

# Optimizing Your Potential as a 4-H Volunteer



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## Indiana 4-H History Celebrating 100 Years of Helping Hoosiers Grow

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### **Introduction:**

2002 marks the 100th anniversary of the 4-H program in this country. Few efforts in our history have been as long-lived and successful as the land-grant university system and its Cooperative Extension programs, of which 4-H is the youth component.

This fact sheet will share with you the early beginnings of the 4-H program in Indiana:

- How it came to be
- Some of its most important events, and
- How it has grown and changed over the years to meet the changing needs of Indiana youth.

### **The Morrill Act:**

The 4-H program grew out of the need to help young people and their families receive better agricultural education. Boys and girls clubs were first begun in the early 1900s,

but their foundation was established much earlier with the signing of the Morrill Act in 1862.

The Morrill Act established the Land Grant college system that provided for a school of higher education that taught agriculture and mechanic arts in every state. Purdue University is Indiana's Land Grant university.

### **The Hatch Act:**

Twenty-five years later, in 1887, the Hatch Act became law. This bill gave great impetus to the dissemination of the agricultural research and knowledge established at the university to the people in the rural areas of the state.

Farmers' institutes were the early method used for rural people to hear the latest developments in agriculture. Professor W.C. Latta headed up Indiana's Farmer's Institutes in the early years.

### **Boys and Girls Clubs:**

Along with Farmers' Institutes and the very early legislative efforts to create an Agricultural Extension Service, school systems throughout Indiana were beginning to create Boys and Girls Clubs to provide rural youth with the opportunity to learn new farming and homemaking skills.

No one individual is credited with starting the first clubs nationally, but one of the

earliest reported successful efforts came from Springfield Township in Ohio.

In Indiana, the Hamilton County School Superintendent, John F. Haines, organized the earliest Indiana Boys Club on record. The first meeting was held in April 1904 with 93 boys enrolled. There were two meetings followed by visits from Haines, to view each of the boys' projects. The show that was held at the end of the year aroused more interest in the study of seed corn than the Farmers' Institutes had done.

Boys and Girls club work grew from these early beginnings through the next decade as the movement for a national Agricultural Extension Service grew. In Indiana, the Clore Bill was signed into law in 1911. This bill provided for an annual state appropriation of \$30,000 for Extension work through Purdue. National legislation, the Smith-Lever Act, would follow three years later.

Early club work consisted mostly of projects and exhibits of corn and gardens. Madison County organized the first Pig club in 1914.

### **Creating the Clover Emblem:**

During these early years, youth often received small, inexpensive trinkets from leaders as recognition for their project work. Although these differed widely by state, the most popular seemed to be 3 or 4 leaf clovers pins.

As interest grew, the movement gained uniformity, and some standard of identification was needed.

The first emblem was designed in 1907 or 1908 by O.H. Benson as a three-leaf clover. The H's represented head, heart, and hands.

In 1911, Benson suggested a fourth leaf should be added, standing for "hustle." Hustle was later changed to health and thus the four "h" words became symbolic of club participation.

### **4-H Colors:**

Shortly after the adoption of the emblem, the club colors of green and white became a standard.

The white background of the 4-H flag was used to symbolize purity.

The green of the 4-H emblem was used to represent nature's most common color. Leaders also felt that it symbolized youth, life, and growth.

### **The Smith-Lever Act:**

While Boys and Girls club work had its initial growth through the schools with the support of administrators and teachers, it eventually evolved as a part of the Cooperative Extension Service.

Congress passed the Smith-Lever Act in 1914 officially establishing the Cooperative Extension Service. During that year, over 4500 boys and girls enrolled in club work and completed their projects. Club work grew rapidly after that and many counties across the state started hiring Assistant County Agents who worked primarily with the youth clubs.

For a number of years, vocational agriculture and home economics teachers continued their involvement in the program. Volunteer adult leaders have always been a major factor in the programs' success. Some leaders have directed clubs for several decades, while others have been involved in special projects, programs, and events.

#### **4-H Round-Up:**

Learning experiences for youth were included as part of the Purdue short course, a two-day event held each January for farmers.

In 1919, an influenza epidemic prevented youth from participating in the Short Course, so leaders organized a “Roundup” of youth for April 21-24. Fifteen hundred youth attended and it was determined that the separation allowed for a better youth program.

After that, Roundup was held the first week of May for a number of years and then shifted to June, where it is held to this day.

4-H Roundup is an excellent tool to encourage youth to become better 4-Hers, to recognize them for their sustained achievements; to further their citizenship and leadership efforts; to share new information and knowledge, and to acquaint them with Purdue as an institution of higher education.

#### **4-H Pledge:**

Otis Hall, a native of Montgomery County composed the 4-H pledge. His pledge was adopted nearly as written by a national committee who sought entries. Hall is considered one of the pioneers of 4-H club work. He graduated from Darlington High School, and Wabash College and served as the superintendent of Schools in Montgomery County where he worked with the Boys and Girls Clubs. He later served as state leader for 4-H in Kansas, and in Hampden County, Massachusetts.

