



RESEARCH PAPER

## **Impact of the 4-H Camp Counseling Experience**

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## **Abstract**

Each year extensive resources are invested across the state of Wisconsin in summer residential camping programs intended to promote life skill development in 4-H members. To date, the majority of evaluations regarding camp programs have focused on satisfaction and life skill development in elementary and middle school aged campers. This study focused on the impact of the summer camp program on the 4-H members serving as camp counselors. Results showing gains by teen camp counselors are presented, as well as a discussion of the implications of the findings for youth development work and suggestions for further study.

## **Situation**

The Wisconsin Youth in Public Leadership (YPL) Issue Team was established in 1999 as part of the State 4-H Youth Development Program Area response to the results of UW-Extension's strategic planning process. The work of the group began with the development of a team plan early in 2000. One of the primary goals of the team plan was "the desire to develop a deepened understanding of youth leadership development". In 2001 the YPL Issue Team was given the opportunity to work with Cooperative Extension Evaluation Specialist, Heather Boyd, in order to conduct an evaluation that would tell a story about the impact of the 4-H experience.

The intent of the evaluation was to communicate the impact of programming on leadership development in 4-H members to stakeholders both within, and outside of, Cooperative Extension. After discussing a variety of possible programming efforts, the YPL Issue Team identified camp counseling as the target program to be evaluated. Reasons for this selection

included the large size of the potential survey group, the high degree of commonality in the counseling experience, the extensive resources including agent and volunteer time devoted to the 4-H summer camping program on an annual basis, and the lack of existing research on the counseling experience.

The survey group was deemed to be large both in terms of the number of counties conducting a summer camping program and in the number of 4-H teens serving as camp counselors each year. In Wisconsin, 63 counties reported doing residential 4-H summer camps, utilizing more than 700 counselors. Resources allotted to camping were substantial. Reported summer camp programs served nearly 3,000 campers and provided approximately 150 days of residential camp experience. In addition to the time spent in the actual camp program, agents reported well over 400 hours invested in counselor training time statewide.

Commonalities which validated conducting a statewide evaluation included the following factors: camp counselors are similar in age; generally go through a selection process; receive pre-camp orientation; plan and conduct camp programs and provide leadership and supervision to elementary and middle school aged campers.

Another factor contributing to the selection of camp counseling for the study was the lack of existing research on the counseling experience. The majority of evaluations conducted in camp settings have been internal process evaluations aimed at program improvement and identifying levels of participant satisfaction (Dworken, 2001). A review of the literature indicated that the great majority of the existing studies evaluated camper experiences rather than counselor experiences. There is little information regarding the impact of this intensive experience on the 4-H teens serving as camp counselors.

In Wisconsin, the most recent study conducted by 4-H Youth Development was done in 1988 (Rossing and McIntee, 1988). The study was limited both in the size of the survey group and in the focus of the evaluation. The study surveyed 48 counselors in 11 counties. The focus was counselor self-assessment on identification and growth in pre-identified specific areas of leadership development.

Following selection of the target group for the study, a sub-committee of the YPL Issue Team was established as a research committee to plan and conduct the evaluation. This group proceeded with discussion and identification of the specific focus of the evaluation. This resulted in two research questions. The primary question to be studied was, “What do camp counselors learn from their counseling experience?” The secondary research question was, “How do camp counselors view their training/orientation?” The objectives of the two research questions were to measure the impact of the experience on counselors and also to provide data that would help youth development professionals with counselor training and development on the local level.

## **Methods**

The research committee of the YPL Issue Team coordinated efforts with the Evaluation Specialist to develop a survey instrument and procedures to address the research questions. Committee members discussed and analyzed common components of the 4-H summer camp program, identifying relevant areas of life skill and leadership development.

The committee concluded that using open-ended questions would result in information unique to each counselor. The development of life skills enhances the ability of individuals to be

successful throughout their lives. Accordingly, questions were developed to determine whether counselors could identify ways that the skills they learned could be transferred to other settings.

