, is comfortable with their "leadership" on display and leaders can have a huge impact - positive or negative! Watch a young person, who may not be comfortable presenting in front of a large group, quietly show another how to wash a calf, show a pig or finish a hem "just right". That is servant leadership!

I pledge my HEALTH to better living – it is important to know where our food comes from and make good choices in regard to healthy eating and a healthy lifestyle. Being the best version of ourselves contributes to the success of all around us.

The activities of 4-H teach life skills such as the ability to clearly and concisely present material to an audience, understand meeting structure for efficient and productive meeting, and updating records from record books to checkbooks and budgets. We are all competitive and want to do well but often the learning process and life skills are more important than a judge's opinion on a given day.

Life skills- That's what it's all about!



For more questions about 4-H and how your family can be involved, please reach out to McKenzie Smithson, 4-H & Youth Development Agent at 316-321-9660.