

# No Act Too Small Resource

Small Steps 4-H Members and Leaders can  
Take to Create Positive Environmental &  
Healthy Living Change

*Developed by the Members Forum Delegates, 2018*

4-H Canada  
**Members  
Forum**   
2018



## Background

Members Forum, which has been running since 1933, invites 4-H members from across Canada to learn about leadership and their ability to make change, under the pillar theme of the Environment & Healthy Living. Specifically, this year's theme "No Act Too Small", challenges members to consider the small changes and actions they can adopt or encourage in their communities, and how those small nudges can have a huge ripple effect.

In 2016, Members Forum delegates collaboratively created *Bridging the Gap*, a resource that outlined tips for developing and strengthening youth-adult partnerships in 4-H. Having 4-H members from across the country share their voices and opinions in a youth-led resource is invaluable, and is an element of the Members Forum program that has continued. With the ability to create impact on a club level to a national level, this is truly youth leadership in action!

## Acknowledgments

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## Introduction

Are you being a responsible citizen by creating positive change? If you're not, the smallest of acts can create a positive outcome. The small acts of a citizen, or a 4-H club will lead to a healthier, more sustainable community within their communities, provinces, nations and the world. A small act can be defined as an action easily taken by an individual, which can be multiplied into something greater.

Small acts are “actions” which can help to create and further real change in the world. These actions are ones which, when multiplied by others doing the same (or alternative positives), will generate great changes upon many levels. They will build up over time to reverse the negative trends and impacts. From the general small acts listed within this introduction, which can apply to all issues that one might face, as well as those more specific ones which are further into this resource, **you** can work at problems which affect, concern or interest you.

General small acts aren't tied to just the Environment & Healthy Living, but make change, no matter where your interest lies. This can come in a number of different forms. Voting and writing letters to your local political representatives (municipal, provincial, federal) can be excellent ways to start. You may decide to become an advocate or educator. No matter how you decide to make change, remember to evaluate your actions and the large impact a small act can have. Lead by example and be a role model because others will follow in our footsteps!

Healthy living is mostly summarized in five categories: self-care, exercise, healthy eating, relationships, and mental health. All these categories matter at personal, club, community, provincial/ national and international levels. For example, self-care on a personal level could look like getting more sleep. A general act of this would be to sleep longer or go to bed earlier, but usually people ignore this general advice. Instead, a small act of putting your technology on the other side of the room or getting an app on your phone to shut off all apps at a certain time would ensure that you get the sleep you need.

The health and sustainability of the environment is an issue which seems daunting. Positive change can be achieved though, even through actions which are accomplished by oneself. Small acts which **you** can work at will help you, as well as your clubs, community, province/nation and the world. These acts are just small ones, which are practically as simple as doing nothing at all, as many can be achieved in minutes. For example, in order to help the environment and use less energy, you can simply turn the lights off when you leave a room. This practically minuscule action is one which one person might think is nothing, and could never help due to its size. But, when many people do as so, then great positive change can, and will, be achieved.

The options we have listed are just some of the ideas that the delegates of the 2018 member forum had came up with. Even with all of the brainstorming we did, there are still many more small acts a person can perform. So, we encourage you to read these suggestions, try out some small acts, and keep exploring for many more topics or options that would cause a positive ripple effect in your life, club, community, province/ nation, and the world. As we know, a healthier environment leads to healthier people, and these small acts are a way to make this a reality!

