



THE PUBLICATION FOR MEMBERS OF THE WISCONSIN ASSOCIATION OF EXTENSION 4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROFESSIONALS

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**“BUILDING CAPACITY FOR
COMMUNITY YOUTH
DEVELOPMENT”**

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Entre Nous means “between us” and serves as the official publication for members of the Wisconsin Association of Extension 4-H Youth Development Professionals.

Articles should be submitted via e-mail, either in ascii text or in an attached Microsoft Word document. The e-mail should be addressed to Merry Klemme, Editor, at merry.klemme@ces.uwex.edu.

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From the Heart of the Editor: Some People Just “Get It”

Merry Klemme, Kewaunee County

This last weekend was Mother’s Day. Being the mother of seven and grandmother of seven always leads me to expect big things.....which rarely happens. But that’s a whole other story.



What Mother’s Day does do for me though is gives me time to reflect on the memory of my own mother.

She has been gone for 27 years now, but I still talk to her daily and judge my actions by what she would expect of me.

She was there to support me through some bad times – a teen pregnancy, two failed marriages, two suicide attempts – and those are only the times I am willing to share with you. She didn’t live long enough to see me marry my best friend, help us celebrate all 27 years of our marriage, see me graduate from college with both my bachelor’s and master’s degrees, get my dream job, and share all the other wonderful days of my adult life. But that doesn’t concern me because I know she sees and feels all my sorrows and joys, from where she is.

Why am I telling you all this? Well, there is a reason. This issue of *Entre Nous* has the theme of the state team, “Building Capacity for Community Youth Development”. I have found that knowing how to do that does not come naturally to most people. It always shocks me when I sit in a room full of “community youth professionals” that most of them do not know the value of youth/adult partnerships. They are still in the programming “for” youth mindset rather than the programming “with” youth mindset.

“My mom was one of those rare people who knew, by instinct, how to let youth lead.”

M. Klemme

I find that when I am working with a new coalition, for whatever purpose, that I have to teach many of the adults in the room that youth can, and should, be leaders for their programs. It always surprises me that I am the one who says “Why don’t we ask the kids?” and “We need youth at this meeting.”

My mom was one of those rare people who knew, by instinct, how to let youth lead. She was a general leader of the Merry Belles 4-H club for over 25 years. That shouldn’t surprise you. Many of the adult 4-H leaders we work with also know, instinctively, how to build youth/adult partnerships. It is based on a basic respect for youth.

I know that I learned my respect for youth because my mom role modeled that for me. I know that one of the best ways that we teach this concept is by role modeling it for our adult leaders and other community adults. I know that college only helped me hone my skills in respecting youth and gave me the research and philosophical knowledge to understand why it works.

Building capacity for community youth development requires a basic respect for youth. Thanks, Mom, for teaching me that. May I continue to pass it on.

Join the WAE4-HYDP Communication Team

Myrna Rhinehart, Marquette County, Assistant Editor

Do you enjoy reading the articles in *Entre Nous*? How would you like to help decide what format to use, recruit others to write articles, take photographs for inclusion, and write articles yourself? Here is your chance!

“The committee has decided that anyone who has interest in publishing and communication can and should join our committee!”

M. Rhinehart

The Communications Committee of WAE4-HYDP is charged with publishing *Entre Nous*. This is the association’s communication tool, our source of news, and our primary means to share resources and views. We seek to maintain a balance of personal and professional information in *Entre Nous*. The committee has decided that anyone who has interest in publishing and communication can and should join our committee! Even if there is already a member from your district on the committee, you can become involved as well. Just contact one of the committee members listed on the cover!

Our themes for next year’s issues are 1) youth, 2) volunteers, and 3) parents/families. Some of the changes that you may have noticed in the past year include more photographs of association events, more clip art, and an opportunity for all members to receive the newsletter electronically (which includes COLOR). All of these changes were developed as a result of committee membership contributions. You, too, can help write association event history as well as share the good work that we do!



Youth-Adult Partnerships in Community Youth Development: Lessons From Volunteers Across the Country

Linda Camino, Ph.D., Senior Scientist, School of Human Ecology, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Building strong communities, especially in rural areas and small towns, requires the commitment of volunteers, not only paid staff. Across the country, youth and adults --"everyday folks"-- are working in partnership to strengthen their communities. Youth-adult partnerships (Y/APs) are increasingly being seen as a key strategy for success.

What does it take to support volunteers in forming and carrying out Y/APs for community work? The answers come from lessons learned by volunteers throughout the country. These lessons are based on evaluation of youth and community development initiatives I have conducted over the past seven years in both rural and urban areas.

WHAT DO Y/APS LOOK LIKE?

- Y/APS are based on values of equality, but take differences into account.

The idea is to work with, rather than for, youth. Values of equality involve respect, and willingness to listen and learn from each other.

But, youth and adults in the communities learned that being equal does not mean being the same. Adults in one rural community were anxious to be good at Y/APS. So, they tried hard to be "age blind." They encouraged youth to meet among themselves to develop their own goals and agenda. After a few meetings, however, youth emphasized their need for adult guidance and desire to work together with adults.

