2021 Impact

In 2021, UI Extension has had a phenomenal impact on youth and families living on or near the Nez Perce Reservation in large part due to the America Recovery Plan Act regional grant. Funding from this grant, in partnership with UI Extension, Coeur d'Alene Reservation, was used to expand projects with four new programs. The programs included Outdoor Survival Skills, Basketball STEAM, Culture is Prevention and Robotics. More learning opportunities were provided, and intergenerational opportunities expanded. Youth and adults have expressed their gratitude for these opportunities to connect or reconnect with cultural activities. Youth have also expressed delight in the new opportunities to learn about Tribal traditions as well as new science, technology, engineering, arts and math activities.

Nez Perce Reservation 4-H

One of the highlights for 2021 was the Culture is Prevention project. This project was initiated as an opportunity for youth and elders to come together to learn Tribal arts and crafts in a workshop setting. Instructors shared their crafts in an intergenerational setting with the projected outcome of empowering youth to be as much of a teacher as a learner and to extend the learning in their home settings. Participants had the opportunity to learn beading, sewing, weaving, drum making and other cultural arts. The participation rate increased exponentially as the program grew, with return participants as well as new participants at each monthly session. More instructors also stepped forward to ask about teaching their craft.

Another highlight of 2021 was the Basketball STEAM project. This project was designed to meet youth ages 5-13 on the basketball court to teach science, technology, engineering, arts and math using basketball as the modality. Basketball is a way of life on the reservation and youth start very young learning the skills of handling the ball, playing as a team and learning respect. The practice, drills and workshops included STEAM learning activities like learning to design their own jerseys and backpacks, learning about the math of basketball including stats and geometry of the shot.

On the Horizon

Youth from the Nez Perce Tribe and Coeur d’Alene Tribe participating in the Basketball STEAM project will be traveling to Seattle, Washington for a field trip in August 2022. The trip includes a tour of the Microsoft campus to learn more about engineering career opportunities related to the field of basketball and a Mariners baseball game. The group will also tour the Seahawks and Mariners stadiums and spend time on the ice at the new Kraken hockey arena. This field trip is designed to open the eyes of youth to the many career opportunities sports have to offer outside of the court or the field in science, technology, engineering, arts and math.