

“To Make the Best Better”

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I was dodging raindrops the other day, looked down, and saw this 4-leaf clover. For some, the 4-leaf clover represents luck. While I always feel lucky to find one, I also immediately think of 4-H. I am an OSU Extension Educator with 4-H Youth Development, so some might think well of course she does. But it is more than that, since before I can remember I have been involved with 4-H. I have lived and breathed this program all my life and believe in what we do.



We are a youth development program. Our goal and mission is to develop caring, contributing citizens; to provide learning opportunities for youth to develop their skills to be successful throughout life. To connect them with caring adults who can help mentor them and help them become life-long learners.

We use the motto “To Make the Best Better” and the slogan “Learn by Doing.” The youth in the program are the best, and by participating they are working to improve. They do this by completing hands-on activities and projects and learn by doing real-world things.

As an educator and working with volunteers, I strive in all the decisions I make that they are moving in that same direction toward making the best better. When I have to make decisions, some are easy and some are hard, I must think of what is best for all the youth and volunteers in the program. Just like the kids, the adults are learning as we go through the process.

We make a pledge at each of our meetings and events to help guide what we do. It can also serve as a guide outside of specific events and each and everything we do, especially right now in a time of uncertainty and difficult decisions.

*I pledge my head to clearer thinking. As we work through all these difficult decisions, know that those who are working through this are trying to make the best decision for everyone involved not only for now but for future years as well.

*I pledge my heart to greater loyalty. The adult volunteers are champions for all the kids in the program. As I work with these individuals, they do not take this role lightly and are trying to find positive solutions.

*I pledge my hands to larger service. Just like our youth complete service projects to give back to the community, we could not do the things we do without dedicated volunteers, who give tirelessly to make the best decisions they can for the youth in our community.

*I pledge my health to better living. Physical health is important, but we also need to focus on our mental health. We need to stay positive in both our thoughts and how we are treating ourselves and others, especially as difficult decisions are made. We often hear that we need to learn to win and lose graciously, and we do. But our responses to disappointment should also look like this also, in person, in email and on social media.

*For my club, my community, my country, and my world.



The decisions being made are for everyone. Right now, public officials are making decisions that impact each and every one of us. They are not making these decisions lightly. At the county level and with 4-H, a lot of people are looking toward the fair. The people making decisions are not taking it lightly and understand it impacts each and every one of the youth who exhibit and more. The fair is the culmination of hard work and the chance to show off what has been accomplished. It is also a chance to have fun, see friends, and make memories.

As we do face these interesting times in history, I challenge you to remember the 4-H pledge. I challenge you to not act like those making decisions are doing it carelessly and without considering all the implications. I challenge you to not act like they do not have insight into how much this means to people. It is simply not the case, they do. I challenge you to respond with grace and kindness no matter the decisions. I also challenge you to think about how you have the conversation with the young people in your lives. What do you want to teach them about how to handle wins, losses, and disappointments? These are called tough decisions for a reason, none of us want to even be considering many of these things. But we must make the decisions based on what will be the best solution now and for years to come. All we can control in this situation is how we react, let us make it a positive one.

The 4-H program is part of the Ohio State University Extension services. For more information on the 4-H program and how to get involved, contact the Brown County OSU Extension office at 937-378-6716. Our office is temporarily closed due to COVID-19, but we are available by phone. You can also find more information on our website brown.osu.edu or follow Brown County 4-H on Facebook at facebook.com/brownco4h. A list of canceled and postponed events is listed on our website.

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