

# <sup>UW</sup> Extension Impact Report

## Camp Counselors

### Teen Counselors Learn Important Skills

Going to summer camp is an annual rite of passage for thousands of Wisconsin children. Parents and youth leaders believe that camp can teach youth new skills and enhance their self-confidence and independence. The older youth who serve as a camp counselors also show big gains in leadership, responsibility and other skills.

#### Extension's Response

Extension 4-H youth development faculty and staff organize camps at the county level and at Upham Woods Environmental Center. They select, train and supervise teen counselors. About 700 teen counselors worked with 3,000 younger children at 4-H camps in 2003. The average camp lasted 2 to 3 days, with 150 camping days in the state during the year. Agents estimate they spend a total of 400 days in training and supervision counselors.

#### Outcomes

Teen counselors reported they gained many skills, with "leadership" ranked highest. Others included people skills, communication, patience, tolerance, responsibility, teamwork, problem-solving, planning and organizing.

More than 96 percent (264) of the counselors said they learned at least one skill that might help them in a future job. The skills mentioned most often were: communication, teamwork: working with others, leadership, planning.

*"The kids always looked up to me for direction and support. It taught me more responsibility than I ever had before."*

*"I want to be a social worker so being a counselor gives me the chance to get to know lots of people and their different backgrounds, as my future job will also require."*



Contact: Kathleen T. (Katy) Forsythe, (715) 839-4712, [katy.forsythe@ces.uwex.edu](mailto:katy.forsythe@ces.uwex.edu)

Aug/2004