

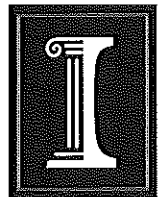
*HISTORY OF 4-H IN
CHICAGO*

Presented at

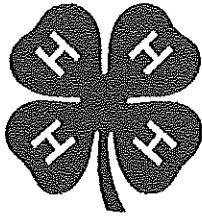
Chicago Extension Open House

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UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
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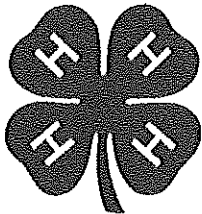


Forty-two Years of 4-H in Chicago
by: Sandra L. Lignell
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In the mid 1950s a growing number of private business people believed that America's agrarian values were sorely needed in the nation's cities. John B. Clark, president of Coats and Clark Inc and a long time supporter of 4-H, saw 4-H as a vehicle for transmitting such values and he was willing to underwrite the experiment. Hoping to do something in his own New York City, he first contacted Cornell University with his proposal. After some negotiations Cornell turned down the proposal to begin 4-H in New York City. Clark then turned to Rutgers University to begin a program in Newark, New Jersey. Once again his offer was rejected. Within a few months, Clark's interest shifted to Chicago and the National Committee on Boy's and Girl's Club Work. The Committee was not bound by the funding restrictions of the Extension Service. Clark believed that the National Committee, this was the predecessor to the National 4-H Council, might provide the channel for bringing 4-H into Chicago. At this time there was a strong suburban 4-H program. Guy L. Noble, director of the National 4-H Committee, eagerly began working out the details with Clark, but knew that he would need the support of the Illinois Extension Service.

Kenneth Anderson, Associate Director of the Committee, began talking with O. F. Gaebe, Illinois State 4-H Leader and W. G. Kammlade, Associate Extension Director, in May 1956. Both were well aware of the public demand for 4-H in Chicago. When the subject was raised with the Illinois 4-H Foundation there was little enthusiasm on the part of those in attendance. Anderson informed Gaebe and Kammlade that Clark was interested in helping and that several other businesses in Chicago would like to be involved.

Kammlade immediately endorsed the idea and worked toward the establishment of the Chicago 4-H program. He had to counter resistance among rural 4-H supporters and agriculture leaders who feared their insufficient 4-H budgets would be further diluted to serve a growing urban area. The associate director assured critics that most of the money would come from private sources. He re-enforced the assurance by placing the management of the Chicago program under the jurisdiction of the State 4-H office rather than the Cook County Extension office. This was an unusual arrangement that



later caused problems for 4-H, but Kammlade apparently thought it was critical to the success of the new program.



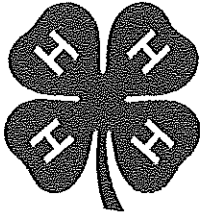
On June 25, 1956, Clark wrote Noble, that Coats and Clark would underwrite Chicago 4-H for three to five years at a rate of \$10,000 per year. Other donors were the Burrige D. Butler Memorial Trust, The Sears-Roebuck Foundation and the Robert R. McCormick Foundation. By the end of 1956 most of the red tape had been cut and Kammlade, with promised backing from private industry, had convinced all the necessary forces within and outside Extension that the pilot project in Chicago should go forward. Negotiations on Chicago 4-H were conducted quietly, but as more and more people became involved the news began to leak.



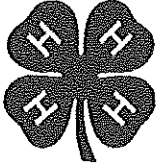
Richard Orr, farm editor of the Chicago Tribune, kept his ear to the ground for news and it was not long before he picked up word of the Chicago 4-H plan. This was an excellent story and Orr hounded the officials at the National committee for weeks in pursuit of a scoop. Finally Anderson arranged for Orr to talk with Kammlade. On March 13, 1957, Orr filed a story for the Tribune under the lead paragraph: "State 4-H Officials are getting ready to launch a program of club work for boys and girls in Chicago this spring. It will be the first opportunity for city youngsters to become a part of the nationwide youth organization that is devoted to encouraging good citizenship, home and community service and a sense of self-reliance thru 'learning by doing.'"



