

4-H Power of YOUTH

4-H is the youth development program of our nation's Cooperative Extension System and USDA.

Muhlenberg County EYSC Project Receives Award



A Super Hero from the EYSC leadership team interviews a student as part of the Bully Free Forever Program conducted in Muhlenberg County, KY.

Bullying is a pervasive national youth issue affecting young people of all ages in communities across the country. The Muhlenberg County EYSC leadership team, along with community stakeholders, identified bullying as an issue of primary concern in the elementary and middle schools in the county. The EYSC youth received

recognition for their work in creating awareness of bullying behavior at the Kentucky 4-H Volunteer Forum held earlier this year in Lexington, earning the *Power of Youth Award*.

"We learned that...ANYONE can become a victim [of bullying] and ANYONE can become a bully," said one youth leader involved in this program.

The leadership team worked to create a presentation that could be provided to students called "Bully Free Forever" that raised awareness about the types of bullying and how youth can resist peer pressure, recognize their own bullying behavior and report bullying to adults. During this 60 minute presentation delivered at school assemblies throughout the county over two years, youth leadership team members acted as "Heroes" and "Villains" by adopting a super-persona of bullying and reporting behaviors. This drew attention to this important issue in fun, relatable manner while allowing youth to spread important messages about bullying.

This program, developed by the youth, volunteers and Muhlenberg County's 4-H Agent, also initiated important community collaborations with the local sheriff's department and other school agencies. Through their efforts, the youth have been able to anecdotally document a decrease in bullying in the schools and an increase in reporting of bullying incidents.

Using the *Engaging Youth, Serving Community (EYSC)* funds, they were able to create an anti-bullying, bullying awareness video that was shown in all community movie theaters. Through these ongoing efforts, the leadership team continues to build important community partnerships.

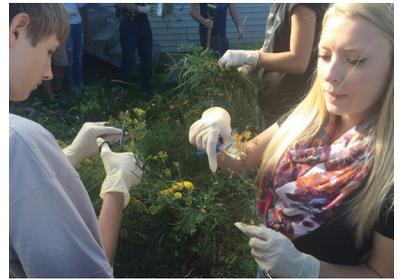
This EYSC 4-H Program was a project of the University of Kentucky under the leadership of Mark Mains, youth development specialist. ■

4-H Youth Partner to Solve Community Problems

4-H's *Engaging Youth, Serving Community Year 10 (EYSC10)* program awarded grants to 11 Land Grant Universities to develop, implement and evaluate youth-facilitated community-based issues forums with action plans in rural communities. For four of these Extension Service programs, EYSC10 represented the third year of work in a longitudinal effort of funding the same communities. Seven Land Grant Universities followed a year later, engaging in this youth-in-governance program model. Results in the effort to test the youth-driven solutions to community problems continue to be impressive:

- 620 youth in 53 targeted rural communities participated on state and local leadership teams, working with 253 adults to develop youth-adult partnerships.
- These leadership teams engaged an additional 3,020 youth and 546 adults to implement action plans to solve priority community issues.
- Approximately 78 percent of the youth leadership team members held additional community leadership positions such as community council member and youth advisory commission, nine percent more than the previous year.
- The youth provided a total of 38,952 volunteer hours and adults contributed 14,460 hours. Using the Independent Sector Index value of \$21.79 per hour of volunteer time, there was more than \$1.16 million provided in in-kind support to local communities by everyone engaged in this program.
- 26 percent of the participants represented Black, Native American, Asian and mixed race populations, an increase of 4 percent over EYSC9.
- 100 percent of the communities collaborated to solve community issues with 256 partners, including government agencies, school systems and community organizations. These groups brought an additional 2,919 youth and 1,719 adults into the program, which is 2,325 more youth and adults from 100 more organizations than last year.
- Grant money was leveraged \$15.69 for each federal grant dollar with cash and in-kind support, including the value of the volunteer labor.

The EYSC program is made possible by the Rural Youth Development Grants (RYD) #2008-45201-04715 and 2011-45201-31092 provided by the National Institute for Food and Agriculture, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) through National 4-H Council. USDA's national collaborative partners in the RYD Grant Program are 4-H, FFA and Girl Scouts of the USA. ■



The success of the EYSC project in Milo, Maine with an afterschool group growing fresh produce to improve youth diets in the school cafeteria led to creation of a science elective class in horticulture to make the community change sustainable.



Students from Morgan County High School, GA, observe a fatal accident, staged as part of the EYSC "Teen Maze" project making youth think about the results of risky behavior.

For decades, high school administrators have parked mangled vehicles in front of schools as visual reminders for students not to drink and drive.

