

## Celebrating 4-H Centennial with a Tree Planting Ceremony

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Citrus County 4-H recently celebrated a century of youth success with a tree planting ceremony. Florida 4-H Youth Development strengthens communities by providing a positive future for youth. As the youth development program of the University of Florida IFAS Extension, Florida 4-H uses a learn-by-doing approach to enable youth, ages 5 to 18, to develop the knowledge, attitudes and skills they need to become competent, caring and contributing citizens of the world.

In 1909, Florida 4-H began with corn clubs for boys and tomato clubs' for girls were organized in 1912. Here in Citrus County we can trace our roots back as far as 1915 and the 20's with records of Walter E Allen, the "Farm Demonstration Agent" and Elizabeth Moore, "Home Demonstration Agent." Each conducted 4-H youth development for boys and girls through afterschool programs.

Today, 4-H is the largest youth organization in the world with over 8 million members nationwide, 263,000 members in Florida, including over 330 4-H club members and 4,300 school enrichment contacts here in Citrus County.



Left to right: (standing) Marie Dumas, Eloise VanNess, Dr. Ronald Dumas, Amy Duncan, Monica Frank, Debbie Frank, Kriss Dixon, Chrissy Uzar, Naomi Ward, Jenny Frank, Hannah Rowe, Patricia Uzar, Mare Holloway, Sherri Sanders, (kneeling) White Cedar Tree, Mariah Dixon, Taylor Granda, Brianna Saltmarsh, Hannah Jo Dixon, (seated in front) Nikki Uzar.

In commemoration of 100 years of Florida 4-H, local 4-H'ers from then and now, planted a White Cedar tree on the grounds of the Citrus County Fair. The ceremony was attended by current 4-H'ers as well as past 4-H Alumni. Two notable guests who recalled their years as members were Ms. Eloise VanNess and Dr. Dumas. Dr. Ronald Dumas a Citrus County 4-H'er in the 1940's remembered summers at 4-H Camp Cherry Lake. In appreciation for what 4-H does for local youth, Dr. Dumas has volunteered his veterinarian services to the youth livestock program at the Citrus County Fair for the past four decades. Ms. Eloise remembers going to 4-H summer camp in 1936 with Ms. Moore and has continued her involvement as a 4-H volunteer for 50 years.

The tree planting ceremony was headed by the 4-H County Council president, Nikki Uzar. Monica Frank shared a "tree poem" and Jenny Frank led a "tree song," both are Nature Explorers 4-H club members. County 4-H Agent Amy Duncan also spoke about 4-H history and the new book "*Florida 4-H: A Century of Youth Success*," featuring local 4-H history, currently on sale.

For more information on 4-H visit: [www.florida4h.org](http://www.florida4h.org). Citrus County Extension connects the public with the University of Florida/IFAS's knowledge, research, and resources to address youth, family, community, and agricultural needs. Programs and activities offered by the Extension Service are available to all persons without regard to race, color, handicap, sex, religion, or national origin.