

4-H youth are ready... **FOR LIFE!**



Over the past 20 years, research commissioned by National 4-H Council and conducted by Dr. Richard M. Lerner and his research team at the Institute for Applied Research in Youth Development at Tufts University shows that **4-H contributes to the positive development of young people – with lasting effects that continue into adulthood.**

Building on the decade-long original study conducted between 2002 and 2012, Dr. Lerner and his research team recently completed two additional studies between 2020 and 2023.

Collectively, this research reveals the impact of 4-H and underscores its positive and enduring influence on youth, ensuring they are ready for the journey of life.

ORIGINAL STUDY

The original **4-H Study of Positive Youth Development** conducted from 2002 to 2012 across multiple waves of data collection, reveals that, compared to their peers, **4-H members were:**



nearly **4X** more likely to **make a positive contribution to their communities**



2X more likely to **participate in out-of-school-time science programs**



2X more likely to **make healthier choices**

REPLICATION STUDY

The **Replication Study of Positive Youth Development**, conducted with **346 youth** across three waves of data collection, reveals that 4-H continues to have a strong impact. Youth reported high levels of positive youth development, including **overall well-being, a desire to contribute to others, a sense of purpose and hope for the future, strong relationship skills, good self-regulation and active school engagement.** Findings show the positive impact that 4-H continues to have, particularly as youth navigate significant mental health and other challenges.

Most notably, when compared to non-4-H youth, **participants in the Replication Study were:**



2X more likely to report **feeling competent**



2X more likely to **feel positive about their wellbeing**

RECONNECTION STUDY

The **Reconnection Study**, one of the first investigations into the long-term effects of 4-H, was conducted with **332 young adults** who were part of the original study. Results show that 4-H significantly influenced the **confidence, relationship and leadership skills** of the 4-H alums as they enter adulthood. They also reported having a **strong sense of purpose, hope for the future, and a desire to give back through community service**.

When compared to young adults from the original study who did not participate in 4-H, 4-H alums were:



3X more likely to participate in community service



2X more likely to report living life with intentionality & purpose



2X more likely to have a goal of being a leader

ESTABLISHING IMPACT!

How do we ensure youth thrive and are ready for life?

Youth impact is dependent on creating intentional, high-quality 4-H programs that promote positive youth development (PYD). Based on the Thriving Model, the 4-H PYD Academy equips 4-H professionals with the essential knowledge and skills to plan, implement, and evaluate high-quality, impactful youth development programs.

Academy offerings include in-depth training in learning and applied PYD theory, program development and evaluation. Short, one-day intensive Academies develop skills in focused areas, like volunteer development and STEM programming.



MORE INFORMATION

More information about the **4-H Study of Positive Youth Development** and the **Replication and Reconnection** studies can be found at: 4-h.org/about/research/4-h-impact

More information about the **4-H PYD Academy** and upcoming academy opportunities can be found at: pyd-academy.extension.org



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COUNCIL



Institute for Applied Research
in Youth Development