IMPACT
University of Idaho Extension

Bonneville County, 208.529.1390
Fax: 208.529.1391
2925 Rollandet, Idaho Falls, ID 83402

4-H camp: Where life skills are learned

AT A GLANCE

Youth at 4-H camp learn life skills through activities and projects that follow the 4-H mission mandates.

The Situation

Every year we take youth to 4-H camp where they learn new things and have a great experience, but is it the same as our other programs? Are they gaining life skills? Will following the National 4-H mission mandates (healthy living, 4-H science, and citizenship) work at camp?

Our Response

To more fully understand what the youth were gaining at 4-H camp I intentionally planned workshops and activities that were appropriate for the camp setting and atmosphere, but also followed the 4-H mission mandates. These workshops were designed to teach youth specific topic information and life skills that they could use in other areas of their life.

Program Outcomes

To evaluate the workshops, I selected survey questions from the common measures list. These questions were designed to measure program effectiveness at reaching learning objectives for each Mission Mandate. The questions do not give a detailed account of knowledge acquired, but give an account of simple skills or ideas learned in specific areas. I planned the workshops based on two of our mission mandates (healthy living and 4-H science). Shooting sports was a new option to camp this year so we also focused on safety.

4-H Campers at the Bonneville/Bannock 4-H camp learning about science and engineering with KIVA Planks. Photo by Brandy Kay.

After the workshop on shooting sports the youth were asked:

When you use a firearm, how often do you follow safety rules?

- 71% of the youth replied that they follow safety rules always or most of the time. With a little over 25% of them declaring that they do not use firearms.

As part of a healthy living workshop the youth were taught simple camp cooking skills and how to prepare even simple snacks safely.

When asked, *As a result of participating in a 4-H Healthy Living Program I now take the following actions…*

- 89% of the youth strongly agree or agree that when they cook food, they are safe and careful.

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- 89% of the youth also reported that they tell their friends what they think when their friend is going to do something unsafe.

During the science workshop youth participated in a simple experiment activity.

As a result of my experience in this 4-H program or project … the youth reported that:

- 95% of them like experimenting and testing ideas,
- 89% of them get excited about new discoveries,
- 80% of them want to learn more about science,
- 82% of them like science,
- 75% of the participants saying they are good at science, and
- 46% of the participants would like to have a job related to science.

These outcomes showed that safety was taught and that the youth can recognize when a peer is being unsafe. It also showed an interest in science and experimenting and a willingness to try new ideas.

Conclusion

The planning worked. Responses indicated youth were learning life skills from the 4-H mission mandates at 4-H camp. The same as they would if it was a 4-H club activity, day camp, or afterschool program.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Brandy Kay, 4-H Extension Educator
University of Idaho Extension, Bonneville County
2925 Rollandet
Idaho Falls, ID 83402
Phone: 208.529.1390
Fax: 208.529.1391
E-mail: brandyk@uidaho.edu

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