



The 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development 2009 Summary of Findings for Wave 6 of the Study

Study Shows: 4-H Helps Young People Excel Beyond Their Peers



The structured learning, encouragement and adult mentoring that young people receive through their participation in 4-H plays a vital role in helping them achieve future life successes. For nearly a decade, preeminent youth development scholar, Dr. Richard Lerner, and the team at the Institute for Applied Research in Youth Development at Tufts University have been working with faculty at land-grant universities to conduct *The 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development*.

This in-depth, longitudinal study has discovered that, when compared to other youth, young people involved in 4-H have higher educational achievement and higher motivation for future education. In addition, youth in 4-H are more civically active and make more civic contributions to their communities than youth in other out-of-school programs.

4-H Youth Make More Healthy Choices

According to Wave 6 of the study, 4-H'ers – regardless of their background, socio-economic status, race, and gender – thrive through the health/safety education and experiences they receive through 4-H programming. In fact, young people in 4-H are:

- Less likely to have sexual intercourse by Grade 10,
- 56% more likely to spend more hours exercising or being physically active,
- Shown to have had significantly lower drug, alcohol and cigarette use than their peers.

4-H'ers Excel in School and the Sciences

The advantages of 4-H participation also include higher educational achievement and higher motivation for future education. Young people in 4-H:

- Report better grades, higher levels of academic competence, and an elevated level of engagement at school,
- Are nearly two times more likely to plan to go to college,
- Are more likely to pursue future courses or a career in science, engineering, or computer technology.

The study also finds that girls in 4-H are more than twice as likely to participate in science, engineering, or computer technology programs than their peers.

Young people in 4-H Are Committed to Improving Their Communities

A notable trend of the study indicates that 4-H youth are three times more likely to actively contribute to their communities when compared with youth who do not participate in 4-H.

Methodology:

The 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development is a longitudinal study that began in 2002, and continues today, surveying more than 6,400 adolescents from diverse backgrounds across 34 U.S. states. The study is made possible by the contributions of our nation's land-grant universities and National 4-H Council.

