

Starting and Maintaining 4-H Clubs



Starting and Maintaining 4-H Clubs in Florida

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Criteria for 4-H Youth Development Programming Including 4-H Clubs

Both National and State 4-H Headquarters, located at USDA Cooperative State Research Education and Extension Service (CSREES) and at University of Florida (UF) respectively, have policies governing 4-H clubs. These policies govern all youth development programming delivered through 4-H:

- 4-H programs, curricula, and procedures are based in research and are developmentally appropriate.
- 4-H programs are based on the needs of children, youth, and their parents.
- 4-H provides access to resources of the Land Grant University Cooperative Extension System.
- 4-H provides members access to county, state, and national 4-H opportunities.
- 4-H membership is open to all youth.
- 4-H programs employ experiential learning strategies.
- 4-H encourages active involvement and participation by children, youth, and adults in all aspects.
- 4-H relies heavily on youth and adult volunteers or staff to provide a critical support system.
- 4-H provides training for volunteer and staff, recognizing that training is essential for effective 4-H programs.
- 4-H adapts to and supports mobility of children/youth and parents.
- 4-H clubs comply with national 4-H name and emblem policies and policies of the state.



What is a 4-H Club?



The 4-H club serves as the primary means of providing youth development programming in 4-H. It has the advantage of long-term involvement with the support of “caring” adults. 4-H clubs are organized and supported to provide community-based, positive, and structured learning opportunities for youth throughout their developmental years. Surveys of youth who have been involved in out-of-school youth programs report the importance youth place on knowing that programs will continue over many years. Youth are reluctant to take ownership in groups or establish relationships with volunteers when they appear temporary. While other 4-H delivery methods are effective, the more in-depth experiences occur in and through the club.

The goals and structure of 4-H clubs vary according to the needs of the members they serve. Some clubs offer one project topic that the entire membership experiences together at the club meeting. Others offer a selection of projects delivered through project meetings held at times outside the club. Some clubs have a singular focus such as community service clubs, or they serve a specific audience such as tribal reservation clubs, after-school or home-school youth. But there are components and characteristics common to all 4-H clubs, and these commonalities provide the definition of a 4-H club.

A 4-H Club:

- Is an organized group of youth.
- Has a planned program that is ongoing throughout all or most of the year.
- Is advised by adult staff or volunteers.
- Typically elects officers.
- May meet in any location.
- Includes opportunities to learn skills through a wide variety of project experiences.
- Offers opportunities for leadership, citizenship/community service, and public speaking.

Who can join?

Youth ages 5–18 (as of September 1 of the current year) are eligible to be 4-H members in Florida. Organized clubs may serve youth across the age span of 5 to 18. Counties in Florida have the option to support younger members (5 to 7 years) called *Cloverbuds*. These clubs require additional volunteers, especially to support the younger youth, ages five to seven. Where these clubs exist, they focus on cooperative learning and do not participate in competitive events.



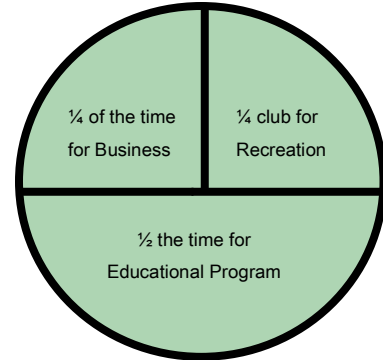
Types and Characteristics of Clubs

Organized 4-H Clubs

The 4-H club is one of the most effective methods used by the 4-H program. 4-H clubs are organized groups of boys and girls supported by adult volunteers. The 4-H club conducts meetings and activities throughout the year — usually holding six or more official meetings annually.

Club meetings typically include:

- the conducting of some business by the officers,
- an educational program, and
- a group team-building or recreational activity.



The club frequently includes opportunities for leadership, citizenship, and public speaking. It may meet in any location and is authorized through the county and state Extension Office to use the 4-H name and emblem.

In all clubs, members are encouraged to learn and participate in one or more projects. Additionally clubs do a community service activity or service-learning project during the 4-H year. All clubs require at least one designated adult club volunteer.

