

4-H The Power of YOUTH

4-H is a community of young people across America who are learning leadership, citizenship and life skills.

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EYSC Year 2 Accomplishments

Through the Engaging Youth, Serving Community (EYSC) program, 4-H staff worked with 4-H members and volunteers to develop and implement a variety of unique programs in rural communities.

During EYSC Year 2, funding provided for:

- Youth in governance, 4-H Afterschool and professional volunteer training projects in 60 counties nationwide
- 1,344 youth and 1,119 adults trained in youth/adult partnerships
- 752 youth and 956 adults engaged as partners in governance
- 6,007 youth and 2,587 adults participating in youth/adult partnerships
- 823 youth recognized for contributions to their communities
- 69 new 4-H Afterschool clubs established with 591 adults as volunteers
- 40,308 hours youth and adults worked together in 4-H Afterschool clubs
- Hundreds of hours of training sessions, board meetings, conferences/workshops, speaking events and community events. ■

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Skateboarders and BMX bike riders in Placerville, Calif., now have a safe place to perfect their craft, thanks to 4-H member Melissa Jones and the El Dorado County Youth Commission's Skate Park Committee.

Saving Joe's Skate Park Public Forums Deliver for Youth in Placerville, Calif.

The future of skateboarding moves like "Ollies," "McTwists" and "180s" at Joe's Skate Park in Placerville, Calif., are safe, thanks to 4-H youth members and adult volunteers who saved the skate park last year through a series of 4-H-led community forums.

The El Dorado County Youth Commission's Skate Park Committee, chaired by 4-H member Melissa Jones, spent four months investigating the local skate park.

"You always hear this idea of youth in governance and youth working with adults," said Jones, a local high school student. "You think it sounds like a nice idea, but will it really work?"

Jones led the Youth Commission as members surveyed 750 park users and interviewed police, city officials, representatives from local government agencies and others. The commission then published a comprehensive report outlining scenarios including operating Joe's with a vendor or the local recreation department with a user fee, closing the park, or operating the park unsupervised. It firmly

recommended that the park be operated unsupervised with a committee—made up of all stakeholders including youth and officials—formed to oversee it.

More than 100 people attended the public forum in February 2005, including stakeholders, park users, local businesses and parents. The event changed a lot of minds, particularly several who were leaning towards a supervised park. A week later, the county parks and recreation department endorsed the Youth Commission's recommendations. The El Dorado County Board of Supervisors had nothing but praise for the Youth Commission that made a formal report and recommendations on the future of Joe's.

So Joe's is open, operating, and getting skateboarders and BMX bike riders off the streets, sidewalks and parking lots—thanks in large part to the 4-H-led forum. "We all came into this with open minds and a teamwork attitude, and it shows that we really can affect our community," Jones said. "We can change communities. We should do this a lot more." ■

New Order In The Court

4-H Youth Have Stake In Juvenile Justice System With Teen Court

In Lincoln County, Wis., kids in trouble face up to their misdemeanors like most adults—in court. Only this time, it's a different kind of court, and the results are quite positive.

Teen Court, a panel of five trained 4-H members, meets with first-time offenders ages 12-16, as opposed to a regular judge. They ask questions, deliberate, and then hand down “restorative sanctions” which hold offenders accountable for their actions, specify community service and repair harm to victims and the community.

The 4-H members encourage the youth to pay for their actions by making a difference in the community. Sentences range from 10 hours of service at the local parks and recreation department and a written apology to the city for vandalism to community service, an explanation letter to siblings, a thank you to the chief of police and creation of an educational poster about smoking to make up for a tobacco violation.

4-H members on the jury are the same age as the youth who appear in front of them. They have undergone two days of training complete with mock trials. The crimes they hear must be misdemeanor offenses like tobacco and alcohol violations, curfew violations, truancy, disorderly conduct, shoplifting, theft, vandalism and parks violations. Defendants must admit the



Wisconsin Teen Court 4-H members deliberate cases for first-time offenders, ages 12-16.

offense and put themselves at the mercy of the Teen Court.