In this case, adults actually perpetuated power imbalances between youth and adults. By being "age blind" and expecting youth to act immediately like adults, the fact that the young people had little to no experience in organizing and running meetings was overlooked.

- Y/APS have a set of skills and competencies that youth and adults need to master.

Y/APS don't happen naturally. They require practice. Youth and adults need to develop skills in communication, teamwork, and coaching.

In all the communities, adults had more difficulty letting their guard down in communicating with youth than did youth with adults. When effective communication was achieved, the result was mutual insight and a deepening of respect.

Learning how to work in teams was important. The most successful Y/APS had flexible roles for both youth and adults and high tolerance for differences. In several communities, youth took on leadership roles and introduced creative ways to problem-solve in meetings.

Adult leaders tried to run meetings according to Robert's Rules of Order in one urban neighborhood. Participation dwindled. Then, a youth worker introduced a facilitation method that ensured all could participate. Further, the method was less rule-bound which made it easier for "everyday" folks to lead meetings.

Developing skills in coaching--providing legitimate opportunities for youth to take on meaningful roles in the partnership, while also holding them accountable, was hard for adults. Although many adults benefited from learning certain skills from young people, such as those related to computer technology, the role of coach fell more often to adults because of their greater experience and access to institutional power.

Striving to be egalitarian, adults assumed that if they helped and supported youth in taking on new roles--as decision makers, trainers, and organizers--then the young people would intuitively understand what was expected of them, and would not make mistakes.

In one rural community, for example, adults shied away from coaching youth on critical tasks of community projects. Several youth, not knowing exactly what to do, procrastinated and did not follow through. At the last minute, adults rushed in to save the day. Youth were embarrassed with their performance, and angry with adults' criticism of their work. They questioned why adults did not offer proactive guidance.

HOW DO LARGER COMMUNITY CONTEXTS AFFECT Y/APS?

"There are adults who don't like each other, have feuds for generations, and then take it out on the kids."

L. Camino

- Community history and power structures set the stage. In most of the rural communities, adults described the small population as being "closeknit." They saw it as an asset.

Smallness, however, was an obstacle for many youth. Said one, "There are adults who don't like each other, have feuds for generations, and then take it out on the kids."

Most adults in these initiatives had little prior institutional power within their communities. Many were reluctant to share the limelight with youth because this was the first time they themselves were able to come out front and center.

- A community history of oppression can also obscure recognition of young people as current participants, rather than as future community resources. In a Native American community, for example, members were struggling with coming to grips with a past rife with racism and pressures to abandon cultural traditions in favor of assimilating into European ways.

"It's a hard thing," said an adult, "Because of the history of our people, we're trying to figure out how much of the past to keep, and how much to leave behind...52 percent of the population [of approximately 300] is under 18, but lots of adults are saying, 'we'll let the kids do this later.'"

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO SUPPORT Y/APS TO MAKE THEM SUCCESSFUL?

There are several ways that community leaders can help ensure the success of Y/APS for community work.

- * Find Creative Ways to Bring Youth and Adults Together.

Everyone is busy. Both adults and youth have jobs, family responsibilities, and volunteer commitments. In addition, youth have school and sports. The hard realities of scheduling have to be dealt with early on and revisited constantly. Use participatory methods to run meetings.

- * Help Youth and Adults Develop and Practice Skills.

It seems obvious that community work is new for many youth. But many adults, too, will be rookies at volunteering, community work, and working as partners. Ensure

that both youth and adults are grounded in communication, teamwork, and coaching skills.

* Go Beyond Individual, Volunteer Training.

Training is necessary. But training of individual volunteers alone cannot achieve an infusion of Y/APs into communities for the long-term. Communities are also governed by a number of established structures and relationships of power.

Use coalition building skills. Help youth and adults, from volunteers to paid staff to officials, to work through stereotypes about youth, community, leadership, and power. Create options for all to participate.

* Use your expertise confidently.

Many youth and community workers and leaders do not readily share their planning and implementation expertise for fear of overshadowing volunteers. Ironically, this is the advice that "everyday folks" most often desire. In these communities, the most effective leaders and youth workers located and navigated a balance between empowerment and guidance.

For more complete information about these studies and youth-adult partnerships, see:

Camino, Linda (2000). Youth-adult partnerships: Entering new territory in community work and research. *Journal of Applied Developmental Science*, 4, 11-20.

Camino, Linda (2000). Putting youth-adult partnerships to work for community change: Lessons from volunteers across the country. *CYD Journal* 1(4), 27-31.

