

NEWS RELEASE

TEXAS 4-H AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM



TEXAS 4-H DEVELOPS YOUTH INTO LEADERS

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COLLEGE STATION – For one hundred years, the Texas 4-H and Youth Development Program has been instilling life skills in the youth of Texas to prepare them for leadership and service. The 4-H motto 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.” These foundation statements have been leading this 625,000 member organization to do what they do best – serve their communities, while becoming better citizens.

Founded in 1908 by Tom Marks in Jack County, Texas, the “Corn Club” agricultural program involved 25 young men with the hopes of teaching them new farming techniques with corn. Tom Marks had labored with their fathers on adopting the new technology with no avail. His hope was to demonstrate through the young men the benefits of adopting new agricultural practices and increasing production. The results of the project were tremendous, both in demonstrating the techniques of new agricultural methods, and the change it made in the young men. Four years later, Edna Trigg created the “Girls Tomato Club” in Milam County, Texas with the same hopes of demonstrating home canning techniques.

Through the guidance of these two individuals, opportunities were created by the youth accepting leadership roles and demonstrating to the community the techniques they had acquired as a result of participating. Later, the two programs were combined as they expanded across the state and the program eventually became known as 4-H.

Today, the Texas 4-H and Youth Development Program is part of the Texas AgriLife Extension Service, an agency of the Texas A&M System. Annually it reaches over 600,000 youth with more than 40,000 volunteers in all 254 counties of Texas. 4-H is just as much an urban program as it is a rural program. “Our roots may be formed in agriculture, but all youth in Texas are involved in 4-H, from photography to computers, to consumer education,” stated Dr. Martha Couch, Associate Director for 4-H and Youth Development.

The 4-H program helps teach life skills through youth’s involvement of their head, heart, hands, and health in hands-on educational activities. Youth learn the principles of public speaking, conflict resolution, character, decision making, record keeping, planning/organizing, and critical thinking to name a few of more than forty life skills. All educational efforts are coordinated by a county Extension agent and a team of volunteers in each county and is open to all youth between the ages of 8, and in the third grade, to 18 years of age.

For more information about how to get involved in 4-H, contact your County Extension Office, or e-mail texas4h@tamu.edu.