



A CHRONOLOGY OF NATIONAL HEALTH PROGRAM ISSUES IN 4-H

- 1900 - Liberty Hyde Bailey dreamed of a world in which *learning about the world we live in was valued* and that learning extended beyond the classroom walls. His focus was on practical science applied to real world problems.
- 1901 - Will B. Otwell dreamed that young people *could change the world* through their eagerness to try something new, such as applying new farming techniques and technologies, and inspire to others to try new ideas as well.
- 1902 - A.B. Graham and O.J.Kern shared a dream that young people could become *excited about practical science* which would allow them to better understand their world and to dignify the lives of the "common people".
- 1905 - The focus on three "H's" took hold; *Head, Heart and Hands* with an emphasis on making youth fit for self-government, self-control, self-help; a living, thinking being.
- 1906 - William Hall Smith in Mississippi started a corn contest, similar to those in the Midwest for young boys. He hoped that these contests would convince farmers that corn could be a cash crop in addition to providing feed for farm animals. Smith thought farmers could dramatically improve rural diets.
- 1910 - Gertrude Warren dreamed that youth could be engaged in more than just activities- but should be encouraged in programs which would inspire them to be *lifelong learners of science, of beauty, and of service*.
- 1912 - Tomato and Canning Clubs started for girls to improve rural diets by teaching gardening and safe food preservation techniques.
- 1920 - 4-H clubs initiated hot lunch programs for schools starting in 1918. In 1920, a national outline guide for programs was available to support state efforts.
- 1922 - Health took hold in the 4-H program with a health contest in which State Leaders were invited to have their youth select the boy and girl from their delegations whom they deemed healthiest. These candidates were thoroughly examined by physicians from the Elizabeth McCormick Memorial Fund, a health foundation. The idea of presenting a farm boy and a farm girl as the "healthiest in the United States" had an appeal that fired journalistic imaginations and won headlines. In 1922 and for years thereafter, the health contest produced more newspaper and magazine space than any other single feature - and in spite of its defects- the contest focused attention on the importance of health to boys and girls. The contest waned after World War II, and the remaining programs in health seemed "vague and disparate".
- 1927- Boys and Girls Club Work or Junior Extension officially became 4-H club work.
- 1931 - Land Grant College Association decided to study 4-H club trends and chart a course for the future- Published a statement of objectives in 1935, which were intended to serve as a compass for 4-H work-
1. To help rural boys & girls develop desirable standards of farming, homemaking, and community life.
 2. To give technical instruction- and in so doing give boys and girls a respect for agriculture and homemaking.
 3. To use the "learn by doing" method, and give boys and girls a chance to demonstrate to others what they have learned.
 4. To instill in young minds an appreciation of their rural environment.
 5. To teach the value of research and develop the scientific attitude.
 6. To train boys and girls in cooperative action for the solving of rural problems.
 7. To cultivate habits of health and the wise use of leisure; to arouse the desire to keep on learning in order to live richer lives.
 8. To teach better methods of farming and homemaking, to the end that farm incomes may be increased, standards of living improved, and the satisfactions of farm life enhanced.

- 1956 - 4-H was invited to participate in the first meeting of the President's Council on Youth Fitness.
- 1960 - Nearly half a million youth were reached by 4-H health programs focused on diet, nutrition, and weight management.
- 1969 - The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program was authorized through Congress to develop and implement programs focused on nutrition in urban areas.
- 1972 - "Mulligan Stew" introduced; a 4-H television series focused on nutrition designed to appeal to inner city youth. Its popularity swelled 4-H participation figures by 1974 to 7.1 million, more than triple the enrollments recorded in 1965.
- 1973 - Every state had some sort of drug prevention program, some had programs focusing on health careers, and some states piloted programs on smoking and health. Some states were also doing work in sex education. In 1973, National 4-H Conference included frank discussions on abortion, teenage pregnancy and sexuality.
- 1975 - 4-H Eye Care Education Project was begun with a grant from American Optometric Association.
- 1975 - The health program still lacked emphasis and national priority. A grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation funded a study and a series of recommendations on 4-H health programs. Three years later, the same foundation supported new 4-H health ideas in Florida and Michigan. The pilot programs used computers to develop health risk profiles on children and designing new health programs that 4-H and schools could share.
- 1978 - 4-H began to focus on its accessibility to handicapped youth and adults. 4-H convened a session with handicapped youth and leaders from 4-H, Scouting, and the YMCA and YWCA to determine accommodations and ways 4-H could be more welcoming.
- 1994 - ES 4-H Unit Plan of Work
With partnership, identified key national priorities for strategic planning, including:

Health

1. Define a relatively narrow focus
2. Conduct national assessment- find out what is there
3. Develop working paper on 4-H Health including fit with Decisions for Health Initiative and Strategic Plan for Health
4. Identify potential partners including public and private sector
5. Research national and state policies regarding adolescent health
6. Build a coalition for 4-H Health Education
7. Define a niche for extension youth health programming - what is the "Big Idea"?
8. Identify the leadership
9. Conduct a symposium on health - attend conferences on youth health: Healthy People 2000, International Health Conference.
10. Prepare a position paper for distribution and comment.
11. Support and partner with Reinvention Lab at National 4-H Council around Health issues.
12. Support for the Southern Region Health Curriculum Team

Sources:

Reck, Franklin (1951). The 4-H Story: A history of 4-H club work. Iowa State College Press, Ames, IA.
Wessel, T. & Wessel, M. (1982). 4-H: An American Idea, 1900-1980. National 4-H Council, Chevy Chase, MD.
Extension Service 4-H Unit Plan of Work (1994). USDA Archives.

The mission of National 4-H Headquarters is to advance knowledge for agriculture, the environment, human health and well-being, and communities by creating opportunities for youth. For more information, visit www.national4-headquarters.gov



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