Connecting Our Youth to the Communities

Sue Pleskac, Jefferson County

Back on June 13, 1995, I had the fortunate opportunity to be invited to the Wingspread Briefing with John Kretzmann. Wingspread is the conference center for The Johnson Foundation, Inc. in Racine, Wisconsin. Their conferences and briefings have a solid history of bringing a diverse group of people together from all over the world to focus on emerging issues in order to define problems, create action plans and build effective coalitions. John Kretzmann's presentation was entitled "Roles for Youth: A Positive Perspective." Kretzmann is the co-author with John McKnight of *Building Communities from the Inside Out* and with Center for Urban Affairs and Policy Research at Northwestern University. John's message resonated with me in 1995, and as I reflect now in 2001, has greatly influenced my work in 4-H youth development since.

Kretzmann confirmed the idea that every person, no matter of age or ability, is a vital member of the community. He also challenged us all to be community builders and

“Every community is filled with useful work and service opportunities for young people.”
S. Pleskac

pledge to two core ideas: 1) everybody has a gift; and 2) everybody is going to use his or her gift for the community. He shared the *10 Commandments for Involving Young People in Our Communities*.^{*} I find these points as starting places, strategies, and tools to strengthen the work of building capacity for youth, as they become effective and engaged community members. The “commandments,” according to Kretzmann are:

1. Always start with the gifts, talents, knowledge, and skills of young people. Find out what they like to do and are good at doing.
2. Always look for the positive in the unique individual. For example, it should be “Maria with lovely voice” not “Maria the pregnant teen.”
3. Every community is filled with useful work and service opportunities for young people. The corollary of this is that there is no community, institution, or organization that cannot find a useful role for a young person.
4. Always distinguish between real work and games or simulations, because young people can.
5. Fight age segregation. Youth today are the most age-segregated generation in our history, to everyone’s detriment.
6. Avoid aggregating people, especially young people, by what they don’t have. Too often we group people by their deficiencies instead of letting those who *can* help those who *can’t*.
7. Move as quickly as possible beyond “youth advisory boards” or committees with only one youth on them.
8. Constantly cultivate opportunities for young people to teach and to lead.
9. Constantly reward and celebrate creativity, energy, and effort—loudly and with spirit. Whenever possible, let young people take the lead on the form the celebration will take.
10. Amplify continuously “*we need you.*” Young people are not a problem, they are our solution.

^{*}Taken from the Wingspread Briefing with John Kretzmann, June 13, 1995 and the Wingspread Journal, 17 (3) 11. If any member would like to borrow my tape of the briefing, please give me a call.



18 U.S.C. 707

A Good Mix - 4-H Community Clubs and Community Youth Development

Deb Ivey, 4-H Youth Development Agent, Iowa County

The e-mail read like this: “You are signed up to attend the “What is Community Youth Development? How Do Community Clubs Fit In?” workshop next week at Green Bay. As a part of this workshop, we will be having two very informal panels to address various questions related to youth development within both clubs and coalitions. We would appreciate your willingness to be a part of the group that will take a look at 4-H Community Clubs.”

As a non-tenured, 1 and ½ year employee of UW-Extension, how could I say no?

After an initial feeling of “Wow, they want to hear what I think”, the reality settled in that the organizers of this session did want me to make some intelligent comments

about 4-H Community Clubs and their contributions to Community Youth Development. So I studied the questions, prepared my responses and presented them during the panel in Green Bay. Positive feedback was received and I was off to new adventures.

Then *Entre Nous* chose Building Capacity for Community Youth Development as the theme for the Spring 2001 issue. As a member of the State Program team for this initiative, I decided to once again look at the connections between 4-H Community Clubs (4-HCC) and Community Youth Development (CYD).

According to the executive summary for the Building Capacity for Community Youth Development (BCCYD) Team's plan of work, this initiative "focuses on building and strengthening partnerships and collaborations that promote youth opportunities and supports within the community." If we look just at this statement, there are a myriad of ties between 4-H CC and CYD.

"Building and strengthening partnerships and coalitions is what 4-H is all about in my opinion."

D. Ivey

1) "Building and strengthening partnerships and coalitions" is what 4-H is all about in my opinion. There are partnerships with families, with fair boards, with project and club leaders, with Extension staff, and with other community groups. In many cases, the 4-H Community Club program may only be as strong as these partnerships. Providing opportunities for 4-Hers to experience these partnerships lets them learn how to work together, how to resolve conflicts, how to lead and follow in a group, and how to learn from others' expertise.

2) 4-H also fits nicely into the phrase "promote youth opportunities and supports." At a recent Southern District 4-H Youth Development meeting, Greg Matysik and Trisha Day shared a handout reviewing Best Practices for Youth Development that identified the opportunities and supports that youth need. Once again, the 4-H Community Club program provides many of these opportunities and supports for most of the members. Here is a highlight a few of these connections.

Provide youth with opportunities for exploration and reflection: This is a core component of the experiential learning model that is the cornerstone of the 4-H project experience. Youth try something, then talk about what they're doing and how it applies to their lives. This opportunity can also include involving youth in planning and carrying out programs and activities. Youth leaders, 4-H club officers, 4-H Ambassadors are a few of the places in 4-HCC where this takes place.