Morgan County High School in GA stepped this up a huge notch on May 6, 2014 through a Teen Maze. Students experienced the affects of life altering situations, like driving drunk, being arrested, becoming a teenage parent or contracting a sexually-transmitted disease, by drawing random cards and "living" out the decisions through the maze.

The maze experience was the result of three years of planning by a group of senior

Teen Maze Focuses on Teen Risky Behaviors in Morgan County, GA

(adapted from a article By Sharon Dowdy, University of Georgia)

Morgan County 4-H'ers. It was funded by a Rural Youth Development grant from the National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA) and National 4-H Council and became a reality through the support of local volunteers from the local 4-H office, high school, health department, sheriff's department, hospital and court system as well as leadership from the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service.

"The goal was to have the teenagers realize the consequences of a wide range of risky behaviors" said Janet Woodard, Morgan County Extension coordinator. The maze concept has been used successfully in several Georgia communities so the

Morgan County planning group learned from the organizers of those past events.

"The maze itself is an incredible experience for youth and can have lasting impacts as young people consider various consequences from decisions," said Woodard. "The 4-H'ers, who planned the event, contacted agencies for support and implemented the maze were the driving force in making this happen. They are truly a great example of youth making a difference."

Post event surveys showed that 91 percent of respondents agreed that they would change their behavior as a result of this experience. Furthermore, 87 percent of respondents agreed that their friends will change their behavior as a result of this experience. ■

Nevada Teen Partnership Feeds Impoverished Community



A group of teens cover graffiti on the local water tower with fresh paint and tribal signs as part of the Pyramid Lake Reservation EYSC Project.

The Native American Reservation of Pyramid Lake faces many of the issues of greater Nevada following the economic recession—unemployment, foreclosures and bankruptcies. Based on Bureau of Indian Affairs 2005 Employment report, the unemployment rate for

Pyramid Lake was 51 percent and of those employed, 23 percent lived below the federal poverty guidelines. Teen pregnancy, rates of substance abuse and the student dropout rate are higher per capita on the Pyramid Lake Reservation when compared with other Nevada communities. Those whose parents are employed travel great distances to work, creating an atmosphere where teens feel unsupported by their parents and have few role models that they can turn to when they are seeking assistance.

In collaboration with the Federally Recognized Tribes Extension Program, the Pyramid Lake community built a Hoop House to start vegetable production. Tribal members wanted to increase local food production as a way to

support healthy eating, creating a local "farmer's market" and generating more interest in traditional foods of the tribe. Tribal members constructed a Hoop House and planted cover crops for full production in 2013.

This partnership has developed a reconnection between youth and tribal elders and a rekindled pride in the reservation community. The teens leadership group also identified a community clean-up project and painted a mural depicting pride over the graffiti on a local water tower.

Additionally, teens are working with tribal leadership to incorporate youth voice within the tribal council and participating in leadership development opportunities offered through the University of Nevada-Reno 4-H Program. ■

Reservation Walking Trail Builds Idaho Fitness Opportunities

Teens engaged in the EYSC program on the Coeur d'Alene Reservation utilized three of the four corners of the Medicine Wheel as their guide to identify community issues. Physical, emotional and mental well-being have been the focus since the program started in 2011.

Despite high poverty rates in the area (17 percent unemployment and 29 percent poverty), EYSC has provided positive opportunities to the community. The 2011 UNITY Week was held in conjunction with *Rock'n the Rez Culture Camp* drawing over 140 middle and high school youth from six tribes, with a wide variety of activities ranging from camas (a wild plant) and deer meat preparation to a youth round dance.

Throughout 2012 and 2013, youth continued to learn to be healthier within the context of their culture. Weekly activities through the *Strengthening the Spirit* Afterschool program took advantage of the beautiful natural environment of the rural community with Bike and Paddle the Watershed events. Youth participated in a healthy/non-healthy food scavenger hunt at the local market, using iPads to video items found during the hunt. Youth also participated in weekly preparation and cooking of healthy dinners.

Building on collaborations within their community, the teens partnered with Upward Bound in its community service outreach. The

latest project resulted in the creation of an educational nature trail in the backyard of Lakeside Middle School. The trail, completed in 2014, provides better access to the natural area behind the school. The trail is used by multiple classes of Plummer-Worley students during the school day and during the afterschool program. According to Erika Thiel, Idaho EYSC Principal Investigator, collaborations are the key to sustaining the EYSC program after the grant. "It is exciting to see youth building on the concepts learned in EYSC by collaborating with local partners on projects, making a lasting difference within their communities." ■

Oconto's Promise Builds Youth-Adult Partnership in Wisconsin



Oconto's Promise began in 2005 as a core group of community members committed to building a supportive environment for youth in the rural community of Oconto, Wisconsin. Oconto's Promise worked to identify strategies for involving youth in strengthening community bonds by seeking opportunities for adults and youth to work as partners in projects to benefit the local community.