There are different methods and locations of organizing 4-H clubs. Clubs may be formed in communities, in schools, in after-school settings, or on military installations. Two distinctive types of methods or organizational structure exist: clubs where youth have multiple interests or singular focus. Either type of club should provide an opportunity for youth to plan and conduct their own program with the guidance of adult volunteer(s) or have input into what they want to learn within a project focus. These clubs usually have elected youth officers, develop their own club name, create their bylaws, and learn to govern themselves.

Multi-Project or General Club

The *multi-project or general club* (1) meets regularly to conduct a business meeting; (2) provides an educational program or activity (often by the youth themselves); (3) addresses county and community issues through community service-learning projects; and (4) offers a selection of projects delivered through project meetings held at times outside the club meeting. This format provides a wider choice of learning experiences for the 4-Her but requires more volunteers for the additional project meetings. It is more complicated than single-project clubs to manage.



Project Clubs

Clubs that (1) meet regularly, (2) conduct a business meeting, (3) address county and community issues through service, and (4) focus on one project for the entire membership are referred to as *project clubs*. In a single-project club, all the members are enrolled in the same project; they may be active in more than one project club.



Supplemental Learning Activities

In addition to the many activities scheduled in club meetings, 4-H members in all clubs are provided access to additional structured learning opportunities through activities such as the following:

- Community Service-Learning Projects
- Day Camps
- Overnight Camping
- Trips
- Events and Activities
 - Competitive Events and Activities (fairs, judging etc.)
 - Non-Competitive Events and Activities (clinics, workshops, lock-ins, retreats, seminars, etc.)

For a complete guide to
Florida 4-H Events, and
for event calendars
and participation information,
go to:

<http://www.florida4h.org>

Club Program Support Materials

These or other materials may be available from your local 4-H office for club support each year:

- Club Program Planning Guide
- Club Program Planning Workbook
- Club Secretary's Book
- Club Treasurer Book
- A Guide for Club Officers
- A Guide to County and District Councils
- Member and Leader Identification Cards—upon re-enrollment

Checklist for Annual Club Re-enrollments

- Youth enrollment forms (completed by each member – signed by parents) to select projects
- Participation Form (completed by all youth – signed by parents)
- Volunteer enrollment forms (completed by each volunteer) to update roles/contact information
- Annual Charter Request form (signed by leader)



Criteria for Florida 4-H Club Charters

Enrollment Procedures



Enrollment of clubs and all members and volunteer leaders is required for participation. The 4-H program/enrollment year operates from September 1 through August 31. This enrollment is done through the county and submitted to the State 4-H Headquarters. Florida 4-H uses a computer enrollment system called 4-H Online, which means the forms must be filled out completely and accurately. Check with your county office for procedures.

Establishing and Chartering a 4-H Club

Florida has established criteria for enrolling as an official 4-H Club. Official enrollment as a 4-H Club and receipt of a 4-H Club charter gives the club the authority to use the 4-H name and emblem. Clubs must be chartered through a request to the local Extension Office, meeting the minimum criteria and receiving written approval. Criteria for clubs in Florida are as follows:

- The club has five members (from at least two families) with completed enrollments.
- The club is organized with youth officers or defined youth leadership roles.
- There are one or more appointed club volunteers, following application, screening, and training.
- An initial meeting place is secured for at least several consecutive months.
- An official non-discriminatory club name is chosen.
- Club rules, which may be in the form of bylaws, are established.
- At least six or more regular meetings plus project meetings are scheduled.
- A written educational plan/calendar for the club program and activities is presented to the county 4-H office (draft is okay).
- Follows the affirmative action policy of the Cooperative Extension Service.



A copy of the club enrollment is kept on file with the County Extension office. When requesting a Club Charter, the *New Charter Application Form* should be completed by the Club Secretary and signed by the Club President, Club Organizational Leader, and Extension Faculty. Once completed, the Extension Faculty will then forward the request to the State 4-H Headquarters. This form, provided on the next page, can be found at the Florida 4-H website listed at the front of this document.

Official Chartered 4-H Clubs can use the name and emblem of 4-H. Individual clubs may have continuous use of their charter over many years; however, an *Annual Request for Charter* is required from all clubs. This form, found on page 7, can be obtained from the Florida 4-H website. Counties usually require this form to be completed upon the re-enrollment of individual members annually during the fall. The annual 4-H calendar follows a program year operating September 1 through August 31. A letter from the County Extension Office will acknowledge continued club status annually.