The first public announcements about Chicago 4-H helped launch the fund drive needed to bankroll the new program. Some money was available from state and federal Extension allotments, but most would have to be private. Initially Ty R. Thompson, National Committee service director, headed the drive. Thompson later served as a trustee of the Chicago/Cook County 4-H Foundation. The Chicago 4-H Club Advisory Committee was formed in 1957 to help expand the program and increase private support. Within a few months the group of business leaders incorporated under the name Chicago 4-H Association. A. W. Harlow of Illinois Bell Telephone served as its first president. In 1974 this group became the Chicago/Cook County 4-H Foundation. Many Chicago business and professional leaders worked with the Association. Frances B. Watkins, a trustee of the University of Illinois who played a vital role in 4-H coming to Chicago, was secretary from 1957 to 1974, later served as a trustee of the Chicago/Cook County 4-H Foundation, and was a member of the Chicago 4-H Council. Thomas



J. Nayder, Chicago Building Trades Council President, headed the 4-H Association from 1967 through 1974.



From the time discussion of Chicago 4-H began Kammlade made it clear that the program would have to be extended to low-income people and that it would include Negroes. He was aware that 4-H in the late 1950s was segregated, but that the university could not be a part of a new program in Chicago that would exclude Negroes from membership and leadership. Those recruited to back the Chicago 4-H experiment agreed and the program went forward with that understanding.



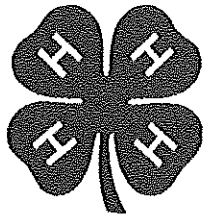
The stipulation to include African Americans, and the need to find someone who could adapt 4-H to an exclusively non-farm audience were on the minds of Illinois state 4-H officials as they worked to staff Chicago 4-H. Lawrence Biever accepted the position and began work on July 1, 1957, as a 4-H youth club specialist. On December 4, 1957, Anna Rose Biever, Biever's wife, was hired to work with the program. Biever began the program with a newly earned doctorate from the University of Wisconsin, some basic beliefs about youth work, and a letter from a Chicago teenager named Sally Tokarz who wanted to start a 4-H club in the Chicago stockyards area. On August 17, 1957, Biever, Tokarz and fourteen other teenage girls formed the Yarettes, Chicago's first urban club. Three of these girls then recruited other boys and girls for three other 4-H clubs in the neighborhood.



By October 1, 1957, seven clubs had been formed. The first 4-H officer induction ceremony and workshop was held October 7, 1957 in a Saint Rose of Lima schoolroom. By June of 1958, a total of twenty-eight 4-H clubs had been formed in various parts of the city. By 1967 there were 137 clubs in Chicago and the numbers continued to grow. To facilitate programming, the Bievers divided Chicago into cluster areas identified as southwest, midway, yards, southside, southeast, Dunbar and northside.

The Bievers found that 4-H home economics and photography projects worked in the inner city, but nearly everything else required adaptations or starting from scratch. Materials were borrowed from other states initially. The Bievers prepared their own guides on topics ranging from junior leadership to money management. During their seventeen years in Chicago they developed and introduced seventy-eight projects.

They conducted a connotative camping program that involved total youth involvement built around a theme that was selected annually. The program provided recognition for campers. Best

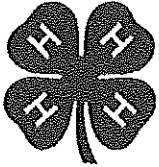
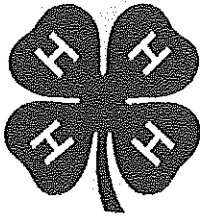


campers were selected who demonstrated the qualities, characteristics and attitudes of fellowship, leadership, sportsmanship, workmanship, courtesy and cooperation. Candidates for best camper were nominated by their peers and selected by previous best campers attending camp. Campers who were fourteen years of age and members for two or more years, who camped the previous year, participated in public speaking and demonstration festivals, and completed member record forms were eligible to apply to serve as camp counselors. Applicants were evaluated at camp and at the closing ceremony a white string, a badge of their role, was given to those who were chosen as new counselors for the next year.

The Chicago Board of Education in 1961 asked 4-H to organize clubs in minority public housing projects where the school drop out rate was especially high. This was done to combat juvenile delinquency and keep youth in school. Sixteen 4-H clubs were organized in housing projects. In the process the Bievers learned to deal with security problems that were far outside the experience of most Extension Agents. When cab drivers would not take Anna Rose into the projects for meetings, the members would walk her to the bus stop. Most meeting were held in an apartment or home where it was more secure. But the children told of having their exhibits or ribbons taken from them on their way home from 4-H events. Ribbons and other awards were proudly displayed in the home of the 4-Hers.

There were few reminders of rural America in Chicago, but it was not a city unfamiliar with the smell of livestock emanating from the stockyard on the southside of Chicago. Chicago did have pig projects for a short time. A Chicago packing company made some empty stalls available to 4-H members who raised twenty-two pigs. Kammlade visited the pig project and declared them "Fine enough to go to the State Fair." The pigs and their owners distinguished themselves at the State Fair. This demonstrated that quality pigs could be raised on concrete rather than mud holes.

