

## What is 4-H?

You are traveling to Japan with the States' 4-H International Exchange Program. Maybe you or a family member has participated in 4-H, or this may be your first experience as a 4-H member. 4-H is sponsored by the United States Department of Agriculture and administered by state universities. In our case, 4-H is a youth leadership program of the University of Alaska Fairbanks Cooperative Extension Service. The goal of 4-H is to learn by doing, and then to share what you have learned. The 4-H motto is "To make the best BETTER."

Famous former 4-Hers include: Eric Stonestreet, Julia Roberts, Johnny Bench, Al Gore, Faith Hill, Johnny Cash, Jim Davis (the creator of Garfield comics) and Herschel Walker.

While 4-H began as a program for farm families helping people learn practical skills such as raising animals and preserving vegetables, it has expanded. 4-H is now an international program, with millions of members in countries all over the world. In the USA, 4-H still has programs related to farming, horses, sewing, etc. but also robotics, science and many more topics.

The global immersion programs, such as this global citizenship exchange to Japan, are an important part of 4-H. Each year, many 4-H youth learn about other cultures by either hosting a delegate from another country or by traveling to experience another culture from the "inside".

The Four H's stand for Head, Heart, Hands and Health.

If you don't already know it, learn the 4-H Pledge so you can share it with your friends in Japan. The Pledge goes like this: I pledge my head to clearer thinking, my heart to greater loyalty, my hands to larger service and my health to better living for my club, my community, my country and my world.

Here is a link to a YouTube video of the hand motions for the 4-H Pledge.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tgzsFKyKwdg>

Some clubs add more motions, which you can see in other YouTube videos.