Interest in connecting outdoor activities with healthy living provided just such an opportunity as the Oconto community embraced the youth-adult partnership foundation of EYSC in 2010. For the first two years, the EYSC youth-adult community leadership group decided to develop a local marsh and trail complex in an area for wildlife viewing. They forged

collaborations with organizations such as the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Audubon Society in seeking to attract families to explore their own natural community assets.

The youth-adult teams and collaborators identified a need for an observation platform. The Oconto High School building trades class built the platform with the Oconto Sportsmen and a local contractor provided surface preparation. The site was chosen by a seventh grade class using a deliberative process. Once the platform was completed, examples of events held over the last two years to engage families at the marsh included:

- Dragonfly hike (partnered with Audubon Society and University of Wisconsin-Green Bay faculty),
- Frog Walk (youth-led activity), and
- Migratory Waterfowl Viewing (partnered with DNR and Ducks Unlimited).

The third year of the *Engaging Youth, Serving Community* grant focused on the marsh, but expanded to include Copper Culture State Park and the area between the two sites. "History on the Bay" used mobile technology as a vehicle to highlight the skills of youth and to build connections in the community. A University of Wisconsin Program Innovation Fund gift and an in-kind contribution supported the project.

The second component of "History on the Bay" connected residents across generations as it showcased the skills of youth in the production of a digital history trail leading participants from Copper Culture State Park through the city of Oconto to Oconto Marsh using mobile technology. Youth and adults partnered to highlight the rich history and natural resources of the area through ten videos over the last two years of EYSC. ■

EYSC Teens Broaden Horizon of Maryland Community

Implementing an *Engaging Youth, Serving Community* (EYSC) grant-funded project is of critical importance to the Elton Housing Authority communities of Rudy Park and Windsor Village. 100 percent of youth and adults in these communities are living below the poverty level. Implementing the EYSC program is creating a positive atmosphere and an increase in quality of life for the community.

The 2011 EYSC grant community forums concluded with "A Series in Growing" project that encouraged both the youth and adults in these communities to improve critical community capitals through the acquisition of knowledge, skills and positive attitudes. A key component of the "Series in Growing" project was the adaptation of the Alaska EYSC 1 afterschool program; *After the*

Bell's fundraiser "Artist Chairs" whereby families had opportunity to create their own piece of art while furthering family bonding. The project also used a Youth In Governance Model of engaging youth in the decision-making processes, an area of need indentified by the University of Maryland Extension-Cecil County's collaborating partners.

The 2012 EYSC Health and Family Unity Educational Series was the culminating event that concluded a yearlong effort by the University of Maryland Extension Cecil County and the Elton Housing Authority to help the community achieve a greater level of community unity and personal health. Throughout the year both organizations offered educational opportunities relating to the EYSC forum goal including 4-H family unity programs, 4-H healthy lifestyles programs, and



Elton EYSC youth and adults raise awareness about community health and safety the old-fashioned way.

Expanded Food and Nutrition Programming. Efforts continued throughout 2013.

EYSC has been successful in bringing both Rudy Park and Windsor Village closer to the goal of a stronger community with more positive youth and adult interaction and the opportunity for educational experiences. ■

EYSC Collaboration Leads to Healthier Delaware Community

In many communities, the local library is the hub for educational programs and reading activities for youth and adults. In Laurel, Delaware, it is also the hub for activities designed to create a healthy, more vibrant community, thanks to a partnership between the Laurel Public Library, Laurel Chamber of Commerce, Laurel Historical and the University of Delaware Cooperative Extension's 4-H *Engaging Youth, Serving Community* (EYSC).

The EYSC 4-H youth-adult community leadership team facilitated a public issues forum to identify the top areas of concern for the community: safety, health and pride.

Youth and adults organized a Pick-Up Laurel Day where 35 people collected 22 bags of trash to give the town a fresh sparkle. This project was a community collaboration involving community and faith-based organizations, but a key to its success was collaboration between 4-H youth and the Library's marketing team.

The success of this venture led to *Walk Laurel*, an update of the Laurel Historical Society's "Walking Tour of Laurel" Brochure. As a part of this initiative, the EYSC team constructed a walking/fitness trail around the Roger C. Fisher

Memorial Park to give citizens the ability to complete the one-mile trail while reaching fitness goals at activity stops along the way.

