When youth lead, people follow
Listening to what teens think helps us help them
“The most affected are often the most effective”

– ANN CHRISTIANO, UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA, FRANK KAREL CENTER
Youth underscore inequities in technology, food and mental health

**Broadband Access**
November 1-15, 2020  
ages 13-19

**Nutrition**
March 9-16, 2020  
ages 13-19

**Mental Health**
May 4-14, 2020  
ages 13-19
Teens need more from adults and their communities

- Demanding access to resources, knowledge, services to close gaps and increase opportunity
- Thirsting for connectivity with their friends and families—and communities during COVID-19
- Expecting communities and schools to improve access and education
Digital Impact Survey
22% of rural teens have spotty internet
59% of teens without broadband believe in the American dream vs. 72% with it.
Digital access helps teens believe in opportunity

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<tr>
<th>1,570 teens surveyed</th>
<th>Teens without broadband are 2X as likely to lack confidence about graduating</th>
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<td>70% of teens without broadband believe digital skills will help get a better job and financial situation in the future vs. 83% with it</td>
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<td>43% of rural teens plan to leave their hometowns due to poor connectivity</td>
<td>78% of teens with broadband say “Knowing coding creates more career growth opportunities in the future” vs. 61% without</td>
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Digital technology creates community investment for teens

Community Engagement
Teens with digital access are more engaged in community and political issues

Social Engagement
Broadband keeps teens connected with others, pop culture

Building Roots
56% of teens would be more likely to want to stay in their community if high speed internet was easily accessible
4-H Changemakers

Helen Honecker, West Virginia

**Escaping stress during COVID by building an online community through a game design**

“Many of us, including myself, feel socially isolated from friends. This program helps teens interact with other teens…”

Talon Callahan, Washington State

**Reconnecting youth to their cultural heritage through rural broadband adoption**

“I’m an advocate for rural tribal broadband because what I see as most problematic...It’s not about it being slow, there’s just not really access here.”

Clyde VanDyke, Cornell

**Sparking community change through data mapping & visualization**

“I wanted to show how other factors in society like unemployment rates and education level can impact drug overdose deaths.”

4-H is the youth development organization of our nation’s Cooperative Extension System and USDA.
Teen Healthy Habits Survey
88% of teens believe access to healthy food is a basic human right.
84% say “all students in America should have the same access to high quality food”
Access to healthy food is a basic human right

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<th>1501 teens surveyed</th>
<th>37% of teens cannot afford to eat healthy foods</th>
<th>25% of teens have to drive 30 minutes to buy groceries</th>
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<td>68% get by on snacks and junk food during the school day</td>
<td>74% wish there were healthier options in their community and at home (69%)</td>
<td>89% Rural teens expect schools to provide healthy meals</td>
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4-H'ers take action to address food insecurity

- **31%** have donated to healthy food charities vs. 18% of non 4-H'ers
- **25%** have volunteered at a community garden vs. 15% of non 4-H'ers
- **21%** have joined a march or protest compared to 11% of non 4-H'ers
4-H Changemakers

Daisy Buenrostro, Washington State
Creating access to groceries online
Recreating in Spanish

“Most...are still working, which puts them at risk. I recreated a video in Spanish...about ordering groceries online...COVID doesn’t mean we stop serving our community”

Forest Perkins, University of Maine
Community Feast (website)
Revitalizing school garden
Connecting farmers & food pantries

“We are advocating for them [food banks and farmers] to donate excess food to food banks...to connect those with a food surplus to those most in need”

Janya Green, Fort Valley State
Leading Village Community Garden
Sharing access to produce

“Access to healthy food shouldn’t be an issue of age, race, income, geographic location or any of the other ways that society divides us”
Teen Mental Health Survey
7 in 10 teens are experiencing mental health struggles
64% believe COVID-19 will have a lasting impact on their generation’s mental health.
61% of teens say, “The COVID-19 pandemic has increased my feeling of loneliness.”
Teens see mental health as a significant issue

- **1516** teens surveyed
- **75%** say a mental health stigma still exists
- **3X** more likely to feel more peer pressure to hide their feelings than to drink or do drugs
- **40%** of teens give themselves a grade of ‘C’ or below for wellbeing during COVID
- **45%** have experienced excessive stress
“It’s time for Americans to talk more openly and honestly about mental health issues in this country”

– 82% OF AMERICAN TEENS
4-H Changemakers

Jordyn Maloy, University of Maine

#EmpoweringMEandYou
Creating online mental health classes

“With the anxiety levels that people...are undergoing right now, I think our project can effectively help a lot of people that may not have easy access to other forms of help.”

Gavin Crawley, Michigan State

Leading mental health trainings improving access to resources & reducing teen suicide

“I believe in building a strong support network...we need a voice and people we can trust to connect us with tools to build life skills and access resources.”

Micah Palacios, Texas A&M

Navigating Your Thoughts Program Reducing mental health stigma

“You just never know what a person is going through. Just being kind to them and watching what you say...is an important lesson I have learned through my mental health journey.”
We use these insights to

- Keep a finger on the pulse of teen perspectives
  - Racial Injustice Youth Survey
- Share findings with partners, media
- Inform the work we do with 4-H Extension, Council
Thank You.

４Ｈ is the youth development organization of our nation’s Cooperative Extension System and USDA.