

# IMPACT



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## 4-H Projects in Bingham County Schools Enhance School Curriculum

### *The Situation*

Decreased participation in miscellaneous 4-H project areas in Bingham County was evident. Fewer than 500 youth were enrolled in these projects in 1994. There were no organized school 4-H clubs. Youth were losing interest in the 4-H program and missing the opportunity to participate in valuable hands-on life-skill education. Youth found themselves with more time on their hands to participate in unproductive activities. Working with local schools seemed to provide the opportunity to reach youth in a productive environment. Offering curriculum to enhance subjects already being offered was appealing to teachers.

### *Our Response*

All fourth grade students in Idaho schools study Idaho history. The 4-H faculty and staff in Bingham County developed an Idaho history 4-H project adapted from a former project. The materials were designed for teachers to use hands-on activities as a major part of the curriculum. In 1995 the materials were taken to the fourth grade teachers in one school. The 4-H teaching method and requirements for project completion was shared with the teachers. All of the materials to help youth understand the requirements and record books were given to the teachers. The 4-H staff gave a presentation to the students to introduce them to 4-H and the Idaho history project requirements. Youth were enrolled as 4-H members, and the teachers were enrolled as 4-H leaders.

Teachers who completed the project with their students shared the curriculum and the project with fellow fourth grade teachers. In 2001 there were 18 organized school clubs with over 1,325 4-H projects completed in Bingham County schools.

### *Program Outcomes*

The students participating in the Idaho history 4-H project learned about 4-H. They were able to learn about Idaho and make projects that helped them understand their heritage. The youth participated at the fair by having their projects judged and receiving ribbons and premiums.

Teachers gained an understanding of 4-H. They learned how to incorporate 4-H curriculum materials into their classroom teaching. The teachers came to 4-H for new curriculum materials and ideas. They also attended 4-H trainings and recognition banquets. In addition to the Idaho history curriculum used by fourth grade teachers, elementary and middle school teachers are now using forestry, wildlife, fisheries, and outdoor recreation 4-H curriculum in their classrooms.

The youth, leaders and parents now receive the monthly newsletter informing them of 4-H activities and all extension programs available. 4-H camp enrollment has increased 50 percent since 1998, from 70 participants to 117 participants. 4-H funding from the county has increased 17.5% each year since 1998. Thus, incorporating 4-H projects into school

curricula has raised public awareness of 4-H to non-traditional 4-H families.

Teachers continue to use 4-H curriculum, and youth and parents continue to have access to educational extension programs. The 4-H faculty and staff continue to work with community leaders and advisory councils to offer useful projects and programs.

***Participating 4-H Staff***

Scott Nash, Extension Educator  
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***For More Information***

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