

4Hs for the World

World. A simple five lettered word that speaks of our physical Earth and the holistic society in which we humans are a part of. The word dates back hundreds of years and roots out of the word Weoruld which roughly translates to “age of man”. Even back then, it was apparent that the age of man depends on our world and now with climate change threatening the way we live, it is all the more important that we acknowledge this.

Being a new 4H member this year, it was only natural for me to be caught off guard at my first meeting when the group started to recite the 4H pledge by memory. As I fumbled my way through it, I pondered about the meaning behind this fairly simple, yet meaningful pledge.

“I pledge my head to clearer thinking,” reads the first line. What does it mean to think clearly? Looking around the world and seeing all the hate that affects us on a daily basis, it is more important than ever to think critically without the biases that make the world such a difficult place. This line is a prompt to open mindedness and personal growth.

The second line promises your heart to greater loyalty. Loyalty is perceived in so many ways to a point where it often loses its meaning. Take a dictionary for example, where synonyms of loyalty range from allegiance to obedience. When we pledge our hearts to loyalty, it is not out of obligation and it is not blind faith. Loyalty builds trust, connections and the drive to build a better community, nation and world.

“My hands to larger service” marks the third H. I quickly related this line to one of my all time favourite quotes; “if you ate today, thank a farmer” because although farming isn’t the most prestigious job, it’s what every human being, depends on. *That*, to me is definitely larger service.

Health to better living refers to the importance of taking care of yourself. Although selflessness is an important trait, it is also just important to cherish life. By devoting your health to better living, you do a service to yourself and your community.

Which leads to the final two lines of the 4H pledge, “For my club, my community, my country, and my world”. One of my first impressions after becoming a member was how much value there was in giving back to the community at 4H. All 4H alumni I have met found ways to give back to the community, from hosting 4H project animals to becoming global leaders. This pledge encourages youth all over the world to explore their passion, innovation and impact with more than their community. After all, with humans circling the globe for answers, perhaps with heads thinking clearer, hearts with greater loyalty, hands for better service and health to better living, we can collectively make the age of man, a better world to live.