Provide youth with opportunities for expression and creativity: Consider the 4-H projects in the communication, creative and cultural arts areas and you will find multiple opportunities for youth expression and creativity. Add to this Arts Camp, State Art Team, Showcase Singers, State Drama Team, Press and Tech Team and others.

Provide youth with opportunities for group membership: Being part of a 4-H club often connotes a group identity. The members develop a sense of teamwork and a feeling of camaraderie. For many youth, this first occurs in the local club, becomes a county identity and develops into an "I am a 4-Her" attitude.

Provide youth with opportunities for being of service to others: An important part of most 4-H programs is a community service component. 4-H clubs in Iowa County recently held a pancake breakfast as a benefit for a 4-Her that lost her father in a car accident. Many 4-H clubs clean highways, volunteer at senior centers, and provide service to others. Older youth also provide a service to younger members when they teach them about a project or serve as a buddy.

Support youth's needs for nurturance and friendship: Many 4-H clubs become like families as leaders and members get to know each other. Birthdays are celebrated, youth feel comfortable sharing ideas, and life-long friendships develop.

Support youth's need for high expectations: 4-H projects include opportunities for youth to set goals and determine the steps necessary to reach those goals. Youth in 4-H can also earn personal satisfaction and/or public recognition for their accomplishments.

And, *Support youth's need for standards and boundaries:* 4-H programs have deadlines, entry requirements, identification dates and other requirements for participation. Youth who participate in 4-H programs are expected to follow behavior guidelines when they represent the 4-H program and face consequences when they do not follow the guidelines.

So to answer the question "Where do community clubs fit in community youth development? —I would say everywhere. 4-H Community Clubs and Community Youth Development are a good mix.



Guardians of Racine County Positive Youth Development

Ellen Shiflet, Racine County

Common denominator: the persistence and determination to make Racine the most youth-friendly city in the nation.

Every good cause needs guardian angels. No matter how right or deserving the cause, no matter how obviously correct a position might seem to the already converted, every good cause needs a voice and a presence to help open doors and navigate the rough spots. Positive youth development is no exception.

Enter the Coalition. The Racine Community Coalition for Youth began meeting in January 1994 as a successor to three separate committees of concerned organizations and individuals. The Coalition formed in response to concerns about public education, the increase in violent juvenile crime, and what was viewed as inadequate community support for young people. Unique was the composition of this group, for it included prominent members of the private sector such as David Rowland and Gabriella Klein with the then Chief of Police, Dick Polzin and 5th Circuit Court Judge Dennis Barry seated next to Racine County Human Services Director Bill Adams and

Racine Area United Way Director David Maurer. At the same table sat Charles Bray, then President of the Johnson Foundation, Reva Holmes representing SC Johnson Inc. and youth members such as former St Catherine's student, Emily Henkens, and former Walden HS student, Carl Johnson.

“Youth are wanted, respected, capable and liked.”

E. Shiflet

This group of twenty plus banded together as equals around the table to address the needs and hopes of Racine community youth in planning, mentoring, and advocacy roles. Operating by consensus and staffed by then coordinator Susan Gould, funded by donations and in-kind support, this group began thoughtful conversations, which resulted in a clear mission: We will make Racine a place where:

- Youth are wanted, respected, capable and liked.
- Children and youth have a healthy start and feel safe and secure.
- Children and youth are provided productive, meaningful pursuits that prepare them to be responsible, contributing members of the community.
- Meaningful and rewarding employment is available to those young people who have prepared themselves for work.

A lesser group would have flinched at this framework. However as now retired Charles Bray, commented recently, “Just bringing people to the table created energy, creativity, commitment, and passion for the task.” Marveling at the unique group who agreed to sit at the table, Bray added, “No community can hope to be a true community if people aren't talking cooperatively and collaboratively. Too many leaders live and work in isolation.” This group built bridges for dialogue and, later, action.

Bray saw the problem at that time as “our community was a community run by adults.” The Coalition set forth “to do the intelligent thing” focusing on empowerment opportunities for the youth who could then make a difference for themselves.

And quietly but determinedly they did. Judge Dennis Barry reflected on the insights the Coalition provided him as he was then chair of the State Juvenile Justice Study Committee, which significantly revised the law of the time resulting in a new Juvenile Justice Code. Barry commented, “The Coalition had the ability to bring together people from all aspects of a youth's life with a common goal.”

But bringing the Search Institute of Minneapolis to town to educate those interested in youth development with the fine points of asset development has to be viewed as the most significant contribution of this organization to date. Over a relatively short period of time, work with youth has transitioned from a deficit model, to one which focused on developing the developmental assets or characteristics that young people need to become caring and productive adults. To identify a benchmark of assets of Racine youth, in the fall of 1997 the Search Institute's survey, Profiles of Student Life: Attitudes and Behaviors, was completed by almost 7,000 seventh through twelfth grade students in the public and private schools of Racine County east of Interstate 94.

This was no small feat to accomplish. The Coalition first worked to educate the community on the importance of this topic and then lobbied school boards to allow their students to participate.