In addition, the team wanted to learn how the camp counselor experience helped youth develop and learn specific leadership skills. Because leadership is such a broad and complex concept, the committee believed it was important to break it into components of leadership development for purposes of the study. These components needed to be accepted in the youth development literature, relevant to the camp counselor situation and easily understood by the teens completing the self-assessment. The elements selected were teamwork, communication, decision-making and planning and organizing. All of these elements were believed to be readily understood by youth and were confirmed as appropriate in current youth leadership development models (Van Linden and Fertman, 1998) and (Zeldin and Camino, 1999).

An initial survey was developed and piloted by seven counties (four camp programs) in 2002. Based on results and input from the staff administering the pilot survey, the instrument was revised in 2003 for use by all counties operating a residential summer camp program. Minor revisions were made to the instrument and strategies were developed for dealing with the challenge of obtaining the parental consent required for human subject compliance. The final instrument and human subject permission form are located in appendix A.

Research committee members conducted a statewide Wisline teleconference session for 4-H Youth Development staff in May 2003. The purpose of the session was to share information about the camp counselor evaluation process and to offer suggestions for optimizing response rates. The teleconference was promoted through e-mail, the Wisconsin 4-H Youth Development *Youthline* monthly mailing and discussion at district meetings attended by Youth Development faculty and staff.

A copy of survey materials, including instructions and forms to comply with human subject requirements, were mailed and e-mailed to each county prior to the teleconference. Individual agents were responsible for administering the surveys at the conclusion of their camp programs and returning completed forms to the Evaluation Specialist. Several e-mail messages were sent to agents by committee members throughout the summer reminding them to administer the survey following their residential camp program.

Agents administering the study coded the completed survey forms with information in order to help support staff enter the data in a consistent and understandable manner. Agents numbered the completed surveys with consecutive numbers, followed by the agent's last name. The last number placed on the survey was the total number of surveys distributed in order to calculate the response rate. Survey data was entered into a database by State 4-H support staff and analyzed by the YPL Issue Team research committee.

## **Results**

### Sample

The counselor survey was distributed to 72 counties. Camp counselors from 44 counties (62%) participated in the study. (Note: Not all counties in Wisconsin conduct summer 4-H camp programs.) Individual survey results were gathered from 274 out of a possible 390 counselors from the participating counties resulting in a 70% response rate. A staff questionnaire indicated that these counselors worked with approximately 1900 campers during the summer of 2003.

The research committee reviewed the raw data and used qualitative data analysis techniques to categorize all qualitative answers. (Taylor-Powell and Renner, 2003) The committee members reported the findings and reviewed the process used to group and interpret

the results. In some cases, the total numbers of responses for each question were larger than the total sample because of multiple answers to a question by a single respondent.

### Findings

(The survey instrument is located in Appendix A and a summary of results for all questions is found in Appendix B.)

### Skills developed/learned

When asked what skills they developed as a result of the counseling experience, a wide range of skills were listed. Leadership skills had the highest response rate with 36% (98) of counselors stating they had developed leadership skills. One counselor indicated, *“As a result of being a counselor, I have been able to gain valuable leadership skills that will help me in the future.”*

The top eight skills identified and numbers of responses are indicated below:

- Leadership - 36% (98)
- People skills/working with youth - 27% (74)
- Communication - 19% (51)
- Patience/tolerance - 18% (48)
- Responsibility - 17% (46)
- Teamwork - 15% (41)
- Problem solving -11% (31)
- Planning & organizing -11% (30)

In addition to identifying skills they felt they developed, participants were asked to select from one of four specific areas where they felt they learned the most and to give examples of what they learned.

