4-H day camps positively influence Bingham County youth

The Situation
Bingham County has a strong 4-H program, with 4,657 youth participating in 4-H in 2010. Youth participate in traditional projects, school enrichment projects, and the yearly overnight camp project. Despite the great support for 4-H in Bingham County, it was noted several years ago that fewer families were participating in non-livestock, traditional 4-H projects. When interviewed, families said their children had competing demands for their time such as sports, music, academics, and work. Additionally, more mothers were working outside the home, resulting in less time to lead traditional 4-H clubs.

Our Response
Bingham County 4-H faculty and staff created a day camp program to provide youth a 4-H experience that did not require a large time commitment. The program is marketed to reach both traditional and new audiences through newspaper articles, newsletters, and brochures handed out at the local schools.

The day camp program has evolved over the years. Teaching formats have included:

- One-week projects — members attend class every day for one week
- Weekly projects — members attend class each week for several weeks
- One-day-only projects — members complete the project in one day

We have taught projects on early-release school days, and on days off from school during the school year, and in the summer. Table 1 shows the participation in 4-H day camps over the last three years.

Table 1: Bingham County 4-H Day Camp Participation by Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of day camp project</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early release from school</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School year</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>405</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Originally, most of the projects were led by county faculty and staff, but more volunteers are leading projects as the popularity of the program increases.

Program Outcomes
In 2009 and 2010, members were evaluated on their day camp experience. Results of the evaluation are in Table 2.
Between 93 and 96 percent of members reported learning something new, either content-related skills or leadership skills such as helping others. Ninety-five to ninety-eight percent of members reported the intention to use the skills they learned or practiced in the future.

As we look to the future, we are excited to continue offering 4-H day camps in Bingham County, recruiting additional adults and youth volunteers, and reaching diverse audiences.