NEW 4-H CLUB CHARTER APPLICATION (to be completed by Club Secretary)

Name of 4-H Group _____

Type of 4-H Group _____

(4-H Project Club, 4-H Special Interest Group, General 4-H Club)

Community/School _____ County _____

Number Enrolled _____ Total Number of Projects _____

Purpose of Club _____

Name of Club Leader _____

Date Organized _____

President: Name _____

Address _____

Vice President Name _____

Address _____

Secretary Name _____

Address _____

Signed by:

Club President _____

Club Organizational Volunteer (s) _____

4-H Agent _____

Date of Application _____

Attachments:

_____ Club Program Plan with meeting dates and locations

_____ Roster of Club Members

_____ Signed *Charter Request Form*

_____ Club By-laws/Rules

_____ Club Officers/
Defined Youth Roles

Submit to your County 4-H Youth Development Office

Enrolling Members and Volunteers

Enrolling Members

Youth may join 4-H at any time and clubs may be formed throughout the year. Enrollment of new members and volunteers who join the club during the year can be submitted immediately either electronically or in print form to the county 4-H office by the club volunteer. However, many counties promote and recruit new members and “re-enroll” clubs and their membership each fall. Annually, an “enrollment due date” for returning members of 4-H Clubs will be determined by the county 4-H faculty. Enrollment includes choices for projects, releases for use of photographs or program evaluation tools, and agreements for non-discriminatory membership. A state 4-H membership code of conduct / volunteer expectations must be read and signed and submitted with the enrollment. Samples of the *Individual Youth Enrollment Form* and the *4-H Participation Form* are located at the Florida 4-H website. Enrolling and re-enrolling may be done through the Florida 4-H online Enrollment System. Check with your County 4-H Agent for your county’s online enrollment procedures for members.



Eligibility for competition at fairs or exhibitions, and some project involvement requirements are often determined by birth date as of September 1 of the current program year. Other requirements may also be in place at the county level. Competitive event guidelines and supporting information can be obtained from your County 4-H Extension faculty.

Enrolling Volunteers

Florida requires a screening and training process prior to serving as an official 4-H volunteer and working directly with youth. Position descriptions that outline leader responsibilities are usually provided. Every Extension volunteer who works directly with youth on an on-going basis (3 or more times annually) or for an overnight situation must complete the 4-H Volunteer screening process, as well as complete the six-module Chaperone Certification Training and pass with a final test score of 80 or higher.



The *Florida 4-H Volunteer Application Forms* are located at the Florida 4-H website listed at the end of this document or from your county 4-H Extension Office. Once a volunteer is appointed following screening, an annual enrollment form is used to provide updated information to the 4-H office. Enrolling and re-enrolling may be done through the Florida 4-H online Enrollment System. Check with your County 4-H Agent for your county’s online enrollment procedures for volunteers.

Throughout the year, youth, staff, and volunteers who participate in special programs beyond the club level (e.g., County 4-H Camp, State 4-H Congress, State Leader’s Forum, National Conferences) are required to complete additional forms that relate to the specific event.





Florida 4-H New Member Enrollment Form

Family Profile Information

Family Email: _____ 4-H County: _____ **Family Last Name:** _____
 Address: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____
 Primary Telephone Number: (____) _____ Correspondence Preference: ___ Email ___ Mail
 Are you in a: Military 4-H Club Community Club In-School Club Afterschool Club Individual Member

Member Profile Information

Member Email (if different): _____ First Name: _____ Middle Name: _____
 Last Name: _____ Preferred Name: _____ Address (if different): _____
 City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____ Birth Date: ____ / ____ / ____ **Gender:** Male Female
 Primary Phone: (____) _____ Cell Phone: (____) _____ **Years in 4-H**, including current year: _____

Parent/Guardian 1.

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____ Cell Phone: (____) _____ Work Phone: (____) _____

Parent/Guardian 2.