In the skill area of communication, counselors indicated they learned things such as how kids listen, interpersonal problem solving, direction giving, the value of talking/communication, and an understanding of child behavior. One counselor stated, *“I was forced to communicate ideas and directions to not only fellow counselors, but, to the campers as well. I learned that you have to adapt to others and their way of following and receiving directions...”*

In the planning and organizing skill area, counselors reported they learned things such as: be prepared/organized, have a back-up plan, success comes from planning and organizing, teamwork is important, and time management. As one counselor stated, *“I learned that you have to really think about everything you do before doing it.”*

In the skill area of teamwork, counselors described learning that you can’t do everything alone, you accomplish more together and the value of cooperation. A counselor said, *“You really need teamwork when working in a group or even with one other person. Without it, the thing you’re working on will fall apart.”*

In the skill area of decision making, counselors stated that they learned it’s good to have alternative plans and the need to get campers’ input in making decisions.

#### Uniqueness of 4-H camp counseling experience

When asked what was unique about being a 4-H camp counselor, the top three responses were:

- Understanding and working with children - 25% (67)
- Responsibility - 22% (59)
- Role modeling - 11% (30)

One counselor stated, *“I never had to be the leader of a group for three days and two nights. The kids always looked up to me for direction and support. It taught me more responsibility than I ever had before.”*

### Application of skills in the community

When counselors were surveyed about what they learned as a 4-H camp counselor that they will use in leadership roles in their local communities, the top five responses were:

- Working with children - 27% (74)
- Leadership and taking charge - 20% (56)
- Communication/listening -13% (36)
- Teamwork/working together on a goal - 12% (32)
- Planning and organizing - 11% (29)

Over 93% (255) of the respondents identified at least one skill they learned that they would use in their community in a leadership role. As stated by one counselor, *“I’m a better leader in my club and school. And I mentor kids at my school so it helps me out.”* Another counselor said, *“A lot of what I learned is hard to put into words. This experience has helped me improve many of my life skills in general. All of the knowledge and experience I’ve obtained, I will continue to use. It will help me in my role as a leader in school, organizations, 4-H, and other various activities that I partake in.”*

### Career preparation

Counselors were asked what they learned that might help them in a future job.

The top responses given were:

- Communication/communication skills - 19% (52)
- Teamwork: working with others to succeed - 17% (46)
- Leadership skills - 16% (45)
- Planning/organization/being prepared - 15% (41)
- How to work with/deal with kids - 11% (31)

Over 96% (264) of the respondents identified at least one skill they learned that will help them in a future job. Two examples were: *“I plan to go into elementary education. Working with campers really gives me an idea and the leadership experience I would need to be a teacher.”*

*“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.”*

## **Summary of Results and Implications**

These results show that counselors reported significant life skill development as a result of their 4-H counseling experience. They also indicate that these skills will be used in their community involvement, as well as in a future career. The results provide reinforcement for educators to use in telling stakeholders about the benefits and effectiveness of the camp counselor role as a youth leadership experience. In addition, more than 90% of counselors found their experience to be fun and enjoyable, which indicates that the camp counseling experience is motivating as well as educational.

A two-part question on the survey (Question 8) provided data regarding camp counselor training which should be helpful to individual counties for program improvement and counselor training. The survey results and common practice indicate that camp counselors are given responsibility for younger youth. Some counselors reported that they assumed a great deal of responsibility for campers and their care. The importance of the counselor role should lead staff to consider requiring a basic level of training for these older youth. It is of concern that some counselors indicated they received no training prior to serving as camp counselors. Perhaps statewide standards and coverage of certain topics (i.e. first aid, camper characteristics, how to

deal with problem behaviors and situations, etc.) should be looked at as required minimum training for all youth serving as camp counselors. The balance between allowing youth counselors the responsibility for younger youth and providing a safe environment for campers is critical.

