Since its inception in 1909, Oklahoma 4-H has placed emphasis on the importance of youth being engaged, well-informed citizens. Through trips like Citizenship Washington Focus, National 4-H Congress, and events such as 4-H Day at the Capitol, Oklahoma youth are learning about serving the nation and the importance of leadership.

Head, Heart, Hands, and Health. The word has been in the 4-H pledge since 1927, and today Oklahoma 4-H is dedicated to the mental, physical and emotional health of its youth. 4-H has become a national leader in health-related educational issues including chemical health, mental and emotional health, foods and nutrition, physical health and safety.

Oklahoma's National Guard and Reserve personnel are facing some of the largest deployments we have ever seen. What happens to the children and family when suddenly these military members are called to serve? Their children are now “military kids,” and their lives are turned upside down. Family dynamics change; many of their usual support systems may no longer be adequate because it’s hard to understand the unique issues they face. This is why an Operation: Military Kids Team was formed in Oklahoma. In 2009, Operation: Military Kids reached more than 6,600 Oklahomans with events and programing and provided 1,300 youth with Hero Packs, back-packs filled with toys, books and activities.

One Million New Scientists. One Million New Ideas.™ The National 4-H initiative to develop one million new scientists by 2013 has spurred program development in Oklahoma 4-H. From kite aerial photography, to Lego Robotics, to GPS and GIS and participating in the National 4-H Youth Science Day event, 4-H’ers from around the state are learning STEM principles in a whole new way.
Educators are empowering 4-H’ers... and 4-H’ers are empowering those in their communities. They envision a better Oklahoma through leadership, citizenship and education. Oklahoma 4-H has provided youth with the resources to succeed for the past 100 years. Here’s how 4-H’ers are overcoming issues they face in Oklahoma today:

Northwest District

- A Northwest District 4-H’er and her club received a grant to educate Oklahomans on heart disease. They have presented the program at the NW District Mall Day, and they plan on presenting at the county and state fairs as well as other civic events throughout the year. Two years ago they received a similar grant for stroke prevention education for youth called Brainiacs working with the American Stroke Association and reached more than 500 youth.

- A Garfield County 4-H’er organized a beef raffle at her local club. More than $500 was raised and donated to a family whose child was diagnosed with leukemia. She also held two bake sales for Cookies for Kids Cancer and raised more than $200, which Glad matched for a total of more than $400 for pediatric cancer research.

- The Logan County Teen Leaders have developed “Fitness Through Technology,” an entertaining, interactive program in which the teens travel from club to club around the county monthly to monitor fitness to improve the overall health of the youth. The Wii Fit Plus was purchased through a grant this past year and this tool is vital in the effectiveness of this activity. This program has proven to be effective in reaching more than 150 youth with positive results in only a month.

- When a past 4-H leader and community contributor recently passed away, a Northwest District 4-H’er led a group of 4-H’ers, serving the family dinner following the funeral. Because Mrs. Burns contributed many hours to the 4-H program and organized several after school activities and reading programs for youth, 4-H’ers were in charge of a benefit dinner honoring her and all of the money raised was donated to the Geary Public Library to continue her reading program.

- As part of a safety project, Northwest District 4-H’ers help every year at the 4-H county wide “Fright Night,” an event where 4-H’ers provide a safe alternative to trick or treating. There are carnival-like games and a costume contest, and 4-H’ers hand out treat bags containing trick or treat safety tips, recipes, and other fun activities.

- 4-H Educators in the district sponsored and held their annual Winter Series Shooting Sports competition. Each firearm-, ethics-, and safety-trained youth could participate in four different weekend shoots offered across Northwest Oklahoma. Sixty participated in the Air Rifle discipline, 13 in Air Pistol, 31 with Compound Bows in Archery, and 31 in the Recurve Bow Archery division. Improvement in individual skills were tracked across weekly competitions to show improvement in individual skills/scores. This program keeps youth involved in positive social interaction and completion as well as teaching sportsmanship in proper use of firearms.

