



## What Is 4-H?

### Virginia 4-H Has Something for Youth of Military Families!

#### An Overview of 4-H Youth Development

4-H is the largest out-of-school time positive youth development organization in the United States with over 7 million youth members. With a direct connection to United States Land Grant University System, 4-H is the first experience many young people have with higher education.



The 4-H Youth Development Program:

- Exists through Cooperative Extension in all 50 states, most cities, and 3,068 counties nationwide. Whether you move to a city, suburb or rural area, 4-H has something for you!
- Has presence in over 50 countries, including U.S. military installations worldwide.

- Provides predictability and a safe and nurturing environment for military youth.

For nearly a decade, Dr. Richard Lerner has been working with researchers at Tufts University to conduct the 4-H Study on Positive Youth Development. The *2011 Summary of Findings for Wave 7* revealed that when compared to other youth, young people participating in 4-H:

- Are more likely to make more healthy choices.
- Excel in school and the sciences.
- Are three times more likely to actively contribute to their communities.

#### 4-H in Virginia

Virginia 4-H, the youth program of Virginia Cooperative Extension, is connected to the research of Virginia Tech and Virginia State University. Promoting hands-on experiential and inquiry-based learning, Virginia 4-H offers exciting projects for children and youth, ages 5 - 19. **The**

**mission** of the Virginia 4-H Program is to assist youth and adults working with those youth, to gain additional knowledge, life skills, and attitudes that will further their development as self-directing, contributing, and productive members of society. Over 185,000 members and 13,000 volunteers are involved in Virginia's 4-H Program.

4-H can be found in all counties and most cities across the state of Virginia. Clubs have also been organized on 11 military installations. More recently, an increased effort is being made to support youth of geographically dispersed Virginia National Guard and Reserve families through 4-H.



#### Virginia 4-H

##### **Age of Youth Participants:**

Ages 5 - 19

##### **4-H Enrollment:**

Over 185,000

##### **4-H Locations:**

All counties, most cities, and 11 military installations

##### **4-H Offers Youth:**

- Coached and mentored **independence**
- A sense of **belonging** with a positive group
- A spirit of **generosity** toward others
- A wide variety of opportunities to **master skills and address** life's challenges



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

**Green** – nature's most common color, represents life, growth & youth

**White** – symbolizes purity and high ideals

##### **4-H Motto**

"To Make the Best Better"

##### **4-H Slogan**

"Learn By Doing"

## ***Fun and Learning Starts in 4-H Programs***

Virginia 4-H today focuses on three main program areas: Citizenship, Healthy Living, and STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math). Youth choose among projects such as:

*Animal Science  
Community Service  
Careers*

*Filmmaking  
Horticulture & Gardening  
Global Positioning Systems (GPS)*

*Leadership  
Nutrition & Fitness  
Performing Arts*

*Public Speaking  
Robotics  
Rocketry*

See a wide variety of high quality projects organized around 4-H program areas found at this website:

<http://www.4-h.ext.vt.edu/programs/index.html>.

## ***Opportunities to Participate***

4-H members have the opportunity to participate in the program through community clubs, in-school clubs, afterschool programs, special interest groups, Cloverbud groups, military partnership programs, camps, events, and conferences.

### ***4-H Emblem***

The official 4-H emblem is a green four-leaf clover with a white "H" on each leaf.



### ***The Four H's***

The four H's stand for Head, Heart, Hands, and Health. They represent the four values members work on through fun and interactive programs.

- Head – Managing, Thinking
- Heart – Relating, Caring
- Hands – Giving, Working
- Health – Being, Living

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

The 4-H pledge offers intentional commitment to positive growth.

The 4-H Pledge states:



*"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."*



**For additional 4-H information:** Contact your local Virginia Cooperative Extension Office and ask about the 4-H program. To find the office nearest you, visit us on the web at <http://www.ext.vt.edu/offices/index.html> .

**To learn about Virginia 4-H Military Clubs:** Contact Louetta Jones, Virginia 4-H Military Club Director  
Phone: 804-712-8467      Email: [lojones@vt.edu](mailto:lojones@vt.edu)

Visit: <http://www.virginia4-hmilitaryclubs.org>

*(Photos represent military and/or non-military youth engaged in Virginia 4-H programming.)*