

IMPACT



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4-H Involvement Improves ISAT Reading Scores in Nampa

The Situation

With a population of 51,867 Nampa is the largest city in Canyon County, and is experiencing rapid growth (US Census Bureau, 2000). As Nampa continues to outgrow its rural roots, Canyon County 4-H has been challenged to find new ways to meet the needs of urban youth in Nampa. Even as community club enrollment continues to grow in Canyon County 4-H, very few new clubs are being formed in Nampa. 4-H offers life skills to youth in all environments, and Canyon County 4-H was challenged to find new ways to outreach to youth in urban Nampa.

In 2003, the Nampa School District received a 21st Century Community Learning Center grant to provide after school programming to youth who were reading below grade level. The program was named Nampa Total Learning Commitment (TLC), and targeted youth in five elementary schools, one middle school, and two community centers. Youth were invited to participate based on their need as determined by their performance on the Idaho Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) for Reading Skills from the previous year. The after school curriculum was divided into two one-hour sessions. One would be for homework or other academic work, while the other was to provide educational enrichment opportunities for the youth. The director of the Nampa TLC program contacted the Canyon County 4-H Extension Educator to provide enrichment opportunities in the form of 4-H projects.



Tina Platt, Canyon County 4-H Program Coordinator, presents a healthy snacking lesson to youth in Nampa's Total Learning Commitment after school program at South Middle School in Nampa.

Our Response

Brian Luckey, Extension Educator, and Tina Platt, 4-H Program Coordinator agreed to provide 4-H programming to two after school sites in the Nampa TLC program. Youth at Snake River Elementary and South Middle School were enrolled in 4-H by forming their own clubs. The youth elected officers and had weekly project meetings. The 4-H Program Coordinator acted as the organizational leader for both clubs and led them in completion of the Tricks for Treats 4-H project, a nutrition education curriculum. Youth worked on 4-H record books and involvement reports, and gave oral presentations on topics they had learned about during the course of the project. Following completion of the project materials, youth were interviewed by a volunteer "judge," and their projects were displayed at the Canyon County Fair.

Program Outcomes

Nampa School District provided ISAT data for this analysis for the 2003-2004 school year. Because data for individual youth were not available, this analysis assumed that TLC youth participating in 4-H performed at average levels among all TLC participants from the same school. In general, youth involved with the Nampa TLC program raised their ISAT scores an average of 10 points, as compared to an 8 point increase for all students in the district. Further, youth involved in the TLC program at Snake River Elementary improved their ISAT reading scores an average of 14 points, while the entire school raised scores an average of 7 points. TLC students at South Middle School raised their reading scores an average of six points as opposed to five points for the entire school. Because only youth with previously lower ISAT scores were invited to attend the TLC program, these results show that the youth in this program can achieve at a higher-than-average level with some additional assistance.

4-H continues to expand its programming efforts into the Nampa TLC programming, in order to provide all youth in the after school program with opportunities to take 4-H projects. A Junior Master Gardener volunteer provides gardening curriculum to youth in the Lincoln Elementary program, and teachers in the Park Ridge program use the training provided by Canyon County 4-H Staff to deliver a 4-H visual arts curriculum to youth.

In 2005, Canyon County 4-H received an Extension urban programs grant to hire a bilingual 4-H program assistant to deliver more 4-H programming to youth in the Nampa TLC program. Added program resources will give Canyon County 4-H the ability to have a presence in all TLC sites, and to provide more training to after school staff.

For More Information

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