



Heartland Science

Ohio's Legacy of Discovery & Innovation



Agriculture & Food

From Aquaculture to Hot Dogs

4-H Club Movement



Albert B. Graham started the international 4-H Club movement in Springfield in 1902 by forming an "Agricultural Club" to teach boys and girls better farming and home management techniques. From that first club meeting with 30 young people, held in the basement of the Springfield Courthouse, Graham's idea grew into a national phenomenon. Today about 7 million youth are involved in 4-H programs each year. Programs thrive in all 3,067 counties of the United States, District of Columbia, commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and five territories as part of the Cooperative Extension Service. The Cooperative Extension System is a partnership between the United States Department of Agriculture, state land-grant universities, and local county governments. More than 80 other countries also have 4-H programs.

The Ohio State University learned about Graham's "out-of-school education program" and invited him to supervise agricultural clubs for boys and girls throughout the state as part of the University's Land Grant mission. He became superintendent of extension in Ohio in 1905 with goals that included:

- To elevate the standard of living in rural communities.
- To acquaint boys and girls with their environment and to interest them in making their own investigations.
- To inspire young men and women to further their education in the science of agriculture or domestic science.
- To cultivate a taste for the beauty of nature.
- To educate adults in the elementary science of agriculture and in the most up-to-date farm practices.

Graham kept those goals in organizing his agricultural clubs on a national basis, where they eventually became known as 4-H Clubs.

Fun Facts About 4-H

- The National 4-H emblem is a four-leaf clover, which represents the four-fold development of Head, Heart, Hands, and Health. Youth learn the importance of each and how they work together to produce a well rounded person.
- The four leaf clover signifies "good luck" and "achievement." Like the clover, 4-H symbolizes a four-squared, well rounded life. If it is good luck to find a four leaf clover, it is far better luck to know and live each "H" on the clover.
- The 4-H Pledge, adopted in 1927:
"I pledge . . .
My Head to clearer thinking,
My Heart to greater loyalty,
My Hands to larger service,
My Health to better living,

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Page 1 of 2

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for my club,
my community,
my country,
and my world."

- 4-H Motto: "To Make The Best Better"
- The 4-H Slogan: "Learn by Doing"
- The 4-H Colors: Green and White

4-H continues that work in rural areas, but its focus goes beyond residents of agricultural areas. Membership is open to all youth aged 5-19, including residents of urban areas. Graham's original objective at the turn of the 20th Century, however, remains the same in the 21st: "The development of youth as individuals and as responsible, productive members of the community in which they live."

Graham, who was superintendent of the Springfield Township Schools, at that time, believed that agricultural production and rural life could be improved by applying scientific knowledge.

Find out more...

[Ohio 4-H Centennial](#)
[National 4-H Centennial](#)
[National 4-H Council](#)