Key Message Points for 4-H at the Capitol

## 1.Thank the legislator for 100 years of 4-H support

## Demographics:

* 1,386 4-H community clubs
* Over 17,000 adult and 1,800 youth volunteers
* Over 35,000 youth club members
* Thousands more in after-school educational programs, camp programs, services for military families, youth in local governance programming, and science, technology, engineering and math opportunities.

## Partnerships:

Wisconsin 4-H Youth Development is part of the University of Wisconsin-Extension, Cooperative Extension. UW-Extension partners with the USDA, the University of Wisconsin System and local government in each Wisconsin county to provide evidence-based programs that are accessible to all youth.

## *Your Story: What 4-H Youth Development programs and opportunities are significant in the legislator’s district and your county?*

## 2. Share a story (or three) about 4-H’s value

### A. Youth Development

4-H focuses on building life skills needed for employment and active citizenship, including:

* creativity and innovation
* critical thinking
* communication through multiple methods and media
* respecting other cultures and differences
* working cooperatively with others and contributing to a group effort
* becoming self-directed and making a difference in the community

[National 4-H Research](http://www.4-h.org/about/youth-development-research/positive-youth-development-study/) (Lerner et al, 2013) shows that 4-H members, relative to peers are:

* Two times more likely to be civically active (Grades 8-12);
* Two times more likely to make healthier choices (Grade 7);
* Two times more likely to participate in Science, Engineering and Computer Technology programs during out-of-school time (Grades 10 – 12); and
* 4-H girls are  nearly three times more likely (Grade 12) to take part in science programs compared to girls in other out-of-school time activities.

***Your Story: What skills have you gained and what leadership experiences have you experienced? What 4-H experiences helped you build these skills?***

### B. Community Youth Development

* ***4-H members contribute to their communities:*** National research shows that 4-H Youth Development participants are ***Four times***more likely to make ***contributions to their communities***(Grades 7-12) than their peers. 79% of Wisconsin 4-H youth leaders say their experiences motivated them to work with others to improve their communities.
* ***4-H members are connected to community members***: By providing opportunities for youth to have experiences beyond their families, 4-H Youth Development builds a sense of community connectedness among all participants. A study of Wisconsin 4-H youth leaders showed that 83% felt more connected to their community because of 4-H.

***Your Story:*** **What has 4-H contributed to your community? Who do you know and work with now that you have met through 4-H?**

### C. Adult & Volunteer Development

## The typical volunteer gives eight hours a month to Wisconsin 4-H. That time is invaluable to the program, and volunteers take a lot away from it, too. According to a 2009 study of Wisconsin 4-H volunteers, working with Wisconsin 4-H:

* + Gives adults an opportunity for personal and professional growth, including building teamwork, management, communication and goal-setting skills that help them in their careers and workplaces.
  + Gives adults an avenue to become more connected with their communities.

### *Your Story:* How has serving as a 4-H volunteer given you opportunities to learn, teach, connect with others, and impact youth and your community?

## 3. Ask legislators to support 4-H in the future & invite them to an event back home

We would love an opportunity to show you what we do in [COMMUNITY]. We’d like to invite you to [UPCOMING EVENT] or to visit the UW-Extension office in [COUNTY] to learn more about what 4-H means locally. Thank you again for helping Wisconsin 4-H reach 100 years old, and for your continued support of UW-Extension!

