

IMPACT

University of Idaho
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Scholarships, where, how and why? 4-H Scholarship Workday

The Situation

Two important factors led 4-H faculty and staff in Gooding County to organize the first annual 4-H Scholarship Workday. The Idaho Department of Labor website, <http://www.idahocis.org>, states additional education and training increases average pay per hour in Idaho. Statistics reported by the Idaho Department of Labor in 2010 state the average Idahoan with a two-year associate degree or other vocational training currently earns about \$19.91 per hour, a 57% higher wage than the Idahoan who has not continued their education past high school. The average hourly wage for someone with a bachelor degree increases to \$26.49. The second factor driving the decision to establish an annual district-wide scholarship education night was the fact that many scholarships go unapplied for or the quality of applications is poor. 4-H professionals understand the financial situations of local families and in order for youth to attend any type of higher education they must be successful in locating and applying for a wide variety of scholarships and financial aid.

Our Response

By targeting the life skills of leadership, record keeping, self-motivation, and marketable skills, UI Extension Educator Cindy Kinder and Gooding County 4-H Program Coordinator Sarah Butler developed a scholarship education workshop. UI Extension Educator Donna R. Gillespie was invited to incorporate the life skills of goal setting and stress management.

The first annual Scholarship Workday was held on February 1st at the Gooding County Extension Office. The program was designed to include youth and their parents from across the entire Magic Valley area including Minidoka, Cassia, Lincoln, Blaine, Gooding, Camas, Twin Falls and Jerome counties.



4-H Teens involved in teaching need to include these leadership skills on scholarship applications. Photo by Jeni Bywater.

The agenda included an introduction opportunity followed by a general session entitled, "Why Should I Look into Higher Education?" During this discussion participants received information from the Idaho Department of Labor and the Idaho State Board of Education which reinforced the need for higher education and the opportunities it can provide. The second part of the program was divided into: (1) "Goal Setting and Stress Management" where participants gained information about effective goal setting (SMART goals) and managing their time and stress level while applying for financial aid and scholarships, and (2) "Scholarships, Where, How and Why" where youth and their parents learned where to look for financial aid and scholarships. They also received copies of several scholarships that are currently available and actually filled out various scholarship applications.

Participants all received packets including FASFA (Free Application for Student Federal Aid) information, lists of 4-H and FFA related scholarships, a tip sheet for scholarship application completions, hard copies of the Idaho Friends of 4-H Scholarship and examples of well-done and successful scholarship applications. Refreshments were served and surveys completed by the youth and adults who attended.

Program Outcomes

The first annual Scholarship Workday was attended by twenty-five individuals including twelve youth and thirteen adults, eighteen females and seven males with twenty-two Caucasians and three Hispanics. Overall a diverse group of youth and their siblings, moms and dads attended from a four county area.

Of the parents completing surveys, 100% said they agreed or strongly agreed that the Scholarship Workday will help them keep accurate and useful records and have control over their own personal goals/future. They also agreed or strongly agreed that because of the Scholarship Workday they increased their knowledge of SMART goals and increased their awareness of how to handle stress while applying for financial aid and scholarships. Every youth completing surveys indicated they agreed or strongly agreed that the Scholarship Workday helped them think about what might happen because of their decisions and they plan on applying for scholarships this year or in the next few years. On a 1-5 point scale (5 the highest), youth rated their overall experience at Scholarship Workday at 4.08.

When youth were asked what they learned they responded:

- There are a lot of scholarships out there that I didn't know about.
- Need to fill out FASFA now!
- How to handle stress while applying for financial aid and scholarships.
- Resume example was great.
- Adults were asked if they had anything additional to share:
- Topics were good, I think this is a great start.
- This is a valuable concept and should be expanded and continued.
- Good job! Very informative and not overwhelming.
- I've not been through the scholarship process so I am really unsure about the exams, paperwork etc. Thank you.

Additional Information: University of Idaho Extension Educator Kinder also serves as scholarship chair for the Friends of 4-H Endowment which awards over \$13,000 in scholarships each year. She reported that, "It is frustrating to see applications just thrown in an envelope and not put together in a presentable manner. Essays do not explain in detail what is requested and directions are not being followed." Kinder also reported that one teen from the Magic Valley applied for a Freshman Friend of 4-H Scholarship. The youth had attended and learned about the scholarships at Scholarship Workday and was awarded \$1,000.

The Future

The need and impact of the first Scholarship Workday was strongly indicated through participant's evaluations and successes. Plans to continue this annual event in partnership with local libraries are ongoing.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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