Next they raised considerable funds to cover the costs of administering and evaluating the survey and developed marketing tools to share the findings with both youth and adults. (Copies are available from the Coalition at 262-638-6650 or from the Racine County UW Extension office.) These findings, even three years later, help the community understand how our young people are doing. They offer an action guide for youth, parents, teachers, and community members...all who are concerned about our youth's future.

“The Coalition was stunned to find, in the survey’s empowerment results, that “Youth perceive that adults value young people” was seen as an accurate statement by a mere fifteen (15%) of our youth.”
E. Shiflet

The Coalition was stunned to find, in the survey’s empowerment results, that “Youth perceive that adults value young people” was seen as an accurate statement by a mere fifteen (15%) of our youth. Almost as riveting was the response to “Young people are given useful roles in the community” - 23%. The Coalition continued its focus on empowerment opportunities to change this statistic for Racine County youth.

Born out of this concern, the Racine Community Foundation, Racine Area United Way and Racine County funded the local replication of a national model, Youth as Resources. This is a youth empowerment program which casts youth in the role of decision-makers funding community service projects. Recently, Racine County Youth as Resources celebrated its fifth birthday and launched a satellite group, the Western Racine County Youth Board, to extend this empowerment program west of the interstate. Also encouraged by the Coalition were Family-Smart/Kid-Friendly, Youth Fair Chance, Youth Action, and RESCYU, a youth service group which focuses on environmental issues.

The Coalition has always worked to include youth as full members of the steering committee, modeling the need to have multiple opportunities for youth to be heard on one organization’s board. Youth voices have provided valuable insights to a group of community leaders who otherwise might be isolated from this important viewpoint.

Long time Coalition member representing the Racine Community Foundation, Gabriella Klein observed that this group “has by sharing information which helped avoid possible duplication, several times planted the seeds and served as an incubator for programs which support youth.” The Youth Volunteer Expo, co-sponsored by the Coalition and organized with the assistance of recent coordinator, Dick Kinch, has two years in a row attracted over 500 youth to an event which provided access to numerous volunteer opportunities. Permanent sponsors are now being put in place.

To this day, the Coalition works to continue this education process with the general public and provide opportunities for youth empowerment. Next goal? Re-administer the asset survey in 2002 to have a concrete marker of the progress this community has made over the last five years and document what needs to be done next.

Charles Bray observed that “this is an organization which truly has an unfinished agenda.” That is good news for Racine youth. For as the current administrative chair, UW Parkside Vice Chancellor, John Ostheimer challenged new Coalition

members, “We will continue to use our brainpower, influence, and energy to make Racine the most youth-friendly place anywhere.”

Cause for celebration as we begin 2001: our youth’s guardian angels are in place.

4-H Builds Community Leaders

Ellen Shiflet, Racine County

Becky Veres, 2001 Racine County 4-H Graduate

So often we as 4-H educators are asked, “How do 4-H experiences and trainings make a difference for our youth and for our community?”

We have a variety of numerical data available to share with the federal government and funders who request information. We annually tally the number of contacts for each individual program. We add the number of fair entries by category. We count the number of clubs and individual members. However, as we all know, the intangible benefits often go unmeasured and unheralded.

Today, as it has in decades past, 4-H is making a real difference in the communities of the 21st century. Not only is it making a real difference in traditional 4-H communities, but also in the surrounding urban areas. 4-Hers regularly transfer their advanced skills in organization, public speaking, seeing a project through to completion, and positive human relations to non-traditional 4-H roles in the larger community. 4-H youth have grown a well developed sense of the larger community and a sincere interest in impacting positively on their neighbors.

*“Leadership has become a vital part of my life.”
B. Veres*

2001 Racine County 4-H graduate, Becky Veres, is seen as a community leader of today. She is the “go-to-person” if a community leader really wants to get something done. Becky is a community leader of today, and firmly rooted in 4-H tradition.

Here Becky shares her community leadership journey in her own words....

Leadership has become a vital part of my life. In many ways it is what has gotten me to where I am today. Through the leadership of the others who have helped me and also the leadership skills I have gained through the years, I feel that I have grown into a successful young adult.

My journey to becoming a leader started when I joined 4-H at nine years old. It is the various experiences I have had in 4-H that have opened other doors for me. 4-H enabled me to become active in my community with other youth like myself. It was meeting these other youth that brought me out of my shell and opened me up to the world of volunteering and leadership.

During the years I have been in 4-H, I have had the opportunity to hold various leadership roles, growing a little with each. I went from holding a small position on my local club board to a few years later becoming president of the countywide Junior Leader’s Association. I was also a camp counselor for several years and then was given the opportunity to become a youth director because of my growth in leadership

skills. My leadership roles in 4-H could go on and on. Basically, if a youth is interested in taking on a role, a suitable one can be found or made. Whether this be to chair an event or simply volunteer to watch the fair building, each of these experiences helps to build future leaders. These opportunities give youth the encouragement and confidence they need to become leaders.