# Environment

## Personal

1. Turn Lights Off
  - Reduced power bill
  - Encourages exercise by turning lights off to avoid the darkness
  - Reduced personal carbon footprint
2. Composting
  - Reduced cost of garbage disposal - different in every province, with possibly reduced taxes
  - Free fertilizer
  - Positive lifestyle change
  - Encourages less food waste in the home
3. Reduce, reuse, recycle
  - Reimbursement for cans and bottles
  - Less garbage
  - Investing in reusable products and containers
  - Lifestyle change
4. Buying Local
  - Fresher produce for family
  - You know where food is from
  - Less packaging and travel
  - Supporting the community
5. Carpool
  - Reduced carbon footprint
  - Pay less on gas
  - Carpool lane - less traffic and faster (depending on the province)
  - Less time behind the wheel - less people tired driving

**Which small act will you personally take on?**

## Club

1. Club Gardening
  - Planting bee pollinating flowers increases our bee population and a garden is also a great way to eat home grown vegetables.
2. Highway clean ups
  - Highway clean ups affect your community by making it a better and prettier place to be and is a great bonding experience for clubs.
3. Volunteer with a watershed as a club
  - Volunteering at the watershed increases awareness for 4H members and encourages them to spread their awareness throughout their communities.
4. Club Tree Planting
  - Club tree planting is also a great bonding experience and improves air quality!

5. Host a 2050 conference
  - Hosting a 2050 conference is a great way to spread the word of sustainable agriculture through 4-H and around your communities.

### **Which small act will you do with your 4-H club?**

## **Community**

1. Community Garden & Compost
  - Encourages local produce and therefore reduces purchasing of transported foods from outside sources, saving fuel and supporting the community.
  - Composting systems can also be put in place, and the compost that is collected can be used to support the community garden.
2. Clothing and Food Donation
  - Can reduce waste that is thrown into garbage, dumps, etc.
  - Also supports the less fortunate within the community.
  - Reduces Food Waste.
3. Accessible Garbage Cans
  - By making garbage cans accessible, trails and landscape may become cleaner.
  - Discourages littering.
  - Can also make garbage clean-ups easier.
4. Protecting Wildlife
  - Small acts can be done, such as installing birdhouses, etc.
  - Protects diversity within communities.
  - Protects both plant and animal species.
5. Reducing Plastic and Paper
  - Communities can take part in helping the environment by using reusable shopping bags (which reduces plastic consumption).
  - By using less paper within schools, offices, and homes, less trees within the community will need to be cut down.

### **Which small act will you encourage your community to adopt?**

## **Provincial/National**

1. Footprint Reduction
  - Your footprint is your overall impact on the environment. By reducing your footprint, you help to maintain the quality of provincial, and national environment.
  - Things you can do to reduce your footprint
    - Clean up litter from community
    - Bring your own reusable bags when shopping
    - Make sure to get full use from products
    - Grow your own food
2. Repurposing, Recycling, Reusing
  - Often, people create garbage from usable items. Unfortunately, this increases waste, and speeds up the process of draining the finite resources our country has.
  - What you can do:
    - Thrift shop

- Try to repair. If it is beyond repair, repurpose
- Participate in local recycling initiatives
- Buy reusable, not disposable
- 3. Educate, Speak Up, Get involved
  - By inspiring those around you to make change, you provide the knowledge and inspiration for greater, farther-reaching change.
  - What you can do:
    - Get the children in your life engaged in, and respectful of, nature
    - Vote; support responsible politicians and policies
    - Join activist, and environmental organization
    - Make educated decisions
    - Support infrastructure and initiatives for electric vehicles and renewable resources
- 4. Support Sustainable Agriculture
  - With a growing national population, and many people living in famine, it will be a challenge to feed everybody sustainably.
  - What you can do to increase national food sustainability:
    - Buy local
    - Grow your own food
    - Eat less red meat
- 5. Consume Responsibly, Support Responsible Companies
  - Where you choose to spend your money matters. Corporations and companies must be held accountable for their environmental impact. By supporting companies that do good work, it encourages ethical business practices. Consequently, the amounts of ethical products available to buy in Canada will increase.
  - What you can do:
    - Buy local
    - Research the companies you're buying from
    - Support fair trade, and rainforest certified products

### **Which small act will you support\* on a provincial or national level?**

\*Support on this level could look like: voting for a candidate who champions this cause, supporting a campaign, volunteering for a related organization, advocating in your own social network, or running for a position yourself!

