Idaho Youth Development Institute

The Situation
As new 4-H faculty and staff are hired it is important that adequate training be provided to ensure the stability and success of the Idaho 4-H program. The yearly State 4-H training agenda is very full and bound by time constraints. Idaho recognized this situation and created a 4-H Coordinator position to support local 4-H programs. A Youth Development Institute (YDI) was proposed to provide in-depth training in the Core Competencies needed for Positive Youth Development workers. This knowledge base is necessary to help move the Idaho 4-H program forward.

Our Response
A small amount of seed money awarded from the University of Idaho gave the planning committee a base to begin planning. Competencies from the National 4-H Youth Development Practitioner Apprenticeship Certificate Program formed the structure for the program. This youth apprenticeship program is registered in Idaho with the State Department of Labor and available to University of Idaho employees working with youth.

The Idaho Youth Development Institute provided training to Extension faculty and staff working with youth and volunteers. Sixty-seven individuals participated in the Institute. Youth development workers from other organizations in the Pacific North West also participated. The goal of the Institute is to help faculty and staff better understand identified Youth Development Core Competencies.

Program Outcomes
- Participants better understand the developmental stages of youth.
- Participants identify ways to foster and manage youth/adult, community, and resource development partnerships.
- Participants developed skills necessary to work with volunteers.

The committee developed a pre-post evaluation and participants were asked to share the knowledge or attitude they had toward youth development before and after attending Youth Development Institute. A follow-up evaluation will be sent to participants in September/October 2005 to determine any further change.

Forty-four participants completed the evaluation.

Participants were asked to self assess their changes in knowledge, preparedness, understanding and skills related to youth development (where 1 = none, 2 = a little, 3 = some, 4 = a good deal, and 5 = a great deal) before and after the institute.

Participants reported that knowledge about youth development improved from some to a good deal. Preparedness to do youth development improved from somewhat, to pretty well prepared. Understanding about social, physical, and mental youth development improved from some to a good deal because of YDI presentations. They will be marketing for improved recruitment for teens and volunteers.
Skill levels improved for fostering multi-generational communication, ability to minimize intergenerational conflict, build teams, find and keep volunteers and effectively reach youth with education.

Overall Institute usefulness was ranked a mean of 4.3 from a range of 2-5. Knowledge gained at the Institute ranked at 4.3 for the mean from a range of 2-5. Comments suggested that, “It scratched the surface and awakened a desire to dig deeper. I felt an urge to explore ideas and share with council members and leaders. How can we put these ideas and passions into our program.” and “I really enjoyed David Remson’s workshop on addressing the age gap. I liked that he presented the information with humor and offered suggestions on how we can work with the different ages.”

Speaker presentations were ranked for usefulness and knowledge gained where 1 = lowest to 5 = highest. Programs presented by David Remson, Maximizing Productivity to Build Better Teams, the Team Building Activity With 4-H Teens and Matt McCarter, HC*HY—Healthy Community * Healthy Youth (Teen Marketing) received the highest ranking of 5. Presentations by Janice Fletcher on Positive Youth Development & Best Practices and Skills to Reach Young People; David Remson, Motivations and Preferences of Each Generation; Cathy Reckmeyer, Keeping Valued Volunteers ranked 4. Susan Hazelton’s presentation on Recruiting Without Tears & Finding Effective Volunteers received a ranking of 3.

The most important idea presented at the institute was to incorporate intergenerational and multi-generational concepts into their youth development practice. Twenty-two individuals indicated they would use their new understanding of multi-generational concepts with co-workers to build better teams and to improve programs for clientele.

Other key ideas that will be incorporated into practice by five or more participants are to address marketing for improved recruitment for teens and volunteers.

A key comment was to have more messages from youth of how and where we are failing them. The planning committee will need to address this for the next YDI conference. Youth must be included in the planning process for the next conference.

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