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____ Cell Phone: (____) _____ Work Phone: (____) _____
 Address (if different): _____ City: _____ Zip: _____
 Home Phone if different: _____ Parent 2 Email if different: _____ 4-H County: _____

Emergency Contact Name: _____ **Phone:** _____ **Email:** _____ **Relationship:** _____

Volunteer Information

Are you a Volunteer? No Yes **If Yes, please select one:** Youth Volunteer Adult Volunteer
Ethnicity: Are you of Hispanic ethnicity? No Yes
Check all that apply: White Black Asian American Indian or Alaskan Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
Residence: Farm Town Under 10,000 or rural non-farm Town/city 10,000–50,000
 Suburb of city more than 50,000 Central city more than 50,000
Family Member Military Service: None serving A parent is serving Kco 'ugtɫɫpi and/or my spouse is serving
 A sibling is serving A son/daughter is serving
Branch of Service: Air Force Army Coast Guard Navy Marines
Branch Component: Active Duty National Guard Reserves
 School Name: _____ School County: _____ District: _____ **School Grade:** _____
 School Type: Public Private Charter Magnate Homeschool Special Ed Vocational
Volunteer Status: First Year Returning
Adult Volunteer Roles: Organizational Leader Project Leader Activity Leader Resource Leader Military Leader
for: Club **or** Group? **If a project leader**—what project(s): _____
Do you volunteer through another agency? No Yes **If Yes,** Partner Cgency has memorandum of understanding: No Yes
Teacher or Coordinator: No Yes **Which Agency:** _____
 Have you attended the State Volunteer Leader Forum? No Yes Have you attended the Southern Region Volunteer Leader Forum? No Yes
 Have you attended the Southern Region Teen Leader Forum? No Yes
Completed camp counselor training this year: No Yes Served as a camp counselor: No Yes
 Your club volunteer role: _____ County volunteer role: _____
 District volunteer role: _____ State volunteer role: _____
 Committees Serving on (include level): _____

Will work directly with youth, 3 or more times with the same youth members: No Yes
 4-H Master Gardener: No Yes Work with same youth face-to-face, 3 or more times: No Yes

Additional Information

In 4-H in another state? What states? _____ Your experiences in this state(s): _____

Please send email or newsletters about 4-H: No Yes Keep me on the list after j igh school: No Yes

Disability: Do you require accommodations for a disability to participate in 4-H programs? No Yes

Describe disability/assistance needed:

School attending: Public Private Home School full name (if in other county): _____

School is in my 4-H county: No Yes

Club Participation Information

My 2nd 4-H county: I'm in 4-H in 2 counties My 4-H county is not the county I live in.

My club in my second 4-H county: _____.

My project in my second 4-H county: _____ My years in this project: _____

Did you attend any of these overnight camps last year?

County Camp OMK Military Camp Horse State Camp Marine State Camp Shooting Sports/Fishing Camp

Leadership role in my Primary club:

youth leader – over 14 activity leader council delegate president vice-president secretary treasurer
 reporter historian parliamentarian recreation leader sergeant-at-arms youth leader – under 14
 elub project county project

Leadership role in my Secondary club:

youth leader – over 14 activity leader council delegate president vice-president secretary treasurer
 reporter historian parliamentarian recreation leader sergeant-at-arms youth leader – under 14
 elub project county project

Project Participation Information

To be a 4-H member you must enroll in at least one project.

For a list of projects and project literature, go to <http://florida4h.org/projects/index.shtml>.

Project Title	Years in Project	Project Book Title Needed

Program Fees if Applicable:

Club Fee/Dues Paid \$ _____ Personal Insurance Fee of \$1 paid.

Personal Insurance Fee of \$2 paid for Horse Project Members.

Purchase of Project Books Amount Due \$ _____ Paid \$ _____ Bal. Due: \$ _____

Total Amount Paid: \$ _____ Paid by Check Check # _____ Paid by Cash

Return this enrollment form to your county Extension office. For a county directory, go to <http://solutionsforyourlife.com/map/>.

Fiscal Requirements of 4-H Clubs



A 4-H club must be chartered to be eligible to use the name and emblem of 4-H. Chartered clubs have several rights and responsibilities for fiscal management of resources garnered in the name of 4-H. All individual clubs in Florida operate under the fiscal authority and jurisdiction of the local County Extension Director. No accounts will be opened under an individual's name using a social security number. Club treasuries and fundraising activities have specific guidelines and procedures to follow. As clubs are formed,

club treasurers and designated adult leaders will receive training and materials regarding county 4-H club fiscal policies. Each club receives a Florida 4-H Club Treasurer's Book annually.

