

To: David Henderson
National 4-H Council

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Date: August 25, 2005

Re: Executive Summary & Analysis: National Survey of 1,000 Adults

Introduction and Methodology

the polling company™, inc. is pleased to present to the **National 4-H Council** this analysis of findings from a recent national survey of 1,000 adults (aged 18+).

The sample was drawn utilizing a Random Digit Dialing (RDD) method where phone numbers were generated by a computer to ensure that every household in the nation had an equal chance to be surveyed.

The survey was 20 questions in length, including one open-ended question and nine demographic inquiries. Sampling controls were used to ensure that a proportional and representative number of people were interviewed from such demographic groups as age, gender, race, ethnicity and geographic region.

The margin of error for the national survey is calculated at $\pm 3.0\%$ at the 95% confidence level, meaning that the results obtained would differ by no more than three percentage points in either direction even if the entire adult population nationwide were to be surveyed.

The survey was fielded August 16-18, 2005 at a Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) phone facility using live callers. The final questionnaire was approved by an authorized representative of National 4-H Council prior to fielding.

Analysis of Findings

Most Americans have a Positive “Association” with 4-H, but Many Lack Specific Knowledge About the Group. When asked in open-ended fashion to share what they first thought of upon hearing the 4-H name, 39% of survey respondents volunteered a “club or organization”—many noting it was an organization specifically oriented towards youth.

Livestock, county fairs, and young farmers were also common top-of-mind associations, as an additional one-quarter (25%) of Americans surveyed connected 4-H to farming or agriculture. A collective 9% recalled a 4-H related activity (cooking, horseback riding), a similar organization (Boy Scouts of America), or an aspect of the club’s founding tenets, including the four “H”s themselves. A full 27% claimed they could not identify what 4-H was or declined to hazard a guess.

Question: Please tell me what first comes to your mind when you hear “4-H”?

Selected verbatim responses of Americans nationwide:

“Agriculture program for kids.”

“Kids raising livestock for themselves.”

“Animals, leather-craft, cooking, [and] photography.”

“A program I was in as a child that taught leadership skills and responsibility.”

“Head, help, and happiness club.”

“Healthy, wholesome learning and fun for children.”

“Good organization for rural folks.”

“Kids, life skills development, hands-on learning.”

“The club and the clover leaf.”

“Homemaking and cooking skills.”

“A club for youth, kind of like the Boy and Girl Scouts.”

“Heart, hands, health, and happiness.”

“Club where kids get to raise farm animals.”

“School club for future farmers.”

“Head, heart, hands, and health.”

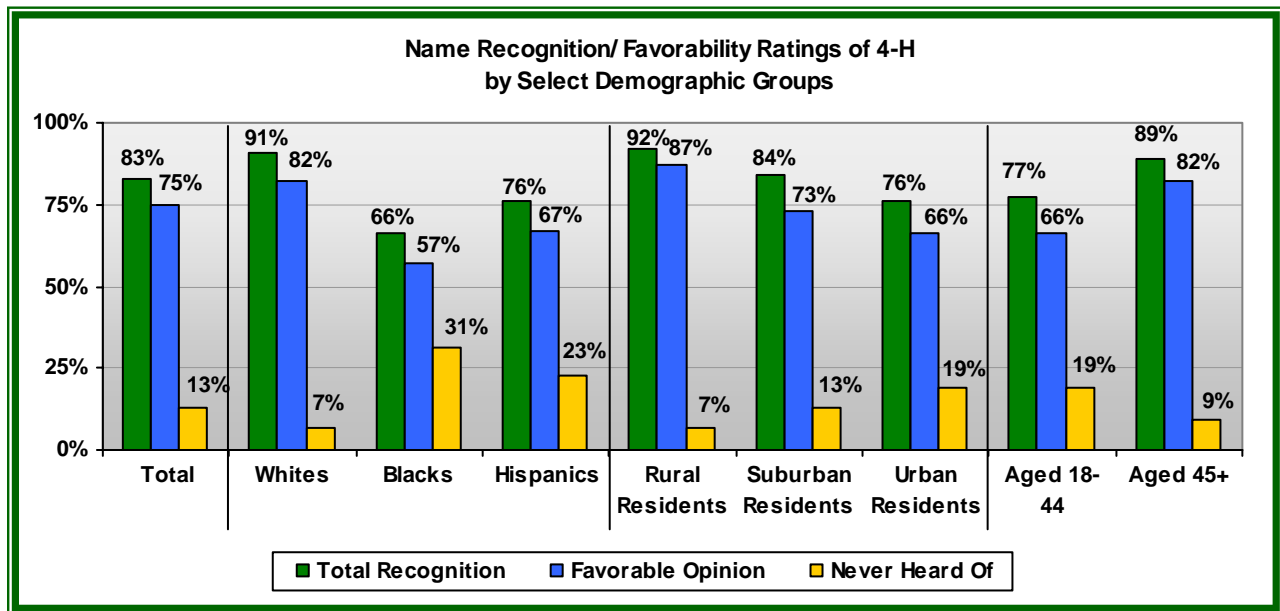
“Very positive a wonderful program for young people.”