Initially there was one 4-H office located in Chicago's loop. By the end of the 1960s Cook County Extension was ready to welcome its Urban Program. The war on poverty brought additional money for youth programming in urban areas. The office in the loop moved to 47th Street in 1967. Later the city was divided into three areas. A northside office was opened on Belmont and known as Area III and a third office was opened in Roseland and was known as Area I. The 47th Street office was identified as Area II. Money from the war on poverty was earmarked for the Chicago 4-H program. In May of

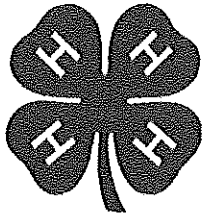


1969 Thomascean Brandon was hired to work with the 4-H program and also the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program in Area III. Loren Floto was hired to work in Area III in February 1970 and left in October 1971. Evell Knight was hired in September 1972 to work with the 4-H program in Area I. The Bievers worked with the program in Area II. In August 1972, Enid Gerst was hired to work with 4-H in Area III. About the same time Anna Hammond was hired to work with 4-H and the EFNEP program in Area I. Merlyn Heyen, 4-H adviser in north suburban Cook was assigned to work part-time in Area III from 1972 to 1974. In 1974, Heyen was named as the Cook County 4-H Program Leader working with the five offices in the county.

On December 31, 1974, the Bievers retired ending a seventeen-year career in Chicago. Gary Heusel was hired as the 4-H adviser for Cook Area II in March 1975. Anna Hammond transferred to Area II to begin an EFNEP program and in December 1976 Knight transferred to Lake County. Sandra Lignell was hired in March 1977 as his replacement in Area I. Larry Wachowski was hired later in 1977 as a 4-H adviser for Area III, but remained only a few months. Donna Asbury was hired in February 1978 as his replacement. After a year's vacancy, Marilyn Norman was hired in April 1987 to work in Area III. Heusel left Area II and Knight was hired as his replacement in 1983. With the Cooperative Extension Service revitalization in 1992, Marilyn Norman became the unit leader and a change in structure going from three city offices to two, one north and one south. Willene Buffett became the Unit leader in 1998.

In the early 1970s working with the County Extension Board, the 4-H Report Team members baked and presented cookies to the County Board Commissioners at one of their meetings. The Commissioners serving on the County Extension Board were George Dunne, Mary M. McDonald and John H. Stroger, Jr. After the 4-H Report Team members gave this gift, the support from the Cook County Board for Extension increased substantially.

During the early seventies many new programs were initiated. A gardening program was initiated at Robert Taylor Homes in cooperation with the Chicago Housing Authority. This was the predecessor of the Chicago Urban Gardening program. In 1992, "Mulligan Stew" was introduced as a television nutrition project for 4-H with an emphasis on school audiences. WTTW ran the series for several years and the Chicago Board of Education worked cooperatively with the three Chicago offices



to involve Chicago students in the program. In 1973 the Chicago Board of Education approached Extension asking them to work with them to develop a program to enhance their science and family life program using incubation and embryology of chicken eggs as the topic. The first eggs were incubated in classrooms in 1974. This project is the largest 4-H project in Chicago and is replicated annually in many counties in Illinois. CES and Chicago Public Schools entered into a memorandum of understanding providing teacher training and Lane Placement credit for Chicago teachers who completed training in incubation and embryology, nutrition education, urban forestry, plant science, entomology, electricity and energy, wetland and aerospace. Rising camping costs in 1978 lead to the development of a volunteer camping program that involved adults and youth in planning and conducting a camping program for Chicago 4-H members. More than three thousand members camped between 1978 and 1991. The early 1980s was a time that a work preparation program was initiated in Chicago using monies secured through a grant. Other grants have been secured in recent years for expanding and strengthening the communities club program. One grant resulted from the Chicago 4-H Ambassadors visit to Springfield for the 4-H Legislative Day.

During the forty-two years that 4-H has been in Chicago thousands have been members of 4-H. Many leaders attended Leader Forums on the county, region, state and national level. Youth participated in regional and state 4-H Conferences. Some of the older youth attended Citizenship Washington Focus while others participated in the International 4-H Youth Exchange and LABO programs either as delegates or hosts. We are proud of our members who earned trips to National 4-H Congress, served on the State Conference Planning Committee, were elected to the Report to the State Team and the Cook County Report Team, served as State 4-H Advisory Committee members, became members of the Chicago 4-H Council and 4-H Ambassadors. This past year, Sam Jones, one of Chicago's first 4-H members received one of four 4-H State Alumni awards.

Chicago is proud of the youth and adults who are and who have been involved in the Chicago 4-H program. Members and leaders have worked "To Make the Best Better" as they learned by doing.