Brothers Jim, Dan, and Ryan Grippo have more in common than their love of shooting sports—all three are pursuing medical careers. The young men grew up in Pennsylvania 4-H and credit the 4-H Shooting Sports program with teaching them to concentrate on a target or goal, to practice diligently, and to aim for the highest level of success in life. 4-H community service projects cultivated a love of helping others. Despite their medical studies and other demands on their time, the brothers volunteer with Habitat for Humanity, Vanderbilt Children’s Hospital, and Ronald McDonald House, and serve on medical missions in South America.

4-H shooting sports activities opened many doors for me, even helped me to attend college.
—Ryan Grippo

Visit www.4-hshootingsports.org for more information.
Focusing on Youth Development

The focus of all 4-H programs is the development of youth as individuals and as responsible and productive citizens. The National 4-H Shooting Sports Program stands out as an example. Youth learn marksmanship, the safe and responsible use of firearms, the principles of hunting and archery, and much more. The activities of the program and the support of caring adult leaders provide young people with opportunities to develop life skills, self-worth, and conservation ethics.

Building Life Skills

Specific objectives for the program are to:

- teach decision making, teamwork, self-discipline, self-confidence, and problem solving;
- promote the highest standards of safety, sportsmanship, and ethical behavior;
- encourage an appreciation and understanding of natural resources;
- develop leadership abilities;
- build character and willingness to assume citizenship responsibility;
- furnish enjoyable, positive relationships with peers and adult instructors;
- strengthen families through participation in lifelong recreational activities;
- build awareness of related career opportunities.

Something for Everyone

The Shooting Sports curriculum uses the resources of the land-grant university and the time, talent, and dedication of Cooperative Extension agents and certified 4-H leaders, instructors, and trainers who instruct 4-H members in firearms safety and marksmanship. The shooting disciplines include archery, muzzle loading, pistol, rifle, shotgun, and hunting. Each discipline is taught by a National or State Certified Instructor.

Meet a few of our members

Katie and Kristie Harrington are expert rifle shooters. Both girls hold the National Rifle Association Marksmanship Qualification Award of Distinguished Expert in International Air Rifle and American Rifle. Katie and Kristie are officers of their 4-H Shooting Sports club in Jacksonville, Florida, as well as honor roll students. Their dad, Joe Harrington, a Navy captain, and their mom, Judy, a teacher, are 4-H volunteers. Judy is also a National Rifle Association appointed coach. For the Harringtons, the 4-H Shooting Sports program is a family affair.

Joshua Burchick, like his dad, a former U.S. Park Ranger with the National Park Service, loves the outdoors. The high school honor roll student and first baseman finds time to hunt, fish, accompany her father on biological surveys, and take award-winning wildlife photographs. At age 15, he was Maryland’s 4-H Shooting Sports representative to the Grand National Waterfowl Hunt, which encourages wildlife conservation and promotes shooting sports.

Helping little kids in the club helps me with my concentration and school work. In 4-H, we set a lot of goals for ourselves. Mine is to make it to the Olympics.

—Kristie Harrington

Joshua is president of the 4-H Gun Club in Maryland, where he has been a member for five years. Yet he makes time to help elderly neighbors with chores. Like other outstanding club members, his life reflects 4-H values.

Healthy Competition

4-H members have opportunities to test their shooting, hunting, and sportsmanship skills in county, regional, state, and national competitions. In fact, they could ultimately set Olympic competition as their goal. There are seventeen Olympic shooting sports events, which continue to draw the third-greatest number of countries.

NRA airgun summit, Wilmington, NC, July 2003. photo credit: pilkguns.com

Member participating in the National 4-H Shooting Sports Invitational, the national level competition in all of the disciplines. photo credit: pilkguns.com