Helping Youth Become Entrepreneurs

**Situation**
As a rural community, Grangeville has very limited summer activities/programs for youth. In essence youth often have “nothing to do” during the summer months. This is particularly problematic for youth in 7th to 9th grades who are usually very interested in money yet are younger than the minimum employment age. Summer is ideal for helping youth to establish their “own” businesses and learn work related skills.

**Our Response**
Kids, Inc., a young entrepreneur program, was created and implemented in summer 1999. This workforce preparedness program was designed to 1) teach youth (6th-9th grade) skills for operating their own businesses and 2) teach youth skills for gaining employment in the future.

The program was designed with the assistance of an advisory committee comprised of both youth and teachers. The Local Prairie Partnership Council’s School to Work program and the Idaho Community Foundation provided funds to assist in the development and implementation of Kids, Inc.

Kids, Inc. was piloted during summer 1999. The program consisted of a 15-hour week-long enrichment camp and five additional weekly meetings throughout the rest of the summer. Youth participating in the program learned how to establish and maintain their own businesses. They also learned about writing business plans, banking, pricing, record keeping, marketing, advertising and taxes. In addition, youth developed personal attributes including reliability, initiative, social skills, interest exploration, meaning of the term “quality,” and money management skills.

Kids, Inc. was led by a program coordinator. Local business volunteers conducted several of the learning sessions.

**Achievements**
Eighteen Idaho County youth grades 6-10 participated in this pilot program. At least 12 of the Kids, Inc. members actually started the businesses they designed while participating in the program and earned more than $300 collectively. Businesses included car washing by appointment, making and selling crafts, serving as a handyman, face-painting and baby-sitting.

When surveyed over 77 percent of youth participating in the program felt the program successfully prepared them for knowing what employers look for in employees and helping them to start a business. In addition, all surveyed participants felt Kids, Inc. was successful at helping them to write a resume, know what types of business opportunities are available, know about checking and savings accounts, and advertise and set goals for their businesses.

Kids, Inc. also received positive responses from parents and the business community. As one parent commented,
“My daughter, Miranda attended the program and I feel it was very beneficial to her. Through the program, Miranda learned how to market her crafts, was offered a chance to sell at Border Days and even received coverage in the Lewiston Morning Tribune.”

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“Exposing our area youth to the expectations of employers and teaching them the needed skills to start their own businesses is exactly what work to school means. The Kids, Inc program is a wonderful addition to the summer and all-year activities available to this age group.”

**Cooperators and Co-Sponsors**


**Program Location**

Grangeville, Idaho.

**The Future**

Kids, Inc. will incorporate feedback from the pilot program and seek funding for future sessions.

**For More Information**

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