

4-H Makes a Difference

For more than a decade, pre-eminent youth development scholars Richard M. Lerner and Jacqueline V. Lerner and the team at the Institute for Applied Research in Youth Development at Tuft's University, Medford, Mass., partnered with faculty at America's land-grant universities, including North Dakota State University, to conduct this groundbreaking research.

The first-of-its-kind research defined and measured positive youth development. The result is a model that is driving new thinking and approaches to youth development around the world.

Researchers theorized that young people whose lives incorporated the Five C's of Positive Youth Development would be on a developmental path that results in a Sixth C: contributions to self, family, community and the institutions of a civil society. In addition, those young people whose lives contained lower amounts of the Five C's would be at higher risk for a developmental path that included personal, social and behavioral problems and risks (Lerner, 2004).

Positive Youth Development

Competence

- Positive view of one's actions in specific areas, including social and academic skills

Confidence

- An internal sense of overall positive self-worth and self-efficacy

Connection

- Positive bonds with people and institutions reflected in exchanges between the individual and peers, family, school and community in which both parties contribute to the relationship

Character

- Respect for societal and cultural norms, possession of standards for correct behaviors, a sense of right and wrong (morality), and integrity

Caring

- A sense of sympathy and empathy for others

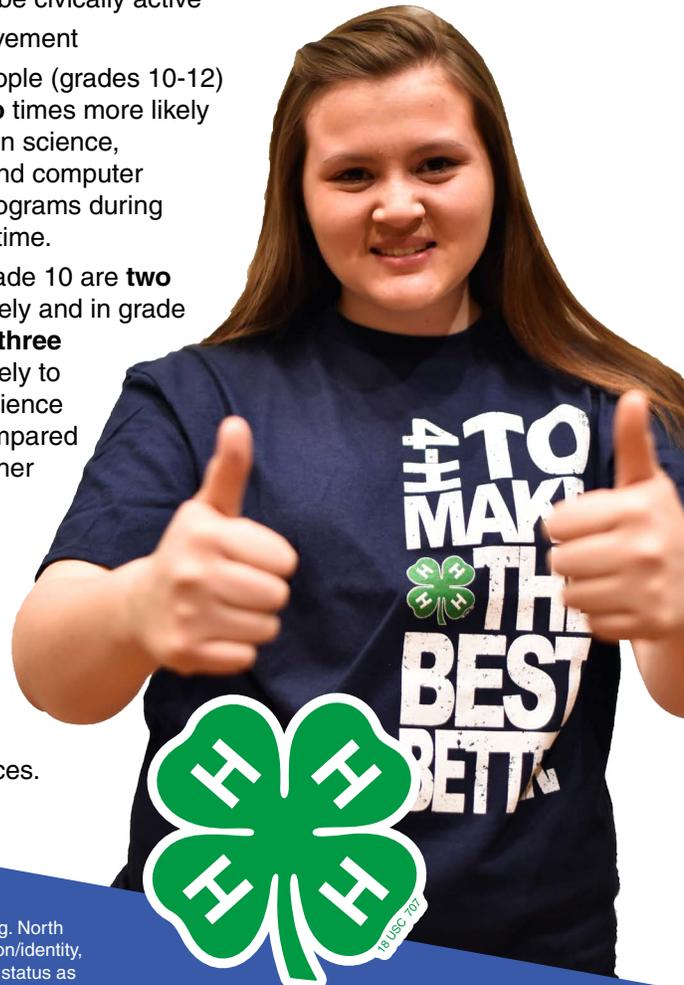
Contribution

- Contributions to self, family, community and the institutions of a civil society

4-H Youth Excel

Compared with their peers, youth involved in 4-H programs excel in several areas:

- Contribution/Civic Engagement
 - 4-H'ers (grades 7-12) are nearly **four** times more likely to make contributions to their communities
 - 4-H'ers (grades 8-12) are nearly **two** times more likely to be civically active
- Academic Achievement
 - 4-H young people (grades 10-12) are nearly **two** times more likely to participate in science, engineering and computer technology programs during out-of-school time.
 - 4-H girls in grade 10 are **two** times more likely and in grade 12 are nearly **three** times more likely to take part in science programs, compared with girls in other out-of-school time activities.
- Healthy Living
 - 4-H'ers (grade 7) are nearly **two** times more likely to make healthier choices.



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