“Teen Court has been a huge success and great for everyone who participates—the panel and the respondent—giving us responsibility and the feeling we are helping the community and making a difference,” said a 16-year-old 4-H panel member.

When offenders complete their sentences, the charges are removed from their records. As one parent of an alcohol offender said, “Not only did this give him a second chance with a clean slate, but he also was educated on the effects of drinking.”

Teen Court works, thanks in large part to the good example set by 4-H members. The average relapse rate for defendants is less than 10 percent, compared to 33 percent for traditional youth courts in Wisconsin.

One young man joined the Teen Court jury after his sanctions were completed. “This experience has been a blessing for my family,” said his mother. “I am extremely grateful for the opportunity for my son to be a panel member. It has been a great encouragement for him to behave well and to be a good role model.” ■

Louisiana Youth Prepare for Hurricanes

4-H youth in Concordia Parish, La., used sophisticated Geographic Information System (GIS) and Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) systems to not only get to know their community better, but to help protect its people when hurricanes strike.

Concordia Parish is an isolated area to grow up in—a rural parish with few recreational outlets, located more than 100 miles from the nearest college or university. Risky behaviors can result from boredom, so 4-H members got involved in civic life by compiling a list of fun things to do in the parish. These included camping, fishing, hunting, swimming, boating, bird watching, taking agricultural tours, visiting the state park or the national wildlife refuge, enjoying the annual Jim Bowie Festival or participating in a classic car club.

The youth also wanted to become part of creating the community preparedness plan after the parish, which sits in the northern part of Louisiana’s Delta Region, flooded last year. When storms threaten, people head for the emergency evacuation centers, which are mostly at parish schools. 4-H youth mapped three schools using the parish profile data they had gathered. From their work, local officials now know how to get in and out of sites and what facilities are available when a hurricane hits.

Twenty-three youth were trained in using the GPS/GIS systems and mapping software for the project through a 4-H GIS grant from Environmental Systems Research Institute, which created the mapping software used by the youth. They got more youth and adults involved in the project by developing workshop exhibits and presentations they gave at a variety of venues including the Southern Region Professional Extension Development Conference in Atlanta, Ga. ■



Louisiana 4-Hers use GPS/GIS mapping systems to help their communities in the event of an emergency.

4-H Members Educate Community About Birds of Prey



4-H Outdoor Club members learned about birds and developed interactive kiosks for the Birds of Prey Center in Lewiston, N.Y.



What's the difference between a merlin and a kestrel? Do you know what an immature Cooper's Hawk looks like? How old do you have to be to handle a raptor in New York? (Sixteen. It's the law!)

Those are a few of the quiz questions on the interactive kiosks at the Birds of Prey Center in Lewiston, N.Y.—kiosks developed by the Niagara County 4-H Outdoor Club.

The kiosks are the brainchild of one of the 4-H Outdoor Club teen members as the group was working with the Buffalo Audubon Society to establish the center. Club members and coordinators attended training meetings on handling birds

of prey. Using the center's e-learning program and some laptop computers, they created the interactive quizzes to be installed on a touch-screen system at the center. The quizzes feature beginner, intermediate and advanced levels as well as quizzes based on participant ages. Each level features at least 10 different questions involving bird identification, migration patterns and the anatomy of raptors.

The quiz kiosk won a blue ribbon and special award at the New York State Fair. The 4-H club also installed park benches, assisted with clean up and yard work and planted saplings and shrubs at the center. 4-H youth even created a video about the opening of the Birds of Prey Center that ran on local TV.

The Center, a project of the Buffalo Audubon Society and the Niagara County Environmental Fund, is located at the Joseph Davis State Park. It features a live collection of eagles, hawks and owls, educating people about indigenous birds of prey, their life cycles and habitat. ■

Rookie Archaeologists Explore East Texas

A whole new and unexpected world opened up for 4-H member Brianna Connor and seven other Jefferson, Texas, 4-H Leadership Academy members who spent their summer vacation discovering how the Caddo Indian tribe lived in the Big Cypress Basin in East Texas.