Northeast District

- Muskogee County/Creek Nation 4-H held their first Space Camp in 2009. 4-H’ers used rocketry, robots, and alternative energy sources for each of their challenges. 4-H’ers also toured the 138th fighter wing base, air and space museum, and Flight Safety International to investigate career paths in the aerospace industry. Experiential learning kits in robots, alternative energy, electricity, phases of matter, and laws of motion were also developed for use in classrooms.

- For five years, Ottawa County 4-H has teamed with Red Cedar Recycling to hold a recycling program in the community. Since 2005, they have presented more than 20 recycling programs and have reached nearly 3,000 youth. They hold a Recycle Day Celebration in the spring and America Recycle Day in the fall and have reached nearly 5,000 people.

Southwest District

- The Greer County Officer Team used a grant to buy a Wii system, a Wii Fit Plus, and health and fitness educational supplies and developed the “Wii Got Fit with Greer County 4-H” program. The purpose of the program is to promote the physical well-being in Greer County through the Wii Fit Plus program and educational tips provided by health experts. Walmart, State Farm, Phillip’s Fitness Center, Quartz Mountain Medical Center, TLC Lean, and TLC for Life are sponsors. A local State Farm agency supplied free pedometers, and Quartz Mountain Medical Center provided free BMI tests along with paid expenses of the memory card for every participant. As a result, the “Wii Got Fit with Greer County 4-H” program has more than 20 participants.

- A 4-H’er and a SW District Educator designed and created a “rain catcher,” an efficient way to collect rain water off of a roof. They built spouts on gutters that connected to twelve 250 gallon tanks. The 12 tanks run to two 3,000 gallon tanks that store the water. The water is then pumped out of the tanks and into a hose that waters a community garden.

- Counties collected more than 1,400 pounds of aluminum pull tabs for the Ronald McDonald House. At an average price of 75 cents per pound, this effort raised more than $1,000 to provide lodging for families with sick children at the Oklahoma City Ronald McDonald House.

- Over the past three years, a Comanche County 4-H’er has conducted Health Rocks! workshops in three schools and with Military 4-H youth, reaching a total of 307 4th through 6th grade students. Health Rocks! helps youth develop life skills in the area of critical thinking, decision-making, communication, managing feelings, stress management and goal setting to help them resist risky behaviors.

- A 4-H state officer has developed “Coins for Kenya,” a program created to raise money to help with an African program that is working to change the rite of passage for young girls. The goal is the help raise funds that will be used to support a youth development center and Extension work that has been demonstrated to effectively replace the ritual of female genital mutilation with educational programs that convey the coming of age of girls.

- In four hours at the food bank, Southwest District 4-H’ers packed more than 43,000 pounds of non-perishable, shelf-stable and frozen food. This food will provide 33,220 meal equivalents to children and families in need.

- Cleveland County 4-H had a robotics team competing in the 2010 FIRST Robotics Oklahoma City Regional Competition thanks to a $5,000 grant provided by NASA and a $2,500 grant from the National 4-H Council. This will be the second year for Cleveland County 4-H to have a robotics team. Last year the 4-H STARs (Science, Technology, and Robotics) won the Rookie Inspiration Award at the OKC Regional competition. This award recognizes the rookie team that shows outstanding effort in community outreach and inspiring a diverse group of students to learn more about science and technology.

Northeast District, continued...

- A NE District 4-H’er leads the Tulsa County S.E.T. Club (Science, Engineering, and Technology) and has been successful in providing quality programming with various guest speakers and demonstrations to give youth an idea of how science and technology is used in the real world. The club has hosted presentations from astronomers on black holes, to the technology of mobile lidar aerial mapping, to actual biofuel collection.

- Focus on solar power: 4-H’ers have been working with elementary classes, camp groups, and other 4-H members to educate them about solar energy. They’ve created over 50 solar cookers that harnessed the sun’s power to cook hot dogs while also learning about lab safety while making the cookers.

- A NE District 4-H’er serves as the Healthy Lifestyle Youth Coordinator for Tulsa County and is a member of Health Rocks!, a program promoting healthy lifestyle choices. This year Tulsa County 4-H’ers promoted food drives in November for Thanksgiving meals for families who could not afford meals and raised money for the Ronald McDonald House.