I can honestly say that 4-H helped to nurture the young leader I had growing inside of me. Through the connections I made in 4-H, I became involved with other youth organizations in the community. These included Youth as Resources, a youth empowerment program where a youth board awards grants for youth-led community service projects and On-TRACK, a youth-led computer training program. Both of these were great groups to be a part of and each one taught me very valuable lessons that I find I am still using today. I also became involved with Sustainable Racine, a business sponsored community investment program, and used my leadership skills to facilitate several meetings. 4-H has also given me the skills to work alongside adults, which has become a vital necessity now that I am in college.

Perhaps the biggest leadership role I took on came to me in a roundabout way through 4-H. This was founding an environmental organization. The three year old group is called Racine Earth Service Corps Youth United. It was a true test of my leadership skills to work alongside so many adults with differing opinions and skills while still getting my opinions heard. It took a lot of work and organization, but the club finally did come together and is still going strong.

That is just a brief overview of the leadership roles I have taken on during the last few years. Of course there are many more, but when one becomes a leader it seems that the role never does go away. This is true at least in my case and I am very thankful of that. Opportunities continually present themselves, and it is enjoyable for me to spend my time working with others in 4-H or any other organization for that matter.

My strong leadership and volunteer background really helped me in the search for a college. I was able to find more scholarships and had great letters of recommendation because of my past efforts. Now that I am at college I can really see how my years in 4-H, learning how to be a leader, have really paid off.

I believe that in my future I will be more adept in adjusting to varying situations since much of being a leader entails this. I have made many connections in not only my own community, but in other states. These contacts have helped me thus far and will most likely do so in the future.

Leadership has proved itself to be a great thing for me. I really feel that if I hadn't been involved with 4-H and walked through those other opened doors, I would not be as happy as I am today. I have the skills and confidence a youth in today's world needs. And that is something I wouldn't trade for the world.



Community Youth Development – Naturally

Mike Hibbard, Outagamie County

What do 4-H, B.S.A.'s Learning for Life Exploring program, Fox Valley Technical College, the Department of Natural Resources, the Department of Transportation and the Shadows on the Wolf (a local conservation club) all have in common? The answer is more simple than one might think. They are all part of a coalition who's purpose is to develop better citizens through environmental stewardship. Unlike many coalitions this group does not meet regularly or have formal bylaws, rather it is collection of organizations working toward a common goal – to manage a 480 acre wetland site in Outagamie County. The coalition is appropriately called SWWAMP (Shiocton Watchable Wildlife Area Management Partnership).

The coalition was formed in 2000 as a result of a request by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (DOT) for a 4-H Club to adopt a wetland. When I received the call, I asked the DOT project manager some questions about the project. He indicated that he was looking for a group of youth to do parking lot clean-up at a wetland site on an annual basis. However, as he further described the site as a 480 wetland that was created in 1994 to mitigate (replace) a natural wetland that was destroyed during a highway project, I could see the potential for career awareness development, service learning and other educational opportunities for youth.

The DOT project manager also indicated that they were working with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to establish a long-term strategy for the management of the wetland. I contacted the DNR to determine the best way to involve youth in the management of the wetland site. This was the beginning of the coalition. I developed some informational materials and set out on a coalition building endeavor.

I contacted local organizations to solicit financial and technical support to enable youth to become an active part of this natural resource management project. We recruited youth from the 4-H natural science projects and from schools throughout the county using the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) Learning for Life's career survey data.

Today, there exists a core of high school aged youth that are working under the technical direction of the DNR to update a resource management plan for the 480 acre site. This management plan will create a list of service projects, which can be undertaken by 4-H, Scouting or other community organizations to improve the wetland ecosystem. The core youth group meets on a monthly basis to observe career speakers in the natural resources fields and to work on the management plan and habitat improvement projects. Fox Valley Technical College (FVTC) allows the group to utilize a classroom and workshop for meetings and projects. FVTC natural resources instructors and students also provide technical assistance and instruction for the youth.

Some of the projects that the coalition has undertaken so far include: the design and beginning construction phase of a handicapped accessible wildlife viewing platform,

the construction of bat colony nesting boxes and owl nesting boxes. A local building designer, who is confined to a wheel chair, donated his design services to develop construction plans for the handicapped accessible viewing platform. Wisconsin Electric donated utility poles and equipment to set the poles for the support structure for the viewing platform. Shadows on the Wolf made a monetary donation for building materials for the projects. Youth and adult partners worked on the construction of the bat and owl nesting boxes and will also work on the final construction of the wildlife viewing structure.

The Wisconsin 4-H mission states “*4-H Youth Development integrates research, education and community-based partnerships, enabling youth to learn and practice skills to be productive citizens.*” SWWAMP, an unlikely youth development coalition, provides youth with hands-on educational opportunities and experiences in sustainable wetland management to enable them to become better environmental stewards which exemplifies the Wisconsin 4-H mission.

Wisconsin Electric and its employees volunteer 5 hours of service to set utility poles for the support structure for a handicapped accessible wildlife viewing structure.



Youth/adult partners work on a bat colony nesting box construction project.