Strategic Recommendation. Educate Americans on how 4-H is relevant to them. Replace the notion that 4-H is *only* all things agriculture by promoting the diversity of the club’s offerings—including programs focusing on health and fitness, business and economics, technology, leadership development, theatre/drama, as well as its many courses on science, the environment, and animals.

To Know 4-H is to Like 4-H. In a separate series of questions, respondents were queried on their opinions of six national youth development groups, including 4-H¹. Most adults had some level of knowledge about 4-H (83%) and held the organization in high regard. **In fact, 75% of respondents surveyed viewed 4-H favorably (60% held a “strongly” positive view).**

An additional 8% said they had heard of 4-H, but had no opinion of it. A miniscule 0.5% viewed the group unfavorably, the **lowest negative rating of all six youth organizations tested in this survey.** Only 13% respondents admitted they had never heard of 4-H—meaning they are ripe for an introduction and initial education on the youth organization.

As demonstrated by the following chart, there were significant demographic variances in name recognition and favorability towards 4-H.



Groups more likely than most to hold a favorable view of 4-H included:


- ❖ Adults over the age of 45
- ❖ Whites
- ❖ Rural dwellers
- ❖ HHI \$50K-\$69K or \$90K+
- ❖ Married respondents
- ❖ Residents of the North Central United States¹
- ❖ Americans who were familiar with and/or involved with 4-H when they were young

Groups more likely than most to have never heard of 4-H included:

- ❖ Young adults (18-34)
- ❖ Blacks
- ❖ Hispanics
- ❖ Urban residents
- ❖ Parents with children aged 18 or younger living at home.

¹ All respondents were asked to evaluate the same six youth-oriented organizations. However, the order in which the organizations (including 4-H) were tested was rotated to avoid bias.

4-H was just one of the national groups respondents were asked to assess—they were also given the chance to evaluate five other youth organizations with a national presence. The following chart illustrates how *favorability ratings were strongly linked to name recognition for each association.*

	Total Name Recognition	Favorable Opinion	Unfavorable Opinion	Heard of, no opinion	Never heard of
<i>Girl Scouts of America</i>	97%	90%	3%	4%	1%
<i>Boy Scouts of America</i>	97%	89%	5%	3%	1%
<i>YMCA</i>	97%	87%	3%	7%	1%
<i>Boys & Girls Club</i>	88%	72%	2%	14%	8%
 <i>4-H</i>	83%	75%	*	8%	13%
<i>Junior Achievement</i>	73%	58%	1%	14%	21%

Strategic Recommendation. The youth organizations that achieved higher favorability ratings than 4-H—the Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, and YMCA—have all successfully ingrained themselves in the greater American culture. 4-H may be able to improve its already stellar approval rating by simply making more sects of the American public aware of its presence and its history of educating and engaging the youth to become leaders of tomorrow. Reach out to those who have not yet been exposed to the organization, namely minorities, young adults, and urban dwellers—they represent important “opportunity targets” for 4-H to re-brand its image.

**Groups More Likely than Respondents Overall
to Hold a Favorable Opinion of...**

**Girl Scouts of America:
90% overall**

- ❖ HHI \$70K-\$89K
- ❖ Rural and suburban residents were more likely than their urban peers to favor the Girl Scouts (92% vs. 86%).
- ❖ Moms were more likely than dads to do the same (90%-85%)

**Boy Scouts of America:
89% overall**

- ❖ HHI \$70K-\$89K
- ❖ Rural residents
- ❖ Suburbanites (and their rural counterparts) were more likely than city dwellers to laud the Boy Scouts (92% and 94%, respectively, vs. 84%)
- ❖ Dads were more apt than moms to hold the group in high esteem (92%-85%)

