

# 4-H in a CHANGING WORLD

## A PLAN FOR MARYLAND

### Message from Dick Byrne, Maryland 4-H Program Leader

**I**t is a pleasure to present the Maryland 4-H Strategic Plan, "4-H in a Changing World...A Plan for Maryland." This document reflects both the excitement of today's 4-H programs, and our commitment to positive youth development.

We share the Maryland 4-H Strategic Plan with you at an important time in our nation's youth development history. As 4-H celebrates its centennial year, this document showcases our commitment to celebrate not only our past, but also our future. It is our hope that this plan will provide the impetus for Maryland 4-H to accomplish necessary changes in our program to better serve our audience—the youth of Maryland—in the future. It has been carefully developed to

- offer all participants the chance to grow and learn together.

- Welcome to your future! And thanks to everyone who has contributed in the planning stages of this plan. It complements the results of the National 4-H Centennial Conversation and the new Maryland Cooperative Extension Strategic Plan 2008. I look forward to working with you in implementing this strategic plan for your club, your community, your country, and your world. What an exciting way to celebrate and build our collective future.

Sincerely,



Dick Byrne



**M**aryland 4-H has a long history of reaching youth throughout the state and helping them to reach their highest potential.

During 2001-2002 the entire 4-H staff within the University of Maryland Cooperative Extension system developed vision and mission statements and goals and strategies.

An action plan was developed to enable the Maryland 4-H Youth Development Program to achieve its vision. The plan contains the following strategies:

- ✿ Set the stage for program development and implementation that reflects responsiveness to youth needs, excellence in curriculum content and delivery methods, incorporation of research findings and processes, and partnerships that add value.
- ✿ Align the 4-H youth development vision, mission, and philosophy with actions throughout Maryland Cooperative Extension.
- ✿ Reach currently underserved and under-represented youth.
- ✿ Develop connected, productive relationships between campus and local units.
- ✿ Identify what it means to have active youth-adult partnerships for program determination, implementation, evaluation, and policy.

### Overall Philosophy for Maryland 4-H Program

Youth are growing and maturing in families in communities through a process called youth development. The Maryland Cooperative Extension 4-H Youth Development Program provides opportunities for young people to enhance individual gifts, talents, knowledge, and skills in a safe and healthy environment. Caring adults enable youth to experience success, build life skills, and develop to their



**“I joined 4-H and I excelled in just about everything I’ve tried. 4-H has opened opportunities to me that would have never been open had I not joined.”**

**Tara Carter**, 4-H member, Prince George’s County



**“I’ve had the opportunity to meet people from all around the state and have made friends that I am sure to have for the rest of my life.”**

**Devin Mills**, 4-H Volunteer, Prince George’s County

• fullest potential as healthy, competent, and contributing adults.

### Vision and Mission

#### Our Vision

The Maryland 4-H Youth Development Program is a recognized leader for community-based programs in youth development. The program:

- ✿ Addresses present and emerging youth needs.
- ✿ Employs a proactive program approach.
- ✿ Uses a focused, experientially designed, age-appropriate curriculum.
- ✿ Works collaboratively with established networks of human and financial resources.
- ✿ Offers a diversity of programs, audiences, staff, and delivery techniques.
- ✿ Provides an inclusive environment that supports a sense of belonging, friendliness, safety, and comfort.

#### Our Mission

The Maryland 4-H Youth Development Program provides a supportive setting for all youth to reach their fullest potential. Youth learn beneficial cognitive and life skills through community-focused, research-based experiential educational programs. Achievement of this mission will create competent, caring, and responsible individuals.



**“4-H is me. It’s given me the skills to be the best that I can be. Before I was in 4-H I was the average guy, but now I stand out from the crowd. I’m so busy, and I love every part of it. How many kids can say that? I am what 4-H gave to me. 4-H really does strive to ‘Make the Best Better’.”**

**Mathew Jones**, 4-H member, Harford County

### Goals and Strategies

#### Goal 1

We will improve and expand quality educational experiences that emphasize learning.

#### Strategies

- ✿ Define the desired characteristics of a “Learning Community” for the Maryland 4-H Program and become visible as a learning community.
- ✿ Develop the potential of Maryland 4-H to utilize experiential and other learning strategies effectively. Work with volunteers and educators to understand and better utilize experiential learning models. Use current programs that provide “hands-on” activities and learning as models for expansion.
- ✿ Create process and regulation templates to follow for event planning, including risk management and safety issues, and provide training.
- ✿ Develop tools to determine and document desired educational outcomes and develop pre- and post-event evaluation tools.

#### Goal 2

We will integrate youth-adult partnerships into the planning, implementation, and evaluation of our work.

#### Strategies

- ✿ Conduct a valid and reliable assessment of the current status of youth-adult partnerships in Maryland 4-H.
- ✿ Develop a plan of action to equip volunteers, youth, and professionals to implement youth-adult partnerships in the program development process.
- ✿ Implement model programs for building youth-adult partnerships throughout the state.

#### Goal 3

We will increase participation of underserved and under-represented youth and adults in Maryland 4-H.

#### Strategies

- ✿ Assess current audiences and identify specific targets for increased participation.
- ✿ Conduct needs/assets assessment and interview key community leaders to identify needs and interests of underserved and under-represented youth and adults.
- ✿ Review staff make-up to see if it is reflective of the community, develop collaborative approaches to staffing, and determine financial resources needed to add positions.

#### Goal 4

With our partners, we will expand our resource base to support new and existing programs and personnel.



**“4-H is leadership and fun with other people. I’ve learned lots of lessons from 4-H, such as being responsible and doing all of my own work. I like to talk to other people about 4-H and all the different things that I do.”**

**Amy Yeiser**, 4-H member, Anne Arundel County

**Strategies**

- ✿ Assess current and potential funding base and identify existing and potential partners to determine WHO gives, WHAT they give, and WHAT happens as a result.
- ✿ Develop a common worksheet as a tool to develop budgets for current 4-H programs, as a way to determine costs and resource needs.
- ✿ Develop strategies for increasing program dollars and other resources, including:
  1. Identify and secure one or more major funding opportunities to support a focused educational program;
  2. Create new endowments in the 4-H Foundation to support innovative programs;
  3. Collaborate with university departments at UMCP, UMES and other system schools, and government, community-based, and private organizations.
- ✿ Offer training opportunities that increase staff, volunteer, and youth skills in resource development.

**Goal 5**

We will integrate technology into everyday practices to maximize communication, teaching, learning, and evaluation of the 4-H program.

**Strategies**

- ✿ Assess technology capacity in the state by looking at use by educators, volunteers, and youth; gather data from

- IT; and conduct a survey of qualitative use focusing on youth.
- ✿ Define current communications, including internal, external, electronic, and print methods.
- ✿ Conduct a survey to determine whether our publications are used and analyze and provide a report on findings.
- ✿ Expand scope of 4-H Technology Team of teachers.
- ✿ Create technology specialist position to support integration of technology into all aspects of the 4-H program.
- ✿ Develop training for specific tools that will help reduce workload (for example, the use of online evaluations that are linked directly to analysis packages).
- ✿ Partner with other organizations/universities (web links, shared materials, develop co-websites) to maximize resources.
- ✿ Increase opportunities to connect participants and users electronically, to build learning communities, and to provide opportunities for virtual volunteering and virtual 4-H participation.
- ✿ Develop new communication strategies, coordinate a peer review of current situation, test new regional communication models, and identify training to prepare staff for change.



[www.maryland4h.org](http://www.maryland4h.org)

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