

IMPACT



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Afterschool Academy has Positive Impact on Youth

The Situation

In rural communities the need for affordable, accessible, and high quality child care, school age care, and teen programs is especially critical. The lack of such programs impacts employment, family income, and educational attainment of families as well as the physical and emotional environments of youth and families.

America After 3 PM, conducted by the Afterschool Alliance in 2003, is the most in depth study to explore how America's children spend their afternoons. This report indicates that afterschool programs nationwide continue to fall short of the demand. Parents recognize the benefits of afterschool and look to their communities to help provide safe, supervised enriching, activities during the afternoon hours.

Local data collected from 715 parent/student surveys of families with school-age children in kindergarten through fifth grades suggests that the majority of respondents work during after school time leaving their children in the care of family, day care providers, or at home alone.

Area day care providers and their clients report a need for after school programming to address the issue of financial constraints in relation to an economically strained community. Due to the limited number of certified day care providers, overcrowding is a concern and families cannot afford to pay full price for a half or quarter day of care for their school-age child.



Afterschool Academy 2005

Our Response

For the past two years Boundary County 4-H has participated in the Engaging Youth Serving Communities Grant project. The parameters of the grant were to establish a 4-H after school program or work with existing programming that provided service to underserved populations. In 2003 Boundary County 4-H and Boundary County School District #101 entered into a collaborative partnership to enhance the school district's existing after school program, AfterSchool Academy (ASA).

AfterSchool Academy provides school age families with a well-rounded and safe environment in which all youth who participate have the opportunity to engage in a wide range of educational, experiential, fun activities. The project provides a solution to the need for school age childcare in a rural community

and addresses the issues associated for at-risk behavior by school age children who are left home alone “after school.”

The 2005 Afterschool Academy was conducted over an eight-week period. The ASA program offered 14 different classes from which students could choose. The classes ranged from one to two afternoons per week and covered a number of different topics including Spanish, knitting, crafts, scrap booking, outdoor adventures, fun and fitness, Junior Master Gardener, under the sea, horses, rabbits, circus stunts, physical activities and bowling. The 2005 ASA had 183 students participating from all four elementary schools within the school district (which is 22% of the elementary school population), as well as a number of students who are home schooled.

Program Outcomes

Over the past two years, program participation, class selection and program length have increased. Additionally, participation in AfterSchool Academy increased by 44% from the previous year.

Students over the age of 10 who participated in the AfterSchool Academy completed a survey. Respondents could choose from Always, Most of the Time, About ½ of the time, Sometimes, and Never. Survey results indicate that AfterSchool Academy is providing a well-rounded, safe environment for youth.

- 83% of respondents feel safe from bullying always to most of the time.
- 61% of respondents felt that young people have opportunities to build positive relationships with adults most of the time or always.
- 81% responded that adults get to know young people most of the time or always.
- 72% reported that young people feel like they can be themselves always or most of the time.
- 72% of respondents felt the activities were challenging most of the time to always.

The Future

4-H is continuing to take an active role in after school programming. In the summer of 2005 four Art and Technology camps are planned as well as continued programming plans for the 2005-2006 school year.

For More Information

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