

# IMPACT

University of Idaho  
Extension

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## 4-H reaches rural youth through afterschool

### The Situation

Rural communities face many challenges when addressing the needs of children outside of the school day. Afterschool programs are an option. Research demonstrates that youth who have a sustained relationship with a caring adult outside of their family have greater self-confidence and are less likely to be involved in negative behaviors. Without afterschool programs, children are faced with no adult supervision from 3-6p.m. With most parents working, elementary children often are either left in the care of older siblings or left to self-care.

### Our Response

The 4-H Youth Development program has been involved in delivering afterschool programs for over 20 years. Our goal is to support quality afterschool programming, especially for rural communities. The 4-H Afterschool program:

- Addresses physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development based on research and best practices from the field.
- Works to improve the knowledge and skills of staff and the quality of programs.
- Provides sequentially planned, experiential (hands-on) enrichment activities that build life skills in science and technology, visual arts, cultural and theater arts, crafts, financial literacy, nutrition, food preparation, health and physical activity.

4-H Afterschool is grounded in the 4-H Essential Elements of positive youth development, providing children with a sense of belonging, and opportunities for mastery, independence and generosity.



Exploring liquid-to-solid concept at 4-H Afterschool.

### Program Outcomes

UI Extension provides afterschool programming through the USDA-National Institute for Food and Agriculture grant, Children Youth and Families At Risk grant (CYFAR) at five sites. Over 285 children are engaged in these afterschool programs. The afterschool sites are in Burley, Plummer, Bonners Ferry, Potlatch, and Farmway Village in Caldwell. The sites partner with community organizations and school districts to offer the program. The afterschool programs help children build their communication, self-responsibility and healthy choices skills. Skill building is done through activities in healthy living, visual and cultural arts, science and technology, and homework time.

The **CYFAR Sustainable Community Program** grant (2007-2012) of \$655,000 serves Plummer, Coeur d'Alene Reservation and Burley. The Plummer site partners with the school district's 21st Century Com-

munity Learning Center grant to fund the Success Center at the elementary school. It is staffed by both school district and Extension staff. By sharing resources the site also conducts a summer program, Rockn' the Rez, in partnership with the Coeur d'Alene Tribe. White Pine 4-H Afterschool in Burley partners with the elementary school. The school provides the lunch room, gym, music room and resource room with kitchen. Extension staffs the program.

- The Plummer, Coeur d'Alene Reservation site (summer and afterschool) reaches 115 children yearly
- The Burley site reaches at 38 children yearly
- The CYFAR grant supports 5 half-time staff

The **CYFAR 4-H Afterschool Outreach to At-Risk Communities** grant (2010-2015) of \$660,000 serves Bonners Ferry, Potlatch, and Farmway Village in Caldwell. The Bonners Ferry and Potlatch sites partner with the local school districts and are housed within a school. The schools provide a room and gym. The programs are staffed by Extension. Farmway Village is unique. It is a low-income housing complex five miles from Caldwell, formerly a migrant housing community. The Caldwell Housing Authority provides the community center and office with internet access. The school district provides snacks and is exploring joint programming opportunities in the future.

- The Farmway Village site (summer and afterschool) reaches 95 children
- The Potlatch site reaches 23 children
- The Bonners Ferry site reaches 14 children
- The CYFAR grant supports 3 half-time staff and 3 Ameri-Corps VISTA volunteers

The CYFAR afterschool sites focus on **life skill development**. At the end of the third year, Plummer and Burley reported the percent of children indicating a positive change in four life skill. Children indicated improved communication, healthy choices, critical thinking and self-responsibility skills as a result of being in the afterschool program.

Burley, % of children indicating a positive change:

- 61% for communication
- 33% for healthy choices
- 53% for critical thinking
- 33% for self-responsibility

Plummer, % of children indicating a positive change:

- 30% for communication
- 36% for healthy choices
- 30% for critical thinking

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

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