In this project, youth learn American Sign Language (ASL), the fourth most commonly used language in the United States. Nationally, more than 15 million people have a hearing impairment and nearly 2 million are considered deaf. 4-H youth will learn that deafness is not simply a physical limitation in hearing ability, but has cultural aspects too.

- Learn how to “talk” with their hands and “listen” with their eyes using ASL.
- Explore the language, culture and history of the Deaf community.
- Interact with the Deaf community by learning the basics of ASL.

The activities above are ideas to inspire further project development. This is not a complete list.

4-H AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE

4-H THRIVE

Help Youth:

**Light Their Spark**

A spark is something youth are passionate about; it really fires them up and gives them joy and energy. Help youth find what it is about American Sign Language that excites them.

**Flex Their Brain**

The brain grows stronger when we try new things and master new skills. Encourage youth effort and persistence to help them reach higher levels of success.

**Reach Their Goals**

Help youth use the GPS system to achieve their goals.

**Goal Selection:** Choose one meaningful, realistic and demanding goal.

**Pursue Strategies:** Create a step-by-step plan to make daily choices that support your goal.

**Shift Gears:** Change strategies if you’re having difficulties reaching your goal. Seek help from others. What are youth going to do when things get in their way?

**Reflect**

Ask project members how they can use their passion for ASL to be more confident, competent and caring. Discuss ways they can use their skills to make a contributions in the community, improve their character or establish connections.
Expand Your Experiences!

**Citizenship**
- Identify an organization in your state or community that advocates for the Deaf. Partner with this organization to increase community awareness about Deaf culture.
- Learn about the American Disabilities Act and survey how it influences building design in your community. Assist willing businesses in becoming more ADA compliant.

**Healthy Living**
- Think about how you receive messages about health and nutrition. Identify a health message and create a plan for communicating this message to individuals with impaired hearing.
- Research the sources and decibel levels of noises around the home. Teach others about the dangers of noise and the importance of hearing protection.

**Science, Engineering, and Technology**
- Visit an audiologist to learn more about hearing tests and how deafness is diagnosed.
- Research modern technologies that assist the Deaf and hard-of-hearing, such as TDD, TDY, cochlear implant, hearing aids and closed captioning.

**Leadership**
- Teach your 4-H community club how to sign the pledge of Allegiance and/or the 4-H Pledge.
- Visit a preschool and read a children’s book about the Deaf. Help children understand the unique abilities of deaf individuals.
- Teach others how to fingerspell using the American Manual Alphabet.

**Connections & Events**

**Curriculum**
- ASL and Deaf Studies K-12 Curriculum Framework - my.gallaudet.edu/bbcswebdav/institution/ASLCurr/index.htm
- Shared Lesson Plans - www.aslpro.com/lesson_plans/shared_lesson_plans.html (open source)

**4-H Record Book**
4-H Record Books give members an opportunity to record events and reflect on their experiences. For each project, members document their personal experiences, learning and development.

4-H Record Books also teach members record management skills and encourage them to set goals and develop a plan to meet those goals.

To access the 4-H Record Book online, visit www.ca4h.org/4hbook.

**Resources**
- Book: *Signing for Kids* by Mickey Flodin
- Book: *Signing Is Fun! A Child’s Introduction to Signing* by Mickey Flodin
- Book: *Gallaudet Survival Guide to Signing* by Leonard G. Lane
- Signing Savvy www.signingsavvy.com
- American Sign Language Browser aslbrowser.com/mtechlab.msu.edu
- American Sign Language University www.lifeprint.com
- Deaf Linx www.deaflinx.com
- ASL Info www.aslinfo.com
- Ohio School for the Deaf www.ohioschoolforthedeaf.org
- Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center www.gallaudet.edu/clerc_center.html
- National Association of the Deaf www.nad.org

The UC 4-H Youth Development Program does not endorse, warrant, or otherwise take responsibility for the contents of unofficial sites.