**YMCA:
87% overall**

- ❖ HHI \$90K+
- ❖ Fathers were more likely than mothers to praise the YMCA (90%-80%)
- ❖ Suburban residents were more likely to favor the organization (90%), while rural residents were the least likely (84%)

**4-H:
75% overall**



- ❖ Adults over the age of 45
- ❖ Whites
- ❖ Rural dwellers
- ❖ HHI \$50K-\$69K or \$90K+
- ❖ Married respondents
- ❖ North Central Residents
- ❖ Those familiar with and/or involved with 4-H when they were young

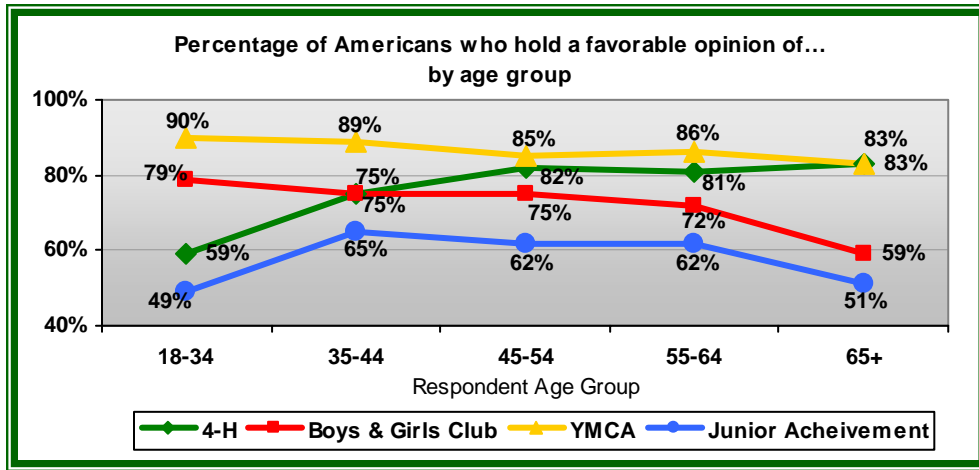
**Boys & Girls Club:
72% overall**

- ❖ 18-34 year olds
- ❖ Parents
- ❖ HHI \$30K-\$49K or \$50K-\$69K

**Junior Achievement:
58% overall**

- ❖ 35-44 year olds
- ❖ HHI \$30K-\$49K or \$70K-\$89K
- ❖ Blacks
- ❖ Suburban residents
- ❖ North Central dwellers

4-H Generation Gap. Age played a telling role in a respondent’s propensity to have a favorable opinion of some of the youth organizations tested. As the chart below shows, **support for 4-H was lowest among 18-34 year olds, and increased as respondents grew older.** On the other hand, The Boys and Girls Club and the YMCA scored higher with young people. Junior Achievement found the greatest praise in the middle of the age spectrum and the least at its bookends. Feelings towards both the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts were consistent across the age spectrum and are, therefore, not featured in the chart below.



4-H is highly praised by Baby Boomers, but unknown by many young adults. Generations X (commonly defined as those born 1965-1978) and Y (those born 1979-1994) represent a “must-have” audience for 4-H. Many of the younger Gen Yers are within the 4-H membership age group and their older “Y” and “X” counterparts will be (or already are) the parents of the next cohort of potential 4-Hers.

Strategic Recommendation. To reach young adults, 4-H must speak to them in their native tongue—technology. The 4-H website will likely be the first source these generations turn to (on average, members of Generation Y spend 16.7 hours a week online). As such, it will be important for this site to engage young people with the “latest and greatest” technology including blogs, games, chat rooms, and video clips.


Boy Scouts Considered Most Respected Youth Organization. In a separate question, respondents were presented with the same six “nationally-based youth development organizations” and asked to name which group they believed was the “*most respected.*” The Boy Scouts were selected by 29% of Americans surveyed—12-points higher than the second most popular vote getter. This is somewhat reflective of the nearly unanimous recognition the BSA enjoys across the country and the fact that the survey was conducted just weeks after the annual Boy Scout Jamboree—an event which drew national media coverage.

The YMCA was next on the list with 17% deeming it “most respected,” followed by the Boys and Girls Club (13%), 4-H (12%), and the Girl Scouts (11%) (*See chart below*). Junior Achievement—the group that one-in-five Americans had never heard of—was mentioned by just 4%.


Respondents were then given the opportunity to reveal which remaining organization, not including their top-choice, was “*also highly respected.*” While the Boy Scouts still came out on top with 22%, both 4-H (18%) and the Girl Scouts (21%) were close behind.