Tax Exemption

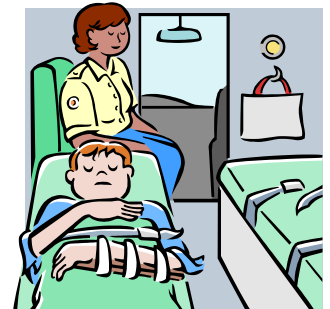
In each county, the County Extension Director (CED), on behalf of the University of Florida Cooperative Extension Service, is accountable for the administrative oversight of all funds associated with the county Extension program. All counties have an association, which serves the following purposes: (1) advisory function including Expansion and Review; (2) Program support; and (3) managing the fiscal resources of the county 4-H clubs and affiliate groups. All individual club funds will be kept with the local county 4-H association's account. Only on occasion will there be an exception to this policy. Working with the county association's treasurer, the club treasurer, at the end of each county 4-H fiscal year, will submit an annual audit report to the association. For review, the county association will submit all the necessary IRS information to the State 4-H Headquarters for filing with the State 4-H GEN. Individual clubs are still expected to follow all procedures in recording any income and expenses on a monthly basis in the 4-H Club Treasurer's Book. With all county associations falling under the Florida State 4-H Association's GEN, donors, individuals, and businesses may deduct contributions to a 4-H club or county 4-H program as afforded by IRS policy and guidelines.

Member Fees/Dues

Some counties require 4-H members to pay membership dues and some do not. Sometimes counties may assess fees to cover the cost of insurance, newsletters, or other specified items.

Insurance/Risk Management

Liability and accident insurance information is provided for county personnel in the 4-H Program Handbook. Ensuring proper coverage for members and volunteers is extremely important and protects individuals and the organization. 4-H volunteers will want to ask their county Extension agent for information and forms concerning insurance coverage available to the 4-H club.



Evaluating, Reporting, and Recognizing Club Performance

4-H Extension agents report data to the University of Florida and CSREES/USDA in an annual statistical report of summarized demographic data regarding members and volunteers. This information includes the numbers of clubs in the county, member enrollment and project information about the program. Youth development professionals working with a 4-H club within an organization outside Extension will need to work closely with the county 4-H Extension faculty and include data on the club in this report.

In addition to the statistics gathered about the 4-H club, volunteers will want to evaluate the success of the club in providing the support youth need. This will allow club volunteers to state how well the club is contributing to the growth and development of its members. This assessment involves more than gathering numbers. While the numbers of youth participating does indicate a level of success in reaching youth (they keep coming, or drop out), there are other indicators that will help assess what is happening in the club. Work closely with the 4-H Extension faculty and use quality evaluation tools to assess club progress.

Club Performance Recognition

Club recognition systems exist to recognize clubs for their performance. Clubs may strive to reach specific standards of performance just as individual club members work to achieve standards. Florida 4-H provides four levels of recognition—bronze, silver, gold, and emerald for 4-H Club attainment. Each of the four levels of standards is available for clubs to achieve. Criteria for *Club Performance Standards* can be found on pages 13 and 14.



BRONZE Clover

Club will receive a BRONZE Clover Certificate and name printed in the 4-H newsletter.

SILVER Clover

Club will receive a SILVER Clover Certificate and name printed in the 4-H newsletter.

GOLD Clover

Club will receive a GOLD Clover Certificate and name printed in the 4-H newsletter.

EMERALD Clover

Club will receive an EMERALD Clover Certificate, name printed in the 4-H newsletter, and name in a news article submitted to the local newspaper for publication.

For further information about the Florida 4-H Program, go to the Florida 4-H website at <http://www.florida4h.org>.



Standards of Excellence for 4-H Clubs and Groups



Check the following *Club Performance Standards* completed during the 4-H year. Documentation may come from meeting minutes, scrapbooks, photos, newspaper articles, letters, etc., and should be attached to this form.

