

IMPACT

University of Idaho
Extension

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

District II 4-H Leadership Retreat: Developed for teens by teens

The Situation

Idaho 4-H offers a variety of programs for teenage members. Most of the programs are designed to promote life skills in teens, particularly leadership and community service volunteering. However, many of the authentic leadership opportunities are reserved for advanced members who have gained leadership positions. Additionally, service is usually an activity of the event, but not a primary focus.

In 2011, several teenage 4-H members had a discussion about the need for a program that focused on leadership and community service. As a result, one teen took advantage of his leadership position within the Idaho 4-H Teen Association to propose a program idea to local UI Extension faculty and staff. Upon acceptance of his proposal, he outlined the learning objectives of the program, secured a facility and a date, and wrote grant proposals to gain funding for the program.

Our Response

The District II Leadership Retreat was the idea of one teenage 4-H member who understood that he would need help and support to make the program a reality. As a youth-led partnership, the teen took the role of program manager. He assembled a team of 4-H members, volunteer leaders, parents, and Extension staff who would each help with various pieces of the project. While there were some traditional meetings with the free exchange of ideas and information around a table, many of the important decisions were made over the telephone or email. In one instance, a laptop computer was passed back and forth to develop registration materials until everyone was satisfied with the product. In every situation, the primary communication was handled by the teen program



Teamwork activity at the Leadership Retreat. Photo by Brandy Kay.

manager, who kept everyone informed in a timely and effective manner.

Most youth/adult partnerships are adult focused. Adults manage the information, funds, and program details, while the youth provide key input and take the primary role of assisting the adults. The District II Leadership Retreat was a youth focused partnership in which the adults assisted the teens, who did the bulk of the work on the program. Teens were a key part of the program from procuring funding and facilities, to developing the agenda, even to presenting some of the workshops.

The retreat was held in 2012 and 2013 at the McCall Outdoor Science School and was arranged around the 4 H's of Head, Heart, Hands, and Health. Both years included a significant service project, and included brainstorming on service projects needed in each teen attendee's home community. The second year emphasized goal setting and motivation, to fur-

ther develop attendees’ skills in completing the projects they took home.

Program Outcomes

A six-month follow-up qualitative survey after the 2012 retreat revealed that most teens had followed through on their promises to deliver service projects in their home communities. Food and clothes drives were conducted for disadvantaged people in the community. One teen started a teen group in his county so that teens could have more opportunities to grow and gain leadership. Some teens used the leadership positions they held in schools to work with adults to demonstrate the ability teens have to lead and support community service projects from the youth perspective to benefit more people in the community.

A retrospective-post-then-pre survey was administered to participants in 2013 to assess leadership skill development at the retreat. Initial goal setting knowledge ranged from low to competent. After the retreat, almost all participants reported skill improvement and competence in goal setting and completion. The indicator with the most positive change include, “I know what motivates me.” Table 1 shows that most participants increased their skills and knowledge as a result of the retreat.

Skills Learned	Pre-Retreat Mean Value	Post-Retreat Mean Value
I know what motivates me.	4.2	5.4
I know what goals are.	5	5.9
I know how to set goals.	4.6	5.8
I know how to complete a goal.	4.9	5.8
I am willing to share my ideas with others.	4.8	5.7
I can take responsibility for my actions.	4.9	5.6

Teens who have attended the retreat have shown an increase in confidence, a willingness to step forward and lead, and an ability to motivate their peers to get more involved in service to their communities. The teens who planned and presented at the retreat have gained skills that will be useful to them as they become leaders in their communities as adults.

This program was the Western Regional Winner for the Power of youth award in NAE4-HA.

Cooperators and Co-Sponsors

Joey Puetz, Payette Extension Educator
 Canyon County Farm Bureau-Sponsor
 Ada County Farm Bureau-Sponsor
 Wilder Sheep Company-Sponsor

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

Brian Luckey, 4-H Extension Educator
 University of Idaho Extension, Ada County
 5880 Glenwood St.
 Boise, ID 83714
 Phone: 208.287.5900
 Fax: 208.287.5909
 E-mail: bluckey@uidaho.edu