Considerable staff time is spent in preparing for camp. Information provided by county Extension staff shows that some staff spend a great deal of time training counselors. This might raise the question of whether the amount of staff time and resources expended for residential camping programs is “worth it”. While ultimately the answer to this question will be up to individual staff, there is evidence that camp does make positive differences for youth. In reviewing the literature, there were several research studies that showed the positive effects of camp on campers. There were very few studies of the effect of camp on counselors. As shown in this study, youth reported many benefits from serving as camp counselors. A cost-benefit analysis should certainly keep in mind the positive effects of camp on counselors as well as campers.

This study was a self-assessment of leadership and life skill development by counselors. Certainly, there are limitations of the study that point to areas for possible future research. This study does not provide any measure of the effectiveness of the counselors in their role nor an outside analysis of any skill development in counselors. Future studies could utilize adult volunteers, other camp staff, and/or campers, as sources of information on counselor effectiveness, as well as observers and reporters of counselor growth and learning.

## Acknowledgements

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## References

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## **Appendix A**

(Survey instrument, human subject forms and instructions to agents)

# Camp Counselor Evaluation 2003

Please complete the following Camp Counselor Evaluation. The results of the evaluation will be used to help us to learn about your experience as a 4-H camp counselor and to describe the value of the camp counselor experience. Your participation in this evaluation is voluntary and confidential. If you have any questions, please contact Heather Boyd, Evaluation Specialist, University of Wisconsin-Extension, (608) 263-0857.

Thank you!

1. Use **three** words to describe your experience with 4-H camp this summer.
2. What are some skills you developed as a result of your counselor experience?
3. What are some things that you wished you had more training in before you were a camp counselor this summer?
4. How has being a 4-H camp counselor developed your leadership skills in ways that no other experience has done? In other words, what has been unique about being a 4-H camp counselor?
5. Circle one of the following skill areas where you have learned the most as a camp counselor. Please share a very specific example of what happened and what you learned.

**Teamwork      Communication      Decision Making      Planning & Organizing**

What happened?

What did you learn?

Continue to next page

6. What, if anything, did you learn as a 4-H camp counselor that you will use in leadership roles in your local community?

7. What, if anything, did you learn as a 4-H camp counselor will help you use in a job you might have in the future?

8. Did you participate in 4-H camp counselor training/camp planning to prepare for camp this year?

yes

no

don't know

If you answered "yes" to the question above, what, if anything, were some of the things you learned during counselor training that were most helpful to you during camp?

9. How old are you? \_\_\_\_\_

10. Are you: Male Female

11. How many years have you been a member of 4-H? \_\_\_\_\_

12. Have you been a camp counselor for any organization other than 4-H?

Yes

No

If you answered, "yes", please list the name of the organization(s).

Thank you again for your help!

(Letter to Parents in Compliance with Human Subjects Protection)

May 1, 2003

Dear 4-H Camp Counselor and Parent or Guardian:

The Wisconsin 4-H Program Staff at Cooperative Extension is interested in learning about the experiences of Wisconsin 4-H camp counselors through a project we call "**Camp Counselor Evaluation 2003.**" We are asking current camp counselors to answer some questions for us during a survey at camp this summer. The results of the survey will be used to communicate the contribution that the 4-H camp counselor experience makes to developing young leaders in Wisconsin.

In order to conform to requirements for surveying you and your child, we must make the following information clear:

Your participation and the participation of your child is voluntary.  
You or your child may choose to not participate in this study.

**Your child will remain anonymous.**

We will keep your consent form separate from your questionnaire. When we report the results of the study, we will not use your child's name. We will not pass the information that you provide to us on to any other person or organization or write the findings of the study in any way that would identify your child by name.

If you have questions about this project, you may contact Heather Boyd, Evaluation Specialist, University of Wisconsin-Extension, (608) 263-0857.

Your child will still be able to participate in Wisconsin 4-H programming **even if your child decides not to participate in this survey.**

If you are willing to participate, please return the consent form with your signature and your child's signature to **INSERT LOCAL CONTACT INFO** by **INSERT DATE HERE**.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

**INSERT LOCAL AGENT/EDUCATOR CONTACT INFORMATION HERE**

(Permission form in compliance with Human Subjects Protection)

We need two signatures - one from the camp counselor and one from his or her parent or guardian.