## **International**

1. Turn lights off
  - Reduces a countries environment impact and energy usage
2. Composting
  - Reducing space occupied by land fills
3. Improved soil quality which improves agricultural exports for the country
  - Reduce carbon emissions and pollution
4. Reduce, Reuse and Recycle
  - Less trash in international waters and affecting animals and land
5. Eat Responsibility
  - Reduces animal waste runoff (eating less meat)
6. Cuts down on greenhouse gases

- Preserves land and water resources
6. Live Roofs/walls
    - Improved air quality and oxygen levels
  7. Lower the cost electricity (heating and cooling)
    - Countries influence one another (ripple effect).

**Which small act will you support\* on an international level?**

\*Support on this level could look like: understanding and sharing the SDGs, voting for a candidate who champions this cause, supporting a global campaign, volunteering for a related international organization, advocating for global impact on your own social network, or running for a position yourself!

# Healthy Living

## Personal

1. Making a shopping list before you go shopping.
  - Can allow you to keep focused on what you need to buy. Not only will it keep you away from unhealthy snacks, but it also helps you budget and save time while shopping.
  - May help with meal planning, reducing food waste, and stress, as you know what you need you won't forget anything. It is also easier to distinguish between needs vs. wants.
  - Teaches discipline - the feeling of fulfilment in knowing you were able to resist urges to buy certain unhealthy products.
  - Apps: Shoplist, Grocery List Checklist
2. Setting goals for yourself/rewarding yourself.
  - Can measure what you have accomplished and will provide direction for future tasks. Goals will help motivate you to continue working, and rewards will motivate you to continue working hard to achieve your goals.
  - Is an effective use of time, and gives you a sense of purpose. Make a journal and stick to it.
  - Provides the satisfaction of achieving your goals.
  - Apps: Reminders, Purpose Color, Habit Tracker
3. Being open to meeting new people:
  - Will help you develop strong connections and make new friends.
  - Boosts happiness and reduces stress.
  - Provides a network of support.
  - Can provide guidance.
  - They can hold you accountable (e.g.: exercise buddy, school work buddy, etc.)
4. Making an active routine:
  - Can boost energy, stimulate your brain, and help in creating new positive memories.
  - Can help destress and decrease feelings of depression.
  - Reduces risks of chronic diseases, such as type 2 diabetes and hypertension, and cardiovascular disease.
  - Helps you keep track of your exercise.
  - Helps with relaxation and improves sleep quality.
  - Choosing to walk instead of driving, taking the stairs instead of elevator, etc.
  - Apps: Fitbit, generic app on most smartphones
6. Sleeping more:
  - Lowers stress, improves memory, maintains weight, and helps you be more productive throughout the day.
  - Reduces risks of chronic disease, keeps your heart healthy, and improves your immune system.
  - Try to aim for at least 8 hours of sleep per night.
  - Track your sleep, set goals.
  - Reduce phone usage before bed to help improve sleep quality.

**Which small act will you personally take on?**



## Club

1. Bring healthy snacks.
  - Can encourage healthy eating habits in younger members
  - Provides access to healthy snacks for members who may not have access
  - Gives an opportunity to teach about the importance of healthy eating, Canada's Food guide and the impact of healthy eating on mental health.
2. Organize social activities.
  - Encourages relationship strengthening and communication
  - Encourages friendships and trust at an early age.
  - Provide a safe space for interacting with peers.
  - Could also include a physically active side.
3. Volunteering.
  - Strengthens community bonds
  - Demonstrates the importance of community involvement
4. Provide a mental health resource.
  - Identify yourself as someone who is willing to listen, make yourself approachable.
  - Club Guidance Counsellor
  - Encourage discussions about good mental health
5. Plan fun events with healthy living aspect.
  - Can incorporate any/all of the aforementioned points:
    1. Physical activity
    2. Social interactions
    3. Building leadership capacity
    4. Provide access to healthy food

