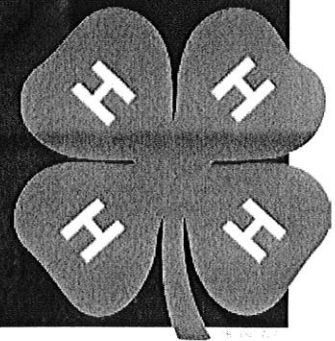




# Hands On, Hearts Full:

*4 Reasons Your Homeschool  
Kids Should Be "4-H"ers*

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4-H is the largest out-of-school youth program in the United States with over 7 million members and 500,000 teen and adult volunteers. The organization serves millions of youth and adults each year, operating in over 80 countries (National 4-H Headquarters 2004) (1).

4-H and the cooperative extension began at the turn of the century to help improve life and farming in rural areas by introducing improved methods of farming and homemaking. Modern 4-H youth clubs go far beyond canning and hog raising, with computer and engineering focused clubs popping up around the country, it is an opportunity for children to not only work as a team with their peers but to give back to their communities. Here are my top four reasons your homeschoolers should be involved in 4-H.

## 1. Hands on Life Skills

When I was a 4-er, my daily homeschool curriculum was 50% 4h workbooks, raising goats, tracking their progress, preparing them for the fair, planning meetings, (since parents were never in charge of meetings). The club president was accountable for order and also for delegating to the other members. From a young age, you get a sense for reaching goals as a team. 4-H as a curriculum is wonderful and enhances the homeschooling/homesteading kids' life experience.

## 2. A Heart For the Community

On leaving for college I was shocked and amazed at how few people I went to University with had zero community service in middle and high school. The great thing about 4-H is the sense of community you get and the many ways you can give back! Our 4-H group visited a nursing home every other weekend with homemade cheese cakes and usually presented a talent show, it was an opportunity to give back, but the lessons we received from the residents we visited was much greater than what we gave.

## 3. Healthy Relationships

4-H forges healthy relationships for kids and teens and friendships that last a lifetime. While Homeschoolers have many diverse ways of socializing and building friendships, 4h is another opportunity for working with a diverse group of peers. Conversely, it also creates a sense of independence and confidence in children that will follow them into adulthood.

## 4. Creates Thinkers

4-H Gives Homeschool students an opportunity to put their well honed creative thinking skills to good work and with incentive opportunities like year end awards for projects, yearly fair projects and demonstrations. All in all 4-H is a great addition to any child's life, but for the homeschooler living on a homestead it is an absolute must!! For more info contact your local cooperative extension or visit <http://www.4-H.org/youth-development-programs/>

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