

OPINION

Notes from UW Extension YOUTH LEARN LEADERSHIP, CITIZENSHIP, LIFE SKILLS IN 4-H

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4-H is a community of young people across America who are learning leadership, citizenship and life skills. 4-H is about having fun, learning, exploring and discovering. In 4-H, young people make new friends, develop new skills, become leaders and help shape their communities. About 50,000 Wisconsin youth are enrolled members of 4-H clubs across the state. Another 195,000 Wisconsin youth get involved in 4-H through special educational opportunities at school, in after school programs, or at neighborhood or youth centers. These youth live in cities, suburbs, small towns and rural communities.

4-H gives youth a chance to pursue their own interests - from photography to computers, from building rockets to raising sheep. They go places - to camp, to state and national conferences, even to other countries on 4-H exchange programs. They learn to be leaders and active citizens.

In 4-H clubs, they serve as officers and learn to conduct meetings, handle club funds, and facilitate group decision-making. In a growing number of communities, 4-H youth serve as youth representatives

in municipal or county government or as members of Teen Courts. They give back to their communities. 4-H members get involved in volunteer projects to protect the environment, mentor younger children and help people who are less fortunate.

4-H experiences are designed to address the four essential elements of positive youth development: Belonging, Mastery, Generosity and Independence.

Today in Lincoln County 4-H . . .

There are 20 active 4-H Clubs located throughout Lincoln County involving over 410 youth and 155 adult volunteer leaders. 4-H members are able to choose from over 80 projects ranging from youth leadership, to computers, to woodworking and the arts. Additional youth are reached through school enrichment and special interest programs including camps, community service days, after school programs and Teen Court.

To learn more about how you can become involved, contact the Lincoln County UW-Extension office at 539-1072 or stop by our office in the Lincoln County Service Center at 801 N. Sales Street, Suite 101. You can also learn more by visiting our brand new Lincoln County 4-H Blog <http://fyi.uwex.edu/lincolncounty4h/> for up to the minute 4-H news!