4-H Drama Club

The Situation
With the reduction of school budgets having a drama program in the middle school became an after-school activity and directed on a volunteer basis. Two parents that helped with the Bear Lake Middle School’s 2004 play inquired into the possibility of the Bear Lake County 4-H Program assisting with the 2005 play.

Our Response
The after-school 4-H drama club was organized in October 2004. 4-H activities from the 4HCCS Theatre Arts Series (4HCCS 6870) activity manuals were used to teach acting skills at these first few meetings. Once the play “Rinse the Blood Off My Toga” was selected and try-outs held, most of the meeting time was used for practicing and costumes development. The script was an old radio play about the death of Julius Caesar and is a spoof of the original Shakespeare Production of Julius Caesar. Kathleen Lake, the play’s director applied her own creative work to the play so that it had the number of parts and was the length needed for the club to perform.

Membership fees were paid for twenty-five (25) youth that enrolled in the drama club with funds from the Red Ribbon Drug Free Program. As enrolled 4-H members, the youth were covered by the 4-H insurance program, which was one of the positive factors the school administration like about working with 4-H. Fourteen (14) of the cast members had been 4-H members before joining the “BLMS Castaway” club. For eleven (11) youth this was their first 4-H club experience.

Stating in January, the club met three times a week after-school. As the Director worked with youth to learn their lines and places on stage, other youth were working with adults on the sets and costumes for this Roman play. There were some funds to help cover cost, but it was determined that very little would be used for costumes, so more could be used on the sets.

The use of an old or new “white” sheet was the main part of each performer’s costume. A few youth did have to purchase a white sheet. Roman style sandals were created by using house slippers, cutting part of the slipper away and covering the other parts with duck tape. At one club meeting the youth designed and made jewelry to be used as part of their costumes. Other clothing, jewelry, wigs and set items were gathered to create the correct look for the Roman play.
Program Outcomes
“Rinse the Blood Off My Toga” cast members gave four performances. On February 24, the first performance was for 170 students from the Paris and Georgetown elementary schools. That evening the play was done for the general public, which included parents and family members. The next day, February 25, 300 students from the AJ Winters Elementary were entertained with the play. The performance the cast members were most concerned about was the one for their fellow Middle School Classmates. The 4-H members performed for 150 of their Middle School peers.

Following the play, one cast member commented that “Hey these guys understood the humor and laughed more than did our parents last night.” To add to the fact that the Principal was very supportive of the students in the play, he agreed to introduce the play to the Middle School Students in a Roman costume.

Each member of the cast completed a 4-H record book and had a group poster entered in the Bear Lake County Fair.

For More Information
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