**Which small act will you do with your 4-H club?**

## Community

1. Buy from local producers.
  - When buying food make sure you know the producer
  - Shop at farmers' markets
  - Boost local economy
2. Help support community sports.
  - Volunteer to coach a team
  - Go to games and support fundraisers
  - Get involved in activities yourself
3. Share a smile.
  - Smile, be polite, hold a door open
  - Be kind to others - simple acts can make someone's day!
4. Look out for your neighbours.
  - Get to know them
  - Let them know you are there for them (e.g. bringing soup when they are sick)
  - Make time for social events (e.g. a local fun run, community garage sale, etc.)
5. Clean up garbage in your community.
  - Make an effort to properly dispose of trash properly
  - Cleaning up litter may inspire others to follow your lead.

- If the community looks good, people will have pride in where they live.

### **Which small act will you encourage your community to adopt?**

## **Provincial/National**

1. Share posts online promoting healthy habits.
  - Sharing posts in support of making healthy choices and supporting important causes.
  - Sharing information over social media about healthy recipes, fitness techniques, ways to access the gym can help inspire and encourage friends from all over to make more conscious, healthier decisions.
  - Supporting provincial or nationwide campaigns that give back, such as Bell Let's Talk, or Run For The Cure can raise awareness and encourage others to become involved.
2. Encourage business and governments to support 4-H and other community programming.
  - Businesses and governments can support community programs in a number of ways, such as promoting them, providing financial support, or granting access to other resources.
  - Advocating for these groups at the provincial and national level can help raise awareness, and encourage growth.
3. Make an effort to support local/Canadian businesses.
  - Supporting local/national businesses can help enforce a stronger economy, which will benefit many other aspects of life for those living within it.
4. Vote.
  - Vote for candidates that support provincial and national programs related to healthy living.
  - Voting allows you to make your voice heard, and partaking in elections can help you feel more engaged and connected to your community, province, and country.
6. Educate yourself.
  - Educating yourself on current issues at the provincial and national level can help you be a more engaged and informed citizen.
  - Knowing where to go to find national resources regarding mental health, nutrition, etc. and being able to share them.

### **Which small act will you support\* on a provincial or national level?**

\*Support on this level could look like: voting for a candidate who champions this cause, supporting a campaign, volunteering for a related organization, advocating in your own social network, or running for a position yourself!

## **International**

1. Advertising healthy living initiatives.
  - a. Sharing on social media platforms. Making a hashtag #GetFit2k19.
  - b. Sharing with friends and families will create the ripple effect.
  - c. Advocate for more outdoor fitness areas.
  - d. Arranging for public postings and advertising.
2. Making healthy living more accessible.
  - Having gyms accessible for youth under 18.
  - Advocate for programs that teach meal planning in schools.

- If you can't afford or don't have the ability to obtain healthy living items make arrangements with food banks, gyms, friends, family, and grocery stores.
3. Support international organizations.
    - Become engaged and do what you can to help reduce problems at the international level.
    - Writing a letter of support for Amnesty International, donating to International Development programs, etc.
  4. Meaningful and responsible buying.
    - Buying Fair Trade products ensures that you are supporting ethical practices, and thus supporting healthy, safe practices internationally.
    - Understanding how products are produced, where they come from, etc. ensures you are being a smart consumer.
  5. Educate yourself on international issues surrounding health and wellbeing.
    - Research organizations dealing with international issues.
    - Fact check, and understand all aspects of global issues.
    - Make an effort to read about other countries, and to understand other cultures.
    - Become an engaged and informed global citizen.

**Which small act will you support\* on an international level?**

\*Support on this level could look like: understanding and sharing the SDGs, voting for a candidate who champions this cause, supporting a global campaign, volunteering for a related international organization, advocating for global impact on your own social network, or running for a position yourself!