When totaling first and second mentions, the Boy Scouts were named by a majority of Americans (51%). However, there was a statistical dead-heat for second place, with the Girl Scouts (32%), YMCA (31%), and 4-H (30%) all within two-points of each other—and within the survey’s margin of error.

Despite its comparatively lower name recognition, especially among younger Americans and minorities, 4-H was considered to be an organization worthy of the same level of esteem and confidence afforded to some of the nation’s most widely-known youth groups.

	<u>Most Respected</u>	<u>Highly Respected</u>	<u>Total “Respected”</u>
<i>Boy Scouts of America</i>	29%	22%	51%
<i>YMCA</i>	17%	14%	31%
<i>Boys & Girls Club</i>	13%	10%	23%
 <i>4-H</i>	12%	18%	30%
<i>Girl Scouts of America</i>	11%	21%	32%
<i>Junior Achievement</i>	4%	7%	11%

Groups More Likely than Respondents Overall to Cite _____ as the
 “Most” or “Highly” Respected Youth Organization²



4-H:
30% overall

- ❖ Rural residents
- ❖ HHI < \$30K
- ❖ Married respondents
- ❖ North-Central dwellers
- ❖ Respondents who were familiar with and/or involved in 4-H as a child

Boy Scouts of America:
51% overall

- ❖ Men
- ❖ Hispanics
- ❖ Suburbanites
- ❖ HHI \$70K+

Girl Scouts of America:
32% overall

- ❖ Blacks
- ❖ Suburbanites
- ❖ HHI \$50K-\$69K or \$70K-\$89K
- ❖ Moms

YMCA:
31% overall

- ❖ Hispanics
- ❖ Single/divorced parents
- ❖ HHI \$30K-\$49K
- ❖ 18-34 year olds

Boys & Girls Club:
23% overall

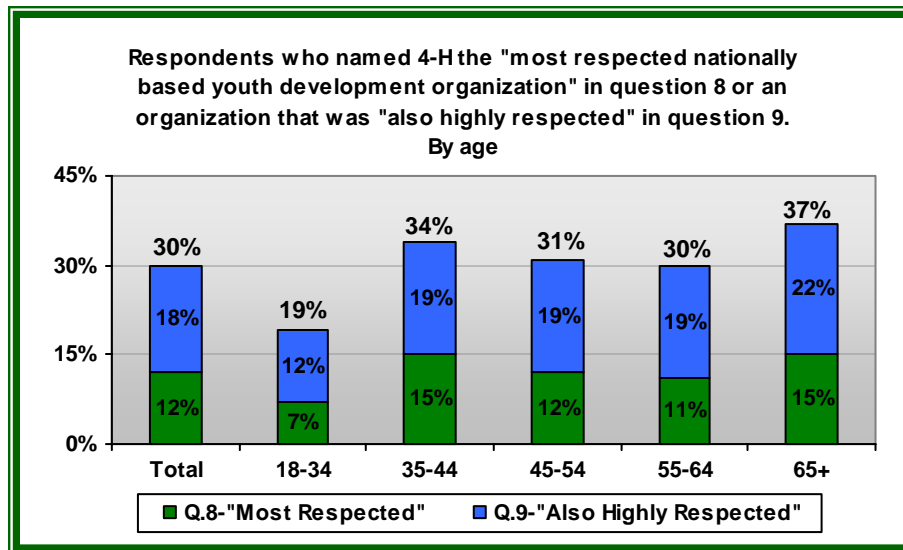
- ❖ Blacks
- ❖ Urban residents
- ❖ Dads and Single parents
- ❖ HHI < \$50K
- ❖ 18-34 year olds

Junior Achievement:
11% overall

- ❖ Blacks
- ❖ North Central residents
- ❖ HHI \$90K+
- ❖ Adults aged 55+

² Demographic groups more likely to name a youth organization “the most respected” in response to question 8 and/or name it “also highly respected” in response to question 9

As seen in the following chart, the 4-H generation gap was also apparent in respondents' "respectability ratings" in questions 8 and 9. **Young adults (aged 18-34) were 11-points less likely than respondents overall to name 4-H a highly esteemed youth group (19%-30%)** and 15-points less likely than their closest age cohorts, 35-44 year olds (34%). Seniors, on the other hand, were 7-points more likely than the average American to bestow this distinction on 4-H.



