

History of 4-H in Florida

Florida's children and youth began enjoying educational activities provided in cooperation with the state's land-grant institutions as early as 1909. 4-H type programs were first established in north Florida, including Suwannee, Columbia, Madison and Gadsden counties. The boys participated in corn clubs, and the girls were active in tomato clubs.

Leadership for the Florida 4-H program was found in three major academic institutions. State 4-H club agents were housed at the University of Florida and Florida State University (originally, Florida State College for Women). In addition, District Extension agents working with 4-H programs for black youth were housed at Florida A&M University.

Separate programs were conducted for boys and girls, as well as black and white youth. As was typical in the rest of the southern region of the United States, 4-H clubs met in the schools with agricultural agents teaching agricultural projects to boys. Girls met with home economics agents to learn about projects associated with the home and family.

The school club programs were supplemented with a number of out-of-school events and activities. County and regional fairs in Florida have a long tradition of providing opportunities for 4-Hers to publicly show their projects and compete for awards. Agricultural judging teams, organized in many counties, participated in regional, state and national contests. These teams provided a way for youth to travel and meet people from outside their communities and learn more about the world around them.

Camping has always been a key component in the Florida 4-H program with Camp Timpooshee in northwest Florida being one of the first 4-H residential camps in the country and established in 1926.

Each of the three universities hosted a week-long summer leadership and project competitions event. The leadership programs included election of state 4-H officers for both the male and female divisions of the program. At one time, there were as many as three state 4-H council leadership programs operating in the state (today there is one State 4-H Council).

With the leadership of national 4-H specialists at the USDA, and the support of the National 4-H Service Committee and the National 4-H Foundation, Florida 4-Hers participated in a number of national events, including National 4-H Congress, National Conference and Citizenship Short Course.

When the [National 4-H Center](#) was established in the 1950s, Florida 4-Hers raised about \$50,000 through the sale of chocolate bars which they contributed to the center.

New Programs Begin

During Dr. James Brasher's tenure as Assistant Dean and Department Chair, the Florida 4-H program flourished with the addition of many new programs. One of the most successful new programs was Florida 4-H Legislature, a mock youth legislature conducted in Tallahassee in the State Capital Building. Youth attending the event were housed on the Florida State University campus. County and state faculty also began developing additional program delivery strategies that again included the public schools in school enrichment programming. Greater focus was also placed on making the 4-H program accessible to all youth regardless of racial, economic, or rural/urban status. 4-H Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Programs (EFNEP) became one of the key delivery methods for innercity youth during this time period.

Expansion Continued

In 1981, Dr. Sue Fisher was recruited from a 4-H specialist position at the University of Minnesota, to become the Assistant Dean and Department Chair for 4-H. She served in that position until July 1, 1997. During this time frame, considerable attention was devoted to development of the 4-H volunteer system that grew to nearly 20,000 adult and teen leaders. Fundraising during the 1980s focused primarily on support for the development of the 4-H camp facilities. Private funds were instrumental in making major improvements in three of the four 4-H camps. As new private funds were secured to improve the camp facilities, increased operating costs required higher user fees. Between 1981 and 1997, camp fees increased from \$18 to about \$110 per week.

Strategic Planning for Florida 4-H

Strategic planning for the Florida 4-H program occurred in 1991-92. Over 1500 youth and adults from across the state, plus representatives from county and state faculty, the Foundation Board of Directors, and cooperating agencies and organizations were involved. The plan they developed served as a guide in programming and organizational development activities. Based on recommendations in the plan and in response to budget constraints, considerable attention was given to updating the 4-H curriculum. Florida 4-H specialists and county faculty have received national recognition for work in this area.

More Recent History

In the past eight years, downsizing has impacted all of IFAS, including the 4-H Youth Development Program. The number of state-supported faculty at the state and county level has been reduced. At the same time, the number of county faculty lines assigned to 4-H programming expanded due to financial support from county resources. For the state 4-H faculty, downsizing has required that critical decisions be made regarding assignment of faculty time. In the early 1990s, for example, the assignment of 2.5

FTEs to 4-H district liaison roles was eliminated. The state 4-H faculty focused their time and program leadership roles on liaison with subject matter departments and specialists, while also developing a rather sizable committee structure to accommodate needed and sustained communications with county faculty. Despite these challenges, the program has continued to grow and now serves nearly a quarter million youth in Florida.

On July 1, 1996, Florida 4-H experienced another major change in its campus-based organizational structure. The Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences was formed, merging the faculty within the Department of Home Economics, with the faculty from the Department of 4-H and Other Youth Programs. This new department with Extension, research and teaching functions houses a multi-disciplinary faculty with assignments in areas of family and consumer sciences, youth and community development.

A new organizational unit, referred to as the 4-H Youth Development Office (today's State 4-H Office), supports the following functions: leadership for statewide 4-H program and evaluation, leadership for statewide program communications, marketing and accountability, coordination for 4-H youth development in-service and volunteer development programs, development of public/private resources, including management of the Florida 4-H Foundation, Inc., management of four residential 4-H camp facilities and associated programs, management of state 4-H events, activities, awards and recognition programs, scholarships, publications and other teaching aids supporting State Major Programs, and encouragement and support for development of innovative programs that address emerging youth needs.

African American History in Florida 4-H

Through the years, the overall objective of 4-H has remained the same: the development of youth as individuals and as responsible and productive citizens. 4-H serves youth through a variety of methods. Some of the contributions of African Americans within the Florida 4-H program are included on the following pages of history:

Background History

Extension work with African-Americans began in Florida in 1915 and was headquartered at Florida A&M University (FAMU). As was common in the southern United States at that time, 4-H work was segregated. About 1,250 boys and girls were enrolled in farm makers clubs and home makers clubs in 1917 in Alachua, Gadsden, Jefferson, Leon, Marion, and Washington counties.

