

Douglas County 4-H

*is the youth development program of
Douglas County & the University of
Wisconsin Cooperative Extension*

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Douglas County 4-H

Youth Development Program

2009 Impact Report

4-H is a **community**
 of **young**
people
across **America**
who are learning
leadership,
citizenship and
life skills.

Program support provided by:


Cooperative Extension



4-H Members Report Gaining Life Skills

Each fall 4-H members are encouraged to summarize their accomplishments via a report and interview process with the 4-H Board of Directors. Here are a few comments from 4-H members who did so this year:

“I think an important concern of youth is the need to fit in, to have a place of their own. Through 4-H I have made many friends and increased my people skills so that I find I can do well and fit into new environments easily.”

“I feel much more confident in myself as a person. I am able to make good decisions and follow through with plans. I am not afraid to get involved.”

“I learned that spending time helping others allows you to have more fun than spending it on yourself.”

“My 4-H experiences have made me more respectful and see other people’s views on different things.”

“I always asked the other members for input when we made decisions about what our club wanted to do. Working as a team with all the members helped our club get projects done.”

“Having leadership experience helps me say what needs to be said instead of no one knowing how to keep things moving to accomplish our goals.”

“4-H has helped me to find what I want to do with my life.”

4-H Members Learn Leadership Skills

4-H members seeking leadership roles are elected as officers of their 4-H clubs in the fall. These Presidents, Vice Presidents, Treasurers, and Secretaries are then invited to participate in a “Club Officer Training” taught by Wilcox. During this hands-on workshop, youth identify characteristics of good leadership and learn more about their roles and responsibilities as officers. A favorite activity is practicing parliamentary procedure by making trail mix. With one officer acting as President, others make motions to add ingredients (peanuts, raisins, M&Ms, etc.) to the trail mix one at a time and take a vote. Laughter and a lively discussion ensue when someone moves that canned mushrooms be added to the trail mix! Year after year, the motion ultimately fails. After eating their creation, Wilcox teaches participants how to organize their club meetings by creating agendas and yearly calendars and discusses the importance of creating by-laws. At the end of the training everyone enjoys a round of Club Officer Jeopardy. This year, seven officers and four 4-H leaders participated in the training. All participants gave positive evaluations of the workshop. When asked what they learned that they intend to use in their clubs, responses included:

- Parliamentary procedure
- To let others volunteer to do things, like lead the pledges, give news, etc.
- Be inviting to visitors
- Take care of the money

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Northern District 4-H Winter Camp

Approximately 50 teens representing 4-H clubs from across Northern Wisconsin came together in January for an action-packed weekend of leadership, teamwork, and learning. Credit union employees volunteered their time to run “Mad City Money,” a hands-on simulation of real life finances and budgeting. 4-H members learned how to balance a checkbook, save money, buy a car, avoid scams, and manage multiple financial obligations. During an ice rescue simulation, 4-H’ers learned proper rescue techniques and worked cooperatively to pull a man out of the ice. Campers built an enormous quinzee (snow shelter) and several brave girls spent the night in it! Wilcox facilitated a personality assessment for everyone to discover whether they were predominantly “left-brained” or “right-brained.” Teams then had to use their talents to market a new flavor of popcorn by creating a recipe from 18 possible flavors. An engineering project required that 4-H’ers build a sled using only cardboard, plastic, and duct tape.

You can imagine the creative designs they came up with—massive sleds, aerodynamic sleds, even a heart-shaped sled and a mouse sled with ears and a tail!



Increased Participation in 4-H Afterschool

Regular participation in after school programs can benefit youth in many ways. Research shows that when programs or activities appeal to children, there’s a positive association with attendance. Douglas County 4-H Afterschool Clubs have seen a high level of program attendance and participant retention during the past year. Participation in the following two clubs is completely voluntary and no transportation is provided. In 2007-2008:

- 80% of youth attended at least 5 of the 7 Four Corners 4-H Afterschool Club meetings
- 70% of youth attended at least 4 of the 6 Great Lakes 4-H Afterschool Club meetings

In 2008-2009:

- 94% re-enrolled and 20 new members joined the Four Corners 4-H Afterschool Club
- 53% re-enrolled and 34 new members joined the Great Lakes 4-H Afterschool Club

This year Wilcox taught introductory science and engineering activities in an effort to motivate children to continue their 4-H Afterschool Club participation, as well as improve their scientific knowledge and leadership skills. At one school, 4th and 5th grade students organized a “Science Night” where they led hands-on science and engineering activities for other students and their families. Evaluations from students who planned and led this event showed they all agreed that “science is fun” and they felt confident teaching others. They also all agreed that they learned how to organize an event, new things about being a leader, and that it’s important to help others learn.

4-H Inspires Future Scientists & Engineers

The United States is falling dangerously behind other nations in developing its future workforce of scientists, engineers, and technology experts. To ensure global competitiveness, we must act now to prepare the next generation of science, engineering, and technology leaders. The Douglas County 4-H Youth Development Program and Superior School District coordinated a fully grant-funded “4-H Gateway Academy” this summer to introduce middle school students to engineering concepts and careers. Twenty students participated in the nine-day Academy, where they built rockets, solar cars, and wind generators and designed bridges, cars, and houses. Students also learned GPS and took a field trip to Cirrus Design.

When asked for feedback, 84% of the students said they would recommend the 4-H Gateway Academy to their friends. Almost all the students said they hope to have a career in a science or engineering field. Comments included: “I was going to be an architect but now I’m going to be an engineer.” “[The Academy] has furthered my knowledge of the different paths of an engineer.” Many parents indicated that the 4-H Gateway Academy increased or reinforced their child’s interest in science and engineering. Comments also included: “[The Academy] presents science, technology, and math through fun, engaging, challenging learning.” “[My son] wishes it were more than nine days!” A teacher said, “It’s the perfect way to get students interested in pursuing further classes in engineering.”

4-H on Extreme Makeover: Home Edition

This summer, Douglas County 4-H’ers had the opportunity to experience first-hand how a national television show is produced, while giving back to their community. In three days, 4-H members and leaders built a chicken coop for the Howard and Jessica Huber family for an episode of “Extreme Makeover: Home Edition.” For the first time in the show’s history, youth were allowed to participate in a project.

“The kids enjoyed being around the fast-paced atmosphere of the television show production, and saw what it took to coordinate the 1,400 people that were on-site,” said Scott Luostari, President of Douglas County 4-H. When the show aired on Sept. 27, 4-H volunteers were introduced as a “local leadership group.” The four “Hs” in the 4-H name were also explained.

News of the appearance on the show was posted on the 4-H Page on Facebook, and people from across the country talked about the pride they felt when they saw 4-H recognized on national TV. Articles about the project were also featured in National 4-H Council’s “Clover Corner News” and Backyard Poultry magazine.



Article adapted from Clover Corner News, 10/14/2009