## **Camp Counselor Evaluation 2003**

I have read my rights as an evaluation participant and consent to participate in the project described.

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(Signature of 4-H Camp Counselor)

(Date signed)

I have read my child's rights as an evaluation participant and consent to his or her participation in the project described.

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(Signature of Parent or Guardian)

(Date signed)

## (Agent Instructions for Administering Survey)

Thanks for considering participating in the Camp Counselor Evaluation 2003!

Here is what we need from you in order to help us get this done in a relatively smooth manner:  
Step 1) Let Linda Kustka ([linda.kustka@ces.uwex.edu](mailto:linda.kustka@ces.uwex.edu)) know that you are going to participate by June 1, 2003. This will help us to gauge what resources we will need.

Step 2) Get the counselors and their parent or guardian to give us permission to get information from them. Give the counselors and their parent or guardian the letter that explains the project, and the consent forms to sign. Have the camp counselor sign the consent form AND have the parent or guardian sign the consent form. Keep these consent forms in a file in your office, separate from the feedback forms that they will return.

Step 3) Day camp counselors should fill out the feedback form that is printed on \_\_\_\_\_ paper. Overnight camp counselors should fill out the feedback form that is printed on \_\_\_\_\_ paper. Get as many forms back as you can, because, in general, the higher the response rate, the more helpful the evaluation information is.

Step 4) Gather all the forms from day camp into one pile. Gather all the forms from overnight camp into one pile. In the upper right hand corner of each feedback form, write an ID number. Start with 1 and go to as many as you have – for each pile of forms. **Do this separately for day camp and separately for overnight camp.** Write whether it the form relates to day camp or overnight camp. Also write on the upper right hand corner how many camp counselors you asked to fill out the form.

In upper right-hand corner of feedback form	<i>ID #</i> <i>Your last name</i> <i>Type of camp</i> <i># forms</i> <i>distributed</i>
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Having a unique ID number and your name on each form will help us with entering the data in a way that will be useful to us.

Having your name on the form will help us if we need to contact you with any questions.

Knowing how many people you asked to fill out the form will help us calculate the response rate.

Step 5) Make a photocopy of the forms for your own file.

Step 6) Send your forms to Heather Boyd as soon as you have them to Heather Boyd, 432 N. Lake Street, Madison, WI 53706. Sept. 1, 2003 is the deadline for the forms to be sent.

Step 7) Join in on the audio conference to discuss results of the evaluation on \_\_\_\_\_. Before that time, we will send you a one-page template for communicating your results that you can modify with your own local information.

**(Camp Program Description Form to be Completed by Agents)**

County Name \_\_\_\_\_

**2003 Overnight Camp Description**

1. How many overnight camp sessions will your county run? \_\_\_\_\_
2. How many days are in each camp session? \_\_\_\_\_
3. How many overnight camp counselors did your county have? \_\_\_\_\_
4. How many overnight campers did your county have? \_\_\_\_\_
5. How many hours of training did your camp counselors experience? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Please list 3-4 main content topics/subject that your camp counselor training includes:

Please return this with your camp counselor evaluations

Thank you!

## **Appendix B**

(Summary of results for all questions.)

# 2003 Overnight Camp Counselor Evaluation Summary

## **Participation:**

- 44 counties (62% of state total) **Note:** Not all counties offer camp programs.
- 274 completed surveys out of 390 possible counselors from the participating counties (Return rate-70%)
- Approximately 1900 campers served by these counselors in 2003

## **Questions:**

### **Notes:**

Some counts are higher than the total number of respondents because more than one answer was given by a single respondent.

Quotes listed here are a sample of quotes from the raw data.