The Pledge, as recited today:

**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, and my world.**

In 1973, the words “my world” were added to recognize the commitment of 4-Hers beyond the nation’s boundaries.

#### **4-H Grows in 1920s:**

By the 1920s, the foundation of club work had come to rest upon the idea that there was a definite state program that served the local endeavors, and that many groups and agencies cooperated to build the effort.

During the decade, the State Fair became the ultimate “show place” for 4-H projects. A beef show was conducted in 1921, and a sheep show was added in 1922. State Fair canning exhibits were first displayed in 1921, and by 1925 club work at the state fair included competitive exhibition in swine, beef, sheep, corn, potatoes, apples, canning, sewing and baking. Club members entered 1718 exhibits that year.

The first state fair boys’ camp was held in 1924 with 203 boys and leaders participating. By 1926, two large buildings had been built for the camp. Bob Amick became Camp Director in 1929 and served in that capacity for more than 30 years.

The 1927 Roundup featured the first state dress revue. The event was held in the Purdue Memorial Union ballrooms with judging on general appearance, suitability of costume to individual and occasion,

economic factors, ethics of costume, and suitability of accessories.

#### **4-H Mottos and Slogans:**

Much emphasis has been placed on the 4-H club motto, “**To Make the Best Better.**”

The motto is important as an organizational and club goal, and it also serves as a reminder to members to strive for excellence in project work, character building, and citizenship development.

Slogans have also been part of the 4-H program. These have varied over the years, but some you may be familiar with include:

- **Learn By doing**
- **Be your own best exhibit**
- **Win without boasting- lose without frowning**
- **Plan your work- work your plan.**

#### **Strengthening Leadership Highlight of the 30s:**

Despite the difficulties of the thirties, Indiana 4-H continued to flourish. One of the highlights during this decade was the growth and strengthening of local 4-H leadership.

State staff conducted leader trainings in every county in the state, and adult advisory committees were established to plan and administer the local programs.

In 1939, 1,808 women and 1,020 men served as local club leaders in the state. Junior leaders numbered nearly 3,800. Adult volunteers were mainly teachers, Farm Bureau members, home economics workers, public-minded farmers, and parents of club members.

In June of 1932, the first State Junior Leader conference was held at Shakamak State Park with attendance from 46 counties.

Blackford County organized the first Rural Youth Club in the state in 1934. This organization served the 18-35 young adult population.

In 1939, the Indiana State Fair 4-H dormitories and Exhibit Hall were completed and dedicated. They were used for the first time during that year’s state fair.

#### **4-H Has a Role in War Effort of the 40s:**

Interest in 4-H club work during the 40s continued unabated. In fact, 4-Hers accepted and participated in club work as a serious responsibility.

Enrollment in 1940 stood at 32,499 girls and 20,876 boys.

Early in the decade, Food for Freedom was uppermost in everyone’s mind. Indiana 4-H club members did their part by growing victory gardens, thus producing high quality food. They also gave demonstrations on food preparation, food preservation, and using substitute fabrics. They also helped in the collection of scrap metal and other products needed for the war effort.

One of the disappointments of the war was the cancellation of the state fair from 1942-1945. However, a state 4-H club show was held in 43, 44, and 45 with 84 of the 92 counties participating.

A positive movement during this decade was the establishment of the local township committees that were organized to help in carrying out the 4-H program. Tippecanoe County first experimented with this concept

in Fairfield Township, and the idea soon spread throughout the state.

### **50s Were A Period of Growth and Challenge:**

The 1950s were a harmonious time for the Indiana 4-H program. The organization grew, and many new programs and projects began.

The decade opened with a statewide membership of 72,041.

After the war there was a change in lifestyle in America. Throughout the country, and here in Indiana, young people were eager to participate in new experiences and to accept leadership roles.

More adults wanted to be a part of the 4-H program, serving as leaders, advisory members, and instructors. This increase in involvement led to bigger and better 4-H fairs, shows and judging experiences.

Enrollment continued to be dominated by rural areas and small towns, but there was a drive to reach out to the cities and the suburbs.

The 1950s were also a time for some new endeavors in Indiana 4-H. Some of the programs that began during the middle decade included:

- The first outbound IFYE (International Farm Youth Exchange) group
- County and District Share-the-Fun festivals were first conducted in 1952
- The First State Fair Achievement Trip was awarded to 4-Hers in 1955. 17 girls and 16 boys made the trip to Washington D.C.
- The 4-H Key Award program was established in 1956 with the bestowing of 586 gold keys for boys and girls.

### **The 1960s – Changes and Challenges for 4-H:**

As the 1960s began, Indiana 4-H ranked 6th in the nation in enrollment: with 90,101 members, (triple that of 1930). Sixty percent of the enrollment was non-farm youth, while girls made up 3/5 of the membership.

The Purdue University Board of Trustees authorized the formation of the 4-H Foundation with its official incorporation on January 5, 1961. This organization, located in Indianapolis is a completely separate entity whose purpose is fundraising outside of the university. The Foundation provides significant financial support and special program support to statewide 4-H activities and events.

