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:

Belonging
Independence
Generosity
Mastery
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/)

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), Ashton 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?
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#4HGrowsTrueLeaders