

IMPACT



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New Audiences for District III 4-H Youth Program

The Situation

An estimated seventy-five adults, each semester, sign up for the College of Southern Idaho's Adult Basic Education English classes. The ethnic backgrounds of these participants include Asian, Hispanic, Iranian, Turks, and Russian. For a variety of reasons, only about half of those registered actually attend class. One of the reasons participants are absent is the inability to leave children at home for evening classes. Of those that participate an estimated 70% bring their children to class.

According to instructors, these children disrupt the education that needs to be achieved. There is a need for an organized youth program to productively develop youth while allowing for adult learning to take place. A recent study conducted by the Idaho Hispanic Commission indicated that Hispanic youth are in need of educational programs and activities that help develop life skills in order to build stronger communities.

The Idaho 4-H Impact Study (completed in 2003) shows that positive influences on youth occur when youth participate in 4-H. It reports that 7 out of 10 youth who have been in 4-H for more than a year said that "4-H is a safe place for learning" and "4-H clubs are supportive environments where I feel accepted for who I am." 4-H promotes the full development of young people for healthy living, an important aspect for the families involved in the English as Second Language (ESL) classes.



Our Response

Extension Educators Cindy A. Kinder, (Camas County), Donna R. Gillespie, (Minidoka County) and Rhea Lanting, (Twin Falls County) worked together to provide a 4-H Youth Development Program (ESL 4-H) to youth whose parents attend adult ESL classes. Educators sought grant funding and provided programs and expertise in a variety of areas. Two individuals were employed to plan and conduct weekly programs. Grant funds were obtained through the University of Idaho Extension Urban Grant Program.

In the fall of 2005, youth programs were organized and conducted each week while family members were attending English classes. The programs were based on 4-H curriculum and youth development activities. Activities included:

- Got Calcium
- Sewing
- Outdoor cooking
- Art

- Scrapbooking
- Cakes and Cookies
- Rocketry

These activities gave youth the opportunity to increase individual life skills. Some of the skills targeted were; healthy eating, community service/volunteering, self-esteem, social skills, communication, and problem solving.

Program Outcomes

Four to five youth participated in the weekly program. Both boys and girls, including youth from Hispanic, Iranian, Bosnian, and Caucasian backgrounds participated. Youth were asked about the ESL 4-H program and they stated that they enjoyed the games and singing songs, and they liked the sewing, good snacks and marshmallow rockets. When asked what they would be doing if they did not participate in the program, they stated that they would either be sitting in class with their parents, or would be home alone “bored.”

Parents stated that “yes they enjoyed bringing their children and would like the program to continue.” They also stated they would like to see the program expand to twice a week. One parent stated that the reason he brought his children was that it allowed them to also grow in their English speaking skills. Another parent stated that her child was encouraging her to go to English class so she could “go to 4-H.”

ESL instructors were very grateful for the program and stated that parents were able to concentrate more in their classes. Six of 14 youth in the fall 2005 ESL class participated in the 4-H program. When asked about the other 8 youth in the class, instructors stated they have a better idea of what the 4-H program was and will strongly encourage all youth to attend. They also stated that the fall 2005 semester was a very non-traditional semester, in that enrollees were a lot younger than usual and probably did not have children at home. They also stated that the ethnic mix was very strong in Turks and not as many Hispanics.

4-H is a great out of school program that keeps youth engaged in educational but fun activities. 4-H promotes the full development of young people for healthy living and gives them positive ways to

improve themselves, their families, and their communities.



The Future

Future programming efforts for the ESL 4-H youth program will include twice a week activities for the 2006 spring semester. The program will provide information on a variety of topics, give opportunities to learn and practice life skills and provide a safe environment for the youth. Educators are actively looking for a continued source of funding.

For More Information

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