<i>Club / Group Name</i> _____	
County _____	
<i>Club / Group President Signature</i> _____	<i>Date</i> _____
<i>Organizational Volunteer Signature</i> _____	<i>Date</i> _____
Total Number of checked responses for the 20 Excellent Standards _____	

Club Performance Standards

- _____ 1. Club/group had a planned annual program that includes group goals ~~OR~~ ~~OR~~ *recruit 4 new members , 75% of members will attend camp , all members will choose one county learning activity to attend).*
- _____ 2. Club/group members were actively involved in planning the club/group's annual program.
- _____ 3. Club/group selected an area of focus for their annual program (*e.g., health & fitness; environmental science; pet care; community service; intercultural understanding OR club/group is represented in the community, by serving on a committee, council, or board with adult partners).*
- _____ 4. Club/Group members were involved in implementing the annual program/activities ~~OR~~ ~~OR~~ *planning and bringing snacks, leading the pledges, calling club/group members for a meeting or assignment , presenting a demonstration, organizing a tour , introducing a speaker , leading recreation , teaching others).*
- _____ 5. A calendar for the year was printed and distributed to members, parents, volunteers, and the local Extension Office (*e.g., identify meetings dates, locations ; educational programs; special projects; social events; county or district events).*
- _____ 6. All members were invited and at least 75% of club/group members were involved in at least nine club/group activities during the year ~~OR~~ ~~OR~~ *meetings , club/group tours , recognition event).*
- _____ 7. Club/Group officers were elected or appointed, and fulfilled their leadership roles.
- _____ 8. Club/Group completed at least one (1) community service project.



Club Performance Standards (continued)

- _____ 9. Club/Group completed at least one (1) promotion activity that promotes 4-H visibility at the community or county level (*e.g., participating in a community parade , radio interviews during National 4-H Week , project displays in business windows, or doing website development for County Extension office*).
- _____ 10. Club/Group has completed at least one (1) project that promotes 4-H visibility at the county, multi-county, district, state, multi-state, national or global level.
- _____ 11. Club/Group recruited at least one (1) project volunteer for at least 75% of the members' project learning areas.
- _____ 12. At least 75% of the members made progress toward individual 4-H project goals.
- _____ 13. Group developed a method to communicate with families at least three (3) times per year regarding club/group activities, education, and achievements (*e.g., newsletters , e-mails , calling tree , group activity that includes families*).
- _____ 14. Club/Group planned at least one (1) activity to include parents and families in club/group activities (*e.g., project showcase , skating party , tours , recognition event*).
- _____ 15. Members took part in a variety of non-competitive activities and/or meetings beyond the 4-H club/group level (*e.g., county project workshops , council meetings , interstate exchange programs*).
- _____ 16. A scheduled recognition event was held for members, volunteers and parents.
- _____ 17. Club/group planned and implemented at least one multi-club activity (*e.g., doing multi-club community service , several clubs managing a community or county event , conducting a multi-club learning or social event*).
- _____ 18. Members participated in competitive 4-H events beyond the club/group level (*e.g., county events , district events, state fair , project area competitions*).
- _____ 19. 4-H club/group consistently had a safety/supervision ratio of 1 adult to 10 youth.
- _____ 20. The racial/ethnic composition of the club reflects the diversity of the surrounding community. (If club does not reflect the diversity of the community, then successful efforts to contact minority citizens in person, by mail, and through mass media may be used. Work with your county 4-H agent for help achieving this goal.)

12-13 Checked of 20 questions = **BRONZE** Clover Club Award
14-15 Checked of 20 questions = **SILVER** Clover Club Award
16-17 Checked of 20 questions = **GOLD** Clover Club Award
18-20 Checked of 20 questions = **EMERALD** Clover Club Award



The 4-H Pledge



The **HEAD** represents:

1. Thinking, planning, and reasoning.
2. Gaining new and valuable knowledge.
3. Understanding the why's.

The **HEART** represents:

1. Being concerned about the welfare of others.
2. Accepting the responsibilities of citizenship.
3. Determining the values and attitudes by which to live.
4. Learning how to live and work with others.
5. Developing positive attitudes.

The **HANDS** represent:

1. Learning new skills.
2. Improving skills already known.
3. Being useful, helpful, and skillful.
4. Developing respect for work and pride in accomplishment.

The **HEALTH** represents:

1. Practicing healthful living.
2. Enjoying life.
3. Using leisure time wisely.
4. Protecting the well being of self and others.

The 4-H Pledge, first adopted in 1927, summarizes 4-H as the four-fold development of youth through the Head, Heart, Hands, and Health.

Post a pledge banner at your meeting site. At the end of the first meeting, give everyone a card with the 4-H pledge to take home.

1. This document is 4H GCL 00 (DLN 4H281), one of a series of the Florida 4-H Youth Development Program, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. First published November 2007. Revised December 2009, March 2012. Visit the EDIS website at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.
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