A DNR conservation officer gives a career presentation on the environmental law enforcement profession.

Katja and the Land of Icky Behavior

René L. Mehlberg, Winnebago County

Katja awoke and didn't quite know what was going on. She laid down after school as she had been up late the night before finishing a citizenship paper. Everything looked familiar, but felt surreal.

"I think I'll go for a little walk to help wake up and check out what's happening," Katja said.

Once outside, it seemed as if there was a slight haze over everything, even though it wasn't hot or humid.

While she was walking she noticed some very peculiar things. As she walked by Tom's Market, Tom was arguing with a customer. This NEVER happened. Tom was always very friendly and helpful, but not this time. Tom was standing very close and yelling very loud. Katja didn't know what the argument was about, nor did she want to. She didn't like it when adults argued.

She continued on her walk and passed the school. It was late in the afternoon and some of the teachers were just leaving. As Mr. Jones was just about to get in his car, Ms. Smith the principal called after him. Mr. Jones looked back, but quickly jumped in his car and drove off. "Why did he leave when he knew Ms. Smith wanted to talk him? That wasn't very nice," Katja thought.

She was on her way to city park when she noticed a flyer on a kiosk. It said, "Youth wanted. Want to make a difference in the community in which you live? If so, we want to hear from you!" It was from the mayor's office. Her parents had always encouraged Katja to be involved in school and church. They believed they even as a youth, she had important items to contribute. They also spoke highly of their community. Her parents grew up there, but lived many other places before deciding that their hometown was the only place they wanted to raise their family. Having a sense of pride of her town and knowing that her parents would support her, she decided to go to the meeting which started just 5 minutes ago.

As Katja walked in, she was completely shocked at what she saw. As the secretary was trying to read the minutes from the last meeting, the committee chair was having a conversation with someone else and even rolled her eyes at the secretary a few times. Adults in the back were doing other work with some even sleeping! This isn't at all what she expected.

"If I acted that way in school, I would be sent to detention," thought Katja. "This is very icky."

The main topic for the night was regarding the use of an old city building. There were many different ideas being discussed including a teen center. One of the adults at the meeting who supported this idea put up the flyers. Katja and the other two youth there found out quickly that this wasn't some place they wanted to be or that the adults there really valued their input.

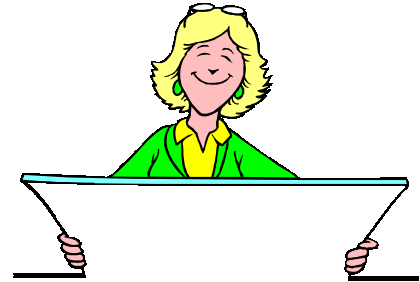
It said, "Youth wanted. Want to make a difference in the community in which you live? If so, we want to hear from you!"
R. Mehlberg

What followed was almost indescribable. There was no order to the meeting, people did not listen to the speaker, and chaos was about to ensue. Just when Katja was about to leave, she decided that something needed to be done and that she was the person who was going to do it.

Since everyone was either having a heated conversation with someone else or not paying attention, she purposefully walked up to the podium and spoke into the microphone.

“Excuse me. Excuse me, PLEASE!!!!!!”

The adults were so shocked at what they saw, that they actually stopped to listen.



“Ladies and gentlemen. Even though what I am witnessing is not what I think of as responsible behavior, I will address you in a respectable fashion. My parents are proud of this town and that they are raising their family here. I have heard that many times. Through their example and their messages, I have developed a sense of pride in this town. This pride has always been with me, until today.”

By this time, each and every adult was sitting, intently listening to Katja.

“When I saw the sign asking for youth input, I was excited. Even though I have not been able to share my opinion with the mayor or other elected officials, I have felt you have been working for youth. I have a good school. When there was a skateboard problem, you listened to the youth and helped develop a positive solution instead of just telling the skateboarders not to do it.”

“But what I have seen in this room, as well as throughout the town, today is not the kind of town where I want to live. All I have seen is adults yelling, ignoring, and just not treating others like human beings.”

She looked directly at the committee chair, “Do you like it when members talk in the back as you are trying to run the meeting?”

Looking at a teacher who is on the committee and was doing other work, “If your students were doing their math homework in your English class, what would you do? How would that make you feel?”

“I’m going to let you know how it makes me feel. As a youth, I have looked up to the adults in my life. I have noticed their behaviors. I also expect certain behaviors from adults, as adults expect from youth. I would have expected the adults running my city government to act in a respectable manner. I would have never imagined the scene which I just walked into.”

“Since I started on my walk through town this afternoon, I have felt as if I have been in the Land of Icky Behavior. A place where people aren’t treated like humans and things just aren’t right.”

“But what I have seen in this room, as well as throughout the town, today is not the kind of town where I want to live. All I have seen is adults yelling, ignoring, and just not treating others like human beings.”

