



4-H VOLUNTEER INFORMATION SERIES

N e b r a s k a 4 - H Y o u t h D e v e l o p m e n t

The 4-H Essential Elements and Youth Development

4-H has the opportunity to help young people meet four essential human needs in a positive way, contributing to the development of caring, productive citizens. Being aware of these elements, adult volunteers can more readily provide opportunities for youth to meet these needs.

INDEPENDENCE

I pledge my head to clearer thinking...

Youth need to know that they are able to influence people and events through decision-making and action. By exercising independence through 4-H leadership opportunities, youth mature in self-discipline and responsibility, learn to better understand themselves and become independent thinkers. Young people are not just the leaders of tomorrow—they have great untapped potential for responsible leadership today.

Provide opportunities for youth to:

- Experience leadership positions at various age and responsibility levels.
- Select projects of interest to them.
- Work on their own as much as possible with adult guidance.
- Share their ideas and concerns.

BELONGING

I pledge my heart to greater loyalty...

Youth need to know they are cared about by others and feel a sense of connection to others in the group. 4-H gives youth the opportunity to feel physically and emotionally safe while actively participating in a group. Research suggests that a sense of belonging may be the single most powerful, positive ingredient we can add into the lives of children and youth.

Provide opportunities for youth to:

- Get to know each other, share interests and celebrate.
- Work in group settings with various age groups.
- Be involved a wide range of activities in the club and community.
- Involve family and community members in 4-H activities.

GENEROSITY

I pledge my hands to larger service...

Youth need to feel their lives have meaning and purpose. By participating in 4-H community service and citizenship activities, youth can connect to communities and learn to give back to others. These experiences provide the foundation that helps us understand the “big picture” of life and find purpose and meaning.

Provide opportunities for youth to:

- Become involved in projects where they contribute to improvements in their environment.
- Visit community resources and identify ways they can become involved.
- Share and gain skills and knowledge in programs with individuals of various ages.
- Develop awareness and compassion for others.

MASTERY

I pledge my health to better living...

In order to develop their self-confidence, youth need to feel and believe they are capable and they must experience success at solving problems and meeting challenges to develop their self-confidence. By exploring 4-H projects and activities, youth master skills to make positive career and life choices.

Provide opportunities for youth to:

- Learn by doing.
- Have a safe environment for making mistakes and getting constructive feedback.
- Explore possibilities for future careers.
- Give public presentations to help develop confidence and communication skills.