



## Understanding the Culture of 4-H <sup>1</sup>

Marilyn N. Norman and Joy C. Jordan<sup>2</sup>

### Culture

Webster defines culture as the concepts, habits, skills, arts, instruments, and institutions of a given people in a given place. Basically, the culture within a group is what everybody knows that everybody else knows and includes the visible expression as well as the invisible roots of the culture. Most groups have spoken or unspoken expectations for member's behavior. These may include rules, rituals, language, demonstration of support for commonly held beliefs, etc. Youth development professionals know the importance of helping young people discover quickly the norms of the group they have joined.

### What is 4-H?

4-H is the youth development outreach program of the Land Grant Universities, the Cooperative Extension System, and USDA. It is made up of a community of young people across America who are learning life skills with the support of caring adult leaders.

4-H'ers are actively involved in educational projects that are fun. 4-H projects use quality curriculum incorporating the most current research and knowledge available through the Land Grant University system.

Each 4-H group will have a set of behavioral expectations unique to that group, and these expectations may or may not be clearly defined for all members. However, all 4-H groups will follow certain practices within the club or group that are clearly defined.

4-H uses the following concepts and customs to create a sense of "belonging" among those new to 4-H and assure those who are already a part of 4-H to have the same understanding of the basic aspects of the 4-H culture.

### 4-H Colors

The 4-H colors are green and white. The white symbolizes purity and high ideals. The green, nature's most prominent color, represents growth.

### 4-H Pledge

The 4-H Pledge is a statement of the outcomes desired for youth from their involvement in the 4-H Youth Development program. It reminds members of the four areas of growth 4-H targets and reinforces the importance of mastery of life skills. Delegates to the 1927 National 4-H Club Camp in Washington, D.C. adopted the pledge. The phrase, "my World" was added to the pledge in 1973.



#### 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.*



#### Motto: "To Make the Best Better"

The motto was adopted at about the same time as the 4-H Club Pledge. Its intent is to inspire young people to continue to learn and grow, to make their best efforts better through participating in educational experiences.

1. This document is 4HS FS101.1, one of a series of the Florida 4-H Program, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Original publication date February 2006. Revised July 2009. Please visit the EDIS website at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.

2. Marilyn Norman, Associate Professor in Family Youth and Community Sciences, and State 4-H Program Leader, and Joy C. Jordan, Associate Professor in Family, Youth and Community Sciences, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville.


**Slogan: "Learning by Doing"**

This phrase sums up the educational philosophy of the 4-H program. Young people learn best when they are involved in their learning. The intent is for youth to become engaged in learning by doing, reflecting on their experiences, and applying it to future situations.

**4-H Name and Emblem**

The 4-H Youth Development Program is represented by a popular, recognizable image that consists of a green four-leaf clover with a right turned stem and the letter "H" in white or gold on each leaflet. The text, 18 U.S.C. 707, appears with the emblem. This emblem became the official 4-H emblem by an act of Congress in 1948.

Use of the 4-H name or emblem signifies agreement to the principles of youth development as promoted through 4-H. The Secretary of the United States Department of Agriculture holds the name and emblem in trust for the educational and character-building purposes of the 4-H program. The 4-H name and 4-H Clover are protected by Title 18 of the United States Code, Section 707 (18 U.S.C. 707) and are afforded the same status and regard as the White House and Presidential Seals. Therefore, they may only be used as authorized by the statute, regulations and guidelines, and according to the authorization of the Secretary or designated representative.

**Specific Ways to Use and Display the 4-H Emblem (print and electronic):**

- Always use the specific image (outline/shape) from [www.national4-hheadquarters.gov](http://www.national4-hheadquarters.gov). Do not alter the image.
- Green leaves (Color – PMS - 347)
- Gold or white H's on each leaf
- Stem to right
- "Notice" statement, 18 U.S.C. 707 to right of stem and below lower right leaf or other location provided by USDA



- The emblem should always have a position of prominence in any design
- Do not superimpose anything over the Emblem or use it as a watermark, etc.
- When used by collaboration, the 4-H Emblem should be the same size and proportion as the other logos.
- When used electronically, the same standards as print versions should apply.
- Additional standards are available on National 4-H Headquarters website: [www.national4-hheadquarters.gov](http://www.national4-hheadquarters.gov)

**Authorities for Approving Use of the 4-H Name and Emblem:**

Secretary of Agriculture has delegated authority to:

- Administrators, CSREES, USDA, (F4-HN Staff) for multi-state use.
- State Extension Directors (1862 land-grant), Administrators (1890 land-grant), Presidents (1994 land grant) for use within state boundaries.
- County 4-H Extension Staff (agents, educators, etc.) for use within a single county or boundary.

Detailed information on the use of the name and emblem, statute, regulations, guidelines, information and downloadable 4-H emblems can be found at:

<http://www.national4-hheadquarters.gov>

**Process for 4-H Name and Emblem Authorization and Responsibilities:**

- Letter to County 4-H Staff
- County staff responds in writing and provides certificate charter
- 4-H Club submits names of members, leaders, and other requested information.

Detailed information on authorizing and charting local 4-H clubs and groups can be found at the Florida 4-H website:

<http://florida4h.org>