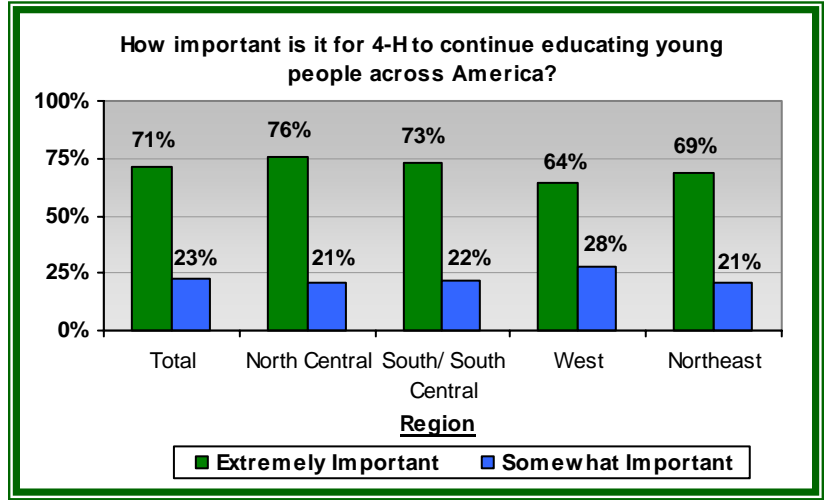
4-H Mission Resonates with Americans. At the start of this survey, many respondents associated 4-H with agriculture and rural living or admitted they did not know much, if at all, about the organization. However, upon hearing that: “4-H is a youth development organization that teaches young people across America the value of leadership, citizenship, and life skills. 4-H has chapters in all 50 states and is represented in urban, suburban, or rural communities,” **an eye-popping 94% reported it was “important for 4-H to continue educating young people.”**

This support was both intense—71% felt it was “extremely important” for 4-H to persist in its teaching—and widespread—no less than 91% of all the demographic groups studied affirmed the value of 4-H. Just 2% did not feel the organization’s mission was crucial, while a combined 5% either were unsure or declined to answer the question.

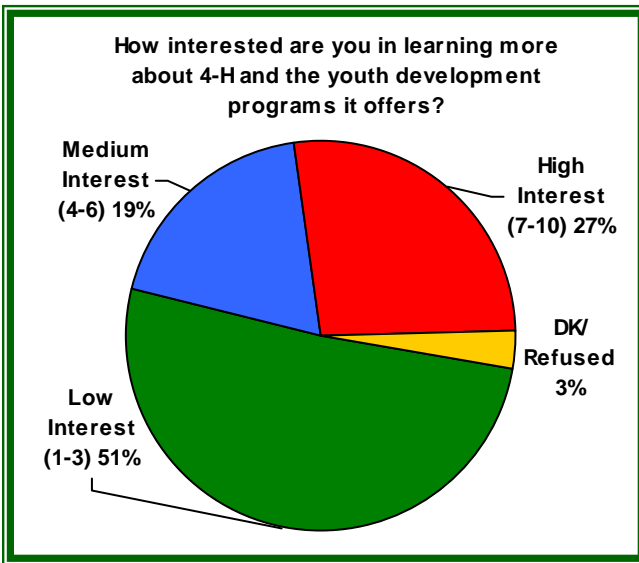
- ❖ Due to the overwhelming embrace of 4-H across all demographic variances, only a few subsets stood out from respondents overall as more likely to declare the youth group’s importance. They included rural residents, those earning \$70,000-\$89,000 or less than \$30,000 per year, and respondents who had been involved with 4-H during their childhoods.
- ❖ Neighborhood distinctions were not as pronounced as those seen previously, as 98% of rural residents, 94% of urban dwellers, and 92% of those living in the suburbs avowed the need for 4-H to continue its effort.

As demonstrated by the following chart, there were some notable regional differences in respondents' feelings about 4-H—both in overall opinion and intensity of feelings.

✧ While those in the North Central and South/ South Central regions were more likely than most to feel that 4-H should continue to help improve the lives of America's youth, residents of the Northeast and the West were somewhat less likely to agree.



4-H Must Convert Shrugged Shoulders into Raised Eyebrows. When asked to rate their desire to learn more about 4-H, half of respondents (51%) were simply not interested.³ An additional 19% indicated a mild level of curiosity—while they were not totally apathetic, they were not engaged or excited either.



That said, the National 4-H Council has tremendous opportunity to educate and inform the public about its mission to “make the best better.” When asked to rate their desire to learn more about 4-H, 27% of respondents noted a high level of interest, with a full 14% professing to be “extremely” curious.”

