

## **Mission and Goals of 4-H**

Four-H is a unique partnership involving youth, volunteers, the University of Nebraska – Lincoln Extension and the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, federal-state-local governments, business and industry. The mission of UNL Extension is to help individuals develop into responsible and productive citizens.

### **Mission of 4-H**

To help youth and volunteer staff acquire knowledge, develop life skills and strengthen values that enable them to become increasing self-directing, productive, contributing citizens. This mission is carried out through non-formal education involving parents, volunteer leaders and other adults who organize and conduct educational experiences in community and family settings.

### **Program Direction**

A strength of 4-H is the support from the University of Nebraska and the flexible programming that keeps 4-H relevant to the interests and needs of young people and their families. Nebraska 4-H regularly involves youth, volunteers, community leaders and Extension staff in establishing priorities to guide the development of new programs. The state and national initiatives that guide Extension are demonstrated in the accomplishments of individual 4-H'ers as they learn leadership skills, adopt healthy lifestyles, explore careers, and discover the uses of science and technology.

### **Importance of Life Skills**

Four-H is based on the concept of teaching young people the skills they need to successfully cope with everyday life. We refer to this concept as life skill development. Life skills are the learned abilities needed throughout life. They involve using knowledge, skills, and experience to meet everyday needs in a variety of situations. Life skills help youth evaluate options and make decisions to deal with the complexities of life. They help youth build and maintain relationships that promote personal well-being in an interdependent society. Young people need opportunities to make choices and to take actions to become self-directive and productive, to lead a satisfying life and to make a contribution to society. While descriptions may vary, these seven basic life skills serve as a focus in many 4-H programs.

1. **Understanding Self:** Understanding and developing a positive attitude about self is an important part of growing up.
2. **Relating With Others:** Interpersonal skills are important in helping people get along with one another. They enable people to interact in a positive way.
3. **Communicating:** Sharing information with other people involves communication skills. These skills are important in helping people give, receive and exchange information.
4. **Solving Problems and Decision Making:** The ability to recognize problems and make appropriate decisions is an important factor in meeting the challenges of today's world.
5. **Acquiring, Analyzing and Using Information:** The ability to learn and keep on learning is essential in a constantly changing world. The ability to learn and use information is important.
6. **Managing Resources:** Management involves using the resources available to reach personal goals. It involves managing your own resources and managing other resources when needed.
7. **Working with Others:** In a democratic and interdependent society, it is important to be able to work with others in different settings.

These skills are learned in a number of ways. In 4-H, life skills are learned by participating in projects, workshops, activities, events, camps and demonstrations, and by serving in leadership roles throughout the 4-H program. Life skills also are taught through the example of adult role models.