

impact

University of Idaho Extension programs that are making a difference in Idaho.

AmeriCorps placements expand education and outreach in Valley County

AT A GLANCE

AmeriCorps placements in Valley County have increased outreach and programming for adults and youth throughout the West Central Mountains.

The Situation

Valley County is in the rural West Central Mountains (WCM). UI Extension continues to have more requests for educational programs than the current staff were able to provide. The office has been able to increase programming, outreach and education events for adults and youth throughout the region.

Our Response

Through partnership with the Palouse Clearwater Environmental Institute, UI Extension secured two 11-month AmeriCorps placements in 2018 and 2019 to serve the needs of Valley County. The focus of the AmeriCorps placement was education and outreach in Environmental Education, Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) programs. The UI Extension educator applied, secured funding and trained for these positions on an annual basis. Funding for this position was provided by the Valley County Commissioners, University of Idaho and the Palouse Clearwater Environmental Institute.

Program Outcomes

The AmeriCorps placements have broadened the audience served with outreach and education programs.



AmeriCorps Service Project hosted a screening of Dream Big for Engineering Week, attracting 75 participants in the WCM.

The programs delivered each year were adjusted to build on the strengths, talents and interests of the AmeriCorps placement.

In 2017, Josie Greenwood was hired and established a UI Extension 4-H Youth Development afterschool program at the Donnelly Elementary School called Discoverer's Club. Programs were offered in November, December, March, April and May.

In 2018, Bre Anderson continued the 4-H afterschool program Discoverer's Club in partnership with the Donnelly Public Library. This afterschool programming was strengthened through partnership with the library and program registrations were full throughout the school year starting in November and offered two times a week until May.

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Makerspace programs were offered in Cascade and McCall, encouraging this model of teaching and exploration in the WCM communities. Over the past two years the popularity of makerspace programs at the Cascade Cultural Arts Center has increased due to partnership with the UI Extension AmeriCorps placement. In 2019, six students attended the makerspace events regularly and learned circuitry, coding robots and bicycle mechanics. A highlight of the makerspace gatherings was a bicycle powered blender that was debuted at the Valley County Fair.

Both AmeriCorps placements worked with the Cascade High School as a community coach for the Envirothon competition. In 2019, the Cascade team received a fifth-place medal at the Idaho Envirothon statewide competition in Challis, Idaho.

Josie and Bre contributed to the Cascade Afterschool programs and provided place-based STEAM education on a regular basis. Summer programs were offered in Cascade in partnership with the Cascade Recreation District. A 4-H garden was established in 2018 in front of the UI Extension building at 501 Kelly's Parkway, Cascade, Idaho.

Collaboration with other local AmeriCorps members in the area is encouraged. Ashlee Flinney, stationed at the McCall Outdoor Science School, partnered with Bre to bring outdoor science to 80 third graders as part of their spring semester watershed unit. Ashlee contributed to the establishment of the Donnelly Afterschool program, often partnering with Bre to provide programming.

The 2018 AmeriCorps service project hosted a public screening of the Dream Big documentary to celebrate and discuss women in engineering. This program was sponsored by the Cascade Cultural Arts Center and the McCall airport reaching 75 participants throughout the WCM.

The 2019 service project included research on environmental education and river guides, that tied into an

Ecology for River Guides Workshop taught at the Idaho River Rendezvous. A total of 15 river guides participated in this environmental education class with 70 respondents participating in the research survey. The River Rendezvous event is held annually for river guide professional development in Cascade, Idaho and proved to be a welcome audience for Extension education.

Josie responded to community needs by teaching and organizing local environmental education professional development training for teachers in Project WET, Project Learning Tree and Project WILD.

Bre responded to community need by working with the Cascade Environmental Committee and the Friends of Lake Cascade to teach and foster Citizen Science monitoring for cyanobacteria on Lake Cascade.

In 2017-18, Josie Greenwood served 211 unique adult and youth, including the first 4-H Idaho Drone Camp in partnership with 4-H leader and pilot Rich Stowell.

In 2019, Bre Anderson served 155 unique adult and youth. She built upon established programming, strengthened partnerships, and expanded the UI Extension audience with her river guide research.

Over the course of two years, both AmeriCorps placements contributed 22 months of service and over 3,400 hours of work to Valley County. They partnered with over 30 organizations in the area. These positions directly interacted with 800 people at community outreach events including the 2018 STEM fair, 4th of July Liberty Fest, Earth Day Festival, McCall and Donnelly Farmer's Market's, Arbor Day Celebration, and the Valley County Fair and Rodeo.

Cooperators and Co-Sponsors

- Palouse Clearwater Environmental Institute
- University of Idaho
- Valley County Commissioners

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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