³ Respondents were asked to rate their interest in 4-H on a scale of “one”—“not at all interested” to “ten”—“extremely interested.” Ratings of 1-3 were classified as low interest, 4-6 as medium interest, and 7-10 as high interest.

Those who were enthusiastic about learning more about 4-H were very similar to the groups previously identified as “*opportunity targets*,” due to their general lack of familiarity with the youth organization. Americans meeting both criteria (i.e. high/medium interest and previously unaware of 4-H) included:

- ❖ Blacks;
- ❖ Hispanics;
- ❖ Parents; and,
- ❖ 18-34 year olds.

4-H alumni also possessed a strong desire for additional information—perhaps wishing their children’s and grandchildren’s generations could benefit from the experience they had during their own adolescence.

One of the most effective ways to engage former 4-Hers to suggest the club to a new generation of members may be to remind them of the “good old days.” Nostalgia is extremely powerful marketing tool and has been relied upon by Fortune 500 brands to sell everything from cars (the new Volkswagen Beetle to the Ford Mustang) to soft drinks (Coca- Cola) to clothing (Lacoste, Le Tigre).

Demographic groups more likely than respondents overall to express _____ in learning more about 4-H

**“High Interest:”
27% overall**

- ❖ Blacks
- ❖ Hispanics
- ❖ 35-44 year olds
- ❖ HHI < \$30K
- ❖ Parents
- ❖ Those involved with 4-H as children

**“Medium Interest:”
19% overall**

- ❖ 18-34 year olds
- ❖ HHI \$30K-\$69K

**“Low Interest:”
51% overall**

- ❖ Seniors
- ❖ Whites
- ❖ Non-parents
- ❖ North Central residents

📖 Strategic Recommendation. Reinvalidate this group’s enthusiasm for 4-H by reminding them of the carefree days of their youth—invoke the past to move the organization forward. Create a section on the 4-H website dedicated to attracting past members from across the country. Such an interactive outreach effort will engage 4-Hers of yesteryear to spread goodwill and share the experiences of their youth with a whole new crop of children and teens.

Key Conclusions

- ❖ **Among national youth organizations, there is a direct nexus between awareness and esteem. The challenge for the National 4-H Council is not to convert and convince, but to educate and engage.** When combining the 13% of respondents who had never heard of 4-H with the 8% who said they knew of the group but had no opinion of it, approximately one-in-five (21%) Americans are unaware of what they might gain from pledging their heads to clearer thinking, their hearts to greater loyalty, their hands to larger service, and their health to better living.
- ❖ **Despite the fact that a majority of present-day 4-H members are *not* from rural areas, for many Americans, agriculture and other accoutrements of country-living remain the most salient association with the organization.** To reach out to the audiences which provide 4-H the greatest opportunity to expand its reach—namely, minorities, young adults, urban residents, and parents with school-aged kids—it is important that they see the organization as relevant to them. Re-brand 4-H as a truly “evergreen” organization by promoting the its utility for people interested in everything from web design to water sports, fitness to finance, and leadership to literacy.
- ❖ **The Boy Scouts, the Girl Scouts, and the YMCA—arguably the nation’s most successful youth groups—have all managed to integrate themselves into the fabric of America’s culture.** In order for 4-H to achieve the widespread recognition and favorability enjoyed by these groups, it must do the same. The first step in that process is increasing the visibility of the organization through an aggressive public relations campaign that includes everything from a new website, to national sponsorships of sporting events and concerts, to television and print commercials that reach both potential members and their parents.
- ❖ **Conquer the generation gap by communicating with young adults and teens in their native tongue—technology.** The survey findings indicate that there was a definite lack of awareness and engagement with 4-H among members of Generations X and Y. While the trust and admiration of senior citizens is certainly a positive endorsement, young adults (aged 18-34) and teens are the audience to which 4-H has the most to offer. Unlike those who came before them, these Americans rely on the Internet as their main source of information. To them, if it isn’t on the web, it simply doesn’t exist
- ❖ **Past is prologue—4-H Alumni may prove to be an incredibly useful tool for engaging new members and generating goodwill among current 4-Hers.** The legacy and history of 4-H remain a vital part of its future. Nostalgia is a particularly effective marketing tool for the Boomer generation who recall their youth as an idyllic phase of their lives. By harnessing former 4-Hers’ fondness for the past, the organization can enlist them to promote its future.