



Youth community leadership

Youth impact communities and 4-H clubs

Youth who take active roles in organizations and communities have fewer problems, are better skilled and tend to be life-long citizens. A recent study showed that the healthiest communities were those in which youth engaged in structured and purposeful activities with adults who were not their parents.

Extension's Response

University of Wisconsin-Extension 4-H Youth Development offers opportunities for youth leadership through older youth groups, community service activities, mentoring programs and 4-H camps. 4-H staff members help create community collaborations where youth learn to develop programs, work with others and apply these skills in community settings.

Outcomes

Twenty-seven older 4-H youth from nine counties formed the Southern District Leadership Team. They worked to increase participation in 4-H programs among older youth and produced a newsletter and Web site. They plan a youth leadership conference for fall 2005.

Disciplinary referrals at the Boscobel schools dropped by half because of the presence of 29 trained playground mentors. These youth, trained by 4-H Youth Development agents in Grant, Richland and Crawford counties, said they've learned to spot bullying behavior. They also say they have gained maturity and leadership skills.

In Fond du Lac County, 4-H Youth Development teamed up with the Boys and Girls Club to develop Summer Leadership Adventure, a program combining community service and leadership development. Sixteen youth worked with community groups and gained skills in teambuilding, planning and organizing.

In Taylor County, seventh and eighth grade students taught computer skills to senior citizens. The seniors increased their skills, including communication with email. 4-H, senior citizens and the Commission on Aging assisted, with computers donated by the county.

Contact: Deb Ivey, 608-935-0391, debra.ivey@ces.uwex.edu;
Rene Mehlberg, 920-232-1970 rene.mehlberg@ces.uwex.edu

3/24/2005