In a partnership of Native American groups, schools and government, 4-H members were trained in computer technology, digital photography, GIS mapping software, archaeology survey and historic analysis. They worked in the field, uncovering artifacts, studying Caddo culture and life and researching Big Cypress Bayou, the Jefferson area and Caddo Lake. They conducted additional research and published their findings on the history, culture and environment of Big Cypress Basin.

"At first I thought it was going to be pretty boring, but once I got into it, it was pretty exciting," Brianna said.

The experience was eye-opening for the 4-H members, and it received a great deal of attention as the 4-H youth found historic landmarks. "It opened up a whole new world

about my own community I did not know existed," one youth said.

The project's goal was to strengthen the 4-Hers' leadership abilities, according to Paulette Cooper, 4-H extension agent, Cooperative Extension Program, Prairie View A&M University. "This was a big breakthrough for these 4-H members," Cooper said, adding that the project helped youth build life skills such as public speaking, teamwork, problem solving, critical thinking and decision-making. ■

Texas 4-H members take part in archaeological digs as they explore the lives of the Caddo Indian tribe.





From left to right, Kentucky 4-H members work with an adult volunteer during a youth-adult partnership training. Washington State University Extension Forestry Educator Garry Anderson shows a group of Pierce County 4-H youth how macro invertebrates affect water quality. 4-H Afterschool youth in Idaho participate in a team-building activity. Ian Gove, 4-H youth board member, addresses the New Hampshire 4-H Foundation.

4-H Impacts the Lives of Rural Youth

A national survey administered to youth and adults from 23 states involved in 4-H's Engaging Youth, Serving Community (EYSC) project found that rural youth who participated built positive relationships with peers and adults and developed important and lasting life skills.

The online survey, conducted by the University of Arizona, surveyed youth and adults involved in Year 2 of the project. The results, which support findings from the Year 1 study, indicate that rural youth developed essential life skills in the three core program areas: 4-H Afterschool, youth in governance and professional and volunteer development.

The survey data will inform design and implementation of future EYSC programs to address specific needs. The survey found:

4-H Afterschool

- All participants felt that programs were well-organized and fostered positive social norms.
- Boys perceived more value in supportive relationships and integration of family, school and community, while girls favored physical and psychological safety education, opportunities to belong, critical thinking and decision making.
- Younger participants preferred program clarity and consistency, while the older participants preferred flexibility and independence.

Youth in Governance

- Adults indicated respect for youth as a program strength.
- For youth, time spent in the program increased their perceptions of the influence of their voice and ability to contribute their

ideas and opinions.

- Findings underscore the expansion of youth voice in civic governance and the acceptance of youth as equal partners with adults.

Professional and Volunteer Development

- Both youth and adults thought that the professional and volunteer development program worked as a learning experience.
- Youth and adults both named youth decision-making and responsibility as the program goal met most often.
- Youth who participated for longer periods of time reported more positive perceptions in program areas including youth decision and responsibility, feedback and diversity, recognition of participation and youth opportunities and skill development. ■

Youth and Tribal Elders Reconnect



The Maza Kute drum group plays music in the tradition of the Santee Sioux Tribe.

Bison are an important and significant part of the culture of the Santee Sioux Tribe in northeast Nebraska. Today, 21 4-Hers are working with 15 adults and tribal elders to maintain the tribal bison area and learn about their heritage.

Santee Tribal youth and adults celebrated the bison at the Santee powwow area with a special bison harvesting ceremony and traditional meal of native foods prepared using the bison. They also sang and drummed with the Maza Kute drum group and singers from the Santee Tribe in the tradition of their people.

The Santee Bison Education Project is just one of several initiatives today on rural Native American reservations in Nebraska. Four tribes—the Omaha, Winnebago, Santee and Ponca—have at least six 4-H youth members on their Tribal Council. Activities include:

- Educational workshops, presentations and community activities focusing on youth-adult partnerships.
- Tribal organization visits and mentorships.
- Mediation and conflict resolution training.
- Involvement in tribal youth leadership groups.
- Tribal and state level conferences on governance and youth and adult partnerships. ■

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