

Extension Education
Tasha Killian News Column
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4-H – What, Why and How By Tasha Killian

Have you ever walked into the fair, seen the green clover with four H's etched in it, and wondered what the program is, why they were all over the fair, and how to join? Well, today is your lucky day. Sit back and join us as we go through a history lesson in 4-H and learn more about why it is important and how you can be a part of it!

In the late 1800's farmers began to form clubs to share new agricultural tips and tricks. These clubs eventually grew and began involving youth. In the year 1902, youth only clubs began to be held after school. The name of these youth clubs was 4-H, with their symbol being a clover. In 1914, the Cooperative Extension system was formed thanks to legislation passed, called the Smith-Lever Act, and 4-H clubs became a part of a larger system throughout the United States.

As Cooperative Extension and 4-H began to grow and adapt to the changes in culture and community, so did the 4-H clubs. 4-H today now offers in school and after school programming as well as community clubs and projects in a variety of areas. Project areas include agriculture and animal sciences, citizenship and leadership, creative arts, family and consumer sciences and healthy living, STEM, and an "other" category which encompasses anything that might not fit into a specific project area.

The four H's in 4-H stand for Head, Heart, Hands and Health – correlating with the 4-H pledge that youth recite at all 4-H events. In this pledge youth dedicate their efforts to bettering themselves, their club, their community and their world. 4-H is a volunteer run program meaning that, although there are staff with full-time and part-time positions to support programming, most of the clubs and camps that are put on are volunteer based. It is a great opportunity for youth to learn skills from adult community members and a great opportunity for adults in the community to pass down their knowledge and skills to future generations.

Since 4-H became part of the Cooperative Extension system, the clubs and programs offered come from research done at the university. Since the extension university in Utah is Utah State University, the 4-H programs and programs are written by Utah State University faculty and staff. Throughout all these programs, positive youth development is the most important. 4-H takes a hands-on approach to learning which helps youth develop and grow skills they can use throughout their life. If you've ever met a "4-Her" you know they are always willing to step up to the plate and try new things. As youth engage in 4-H activities they become more confident, more engaged in community efforts and overall better leaders. Although 4-H started as a community club for agricultural practices, why we do what we do is to help youth learn life skills and contribute to their communities.

In Juab County, we have many opportunities to join and to volunteer in 4-H. From becoming a club leader to entering your son, daughter, niece, nephew, grandson, granddaughter, or neighbor in 4-H, how to join 4-H is actually quite simple! You can do it at home on your phone or computer! The first step is going online to ut.4honline.com. Click on the option "I need to set up a profile." This will take you to a page where you can click on your county, fill out your information and begin your family profile. To add members to your family, click into your profile and then at the top of the page where it says family, add a new member and fill out their information. The yearly 4-H registration fee is \$10 (October 1 to

September 30). Once you have a profile set up, you can go in and search for events to register for. Some events/activities having small additional costs. If you are registering to be a volunteer, there are a few more steps to make sure we have all the information we need to get you set up as a volunteer. You'll need to add yourself as a member of the family, and then select that you are wanting to be a volunteer. Throughout this whole process, you can come into our office or give us a call and we will guide you through it!

As you've learned more about 4-H through this process, we hope you've come to understand the importance the program can have in the life of a child. From kindergarten aged youth all the way up to graduating seniors, 4-H impacts lives and helps youth build skills to last a lifetime. If you've ever participated in 4-H or met a 4-Her, you can testify of the value the program can have in the life of a child. We hope this year, when you see those green clovers at the fair, you can appreciate the history, the purpose behind the displays and sign yourself or someone you know up to have your life changed with 4-H!