



4-H Science - Volunteer Development Program

Indiana 4-H Youth Development

- *Mission:* to provide real-life educational opportunities that develop young people who positively impact their community and world.
- *Vision:* Indiana 4-H Youth Development strives to be the premier, community-based program empowering young people to reach their full potential.

A Cooperative Venture

- The authority for the 4-H Youth Development program is vested in a cooperative structure between youth, interested adult volunteers, and the professional expertise of the land-grant universities and the United States Department of Agriculture.
- The foundation of the program is in the practical application of the land-grant university knowledge by youth in their communities.

Constructive Learning Experiences – Learning by Doing

- The 4-H Youth Development program:
 - Creates opportunities for youth to develop skills, practical knowledge and wisdom through observing, doing and living through experiences.
 - Emphasizes the real life application of knowledge or “learning by doing” to develop skills and acquire a sense of responsibility, initiative and self-worth.

Caring Relationships – Community Spirit

- The traditions of 4-H are organized around the notion of building community spirit and *social capital* –or connections among individuals.
- All youth need caring, supportive relationships in their lives and 4-H Youth Development programs create opportunities for long-term relationships with significant adult mentors.

Creating Opportunities for Youth by Educating Adults

- 4-H Youth Development professionals create opportunities for young people to build skills, exercise leadership, form relationships with caring adults and help their communities.
- The program believes that “youth development” is not something you do TO youth, but is the result of programming WITH youth and is dependent upon the family and other adults in the community.

Shifting to a Youth Development Approach

- We must emphasize the importance of the learning environment and creating opportunities for growth.
- Youth must be seen as central actors in their own development.

The 4-H Youth Development Essential Elements

- 4-H Youth Development creates opportunities for youth to experience:
 - *Independence*
 - *Belonging*
 - *Generosity*
 - *Mastery*

I pledge my head to clearer thinking...

INDEPENDENCE

- Youth need to know that they are able to influence people and events through decision-making and action. By exercising independence through 4-H leadership opportunities, youth mature in self-discipline and responsibility, learn to better understand themselves and become independent thinkers.

I pledge my heart to greater loyalty...

BELONGING

- Youth need to know they are cared about by others and feel a sense of connection to others in the group. This “fellowship” has always been an important part of a 4-H experience. 4-H gives youth the opportunity to feel physically and emotionally safe while actively participating in a group.

I pledge my heart to greater loyalty...

BELONGING

- Current research emphasizes the importance for youth to have opportunities for long-term consistent relationships with adults other than parents. This research suggests that a sense of belonging may be the single most powerful positive ingredient we can add into the lives of children and youth.

I pledge my hands to larger service...

GENEROSITY

- Youth need to feel their lives have meaning and purpose. By participating in 4-H community service and citizenship activities, youth can connect to communities and learn to give back to others. It's clear that these experiences provide the foundation that helps us understand the "big picture" of life and find purpose and meaning.

I pledge my health to better living...

MASTERY

- In order to develop self-confidence, youth need to feel and believe they are capable. They must experience success at solving problems and meeting challenges.
- By exploring 4-H projects and activities, youth master skills to make positive career and life choices.

I pledge my health to better living...

MASTERY

- Youth need to have a safe environment for making mistakes and getting feedback, not just through competition but also as an ongoing element of participation.
- Youth need the breadth and depth of topics that allow them to pursue their own interests.

4-H National Mission Mandates

- Science
- Healthy Living
- Citizenship/Leadership

Learning Science in 4-H

- STEM is prominent in most all 4-H projects that we have
- Emphasizing the science learning in all of our areas and focusing on science focused programs such as:
 - Natural Resources
 - Food Science
 - Robotics
 - Animal Science
 - Much more

Experiential & Age-appropriate

- Experiential learning – Learn by Doing
 - Encourage youth to ask questions
 - Explore answers with them; you don't need to know it all
- Age-appropriate – general characteristics (physical, mental, emotional and social)
 - Introduce basic concepts (e.g. observation and collecting, sorting, and identifying)
 - Topics of increasing complexity for older youth

Suggestions

- Have fun; if you are not the youth won't!
- Team work – consider pairing a youth development volunteer with a science volunteer
- Project focused clubs: Science Club, Natural Resource Club, Robotics Club
- Utilize your interests and knowledge – and don't let the curriculum constrain you
- Invite others to speak/help