



Program Highlights

- ◆ **4-H Youth Members:**
Placer: 773
Nevada: 466
- ◆ **4-H Adult Volunteers:**
Placer: 234
Nevada: 155
- ◆ **Youth Enrolled in Group and Short-Term Activities:**
Placer: 7,384
Nevada: 871
- ◆ **4-H Community Clubs:**
Placer: 14
Nevada: 9
- ◆ **4-H Website Visits:**
Placer: 37,335
Nevada: 18,897
- ◆ **Educator Workshops:**
Placer: 22
Nevada: 3

4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Assuring that all of our nation's young people develop into healthy, happy, and productive citizens is important to all of us. Unfortunately, many of today's youth are failing to develop the competencies and skills that are needed for lifelong success. Research is continuing to show that youth development programs such as 4-H make significant contributions to positive youth outcomes, as well as prevent problem behaviors.

We know that families and schools cannot do it all. Caring communities and other out-of-school activities are important contributions to positive youth development. Through the 4-H Youth Development Program, youth and adults work closely and develop warm, caring, and long-term relationships that support growth in youth. 4-H also helps to improve youth's interpersonal relationships, self-control, problem-solving, cognitive competencies, self-efficacy, commitment to schools, and academic achievement.

Recent research on youth development documents the important role that programs such as 4-H play in the lives of young people. From this research, four Essential Elements that form the foundation of successful youth development programs have been identified. These include:

- *Belonging*
- *Mastery*
- *Independence*
- *Generosity*

These are essential elements of the 4-H Youth Development Program and are delivered in the context of:

- *Citizenship*
- *Leadership*
- *Life Skills*



4-H member demonstrates how to make tortillas at Favorite Foods Day.



4-H Community Club Program

Issue

Research indicates that positive youth development is defined by competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring. Programs that provide activities that promote positive youth development help steer young people toward a life of successful contributions to self, family, community, and civil society.



4-H Youth participating in the Beekeeping Project.

What Was Done

The 4-H Community Club Program provided a community-based learning environment where youth participated in projects, activities, and events that promoted leadership, citizenship, and other essential life skills designed to lead to the development of positive youth development. 78 different projects in Placer County and 48 projects in Nevada County were offered, ranging from beekeeping to public speaking, animal science, drama, guide dog training, rocketry, computer science, and sewing. Caring, supportive adults planned and carried out the program in partnership with youth leadership teams.

Each aspect of the program integrates service learning opportunities. For example, in Nevada County, 150 senior citizens were assisted by the Community Pride Project who provided therapeutic visits with small animals, conversation, and small gifts. In addition, several community events were organized. For example, the “You-Make-It Craft Expo” is an annual event sponsored by Placer County 4-H club members. Almost 1,500 community members attended to assemble craft projects for holiday gift giving.

Impact

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Placer</u>	<u>Nevada</u>
4-H Youth in Club Program	709	438
4-H Adult Volunteers	234	155
Community Clubs	14	9
Projects Taken	2,064	1,163
4-H/Community Events	16/6	16/7

A prospective, self-report questionnaire administered to 4-H and non-4-H youth indicated that:

- Participation in the Placer and Nevada County 4-H Community Club Program was significantly related to all indicators of positive youth development: competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring.
- Youth who participated in the 4-H Community Club Program are on a pathway to developing into successful youth adults and toward a life of successful contributions to self, family, community, and civil society.



4-H Summer Camp



Camper climbs tree to get to the zip line platform.

Issue

Every year millions of youth spend at least part of their vacation in some camp setting. High-quality camp and outdoor adventure programs are beneficial in providing positive youth development experiences during out of school hours.

What Was Done

Placer and Nevada County 4-H each held week long Summer Camp Programs. Highly trained 4-H senior youth members organized and implemented the camp

program with the support and guidance of adult volunteers.

Hiking, swimming, kayaking, high ropes course, archery, arts and crafts, and astronomy were just a few of the many fun and educational activities for youth. The planned activities provided campers with many opportunities to discover and explore their talents, interests, and values in a non-competitive way.

Impact

In Placer County, 166 youth, 15 youth camp counselors, and 18 adult volunteers attended camp. In a post-camp program evaluation of youth:

- 96% reported that they were able to find things they were good at, 89% learned how to do new things, and 72% learned how to do things they did not think they could do.
- 85% reported that they learned to value the natural world and 71% learned something new about nature.
- 75% reported that they felt like they belonged and 96% made new friends.
- Camp counselors had significantly higher levels of leadership development and decision-making than campers.