### **1. Use three words to describe your experience with 4-H camp this summer.**

- Fun/awesome (334)
- Educational/learning experience (110)
- Exciting (93)
- Other words (60)
- Memorable (50)
- Active/busy (41)
- Tiring (21)
- Negative words (20)
- Friendships (7)
- Blank (1)

### **2. What are some skills you developed as a result of your counselor experience?**

- Leadership (98)
- People skills/working with youth (74)
- Communication (51)
- Patience/tolerance (48)
- Other (47)
- Responsibility (46)
- Teamwork (41)
- Problem solving (31)
- Planning & Organizing (30)
- Discipline (15)
- Compassion/understanding (15)
- Specific Camp Skills (15)
- Personal Traits (14)
- Helping Skills (10)
- Blank (1)

Quotes:

“I have gained more responsibility. I never realized how much responsibility it is to make sure all my girls are always with me, they are getting along and all having fun.”

“As a result of being a counselor, I have been able to gain valuable leadership skills that will help me in the future.”

“I believe I developed better communication skills. I found out some things about my campers that made me realize how much I need to talk to them.”

“Each year I think I gain even more people skills with a variety of ages and I know that is something that will help me throughout my lifetime.”

“I gained a better ability to focus on each child individually even though they were in a large group.”

“I have become a more concerned and considerate person.”

**3. What are some things that you wished you had more training in before you were a camp counselor this summer?**

Most common responses:

- Felt Ready to Be a Counselor: (84) (29 said training was good/prepared them; 55 said nothing)
- Camp Activities: (75) (14 said Camp activities; 11 said games/icebreakers; 9 said schedule; 8 said campfire songs/activities)
- Camper Behavior: (66) (15 said controlling kids; 10 said homesick/sick/upset kids; 13 said involving youth in activities/peer acceptance; 6 said working with special needs youth)
- Personal Counselor Skills: (34) (varied skills such as decision making; team building, understanding their job, CPR/first aid)
- Other: (18)
- Left Blank: (20)

Quotes:

“I wish I would have known more activities to do during free time.”

“I felt prepared.” “I felt properly trained for all the necessary things I needed to know.”

“How kids brains work & why they do certain things.”

“How to try and get the kids that don’t want to do anything to do something.”

**4. How has being a 4-H camp counselor developed your leadership skills in ways that no other experience has done? In other words, what has been unique about being a 4-H camp counselor?**

- Understanding & Working with children: (67)
- Responsibility: (59)
- Role modeling: (30)
- Leadership: (19)
- Teamwork/cooperation/working together on a goal: (14)
- Problem-solving/decision-making/flexibility/adapting: (11)
- Dealing with differences in people: (11)
- Taking control/taking charge of situations, activities, or events: (10)
- Teaching: (6)
- Confidence: (6)
- Planning & organizing: (3)
- Communication: (2)
- Miscellaneous comments: (62)
- Left blank: (15)

Quotes:

“Being a counselor gives the chance to experience things one on one and be constantly interacting with different people. Camp not only develops leadership skills but also allows you to apply them immediately which is really good. You are forced to assume the position of a leader.”

“I never had to be the leader of a group for three days and two nights. The kids always looked up to me for direction and support. It taught me more responsibility than I ever had before.”

“I feel that being a camp counselor has made me comfortable in front of people. Also the campers look up to you which makes you want to do good.”

“Camp counseling has given me the chance to be in charge of a large group and lead them in activities. It has taught me to deal with problems quickly and effectively. If an activity falls through, I have learned to come up with an alternative while still being positive.”

“Being a camp counselor you are always on call and are always being looked upon as role models. It has helped me become a better person.”

**5. Circle one of the following skill areas where you have learned the most as a camp counselor. Please share a very specific example of what happened and what you learned. (Choices: teamwork, communication, decision making, planning & organizing)**

- Planning & Organizing (79) 29%
- Communication (74) 27%
- Teamwork (73) 27%
- Decision Making (36) 13%
- Circled all/left blank/circled some combination (13) 5%

**Planning & Organizing Responses:**

What happened?

