4-H Talking Points

• 4-H is one of the largest youth development programs in America with more than 6.5 million young people, ages 5-19, and 538,000 youth and adult volunteers.

• 4-H is the only youth development program with a direct connection to technological advances from university research.

• 4-H has three primary program areas: science, engineering and technology; healthy living; and citizenship.

• Studies show that 4-H members do better in school, are more motivated to help others, feel safe to try new things, achieve a sense of self-esteem, and develop lasting friendships.

• 4-H is in every community across America. During 2005, 55 percent of 4-H members lived in cities, large towns and their suburbs and 45 percent lived in small towns and on farms. 4-H is located in all 50 states; Washington, D.C.; U.S. territories and on U.S. military installations worldwide.

• Youth learn leadership, citizenship and life skills through more than 1,000 projects with topics as varied as rocketry, GPS mapping, public speaking, DNA analysis, nutrition, photography and community service.

• 4-H’s learning opportunities are intentionally designed around four essential elements necessary for positive youth development: supervised independence, a sense of belonging with a positive group, a spirit of generosity toward others and a wide variety of opportunities to master life challenges.

• The fundamental 4-H ideal of practical, “learn by doing” experiences encourages youth to experiment, innovate and think independently.

• 4-H programs are offered through school-based, after-school and camp settings and within community clubs.

• 4-H is operated and supported by a shared leadership of public and private partners including National 4-H Headquarters, USDA within the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service; more than 3,500 Cooperative Extension staff associated with 106 land-grant universities; National 4-H Council; 4-H associations and foundations; and trained youth and adult volunteers.

• More than 60 million young people across America have been 4-H members since the 4-H Youth Development program began in 1902. Famous alumni include Al Gore, Faith Hill and David Letterman. Also, 14 governors, 33 university presidents and chancellors, 31 CEOs and four astronauts are 4-H alumni.