In Nevada County, 96 youth, 20 youth camp counselors, and 17 adult volunteers attended camp. In a post-camp program evaluation of youth:

- 95% reported that they were able to find things they were good at, 91% learned how to do new things, and 82% learned how to do things they did not think they could do.
- 72% reported that they learned to value the natural world and 59% learned something new about nature.
- 77% reported that they felt like they belonged and 98% made new friends.
- Camp counselors had significantly higher levels of leadership development and decision-making than campers.



Embryology

Issue

Young people benefit from learning a wide range of life skills such as critical thinking, managing, relating, caring, giving, working with groups, self-development, and healthy living. Research shows that youth who report higher levels of these life skills are found to lead happier, healthier, satisfying lives.

What Was Done

The 4-H Embryology project is just one example of life skill building. Over the past year, 21 workshops were conducted to train 138 educators. Hundreds of classrooms, afterschool and preschool programs, as well as home schooled families participated in the chick and duckling project. The project reached 7,119 youth in Placer County and 700 youth in Nevada County. The curriculum provides numerous opportunities to learn through observation and hands-on activities the value of life as well as information about chickens, ducks, eggs, and embryonic development. Children are responsible for caring for the eggs and hatching process.

The curriculum links educational, recreational, social, and interpersonal disciplines. It builds children's skills in math, science, and language arts. Throughout the process children measure, compute, and record their findings. They read and write about what they are observing and apply what they learn through art and drama projects.



4-H member caring for newly hatched chick.

Impact

The project received high marks from participating teachers:

- In Placer County, 98.4% said they would do the project again and 100% indicated that they would recommend the project to other teachers.
- In Nevada County, 100% said they would do the project again and 100% indicated that they would recommend the project to other teachers.

Teachers reported on the following changes in their students:

- In both counties, 100% increased knowledge of the embryonic process.
- 98.4% in Placer and 100% in Nevada County increased appreciation of the value of life.
- In both counties, 100% increased in their interest or willingness to care for another living creature.
- 98.4% in Placer and 100% in Nevada County increased interest in hands-on science processes.
- In both counties, 100% increased in science observation skills.



Have Team Building Games...Will Travel

Issue

Youth leaders often search for tools to assist them in leading groups. Ice breakers are needed to acquaint groups and to engage participants in team building experiences by creating a friendly learning atmosphere. Teens want to be ready to lead and engage youth any place and at a moments notice.



Getting an entire group to walk in a synchronized manner is not an easy task.

What Was Done

Placer County 4-H youth identified a need for a guide to games, skits, and songs for all ages. They applied and received a grant from the California 4-H Foundation to develop a manual of team building games that promotes hands-on activities and enables teen leaders to experience how to use the activities while leading others.

Teams of teens from Placer and Nevada Counties as well as five neighboring counties researched and identified team building games, skits, and songs to include in the how to manual and designed the prop tubs. They compiled their findings in a rough draft. Twenty eight 4-H teens, five volunteer 4-H leaders, and nine 4-H staff participated in a weekend retreat of sharing with the group the activities they contributed to the manual. They came away empowered to be inspiring leaders, ready to organize summer camps, and lead club, county, and state events. They created tubs of props to have ready for games.

Impact

- In Placer and Nevada Counties, this manual is used at the 4-H summer camps, in each 4-H club, as well as in the project groups. The manual is used for training workshops of teens at county and sectional events to expand their knowledge and skill to lead team building games with the many groups they lead. The games are used in every county wide event.
- The “Have Team Building Games...Will Travel” team received the 4-H Golden Clover Award and \$500 for their manual. They used this money to print additional copies of the manual and gave one to each of the 30 participants in their training session at the 2008 State Leadership Conference. Each UC Cooperative Extension office received a final copy of the manual for their lending libraries thus impacting many youth throughout the state of California.
- Teens utilized their new knowledge and traveled to Youth Conferences around the state empowering other youth through Team Building Games to develop greater self-esteem, leadership, and life skills.



Healthy, Happy Families Workshops

Issue

There is a remarkable jump in the prevalence of overweight status between preschool and school age, when an estimated 37% of children are overweight (Ogden et al., 2006). Research indicates that many factors are associated with children being overweight, such as, parent-child interactions and parenting practices (Klesges et al., 1983, 1986; Ventura & Birch, 2008).

