

IMPACT

University of Idaho
Extension

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Summer urban 4-H programs

The Situation

Ada and Canyon Counties are the primary urban core of Idaho representing over 1/3 of the population (2010 U.S. Census). Along with an urban population, the two counties also have the highest minority population in Idaho and 30% of children living below the poverty level. Summer support programs for learning, and constructive activities for youth are limited. Low-income feeding programs are offered at numerous locations throughout Ada and Canyon Counties and provide a reason for youth to gather, thus offering an opportunity for the 4-H program to provide learning activities.

The two counties run independent 4-H youth development programs that are designed to meet the needs of the county population. As the two counties continue to grow in population, the needs are beginning to dovetail. University of Idaho personnel in each county can have a greater impact by coordinating their efforts and sharing their successes and challenges across county lines.

Our Response

4-H Youth Development Educators in Ada and Canyon Counties formed an Urban Core Team to address issues common of both counties. The Urban Core Team identified needed resources including personnel, funding, curriculum, and community partners.

The team applied for two grants to provide additional resources and personnel support. University of Idaho Extension granted the Urban Core Team two University of Idaho internships which provided the opportunity to hire two students to deliver programming.

The Urban Core Team identified scientific inquiry skills and the life skills of teamwork, communication



Maricela Avila, UI Intern holding a butterfly. Shows youth and shares the important role some insects play in our ecological system.

and social skills as the focal point of curriculum delivery. The team selected the Junior Master Gardner and Acres of Adventure – Afterschool Agriculture as the curricula of focus for the project.

Two UI summer interns were hired for their experience with youth and their enthusiasm for working with underserved audiences. The interns worked a ten-week period, which included developing a series of lesson plans from the provided curriculum, delivering the lessons to youth at community partner programs, and reporting contacts and impacts at the end of the summer.

Program partners included summer feeding programs, summer reading programs, community centers, and migrant summer programs. The emphasis was on reaching youth from each program at least six times so that they could develop a relationship with the UI student interns and benefit from the lessons they were teaching.

Program Outcomes

The interns reached over 600 youth at 17 community sites throughout Canyon and Ada Counties. A large percentage of youth participants were Hispanic (50%), with 12% being other minority groups (Black, American Indian, Asian or Pacific Islander). While level of income was not captured, the majority of the community sites were in conjunction with the local free lunch feeding programs. A reasonable conclusion is the majority of youth were from low-income families.

Youth participants were exposed to lessons in plant development, ecology, insects, fruits and nuts, eco-art, recycling, and appreciating the outdoors. Three life skills (teamwork, communication and social skills) were identified and integrated into the delivery of the curriculum content as well. Eighteen observational evaluations were conducted over seven sites in the last week of programming which showed indicators of teamwork, communication and social skills were either clearly evident or somewhat evident at all seven sites.

The summer urban program provided an educational environment for youth to engage in positive youth development, avoiding down time that may lead to risky behaviors and/or poor decisions.

This project was important for fostering University of Idaho Extension's role in the community as a key partner to provide transformative learning opportunities for youth whose families may not be able to afford fee-based summer activities. These opportunities are important to help all youth maintain their academic and social skills during the long summer break.

The Future

The Urban Core Team plans to continue to offer summer programming options with our community partners. Combining programming efforts helps to identify more potential community partners and can solidify our efforts to reach members of our community that have previously been very difficult to reach.

Cooperators and Co-sponsors

Ada County partner programs included the Idaho Food Bank, Boise City Parks and Recreation Community Centers, Boise School District Just For Kids, the Kuna Migrant Program, and City Lights. Canyon County partner programs included Caldwell School District, Oasis Food Bank, Valley Crisis Center, Farmway Housing Community, and Chula Vista Community Center.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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