- Described planning a specific activity (25)
- Overall camp planning (14)
- Talked about not planning well or something not working well (14)

What did you learn?

- Be prepared/organized (9)
- Have back-up plan (9)
- Success comes from planning/organization (9)
- Teamwork is important (8)
- Time management (7)

Planning & Organizing Quotes:

“I learned how to successfully plan and prepare for camp.”

“I learned how successful you can be when you plan and organize. Things work smoother and you get great results.”

“I really saw the importance of organization – how everyone must be willing to work together to both plan and organize. Also, adequate time must be allowed for both.”

“I learned that you have to really think about everything you do before doing it.”

“It is crucial to always have a back-up plan.”

“I learned the importance of knowing and enforcing the schedule. Even when things are planned- there are problems, but to have camp without a game plan would be a disaster.”

**Communication Responses:**

What happened?

- Dealt with a camper problem (sickness, shyness, behavior) (30)
- Relating to youth in a group (12)

- Giving directions/explaining activities (10)
- Interpersonal example (9)
- Specific game/activity (6)

What did you learn?

- How kids listen (12)
- Interpersonal problem solving (10)
- Direction giving skills (7)
- Value of talking/communication (7)
- Understanding of child behavior (6)

### Communication Quotes:

“I had one camper that never listened and spent most of the time in her own world. I had to be at her level, looking her in the eye, to get her attention at all, or to have her listen to me.”

“When I met my partner for the first time we had to communicate to get everything else accomplished. I learned the more you communicate the more you accomplished.”

“Not everyone wanted to play the same game. I learned to acquire everyone’s ideas and combine some of them to make the kids happy.”

“I was forced to communicate ideas and directions to not only fellow counselors, but, to the campers as well. I learned that you have to adapt to others and their way of following and receiving directions. Also you cannot be afraid to project and take control of situations when no one else will.”

“I always made sure my campers knew the plan for the day and answered any of their questions. I learned that if they know what’s going on they stayed calmer and enjoyed themselves more.”

“Every night the counselors met to discuss how the day went, which campers are/might be problems, how to deal with certain situations, and shared ideas for the next day. It was very helpful to get everyone else’s ideas and input, plus, you got to hear points of view from people who may have had similar thoughts/problems before.”

### **Teamwork Responses:**

What happened?

- Named specific activity (26)
- Helped other counselors (14)
- Dealt with problem interpersonal relationships (8)

What did you learn?

- Can’t do everything alone/accomplish more together/value of cooperation (23)
- Teamwork (7)
- Everyone should be participating (4)

### Teamwork Quotes:

“Working as a team is better than by yourself.” “If everyone works together, we will get a lot accomplished.”

“We have to work with another counselor in each cabin, so we learn to share the responsibility and work together to make sure our campers have a good safe time at camp. We have to decide who is going to bring what for the cabin, and plan activities and stuff for the kids to do.”

“You really need team work when working in a group or even with one other person. Without it, the thing you’re working on will fall apart.”

### **Decision Making Responses:**

What happened?

- Made decisions affecting camper participation in activities (16)
- Made decisions about activity I was leading (4)
- Dealt with individual camper behavior (3)

What did you learn?

- Good to have alternative plans (5)
- Need to get kids opinions (3)
- Decision making involves teamwork (3)

### Decision Making Quotes:

“I’m so used to deciding things just for me. It’s different to make decisions for someone else (campers). You have to decide what is best for them, and not think of yourself.”

“I learned to listen to my campers and use their suggestions.”

“I learned that decision making is a combination of teamwork and communication as well.”

