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Clovers Galore

There are a lot of great things about March, days are starting to get longer, the hope for spring is rising, and my favorite, St. Patrick's Day! This could come off as a surprise because not many Americans say St. Patrick's Day is their favorite holiday, but it is one of my favorites because of all the four-leaf clovers! During the month of March, I catch myself searching for four leaf clover items to decorate my office. These clover items don't have the H's on them as a 4-H clover does, but they make a nice decoration. Besides while decorating, the H's of 4-H are very important. March is a great time to get refreshed on what the H's mean in 4-H and how you can better yourself by remembering the H's of 4-H!

The first H stands for Head. In the pledge we say, I pledge my head to clearer thinking. In 4-H we assist members to better their skills at decision-making, planning, organizing, and problem solving. A great example of this is 4-H teaches members that things do not always go right. While working a stubborn heifer or baking an angel food cake for the third time, 4-H members work through problems and learn along the way. All of these are great skills they will take into the future. These skills can be worked on by anyone, including adults. Ways to improve these skills as an adult can include playing logic games/puzzles such as Sudoku, learning how to solve a Rubik's Cube, or, my favorite, participating in the NYT mini crossword every day!

The second H stands for Heart. In the pledge we say, I pledge my heart to greater loyalty. In 4-H we allow members to find and stand strong in their personal values, teach members to care for others, teach cooperation, and teach communication. Since a 4-H career spans for 10 years, members have time to grow and find their passions. 4-H helps them do this, and then helps them have a voice as a youth all while teaching members to be faithful to who they are and those around them. The County Fair is a great place that showcases how much Heart 4-H members have. Across the competitions and barns, members help each other out! Arguably, as an adult, we need to work on this skill more than youth. Some ways to improve this as an adult are; start a gratitude journal, call a friend who you haven't spoken to in a while, or challenge yourself to say thank you to every worker next time you are out shopping.

The third H stands for Hands. In the pledge we say, I pledge my hands to larger service. In 4-H we provide and encourage members to create opportunities to volunteer, participate in community service, and prepare for the world of work. The 4-H philosophy is to provide youth with a hands-on experience to enhance learning. Clubs in 4-H are encouraged to do a minimum of one community service activity per year. This year, many clubs delivered roses to nursing homes or others in need around Valentine's Day! Ways to participate in the Hands section as an adult include becoming a 4-H volunteer, contacting local nursing homes to volunteer, supporting a family in need, or any other way that may serve your community.

The last H stands for Health. In the pledge we say, I pledge my health to better living. Health in 4-H encompasses a variety of things. 4-H teaches members healthy nutrition choices, how to cook goods and meal items, how to take care of others younger than themselves, and 4-H allows members to search topics that are related to health. Another way 4-H improves health is by providing a community for all members in a different way than at school. Most likely, members will have a connection with someone everywhere they go because of 4-H, allowing members to broaden their horizons and be more comfortable in social settings. As an adult, ways to improve your health is look into MyPlate to improve nutrition, daily walks, and join a club for adults to meet new people!

The pledge ends with “for my club, my community, my country, and my world” because 4-H empowers members to make a difference locally and worldwide by setting them up with the tools and network to do so. So, next time you are in the store looking at the St. Patrick’s Day goodies, thank of how important the four H’s are in 4-H and how you can also improve upon them!

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