

IMPACT



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Cassia County Embraces Its Hispanic Population

The Situation

Young people across America are learning leadership, citizenship and life skills in 4-H Youth Development. As the youth in 4-H come from so many different social, economic, racial and ethnic backgrounds, it is important for the 4-H organization at the national, state and local levels to provide opportunities for those who are often underserved. One goal is to involve underserved youth in all aspects of the 4-H program including the opportunity to serve in leadership positions.

Statistics have shown that when youth are involved in quality programs, they are more likely to become responsible adults who contribute in a positive manner to their community. Idaho is making an effort to include Hispanic youth in the 4-H program by supporting 4-H curriculum that pertains to the Hispanic culture, as well as offering scholarships to Hispanic youth to attend state and national events.

Our Response

Though Cassia County has only a small percentage of its Hispanics currently enrolled in 4-H, the enrolled youth are encouraged to be involved in all aspects of the 4-H program. Several Cassia County Hispanic teens have taken the opportunity to participate in many different programs. Young men and women have attended several district, state, and national events including Ambassador Training, Teen Conference, National Congress, and National Conference. They have learned and developed life skills such as team work/team leading, service to the

community, as well as skills that enable them to associate and relate with not only their peers, but adults as well.

Within Cassia County, we actively encourage our Hispanic teens to participate in traditional clubs, as well as take an active part in the county's 4-H Teen Association. Since the Hispanics in our teen association come from non traditional families, we provide opportunities for them to raise money so that they are able to attend various county, district, state and national events. We also seek out scholarship money from the Cassia County Leader's Council and the Idaho 4-H Endowment Board, so the youth have better accessibility to the programs.

Program Outcomes

Since September of 2004, we have had twenty active Hispanic youth and three active Hispanic adult leaders. In 2004, we applied for and received a grant from the Endowment Board for a county achievement day, which encouraged the Hispanic Youth to attend. Our flyers were publicized in both Spanish and English, and it was arranged for a translator to be available at achievement day for those who were Spanish speaking only.

The 4-H programs are teaching our Hispanic youth how to be leaders. Currently, the State Teen Association President is a Hispanic youth from Cassia County. Another youth is the vice-president of our teen association and has been selected to be the state flag bearer at National Congress. One of our very active Hispanic adults has chaperoned 4-H

camp for several years and was the chaperone from Cassia County for State 4-H Ambassadors. All three of our current 4-H Ambassadors are Hispanic and have shown great promise in encouraging other Hispanics to participate in our county 4-H program. Attendance at these events is made possible in part due to the scholarships received from our County Leader's Association. Several of our Hispanic teens have made 4-H presentations to the youth at Cassia County's Alternative School, and have given reports on their national trips to the County's Leader Association, County Teens, our County Commissioners, as well as the District III Leader's Association.

The Hispanic youth and adults have participated in these events:

- Achievement Day (County event)
- Day Camps (County event)
- Family Fair (Bi-county event)
- 4-H Camp Counselors (District event)
- Teen Conference (State event)
- Ambassadors (State event)
- National Congress (National event)
- National Conference (National event)

A grandmother (who with her husband, are guardians of one of the Hispanic teens) commented that she is grateful that her grandson has been able to attend so many high quality 4-H programs. She believes that if her grandson had not received the training and opportunities from these programs, he could possibly be out in the streets involved in detrimental activities. She further states that 4-H has helped in teaching her grandson life skills through his local, state, and national activities.

One of the young men involved in various 4-H programs, stated that 4-H has saved his life, not only through the life skills learned through 4-H projects, but the opportunities he has been able to participate in. When this young man reported on his trip to National Conference, he became emotional when he described what it meant to him to be part of the conference, to visit with other youth from all parts of the nation, and to have been able to see and visit some of our national monuments in Maryland. This young man credits 4-H for keeping him on a positive life path.

The Future

This year, our county will be focusing more on Hispanic curriculum. All of our flyers for 4-H mini-classes and day camps held in 2007 will be sent out in Spanish and English. The 4-H Program Administrator and the Extension Educator are currently teaching a decision making curriculum at the County's Alternative High School called "Brainwise," where more than half of the students are Hispanic. We have been approved for a Children Youth & Families at Risk (CYFAR) after-school program that will target at risk populations within our county. All youth participating in this program will be enrolled in our 4-H program, and will complete and display 4-H projects. With this focus on the underserved in our county, we hope that more youth will participate in 4-H, thus becoming contributing members of our community.

For More Information

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