4-H Takes to the Blue Sky

The Situation

Today's youth face complex challenges as they mature into young adults. Problems of alcohol and substance abuse, teen suicide and pregnancy are evident in early adolescent years. The causes of these problems are apparent at a much earlier age though.

Educational programs held after school hours fill time when problems can develop. Called After School Programs, the educational effort also works to develop self-esteem, effective communication skills, and good decision making abilities in the early elementary years. These skills will allow youth to cope more effectively with the challenges that confront them in adolescence.

Our Response

The Owyhee County Extension System cooperated in The Blue Sky Below My Feet, a multimedia space technology program. Blue Sky introduces the world of science and technology, using features from the Space Shuttle program. Blue Sky increased youth-development skills at Grand View and Marsing sites, and you in After School Programs learned:

- how forces, such as gravity, affect our daily lives on earth and astronauts while in space.
- the various roles of fibers and textile products play on earth and in space, and similarities between the nutritional requirements of our bodies while on earth and in space.

Achievements

In cooperation with the Grand View Public Library and the Marsing Elementary school, the Blue Sky program reached 48 youth. Kathy Chick of the Grand View Library, John Barenberg and Jan Odlum of the Marsing Elementary School led the children in the 4-H series.

Envirosafe Services of Idaho, Inc. provided funding for rockets, engines, and a Blue Sky T-shirt for each child. The Owyhee County Extension office provided the program curriculum and leadership.

The finale of both programs was a launch of the model rockets assembled by the children. The successful program reached a diverse audience. More than 90% of the youth were Hispanic. A pictorial display at the Owyhee County Fair and Marsing Elementary Parent Night increased enthusiasm for the program.

The Future

Children, parents, teachers, administrator and Extension personnel quickly saw the positive effects of the Blue Sky program. Because of the popularity of the program, we expect more participants in this year's After School Programs.

Envirosafe Services of Idaho, Inc. has increased funding of the program to reach more youth. Additional school locations are being considered for expansion of the Blue Sky Program.
For More Information

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