



McLean County 4-H - Talking Points

4-H continues to be one of the largest youth development programs in McLean County with participation of more than 3,000 young people, ages 5-18, and 800 adult volunteers.

4-H has three primary program areas: science, engineering and technology; healthy living; and citizenship/leadership.

4-H is the only youth development program with direct access to technological advances from University of Illinois research.

Youth learn leadership, citizenship and life skills through more than 1,000 project opportunities with topics as varied as rocketry, GPS mapping, computer game design, public speaking, photography, nutrition and community service.

4-H's learning opportunities are intentionally designed around four essential elements necessary for positive youth development by providing youth with: supervised independence, a sense of belonging with a positive group, a spirit of generosity toward others and a wide variety of opportunities to master life challenges.

The fundamental 4-H ideal of practical, "learn by doing" experiences encourage youth to experiment, innovate and think independently.

4-H programs are offered through community clubs and through school-based, after-school and camp settings.

Studies show that 4-H members do better in school, are more motivated to help others, feel safe to try new things, achieve a sense of self-esteem, and develop lasting friendships.

In McLean County:

- there are 4-Hers in each of the 31 townships.
- 34 percent of 4-H members lived in urban and suburban communities, 51 percent in small rural towns and 13 percent on farms (during 2007).
- nearly \$12,000 in 4-H project manuals were furnished through state and local resources.
- County Fair overhead costs including building rental, security, and volunteer meals are furnished to the 4-H program annually.
- nearly \$50,000 in 4-H fair premiums were distributed to 1100 4-H'ers last year.
- 4-H Clubs have furnished \$2.00 annually per member toward support of the McLean County 4-H program for more than 30 years.

Among many well known McLean County 4-H Alumni, there is Ed Rust, Chairman and CEO of State Farm; Gordon Ropp, retired IL State Representative, and Director of Agriculture; Brian Basting of Advance Trading; Carrie Muehling of Radio Bloomington; Josh St. Peters of Illinois Farm Bureau; Tricia Braid-Terry of RFD Illinois; Jon Scholl, President of American Farmland Trust; Angie Schmidt-Tiller, V.P of Bloomington Offset Process Inc.

Nationally, famous alumni include Al Gore, Faith Hill and David Letterman. Also, 14 governors, 33 university presidents and chancellors, 31 CEOs and four astronauts are 4-H alumni.

4-H is operated and supported by a shared leadership of public and private partners including National 4-H Headquarters, USDA within the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service; 3,500 Cooperative Extension educators associated with 106 land-grant universities; National 4-H Council; 4-H associations and foundations; and trained youth and adult volunteers.