

Urban 4-H and Garden Intern – Outagamie County

Situation:

The Outagamie County 4-H Expansion and Review committee identified the need to increase 4-H visibility and reach new youth audiences in the Appleton area. “Youth need positive community based programs with peers and adults” was identified as one of the top needs in the Outagamie County Needs Assessment survey done in the fall of 2007. Through existing partnerships and establishing new ones, UW-Extension will be able to offer youth educational programs and provide youth with the four essential elements of belonging, mastery, independence and generosity. A summer intern would pilot youth activities with community gardens and offer 4-H educational programs with other community agencies such as the Boys and Girls Club, YMCA and Harbor House.

A youth garden would be added to the Community Gardens at Columbus School (low income, high minority elementary school in downtown Appleton). The intern would teach a weekly garden educational program with the youth from the Boys and Girls Club at Columbus School. The intern would have the opportunity to work with the Youth Garden (partnership with UWEX 4-H, Master Gardeners, WNEP, Boys & Girls Club of the Fox Valley and Gardens of the Fox Cities) and then adapt the youth garden lessons to the community garden at Columbus School.

The intern would work with Karen Dickrell, Family Living Educator, on a Hmong-American Partnership and Time Warner Cable TV show promoting 4-H opportunities for Hmong youth.

To increase 4-H visibility the intern will coordinate a new 4-H action center area at the county fair with youth leaders sharing 4-H projects and activities.

Response:

A 4-H graduate and college student was hired as the summer intern who would focus program efforts on community youth gardens and expanding 4-H program through outreach efforts. The two main efforts and goals were:

- Work in collaboration with the Community Garden Partnership to develop programming
 - Reach out to underserved youth audience at Columbus Elementary and facilitate a gardening program
 - Collaborate with all area Youth Community Garden Programs to create a collective Garden Gathering.
 - Assist Master Gardeners in helping educate children from the Boys and Girls Club at the Youth Garden

- Explore, design and implement new strategies to promote 4-H
 - Science Program at the Boys and Girls Club and YMCA locations
 - 4-H Youth Activity Stations at the Outagamie County Fair
 - Work with 4-H graduates from Hmong 4-H club on cable TV show

A science curriculum was created in response to the national 4-H SET (Science Engineering and Technology) Initiative using UWEX curricula. It was designed with multiple hands on lessons to teach basic science concepts and promote experimental learning. Lesson topics included Bubbles, Straw Rockets, 5 Senses, Critical Thinking Mathematics, Electricity, Plants and Soil, Structure, and Recycling.

Results and Evidence:

- Columbus Elementary School Discovery Garden was a great avenue for providing Gardening programs to a diverse low income youth audience.
 - Provided series of 30-minute educational lessons about gardening basics to youth in grades 1 – 6 (25 youth).
 - Tried to involve Community Garden Partnership volunteers.
 - Eight out of eleven youth in grades 1- 3 liked the gardening programs and indicated their favorite activities. Six out of nine youth in grades 4-6 could identify all the plant needs by using PLANTS acronym. The other three youth could identify at least three of the six needs.
- Youth Garden with the Boys and Girls Club changed this year with the Master Gardeners taking the lead for the program and staff from UWEX assisting.
 - Provided support and assisted master Gardeners in teaching on Wednesday morning for 10 – 20 youth each week.
- A family gathering was planned and held to promote gardening at UW-Fox community garden.
- Science Programming
 - Weekly half hour themed sessions developed from UWEX curricula for elementary school aged students was taught to youth in grades 2 – 5 at the Boys and Girls Club, YMCA Child Development Center and Appleton Downtown YMCA. The average attendance per session was 17 youth with the range from 9 – 27.
 - A flyer was developed explaining the Exploring Science Curriculum and 4-H for the youth to take home to the parents.
 - Each site coordinator evaluated each of the science lessons. On a scale of 1 – 10 (10 being excellent) only straw rockets, static electricity and cool chemical reactions averaged a score of 9. All the other lessons were 10. The intern reviewed any suggestions for improvements and incorporated in the lesson when appropriate.
 - Each of the county community 4-H clubs received the 4-H Explore Science Curriculum the August County leaders meeting for SET activities to use at 4-H club meetings.

- The 4-H Action Center was a big hit at the county fair. The intern worked with 4-H youth and adult leaders to offer a variety of activities to increase awareness of 4-H projects and promote 4-H. Activities on the stage include music and drama festival presentations, demonstrations, and youth / adult team bake off contest. When an activity was not taking place 4-H youth leaders offered simple 4-H activities including 4-H Explore Science to the families visiting the fair.
- The Hmong 4-H cable TV show outline was developed by the intern, Karen Dickrell, Family Living educator and two Hmong 4-H graduates. However the show did not get taped yet as Hmong youth backed out.
- Midway through the summer, the intern expressed a strong interest in working in Extension and discussed changes in her class schedule for the fall with her advisor after discussion with UW-Extension faculty.