



Healthy youth choices

Helping youth make informed choices

Adolescents make significant choices about their health and develop attitudes and health practices that continue into adulthood. Some adolescent risks include unintentional injuries and violence, alcohol and other drug use, sexual behaviors, tobacco use, poor diets, lack of physical activity and being overweight.

Extension's Response

UW-Extension 4-H Youth Development and Family Living programs offer education on youth risk behavior and healthy choices for youth and adults. They also provide opportunities for youth and adults to collaborate on community initiatives to address youth issues.

Outcomes

In Columbia County, a community collaboration including the 4-H Youth Development educator developed "Teen Maze," a decision-making challenge designed to let students experience the consequences of life choices through creative, interactive educational activities. Eighth graders who participated said the realistic scenarios might cause them to change their behavior.

In La Crosse County, the 4-H Youth Development agent is an advisor to the Youth Commission, which includes youth representatives from nine schools. The Youth Commission planned and conducted a Martin Luther King, Jr. Day for 500 eighth graders and secured a facility for a teen center in La Crosse. They also helped pass a uniform curfew ordinance and published a parenting guide.

Teens in Marinette, Polk and Pierce counties worked with Tobacco Free Coalitions, which include UW-Extension, to check businesses for compliance with laws prohibiting sales of tobacco to minors. Youth checked 145 businesses in Polk and 614 in Marinette County. In Pierce County, youth wrote grants for educating retailers about tobacco sales to youth.

In Ozaukee County, the family living educator worked with a youth collaboration to raise \$6,000 to build a disk golf course – intended to be a positive alternative for youth.

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