

IMPACT

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Extension

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“Teen Ambassador Leadership Kit” teens learn about TALK

The Situation

4-H teens, ninth through twelfth grade, have an opportunity to attend the Idaho 4-H Teen Ambassador training each fall in McCall and learn skills in public speaking. Some younger teens are willing to enter leadership roles and also need a venue to learn. 4-H Staff in District III thought all teens needed a larger portfolio of public relations, marketing, and communication skills to fulfill their responsibilities as Ambassadors for 4-H and the University of Idaho. The State 4-H Teen Ambassador training teaches public speaking and not other facets of being a 4-H Ambassador. An alternative training is also needed for youth who cannot travel from southern Idaho to the state training but still want to learn basic communication skills and become 4-H Ambassadors.

In addition, records show that youth between the ages of twelve and fourteen begin to drop away from 4-H unless they are introduced to new challenges and programs. A local event designed to teach teens life skills to promote 4-H in their communities, county and district would be an asset to both the youth and the 4-H program, as well as keep youth involved in 4-H. District III 4-H staff also support a large variety of camps, including traditional summer camps and day camps. A district teen activity would help build relationships between teens and staff and encourage more of these teens to participate as counselors at the camps.

Our Response

The Teen Ambassador Leadership Kit (TALK) retreat was held at Campus Grove in Albion, ID, on March 6-8, 2009. Idaho 4-H Teen Ambassadors from District III were involved in recruitment, teaching, entertainment and other leadership activities. Participants arrived on Friday evening for registration and team



Teens share their knowledge of poster making during presentations on the last day of the TALK Retreat.
Photo by Jeni Bywater.

building activities; including a late night tour of the historic Albion State Normal School. TALK information was shared and participants began to develop their kit, create a portfolio and learn about the photography scavenger hunt. On Saturday, teens had the opportunity to hear about all three communication workshops and listen to an invited speaker who discussed the importance of promoting your organization and yourself. Three two-hour workshops were offered in the afternoon and included news writing, poster design, and building a personality compass.

The Saturday dinner speaker was a local restaurateur who discussed meal etiquette and interview tips. After dinner teens learned more about photography and selected winners of the photography scavenger hunt. On Sunday morning each workshop group had the opportunity to share their completed projects and what they learned with the other participants. Professional business cards and polo shirts were presented.



Teen Ambassadors form a clover at the 2009 TALK Retreat held at the Campus Grove in Albion, ID.
Photo by Jeni Bywater.

Program Outcomes

Twenty-nine teens, representing seven counties, from District III and District IV registered for the 2009 TALK Retreat. Five Idaho 4-H Teen Ambassadors helped nine adult volunteers and staff with the workshops and other activities.

The Idaho 4-H Teen Ambassadors also served as team leaders for the kitchen and cleaning groups. Adults served as workshop instructors, cooks and chaperones.

When asked how they plan to use the information gained at their respective workshops teens replied:

- “I want to be able to teach little kids about how awesome 4-H can be, the things I learned are going to be a huge help.”
- “I plan to use it when working with people I have a hard time getting along with.”
- “I plan on going out and making my own press releases.”
- “In promoting leadership projects in my community.”
- “Use it to get more members into the 4-H program.”
- “I understand why we think and act like we do, I can better understand someone I didn’t get along with.”

Other comments from teens and adults at TALK included:

- “This was very fun, the kids learned a lot and will remember this!”
- “Keep up with what they are doing, this is great!”
- “I learned a lot and made so many new friends, thanks!”
- “I enjoyed the tours of the building and the photography activity, the speakers were fabulous!”
- “I learned more about myself.”
- “I loved the Saturday dinner, it was fancy and formal and I learned how to eat at a nice table.”

- “Everything was good, I had lots of fun and will come again!”

TALK. The Teen Ambassador Leadership Kit received by participants was developed by Blaine County 4-H Program Advisor, Kathi Kimball as part of her UI student internship. It included sections on press, personality, photography, posters, etiquette, templates and general 4-H information. Participants were encouraged to add to their TALK and use it to promote 4-H and as part of their 4-H Step up to Leadership project.

The Future

Planning for future TALK Retreats has already started with suggestions to add goal setting and event planning to the topics included. District III 4-H Staff will work with Idaho 4-H Teen Ambassador organizers to ensure that both events are successful and supportive of each other. UI Extension Critical Issues funds were received to support the 2009 TALK Retreat. Organizers plan to apply for Friends of 4-H funding for the 2010 TALK retreat.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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