

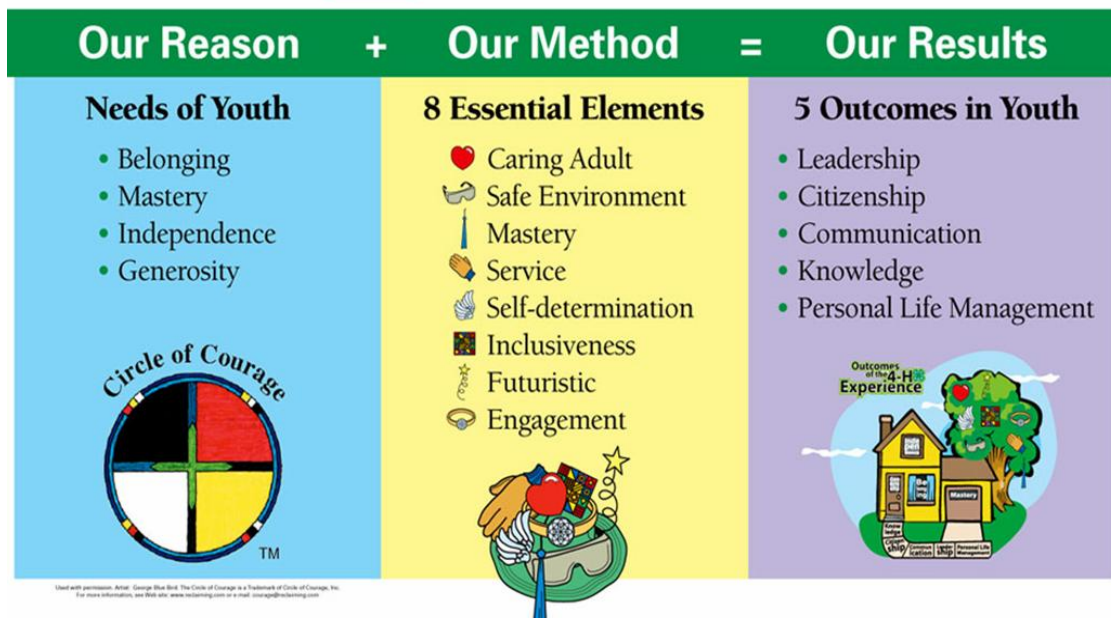
School-Based Food and Fitness Teams as 4-H Clubs

Through the Northeast Iowa Food and Fitness initiative we are learning about the strength of systems approaches to change and the structures that need to be in place to support those systems. The idea of rooting Food and Fitness with an institution presents itself again and again as a best practice. Likewise, as we look to strengthen the structure of the Food and Fitness school-based youth teams and their relationships with the Regional Youth Leadership Team, County Teams, and the Schools Workgroup, it becomes apparent that additional structure is needed for consistency in communication and processes. The Iowa State University Extension 4-H Program may be the best suited to provide the institutional support needed for the Food and Fitness youth emphasis.

Iowa State University Extension 4-H Youth Development can best provide support to the school-based Food and Fitness Teams if these teams become 4-H Clubs. 4-H is actively promoting new club formats that engage youth in those areas they identify as issues and interests. This is a solid fit for the Food and Fitness School-Based Teams.

How Does 4-H Fit with FFI?

4-H is founded on meeting youths' needs for belonging (heart), mastery (health), independence (head), and generosity (hands). This is done by providing 8 Essential Elements. 4-H Clubs are led by caring adults who involve themselves in the lives of members. Clubs happen in a safe environment where mastery and an ethic of service can be practiced. Members are supported as they determine their goals and activities. Everyone is included respectfully in clubs activities, while youth are encouraged to look to their future aspirations. Club leaders work with members and parents keep members engaged, learning, and having fun. When done well, members practice and perfect key life skills in leadership, citizenship, communications, project skills and knowledge, and personal life management.



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Five Life Skill Outcomes in Youth:

<i>4-H Life Skill Outcome</i>	<i>Relationship to Food and Fitness Initiative</i>
Leadership	Youth become leaders at school, leaders in education, leaders in their community, and leaders to make policy change
Citizenship	Youth will actively engage in advocacy for policy change for healthy people and healthy communities
Communication	Youth will be continuously communicating their goals and aspirations as they education fellow students, younger students, school staff and community members about good nutrition, local food systems, and active living.
Project Knowledge and Skills	In order to effectively teach others, youth first need to understand the areas themselves. Youth will gain knowledge in skills in a variety of areas related to good nutrition, local food systems, and active living plus processes involved in policy advocacy.
Personal Life Management	Improving our health involves discipline in managing our lives: decision making, personal responsibility, and role modeling are key.

National 4-H Mission Mandates:

4-H has at its foundation three, national mission mandates that also align with Food and Fitness. Those mandates include:

- Healthy Lifestyles
- Citizenship and Leadership
- Science and Technology

Benefit of School-Based Team to be 4-H Clubs (Teams):

An institutional support system comes with 4-H club membership. Each county has a local Extension Office that houses a County 4-H Youth Coordinator (CYC). The CYC works to provide the training, support, and resources to meet the needs of youth, the 8 essential elements, and the life skill outcomes of youth. Also, a 4-H Youth Development Specialist is available to assist with education and content training efforts. The staff work in tandem to help clubs create vibrant environments to get things done in a fun and effective way. They are a technical and educational assistance team

As a 4-H club member, a multitude of curricular resources also become available to the students and the team coaches. As efforts work to expand the Food and Fitness Initiative, your 4-H technical assistance team can provide the resources needed so that teams can meet their goals and objectives.

Public showcase opportunities are also available with 4-H membership. Youth can share their learning and promote policy change through a variety of communication events and activities. The county fair is another public venue where the club's work can be shared and promoted. This is yet another way to work toward policy advocacy and change. Also, top exhibitors are asked to participate in the Iowa State Fair, another public venue.

Perhaps the biggest benefit of becoming a 4-H club is that the 4-H program and staff through Iowa State University Extension and the County Extension Offices will be the conduit for communication and a catalyst for action. 4-H will provide the leadership and coordination needed so that school-based teams can continue to grow and impact schools and communities through the Northeast Iowa Food and Fitness Initiative.

4-H Program Fee:

A 4-H program fee of \$30 is assessed for each 4-H club member. This educational investment can be paid by the individual, the school, the school-based FFI team, a sponsoring organization, or through local fundraising. 4-H provides access for all. Financial assistance is available for families in need of support.