By 1920, African-American 4-H club work had expanded to 18 counties. The program for men and boys was expanded to include corn clubs, potato clubs, pig clubs, and savings clubs. For the girls there were canning clubs, poultry clubs, improvement clubs, dairy clubs, sanitation clubs, and savings clubs.

Camp History

In 1927, twenty African-American 4-H members attended an interstate meeting of the Southern Negro Boys and Girls 4-H Camp at Tuskegee, Alabama. Three girls and three boys selected on the basis of outstanding records in project work and leadership attended the first Negro 4-H Camp at Baton Rouge, Louisiana, in 1948.

African-American 4-H members initially camped at the district level using tents. A state council for African-American girls was organized during the annual short course at FAMU in 1955. However, in 1948, 4-H Camp Doe Lake, the first permanent 4-H camp for African-American 4-H club members opened in the Ocala National Forest. Located on a 30-acre lake, the camp could accommodate 130 campers per week.

African American Agents

Noah Bennett, the first county agent of African-American decent was employed in 1939. In addition, Miss Floy Britt, Home Demonstration Agent from Florida A & M came to Hillsborough County in 1940 to worked with African-American clients in Plant City, Citrus Park, Sulfur Springs, Port Tampa, Bealsville, and Seffner.

In 1941 Sumter County welcomed the first African American agent to conduct programs for black youth; Mr. Alonzo Young.

The 50s saw the beginning of the Miami-Dade County Fair and Exposition, and the hiring of the county's first African American agent, Victoria Simpson.

Isaac Chandler began in 1953 and continued to serve until 1988 (Lewis, M. D., et al). Chandler began his career through organizing school and community clubs for African American boys and working on corn and swine projects. After segregation, Chandler received the majority of the responsibility for the 4-H program in Hamilton County (Tyree, A.B., 2007).

Society Changed

During the 1960's society was also changing and segregation was no longer permissible. It was a learning experience for everyone. The state 4-H staffs from the University of Florida and the Florida State College for Women were combined. The merger melded 4-H programs serving boys and girls, blacks and whites, into one state 4-H program. At the county level, separate programs for African-American, Native American Indian, and white boys and girls were also merged.

Another major trend during this decade was increasing the number and availability of 4-H programs focused on urban youth who did not have an agricultural background. This also included programs for African-American youth in the early 1960s. Sudella Ford, Home Economics Agent, worked with the African-American 4-H clubs in Hillsborough County. The two largest African-American clubs at that time in the county were located in Bealsville and Citrus Park. Although these clubs were segregated from the white clubs in the county, all 4-H members came together at the Florida State Fair where African-American and white girls participated in the fashion show together.

History of Camp Timpoochee

4-H Camp Timpoochee was established as the first residential 4-H camping facility in Florida in 1926. It was one of the first 4-H residential camps in the nation. District agent J. Lee Smith was looking for a permanent place where 4-Hers in northwest Florida could camp. They would need sleeping cabins for protection from weather and insects, as well as a storage space for equipment and supplies. Mr. Smith discussed his idea for the camp with his friend and financier, James Pace. Mr. Pace donated an ideal location at Stake Point on the Choctawhatchee Bay. It was a high bluff covered with hardwood trees and a beach with a sloping sand bottom. The area had been used as a campground by Native Americans, and pottery shards were found along the beach.

Former State 4-H Leader Woodrow Brown wrote the following about the effort to build the camp, "Everyone was asked to pitch in. Business people in surrounding counties contributed lumber, roofing and nails to build the facilities. Even in those hard times, people gave generously in the best interest of 4-H young people."

The first fundraising for Camp Timpoochee was done by 4-H boys and girls. In 1927, one hundred and two chickens donated by one hundred and three Escambia County 4-Hers, were loaded onto a train as it stopped in several towns in northwest Florida. These chickens were sold on the railroad track in Marianna for nearly \$500, quite a sum at that time. Records tell us that 4-Hers in Washington, Bay, Walton and Santa Rosa counties raised \$1,311 in 1928 for the camp, and an additional \$1,500 was contributed by other friends of the program.

In the 1930s, 4-Hers were asked to name the camp. A 4-Her from Santa Rosa County, Rusty Grundin, suggested the name "Timpoochee". The camp was named for Chief Timpoochee Kinard, Chief of the Euchee tribe. The son of a Scotsman and a Euchee Native American woman, the chief was known as "Sam Story". The Euchee tribe befriended the white settlers who first entered northwest Florida, but eventually left the area as settlement changed the area forever. It is said that Chief Timpoochee Kinard

died of a broken heart from watching the wanton destruction of the land he loved. 4-Hers suggested the name to honor the chief and his courageous people.

Over the years, 4-H Camp Timpooshee has provided educational camping experiences for thousands of 4-H boys and girls. There have been many improvements made to the cabins and facilities over the years. In 1984, the Florida 4-H Foundation kicked off a capital renewal effort, resulting in the construction of new cabins. In 1986, the Choctawhatchee Electrical Cooperative erected the pavilion. In 1995, Hurricane Opal caused over \$100,000 in damage to the camp, and took 15 feet of the shoreline. The camp was rebuilt with the support of federal funds, which replenished the beach area and restored damaged buildings. The St. Joe Paper Company provides support for programs and facilities. Fred Barber left \$10,000 through his will to the camp which was used to fund program equipment. A marine center was dedicated in 1998 with funds donated by the Dupont Company.

Among the four 4-H camps in use in Florida today, Camp Timpooshee is unique because of its facilities for horses and its location on the bay, which provides an excellent area for marine study.