

Why Join 4-H?

Christi Nicholls, 4-H Program Coordinator

Why join 4-H? To really answer that, it helps to know where it all began. A little history: 4-H traces its roots back to 1902, when A.B. Graham started a youth program in Clark County, Ohio. The first club was known as *The Tomato Club* or *The Corn Growing Club*—and it's recognized as the beginning of 4-H in the United States. That same year, T.A. Erickson of Douglas County, Minnesota, launched local agriculture-based after-school clubs and fairs. In 1910, Jessie Field Shambaugh created the clover pin with an "H" on each leaf, and by 1912 these groups officially became known as 4-H clubs.

In 1914, the Smith-Lever Act established the Cooperative Extension System within the USDA, bringing 4-H nationwide. By 1924, the clover emblem was formally adopted, and 4-H clubs as we know them today took shape. The Cooperative Extension System is a partnership between federal, state, and local governments, land-grant universities, and more than 3,000 county offices. Together, this network provides research, education, and hands-on programming to communities across the country.

Fast forward to 2019 and into Juab County. While 4-H is often associated with agriculture—and we absolutely love our livestock youth—our program is so much more. Today in Juab County, we offer opportunities in Leathercraft, Teen Council (leadership), Needlecrafts, Cake Decorating, STEM, Robotics, Art, Cloverbuds, Service, Sewing, Cooking, Fly Tying, plus our Horse and Livestock programs. And we're not stopping there. We're always expanding and looking for new ways to serve the youth in our community.

The beauty of 4-H is that the sky truly is the limit. Interested in learning something new? Have a passion you want to grow? Come see us—if you can dream it up, we can help you explore it.

How do we make all of this happen? Volunteers. We are incredibly lucky to have dedicated, talented volunteers who give their time, share their skills, and pour their hearts into helping our youth succeed. We simply couldn't do what we do without them.

So back to the big question: *Why 4-H?* Did you know 4-H empowers young people to become true leaders? True leaders are confident, collaborative, resilient, and committed— young people who stick with a job until it's done. In 4-H, we believe true leaders aren't born—they're grown. Through hands-on learning, youth gain tools, experiences, and encouragement that help them step into leadership and make things happen. Research shows the impact: today's 4-H members are four times more likely to give back to their communities, twice as likely to make healthy choices, and twice as likely to engage in STEM activities.

Feeling inspired? Ready to join 4-H? Sign up today at **4h.zsuite.org**. Have questions? We're here to help! Stop by our office or give us a call at **435-623-3450**.

Information adapted in part from 4-h.org.