When children are young, parents are the primary means through which food and eating are regulated. Since the eating patterns of children are largely established by as young as 3 years of age (Nicklas et al., 2001), parents assume a significant role in shaping their children's enduring eating habits. Strengthening parenting skills can help parents effectively implement positive nutrition and physical activity changes with their children.



Parents learn new ways to play with their children to promote physical activity.

What Was Done

The *Healthy, Happy Families* curriculum is a series of eight, one-hour workshops designed to help parents learn basic parenting skills and how to apply them to promote healthy feeding relationships with preschool-aged children. These workshops are:

- Begin Healthy Habits Early
- Healthy Routines
- Knowing Your Child
- Encouraging Positive Behavior
- Child's Play
- Experiment, Explore, Try
- Talking With Children
- Trying New Things

The workshops were delivered monthly to 35 parents of preschool-aged children at Sheridan and First Street Elementary in Placer County.

Impact

A retrospective pre/post-test survey was administered to participants at the end of the eight-series workshops. Parents reported significant increases in:

- Nurturance
- Consistency in parenting and discipline
- Follow-through on discipline
- Having family meals together
- Introducing new foods to the child
- Positive parenting
- Parenting efficacy





4-H Science, Engineering, and Technology (SET) Initiative

Issue

Youth in the U.S. show declining proficiency and interest in science, engineering, and technology (SET) and there is a significant workforce shortage in these critical fields. Too many of our nation's young people do not have the SET skills needed for careers in the 21st century (NAEP, 2005).

What Was Done

The 4-H Youth Development Program launched a five-year initiative to reach new youth with SET experiences.

Placer County 4-H established 4-H Rocketry and Digital Photography Afterschool Science Clubs for middle and high school youth. In addition, a week-long 4-H Rocketry Day Camp was held that focused on the basics of rocketry.



4-H youth learns to build a rocket at Day Camp.

Nevada County 4-H started three new SET projects in the 4-H Community Club Program: Computer Technology, Small Engines, and Rocketry.

In both Placer and Nevada Counties, 4-H members and volunteers led the National Science Experiment — “Helpful Hydrogels” — in classrooms, afterschool programs, and at community events. In addition, two SET workshops were held by 4-H staff to train educators on new SET curricula.

Impact

In Placer County, 316 new youth participated in SET experiences.

- Survey results indicated that participation in SET experiences significantly increased interest in taking SET courses and pursuing a career in science, engineering, and technology.
- Pre-test and post-test surveys of youth who participated in the Rocketry Day Camp showed average gains of 76% on basic rocketry knowledge.

In Nevada County, 211 new youth participated in SET experiences.

- Survey results indicated that participation in SET programming significantly increased interest in science and engineering.

In Placer County, 12 new educators attended SET training workshops.

- All participants reported that they were satisfied with the workshops, would recommend the workshops, and learned what they expected to learn.

In Nevada County, 16 new educators attended SET training workshops.

- 94% agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the workshops, would recommend the workshops, and learned what they expected to learn.



Placer County Youth Commission

Issue

Research shows that engaging youth in civic activities is the most effective way to promote civic identity formation and subsequent civic engagement in adulthood (Youniss & Yates, 1999; Zaff et al. 2008). Young people want to create positive change in their communities and impact issues affecting youth. Youth Commissions provide a real world setting for youth leadership and civic development. Giving youth an authentic voice in local policy and decision-making benefits youth and the greater community.



Founding Team Members with Supervisor Holmes after approval of the Resolution to create a Youth Commission.

What Was Done

UC Cooperative Extension partnered with the Placer County Department of Health and Human Services to establish a Placer County Youth Commission. In February 2009, a founding team of 12 high school youth began developing the mission statement, goals, and structure of the commission. Their hard work and the support of Placer County Supervisor Holmes, District 3, resulted in a resolution and a set of bylaws which were approved at the May 12, 2009, Board of Supervisors' meeting.

Impact

- The Placer County Youth Commission was established on May 12, 2009.
- In a retrospective pre/post-test survey, Founding Members reported significant increases on several indicators of civic engagement such as civic and political voice as a result of this experience.

In addition, results indicated that:

- 91% agreed or strongly agreed that they know more about the local government and decision-making.
- 91% agreed or strongly agreed that they are more interested in local government.
- 100% agreed or strongly agreed that they want to take action in their community.
- 100% agreed or strongly agreed that they have had opportunities to interact with adults in a meaningful way.
- 82% agreed or strongly agreed that they felt challenged.