### **6. What did you learn as a 4-H camp counselor that you will use in leadership roles in your local community?**

- Working with children (74)
- Leadership & taking charge (56)
- Communication/listening (36)
- Teamwork/working together on a goal (32)
- Planning & organizing (29)
- Problem-solving/decision making (16)

- Responsibility (11)
- Dealing with differences in people (8)
- Involving everyone/getting participation (6)
- Role modeling (3)
- Teaching (2)
- Confidence (4)
- Other (45)
- Left blank (19)

Quotes:

“I learned confidence and patience. I learned how to stick with something till I got it right. I also learned the importance of doing the right thing and helping out to achieve goals.”

“I will use my new leadership skills to help younger kids in my club be motivated and active in meetings.”

“I learned a lot in handling kids individually and as a group. That you still have to be really fun and make their experience the best that it can be, but also have some rules and guidelines.”

“How to organize and plan a successful event, which will be useful in our club's community service projects.”

”When I lead activities I will make sure that everything is fair and that everyone participates so that no one feels left out. I also learned different ways to keep kids entertained between activities.”

**7. What did you learn as a 4-H camp counselor that might help you in a future job?**

- Communication/communication skills (52)
- Teamwork: working with others to succeed (46)
- Leadership skills (45)
- Planning/Organization/Being Prepared (41)
- How work with/deal with kids (31)
- Responsibility (25)
- Patience (23)
- Working with Others (not campers) (22)
- Career/job implications (21)
- Decision Making/Problem Solving (19)
- Time Management/Be on Time (18)
- Cooperation/Flexibility/Tolerance/Compromise (11)
- Control/Taking Charge of a Situation (7)
- Other (52)

Quotes:

Communication:

“How to communicate with others, see what they are doing and then see what you can do to make it better.”

“Learned to communicate with others who may not have the same goals.”

Teamwork:

“I learned how to positively interact with people to accomplish goals I set before myself.”

“I tested my trust in others and need to continue to trust and depend on them.”

Leadership:

“I learned that communicating, teamwork, and planning are important when using leadership.”

Working with/dealing with kids:

“I learned how to deal with younger kids to accomplish a goal. This could help me in a future job if educating or teaching a skill to others.”

Working with others:

“I learned how to handle working with people that I didn’t get along with and not letting that reflect on the job that needed to be done.”

Career implications:

“I plan to go into elementary education (work at a camp, be a social worker, etc.)

“Working with campers really gives me an idea and the leadership experience I would need to be a teacher.”

**8. Did you participate in 4-H camp counselor training/camp planning to prepare for camp this year?**

Yes (235) 86%    No (31) 11%    Don’t know (5) 2%    Blank (3) 1%

**If you answered “yes” to the question above, what, if anything, were some of the things you learned during counselor training that were most helpful to you during camp?**

- Emergencies/dealing with camp and camper situations (64)
- Counselor expectations/skill development (48)
- Specific camp program components (39)
- Organization/Planning/Preparation (21)
- Skills to work with campers (20)
- Communication (8)
- Review of what I knew (7)
- Nothing (10)
- Blank (42)

Quotes:

Emergencies/Situations:

“I learned what to do in case of an accident or emergency which was helpful because if a camper fell down or hurt themselves some way, I knew what to do.”

Counselor Expectations:

“How necessary it is to be enthusiastic even when you really don’t feel like being excited.”

**9. How old are you?**

Age range of 13-19 with average age of 16.39

**10. Are you: Male Female**

Male (88) 33% Females (182) 67% No answer (4)

**11. How many years have you been a member of 4-H?**

Range from 1-12 years with average of 8.19 years. Forever (6)

**12. Have you been a camp counselor for any organization other than 4-H? Yes No**

No (234) 86%

Blank (3) 1%

Yes (35) 13%

If you answered, “yes”, please list the name of the organization(s).

Church camp (9)

Sports camp (4)

Girl Scout camp (4)

Day camp (3)

UW camp (3)

School Camp (3)

YMCA camp (2)

Other (6) (1 mention each)