



NATIONAL 4-H COUNCIL

LEELANAU COUNTY, MI

SONOMA COUNTY, CA

WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY EXTENSION SERVICE

GARRETT COUNTY, MD

SOUTHWEST DISTRICT, GA

FAMILIES COUNT FAMILY STRENGTHENING AWARDS

Through a joint venture of the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the National 4-H Council, the FAMILIES COUNT Family Strengthening Awards recognize outstanding 4-H programs that work to give children in rural communities what they need most—strong, capable and economically successful families. Responding to the varied needs of the families they serve, these organizations improve the economic prospects of working men and women and create the services and networks of support that all families need to realize their aspirations for themselves and their children.

CHILDREN DO WELL WHEN THEIR FAMILIES
DO WELL, AND FAMILIES DO BETTER WHEN
THEY LIVE IN SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITIES

NATIONAL 4-H COUNCIL

Donald T. Floyd, Jr.
National 4-H Council
7100 Connecticut Avenue
Chevy Chase, Maryland 20815
301-961-2800
www.4-h.org

4-H programs long have recognized the importance of building supportive community networks and strengthening family relationships to bolster the successful development of the nation's youth. Today, 4-H enriches the lives of more than 6.5 million young people through research-based programs at 106 state universities and 3,100 extension offices. In clubs, camps and after-school programs, 4-H offers diverse programs, such as mentoring, financial education and fitness groups – all with the purpose of empowering youth and their families.

The following 4-H programs have been honored with the 2009 Family Strengthening Awards, a joint venture of the National 4-H Council and the Annie E. Casey Foundation. These programs have demonstrated a commitment to supporting youth and families so that they can achieve brighter futures.

“4-H programs offer valuable opportunities for youth to experience hands-on learning that will help improve their lives and the lives of their families,” says National 4-H Council President and CEO Donald T. Floyd, Jr. “Youth become the catalysts for involving parents, families and neighborhoods so that our impact resonates across the community.”

PROJECT MULTI-COUNTY OUTREACH NETWORK EDUCATING YOUTH (MONEY) SOUTHWEST DISTRICT, GA

Southwestern Georgia is home to some of the poorest communities in the nation, including Randolph County, where nearly 37 percent of children live in poverty. To break the generational cycle of poverty and improve financial well-being throughout the area, Project Multi-County Outreach Network Educating Youth (MONEY) was launched. Through a youth financial literacy conference, 101 middle school students learned financial literacy skills, including saving, budgeting and avoiding consumer scams. 4-H'ers also formed a Financial Literacy Youth Task Force partnering with a local bank to continue their financial education and spread their knowledge among their families and the community.

ENERGY EXPRESS WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY EXTENSION SERVICE

Energy Express is an innovative summer reading and nutrition program that engages 3,000 children in 80 rural and low-income West Virginia communities. The program collaborates with parents and community members, provides free books to children and offers 3.5 hours of fun literacy activities. AmeriCorps volunteers conduct family visits, help families connect to supportive resources and share meals with youth and provide mentorship. As a result of its comprehensive approach, Energy Express effectively halts summer learning loss – in 2007, 80 percent of participants maintained or increased their reading scores.

YOUTH MARKET: RURAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP EXPERIENCE GARRETT COUNTY, MD

The majority of farms in Garrett County are at the greatest risk for financial trouble, according to the USDA Census of Agriculture. To help families explore new ways to support themselves through youth entrepreneurship, the Youth Market

began in 2004. Offered as part of an annual rural enterprise conference, Youth Market gives youth hands-on education about marketing, price-setting and selling. The program allows youth to participate in a mentored youth-only market and eventually transition to sell their own products, ranging from honey to jewelry, at a regular farmers' market. Through these youth-led endeavors, families are finding new ways to supplement their income.

4-H BLOCO DRUM AND DANCE SONOMA COUNTY, CA

4-H Bloco Drum and Dance teaches youth the Brazilian Carnival tradition in an after-school arts and music program that strengthens their academics, health, cultural appreciation and family well-being. As part of an effort to curb gang participation and tensions, the program gives youth a fun place to practice performing arts, receive tutoring and learn life skills. To help youth succeed both at home and in school, 4-H Bloco Drum and Dance holds monthly family potlucks and connects the entire family to community resources such as immigrant services and food stamps.

4-H KIDS CLUB LEELANAU COUNTY, MI

Created in response to parents' requests, 4-H Kids Club meets a critical need for children's after-school care. At four sites in Leelanau County, where most parents work for low wages in agriculture and seasonal tourism, 4-H Kids Club offers a safe environment for kids to have fun and receive academic enrichment so that parents can stay employed. Through a collaboration of many funders including the Leelanau County Family Coordinating Council and the Michigan Department of Human Services, the program remains affordable for families. The clubs also involve parents through advisory boards and help families connect to local resources such as food pantries and family advocacy services.



WE UNDERSTAND THE STRUGGLES THAT MANY YOUTH AND FAMILIES FACE, SO 4-H PROGRAMS USE RESEARCH-BASED STRATEGIES TO HELP YOUTH BUILD POSITIVE FUTURES, IMPROVE FAMILIES' LIVES AND DEVELOP STRONG COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS.

–President and CEO Donald T. Floyd, Jr., National 4-H Council