The trail was the focal point of the 2014 Summer Reading Program at the Laurel Public Library, partnering also with the Laurel School District School Nutrition Department, tying hungry youth with feeding, exercise and educational initiatives. This is an outstanding example of the power of 4-H EYSC youth leading solutions to community problems through collaborations. ■

4-H Project Transforms Southwest Washington Town



-Cathlamet youth and adults assemble pet waste stations as part of their efforts to renew pride in their community.

From the start, the youth involved in the Washington State town of Cathlamet were concerned about a lack of community pride. The EYSC teens liked living in Cathlamet, but they felt surrounded by fellow youth and adults who could not wait to leave. The teens took action by holding a public forum in the school cafeteria to discuss ideas to restore the image of and pride in Cathlamet.

The initial action plan called for a Main Street cleanup, development of enlarged historical photos to fill vacant storefronts, hosting family movie nights at the community center and creating a "good neighbor" award column in the Wahkiakum Eagle. The full EYSC team carried out the Main Street cleanup in November 2011, and it received so much positive feedback that other public spaces quickly became the focus of similar future efforts. The courthouse grounds were addressed in 2012 and two city parks received attention in 2013, all youth-led with help from Cathlamet residents.

By strengthening the environmental and built capital of Wahkiakum County, local youth demonstrated that several social and financial capital improvements make a difference. Former Mayor George Wehrfritz recognized these as transformative: "The student support

was critical....We often talk about how vandalism is contagious... Yet the contagion effect also can be positive when a local effort... inspires other people to take corrective action."

Among the concerns expressed in September 2011 was business depression. Membership in the Wahkiakum Chamber of Commerce was at 107, which was unable to fill eight storefronts in the downtown corridor of Cathlamet. At the end of 2013, six new businesses had been opened in or relocated to downtown (a 75 percent decrease in vacancies), and Chamber membership was up to 125 (a 16.8 percent increase).

This economic development project was spearheaded by the Washington State Extension Service under the joint leadership of Jan Klein, youth leadership specialist, and Dale Larson, Kittitas County Extension Educator. ■

Missouri EYSC Youth EXCEL in Their Community



Oregon County Youth EXCEL Leadership 101 class at Lamar High School organized a school wide drive for food and personal hygiene items benefitting Good Samaritan Thrift Pantry.

For Oregon County, Missouri, the availability of afterschool programs has been a continual challenge for the three participating rural communities. A youth tutoring/mentoring program and a new 4-H club established through the *Engaging Youth, Serving Community (EYSC)* program have provided opportunities to engage youth in out-of-school educational activities, while a newly-founded leadership program has provided the basis for partnership between teens and adults.

Strong ongoing community leadership programs can grow a base of civic leaders from which new initiatives can spring, including those that support academic achievement. The University of Missouri Extension's EXCEL (EXperience in Community Enterprise and Leadership) program offered just that opportunity. Oregon County EYSC youth and adults worked together with campus 4-H and community development specialists to organize and pilot the Oregon County EXCEL Program in 2013.

Ten youth and two adult participants met for weekly leadership sessions, working through *7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens*, *6 Most Important Decisions You Will Ever Make*, and *Teen Leadership Revolution*, gaining skills to recognize and to be effective leaders, and to better communicate with peers, community, county and state leaders.

These first-year EXCEL graduates then assisted EYSC adults and youth with planning to offer the program again for new community participants in 2014. In addition to the state

capitol and University campus tours, keynote speakers were invited to educate participants on the unique attributes of Ozark regional culture and economics. Tours of area employers including Ready Transportation, Hirsch Feed and Farm Supply, KKOUNTRY 95 Radio Station, Cover Lumber, Thayer Redi-Mix and Bank of Thayer exposed youth to local career opportunities.

"[This is] a very needed thing in this area," said the relative of an EXCEL program participant. "The youth of Oregon County need every edge they can get. I am thankful my niece and nephews have this opportunity. Thank you, 4-H."

Oregon County EYSC successfully launched a 4-H club, creating avenues for youth to become involved in other aspects of 4-H, including shooting sports, camp counseling and state trips. One parent of an Alton Comets 4-H club member said, "this has been a wonderful thing for my kids. I wish that all kids could experience life skills that are taught through the 4-H club." ■

4-H is a community of six million young people across America learning leadership, citizenship, and life skills. National 4-H Council is the private sector, non-profit partner of 4-H National Headquarters located at the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIIFA) within USDA. 4-H programs are implemented by the 109 Land-Grant Universities and the Cooperative Extension System through their 3,100 local Extension offices across the country. Learn more about 4-H at www.4-H.org or find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/4-H.



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