In 1965, the 4-H Program age limits for participation changed to 9-19, inclusive. Previously, young people aged 10-21 could be involved.

The Horse and Pony Project was introduced in the early 60's. Within a few years membership in this project doubled to over 6,000 members.

The Cooperative Extension service changed its structure in the late 60's and this had a significant impact on the 4-H program. The new staffing approach provided for a separate youth agent in each county giving them equal status to the agricultural and family living agents. It also assigned each youth agent with special resource responsibilities that would be shared across county lines.

### **4-H Reaches Out in the 70s:**

The traditional programs continued to grow and flourish during the 70s, but there was a

shift in the program emphasis. While there was still club work and emphasis on 4-H projects, one also noticed that more and more resources were being directed toward the individual members and his or her personal growth and development.

Another major thrust in the 70s was the effort to provide programming to all Indiana youth. Additional funding provided by the Expanded Foods and Nutrition Program allowed youth agents to broaden their reach to economically disadvantaged families. Television programs like Mulligan Stew provided children with basic food information. Other urban projects like Windowsill Gardens were used by school teachers.

Indiana 4-H began computerization of enrollment and records in the late 70s.

### **80s Were A Period of Adjustment:**

4-H moved into the 80s differently than it had in previous decades. Cuts in federal support brought challenges including reductions in paraprofessionals and students who had been hired to help with a number of key programs.

Still, 4-H continued to reach out to all youth age 9-19 regardless of their place of residence, race, or creed.

Enrollments that soared in the mid-70s began to level off due to changes in reporting practices and a decline in the number of far-reaching television programs that targeted youth.

4-H added new programs in the 80s. These included computer workshops and a pilot computer project. The Shooting Sports program was started in 1984. Project LEAD (Legal Education to Arrest Delinquency)

was introduced as a means of providing a positive approach to laws, law enforcement, and respect for the rights and property of others.

Another new program in the 80s was the “Blue Sky Beneath my Feet” program. Designed to interest upper elementary students in science-related topics, the program was popular partly due to Indiana’s interest and association with NASA’s space program.

Two Indiana 4-H members were astronauts in the 80’s. They were Lieutenant Colonel Jerry Ross of Lake County and Naval Captain Donald Williams of Warren County. In January 1989, Ross presented the state 4-H organization with a 4-H Flag and tree seeds he had taken with him on the December ‘88 shuttle mission of “Atlantis.” Williams was the commander of the October ‘89 flight of “Galileo.”

4-H week had always been celebrated in the fall, but in 1985 at the request of local leaders, the week was changed to February so counties could plan celebrations just prior to members enrolling for the year.

Late in the decade, 4-H volunteers reviewed all aspects of the program to ensure that it still kept pace with changes in society.

The 4-H mission continues to be “to help youth develop through nonformal educational programs and projects, enabling them to become more responsible and productive citizens.”

### **Safety and Security are a Hallmark of the 90s:**

Changes in society in the 90s required a number of policy changes within the Indiana 4-H program. Life is not as simple as it

used to be, and not everyone who wants to work with children has their best interests in mind. In order to ensure the safety of both children involved in 4-H activities and the adults who are serving as volunteers, a volunteer application and screening process was established. The process also requires that all volunteers agree to and sign, adult behavioral expectations that have been established for the 4-H Program.

Much effort was put into upgrading and revamping traditional 4-H projects and curriculum to keep pace with societal changes.

Also, in an attempt to better meet the needs of the youth that 4-H serves, the age requirements of 9-19 were changed in 1997 to follow school grades. Today, youth may become 4-H members when they enter 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. They may continue their membership through the completion of grade 12.

#### **4-H Touches Many Hoosiers:**

The Indiana 4-H program has touched the lives of millions of young Hoosiers providing them with the educational, citizenship and leadership experiences that allow them to grow and develop into productive Hoosier citizens.

Many of your friends and neighbors are alumni of the Indiana 4-H program. You will find 4-H graduates in all walks of life.

They are farmers, doctors, teachers, homemakers, secretaries, foundry workers, electricians, entertainers, athletes, librarians, as well as professionals in other areas.

You probably know many of the people in your community who have participated in Indiana 4-H. Perhaps you didn't know some 4-H alumni who have become a bit more famous. Folks like Jim Davis (creator of Garfield), Jane Pauley, Orville Redenbacher, Sue Ellen Reed, Governor Frank and Mrs. O'Bannon, Janie Fricke, and the Jackson Five were all involved in the 4-H program here in Indiana while they were growing up. There are many others you would recognize who have also benefited from the projects, programs and activities of 4-H. Perhaps you can think of some on your own.

The Indiana 4-H Program in the new millennium serves the youth of Indiana by providing a strong educational youth development program.

Our program delivers educational experiences in a variety of settings. Caring, capable, and competent adults assist in the 4-H Program as models for young people.

We treasure the rich heritage of Indiana 4-H and want to build on that to ensure that 4-H is always available to the future generations of Indiana youth.