



Situation:

Positive youth development is the conceptual foundation of the 4-H Youth Development program – helping young people develop critical life skills universally recognized as the essential foundation for healthy and productive adult lives.

Almost half of Carroll County towns (8 of 17 towns) rank among New Hampshire communities with the greatest barriers and fewest opportunities for successful outcomes for children and youth (Kids Count New Hampshire Data Book 2008). Albany, Bartlett, Conway, Effingham and Ossipee are among the 27 New Hampshire towns with the lowest ranking, placing a unique burden on families, organizations and institutions within the county to overcome barriers to opportunities for children to thrive (Kids Count New Hampshire Data Book 2008).

Youth benefit from participation in well-supervised, high quality out-of-school time experiences, including 4-H groups, camps and afterschool programs. A recent New Hampshire study of state- and federally-funded, academically-focused afterschool programs found that more than half of regularly attending youth improved both academically and behaviorally. (Frankel, Streitburger, & Goldman, 2008)

Extension's Public Value:

Without the basic skills of effective communication, goal setting, decision making, problem solving, and conflict resolution, young adults have a difficult time acquiring and retaining employment, living on their own, and starting a family. Through 4-H, screened and trained volunteer leaders guide youth in acquiring and practicing critical life skills in safe program environments that meet the basic needs of youth and give them the skills, confidence, and character to become healthy contributing adults.

UNHCE Response:

With a focus on belonging, mastery, independence and generosity, the 4-H Youth Development program works with community volunteers to help youth develop these essential skills. Many 4-H projects have a strong foundation in the sciences, helping youth apply concepts they learn in school. UNH Cooperative Extension, in collaboration with other organizations, develops and delivers educational programs that equip youth at risk with skills they need to lead positive, productive, contributing lives.

State and Carroll County Extension 4-H Youth Development staff also developed partnerships to establish or enhance afterschool programs in Ossipee, Madison, and Conway. Through a partnership with National 4-H Council, JCPenney Afterschool, and community afterschool programs, youth attending the School's Out!, Mustang Academy, and Project Succeed Programs in these communities have benefited from 4-H programs and activities offered through Afterschool Programming.

103 children from Ossipee participated during the 2008-09 school year through a \$46,440 grant from the National 4-H Council and JCPenney 4-H Afterschool Program. This program requires a partnership between the afterschool program and the county 4-H Youth Development program, and targets children who wouldn't be able to attend without this support. Another \$4,644 helped 24 children attend during the 2009-10 school year. With a focus on youth with limited resources and parental involvement, the project gives these youth the chance to learn, create, problem solve and experience life skills that otherwise wouldn't have been available to them.

There are 22 active, screened and trained 4-H volunteers and 23 non-enrolled volunteers mentoring 96 youth in small groups throughout the county, where children learn important life skills in a safe, caring group environment. Another 60 Carroll County youth participated in 4-H activities through school enrichment programs. Volunteers working with these clubs contributed approximately 3,073 hours of their time during the 2008-09 4-H year. This represents a cost benefit to the county of \$62,228 when calculated at the 2008 value of \$20.25/hour for volunteer time (independentsector.org).

How We Make a Difference:

- Students and families of Ossipee benefited from the JCPenney 4-H Afterschool Mini Grants. The funds made it possible for 24 students to receive "JCPenney" scholarships. Without the scholarships, many of these students wouldn't have had the opportunity to participate in the School's Out! Afterschool Program at Ossipee Central School.
- In 2009, 22 4-H volunteers from Carroll County reported virtually all youth participants they work with had adopted a new skill learned from 4-H, and 97 percent (59 out of 61) successfully adopted news skills learned from 4-H. One 4-H volunteer noted, *"One young 4-Her "showed sheep for the first time this year. Because of attending the Sheep Clinic, twice, she was the resident expert and was able to pack and prep for the Fair independently."* Many 4-H youth influenced the community through their 4-H community service. 88 4-H Youth and Adults volunteered 827 hours of time on Service Projects in their communities.

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