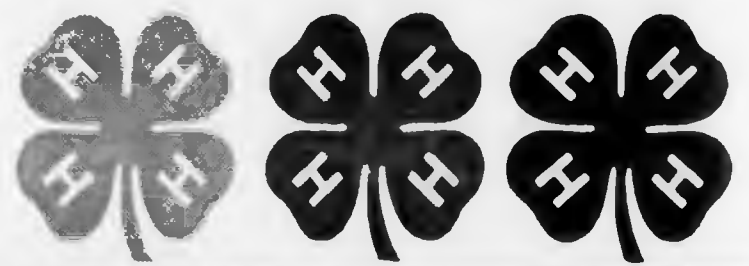


4-H . . . More Than You Ever Imagined



4-H Focuses Programs on "Saving Kids' " Lives

By Donald T. Floyd, Jr.,
Vice President and COO,
National 4-H Council

What's it like in a typical day for America's kids? For some of us it conjures up images and pictures from our childhood - a beautiful spring day - kids playing ball, maybe riding a bike. For today's kids - there can be a very different image that comes to mind.

Let's take a look at a typical day. Today, 2,660 babies will be born into poverty (poverty in America is a family making less than \$13,000); 1,400 babies will have babies today—that 1,400 teen Mom's; 15 children will die from firearms; 24 children will be murdered today and everyday in America; 2,800 kids will drop out of school today, and another 2,800 tomorrow; 3 young people will die from AIDS today - AIDS the silent, classless, raceless killer that has so many myths surrounding it that camouflage its deadliness. Thirteen thousand kids will be suspended from school today, and again tomorrow, and the next day, and the next day. And today in America 6,000 kids will be arrested, another 6,000 tomorrow, and another 6,000 the next day (data from Children's Defense Fund).

This look at a typical day in America paints a picture of kids dying or following a dangerous lifestyle after falling off the positive youth development path. With this grim reality National 4-H Council believes that we have to build an Army. an Army of people with resources and ideas and powerful enough to win the battle — and the

war, and we have to do this now.

Two years ago we changed our focus and started listening to young people and their issues of importance. They told us to treat them as partners, to treat them not as future leaders, but as today's leaders. We joined the growing movement called community youth development (CYD). CYD combines, in an inclusive way, the ideas of the community development world with the positive youth development world that 4-H is so famous for. 5.6 million kids are involved in the 4-H program.

In Indianapolis we are working to bring systemic reform to the school system with our workforce preparation program. Both the school system and businesses are reallocating resources to help kids get ready for work.

In May, 4-H Youth Voices and Action was accepted by The Advertising Council as one of their public service advertising campaigns. The idea will be to position America's children as making a difference in their communities...that kids can and do become involved in ever increasing and meaningful ways - changing the fabric of their communities.

We are a leader in technology. Today we can push a button and instantly communicate via the Internet with all counties.

All of this is connected - as we move to "save kids' lives" in this country. You are an important link in our Army for Kids—you have helped us by making a personal financial commitment, supporting our work - supporting kids and the Army for Kids. Thank YOU, on behalf of the kids. Thank YOU!



Hoke County 4-Hers are shown here making Christmas Crafts.



Bicycle Safety Camp

(Left): Jonathan Patton maneuvers through cones. (Right): Brad Fogleman practices hand signals.

For more information about 4-H contact Sandra Kelly at the Cooperative Extension office at 875-2162.

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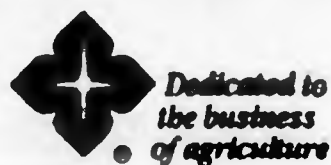
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