

# **Building a *BIG-M, 4-H Positive Youth Development* Program in a Rural Afterschool Setting**

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# So What is 4-H?

It is an international Youth Development organization in 70+ countries, all 50 states (+Guam), in all 102 counties, open to all youth ages 5 – 18 (as of September 1 of the program year).

# What is 4-H All About?

We're all about helping young people:

- Realize individual potential
- Develop critical thinking
- Develop life-long skills
- Assist with COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS (no matter the age)

# Just How Do We Do This?

- University of Illinois – We are part of it!
- Trained, Youth Development Professionals (Educators, Program Coordinators, State Staff)
- Strong National support from National 4-H Council, USDA, and others

# And...

- Evidence-based curricula researched and written by Land Grant University Academic Professionals and Professors
- Screened, trained volunteers, thousands of them in Illinois!
- YOUTH – Teen Teachers, STEM/STEAM Team

# Areas of Focus:

- Expanding FOOD ACCESS
- Encouraging HEALTHY LIVING
- Protecting our ENVIRONMENT
- Preparing for COLLEGE & CAREERS
- Enhancing LEADERSHIP

# What is BIG-M?

The tenants of the 4-H Positive Youth Development philosophy are:

**B**elonging

**I**ndependence

**G**enerosity

**M**astery

# BELONGING:

## Essential Elements:

- A positive relationship with a **CARING ADULT**
- An **INCLUSIVE** Environment
- A **SAFE** Emotional and Physical Environment

Examples?



# INDEPENDENCE

Essential Elements:

- Opportunity to see oneself as an **ACTIVE PARTICIPANT** in the future
- Opportunity for **SELF-DETERMINATION**

Examples?

# GENEROSITY

Essential Element:

- Opportunity to VALUE and PRACTICE SERVICE TO OTHERS

Examples?

# MASTERY

Essential Elements:

- Opportunity for MASTERY
- ENGAGEMENT in LEARNING

Examples?

**Let's have a try at  
BIG-M, PYD...**

# Programs of Interest:

- Teen Teachers
- Hunger Ambassadors
- Health Jam
- Health Rocks
- Illini Summer Academies
- Leadership Conferences

# Do We Have to Start a Club?

Not necessarily – every county is different. It could be:

- A SPIN (SPecial INterest) Club
- A COMMUNITY Club
- A CLOVERBUD Club
- A PROGRAM

# So who do I call?

Call your County Extension Office

Or, Google them: e.g. 4H in McLean  
County

[4-H in McLean County - University of Illinois Extension serving ...](#)

*[web.extension.illinois.edu/lmw/mclean4h/](http://web.extension.illinois.edu/lmw/mclean4h/)*

Extension Educator, 4-H Youth Development, Metro - McLean  
County University of Illinois Extension UNITY Community Center  
632 Orlando Avenue Normal, IL ...

# What can I expect?

No two counties are the same, so expect a few questions:

- What is it you are trying to accomplish?
- How many youth are involved?
- How often do you need assistance?
- What school and what are the ages of the youth you serve?



# Then what might happen?

Because each county is different, you'll get varied responses:

- An appointment to talk?
- A site visit?
- Are there volunteers who could help?
- Are there teens from middle or high school who could help?

# Why isn't it the same?

Just as no two schools are the same,  
neither are counties:

Different needs, socio-economic  
conditions, Extension resources, local  
businesses, transportation, different  
community and county services...

Extension programs are needs-based,  
one size does NOT fit all.

# Common Misconceptions of 4-H:

- You have to live on a farm. NOPE!
- You have to live in the country. Well, you have to live IN a country but not OUT in the country.
- You have to have animals. NO! Never did, neither did my son! Except for our dog and that was a project.
- You have to make cookies. Nada – unless you like them (my mother didn't cook, so I had to learn somehow)!
- 4-H is for nerds!

What? I'm not a nerd, neither are Jennifer Nettles (Singer), Aston Kutcher (Actor), Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, Jim Davis (Garfield comics), Gordon Gee (Pres. of Ohio State), Gilpin Drew (Pres of Harvard), Robert Fulghum (Everything I Ever Needed...), Ned Jarrett (NASCAR), Reggie White (NFL), Rosalyn & Jimmy Carter, Marge Whitson (Current Commander of the International Space Station), and countless others!!

# QUESTIONS?

# For More Information:

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[4h.extension.Illinois.edu](http://4h.extension.Illinois.edu)

## #4H Grows True Leaders