R. Mehlberg

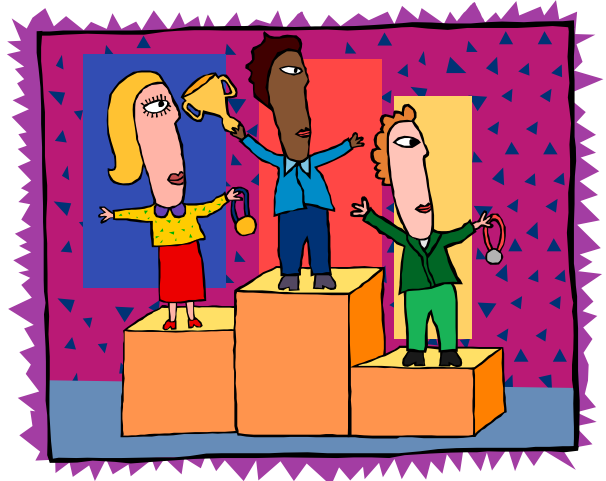
“In order for our town to survive, this must stop. Also, if youth continue to see adults being icky, they are going to begin to act that way as well. We model what we see; if we see adults yelling at each other, you are telling us it’s okay to yell at others. If we find out you are dishonest, we believe we can be dishonest. Before anyone, youth or adults, can make a difference in this community, we must first treat each other as we want to be treated. You just don’t treat other people the way I have been treated in this meeting.”

With that, Katja left. As she said, she knew that she and no other youth could have any positive influence in their community until the adults changed their behavior and their attitudes. She knew she had great ideas; she knew she could make a difference. But she didn’t know if she would be given a chance. But maybe, just maybe, over time the adults would realize their truly icky behavior and would change. Katja wouldn’t give up that hope.

2001 WAE4-HYDP Award Recipients

Annette Bjorklund, WAE4-HYDP Awards Committee

At the WAE4-HYDP Awards Banquet held on April 4 during the WAEP conference in LaCrosse, many of our colleagues were recognized for their outstanding efforts in 4-H Youth Development programming and for their commitment to our profession. Congratulations to all!



SUCCESSFUL PROGRAM AWARDS

Collaboration/Partnership — Team: René Mehlberg, Denise Retzleff, Rebecca Sgarlotti, Kathy Kauth – *“Fun Pack Community Service Project”*

Teen Program — Individual: Nancy Kuehn – *“Dane County Youth Livestock Committee”*

Research Project — Individual: Merry Klemme – *“Youth Center Without Walls”*

COMMUNICATOR AWARDS

Periodical Publication—Individual: Kim Reaman – *“Tips for New 4-H Families”*

Periodical Publication—Team: Debra Ivey, Ruth Schriefer, Anne Bachne, Sarah Halstead, June Meudt, Carrie Wilson, Joan Martin – *“Parents’ Toolbox”*

Media Presentation: Debra Ivey – “4-H Enrollment in Iowa Co. for Expansion & Review”

Educational Piece—Individual: Merry Klemme – “Dear 4-H Friend, THANKS!”

Educational Piece—Team: Sue Pleskac, Marty Stanton, Don Nolan, John Van Abel – “We Asked What Youth Thought... This is What They Told Us”

Promotional Piece—Individual: Myrna Rhinehart – “National 4-H Week – Today’s 4-H Reflects Changing Interests, Needs”

Promotional Piece—Team: Sharon H. McDowell, Arleen Leppin – “Looking for Something Fun & New? Explore Green Lake County 4-H”

Educational Package—Individual: Sharon H. McDowell – “American Spirit Trip 2000”

Educational Package—Team: Ellen Shiflet, Susan Gould, Marla Maeder – “UW-Extension Trends & Analysis: Profiles of Youth in Racine County”

Personal Column: Ellen Shiflet – “4-H Camp—Mentoring in Action”

Promotional Package—Team: Barb Becker, Veronica LaVoy, Alecia Treml, Melissa Boehm, Andrea Kozlowski, Andy Burns, Kimberly Babcock, Therese LaVoy – “Ambassador Package to Promote Juneau County 4-H”

Radio Program—Educational: Jan Kohlbeck Scoville – “Difficult Situations Youth Encounter and the Role Adults Play in Handling These Situations”

Radio Program—Promotional: Jan Kohlbeck Scoville – “4-H Enrollment Time”

Video Program—Educational: Kathi Vos, Linda Kustka, Kandi O’Neil, Agnes Wagner, Patricia Day, René Mehlberg, Jan Heidtke, Maggie Kiselicka, Nancy Stillwell, Donna Anderson, Barbara Chase, Elizabeth Diez, Kevin Kannenberg, Mark Bergner – “4-H Meetings That Shake Rattle & Roll”

SPECIAL AWARDS

Achievement in Service Award: Blair Beacom-Deets

Distinguished Service Award: Donna Duerst, Barb Barker

Meritorious Service Award: Jeanne Baum

Meritorious Service Award (non-member): Doris Bass

Friend of WAE4-HYDP Award: Land O’Lakes Foundation



2000-2001 WAE4-HYDP Board of Directors

Fast Fact

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