

# 4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

*Assuring that all of our nation's young people develop into healthy, happy, and productive citizens is important to all of us. Unfortunately, many of today's youth are failing to develop the competencies and skills that are needed for lifelong success. Research is continuing to show that youth development programs such as 4-H make significant contributions to positive youth outcomes, as well as prevent problem behaviors.*

*We know that families and schools cannot do it all. Caring communities and other out-of-school activities are important contributions to positive youth development. Through the 4-H Youth*



*Kayaking at 4-H Summer Camp.*

*Development Program, youth and adults work closely and develop warm, caring, and long-term relationships that support growth in youth. 4-H also helps to improve youth's interpersonal relationships, self-control, problem-solving, cognitive competencies, self-efficacy, commitment to schools, and academic achievement.*

*Recent research on youth development documents the important role that programs such as 4-H play in the lives of young people. From this research, four Essential Elements that form the foundation of successful youth development programs have been identified. These include:*

- *Belonging*
- *Mastery*
- *Independence*
- *Generosity*

*These are essential elements of the 4-H Youth Development Program and are delivered in the context of:*

- *Citizenship*
- *Leadership*
- *Life Skills*

## *Program Highlights*

- ◆ **4-H Youth Members:**  
Placer: 737  
Nevada: 491
- ◆ **4-H Adult Volunteers:**  
Placer: 200  
Nevada: 174
- ◆ **Youth Enrolled in Group and Short-Term Activities:**  
Placer: 5,507  
Nevada: 405
- ◆ **4-H Community Clubs:**  
Placer: 13  
Nevada: 11
- ◆ **4-H Website Visits:**  
Placer: 69,514  
Nevada: 36,844
- ◆ **Training and Workshops:**  
Placer: 69  
Nevada: 59



# Placer County 4-H Community Clubs



*Making wreaths at the You-Make-It-Craft Expo*



*Wearable art costume fashioned of duct tape.*

## Issue

Young people need opportunities to develop skills, knowledge, and a variety of other personal and social assets conducive to healthy development.

## What Was Done

4-H Community Club Programs provide a community-based learning environment where youth participate in projects, activities, and events that promote leadership, citizenship, community service, and other essential life skills. Caring, supportive adults plan and carry out the program in partnership with youth.

## Impact

- Over 1,500 community members attended the “You-Make-It-Craft Expo”.
- 13 Community Clubs offered 230 different projects.
- 737 youth participated, taking over 1,991 projects.
- 167 youth served as club officers, presiding over meetings and performing the monthly duties of the club.
- 81 youth participated as junior and teen leaders in 134 projects, sharing their knowledge with younger youth.
- 52 County 4-H events and 69 County-wide training workshops were held.
- Over 210 community service activities were held.
- 200 adult volunteers provided over 24,000 hours of mentoring and support for these interactive activities.



# Nevada County 4-H Community Clubs



*The Nevada County 4-H Horse Project provides many educational activities throughout the year.*



*Small animals such as poultry and rabbits are a great first project for beginning 4-H members.*

## Issue

Positive youth development occurs from an intentional process that promotes positive outcomes for young people by providing opportunities, choices, relationships, and the support necessary for youth to fully participate in families and their communities.

## What Was Done

Nevada County 4-H program has 11 Community Clubs. These clubs offered 62 different projects that provide youth with hands-on learning opportunities designed to promote life skills such as public speaking, leadership, and citizenship.

## Impact

- 491 youth participated in the program, taking 1,527 projects.
- 95 youth served as club officers and 80 youth participated as junior teen leaders sharing their project expertise with younger youth.
- Projects organized at least one community service activity, totaling over 59.
- Youth who participated in the Nevada County 4-H Club Program has more positive outcomes such as leadership, citizenship, and other life skills development and lower levels of risk behavior than youth who did not participate in the program.
- The 4-H program builds self-esteem and helps youth realize that their opinion counts and they can make a difference.





# Placer County 4-H Summer Camp



*Building a boat to support as much weight as possible.*

***When asked what they learned from participating in the solar system map astronomy session, campers said, “I learned the order of the planets, how the planets orbit, and that the sun is a star!”***

## Issue

Youth need the opportunity to experience hands-on 4-H SET (science, engineering, and technology) to spark their interest in science and related activities.

## What Was Done

19 camp counselors were trained to teach inquiry-based science in partnership with adults. 141 youth campers participated in activity sessions being piloted for California Camping Association. Activities included:

- Astronomy—solar system map and sky wheel to find constellations while on a night hike.
- Boat building
- Bridge building
- Outdoor cooking over hot coals—cupcakes in fruit covered with foil and bread on a stick.
- Orienteering
- Compressed air rockets
- Digital photography

## Impact

In a post-test survey administered to camp counselors indicated that:

- 96% agreed or strongly agreed that they felt more confident in their ability to lead science-related activities at summer camp.
- 85% agreed or strongly agreed that their knowledge in and interest of the subject increased.
- 100% agreed or strongly agreed that they feel like stronger leaders.



# Nevada County 4-H Summer Camp



*Summer Camp is a great way for youth to meet new friends, learn new skills, and have fun.*



*The Ropes Course is one of the big highlights at 4-H Summer Camp.*

## Issue

High-quality camp and outdoor adventure programs are beneficial in providing positive youth development experience during out of school hours.

## What Was Done

Nevada County 4-H held a week-long Summer Camp Program. Highly trained 4-H senior youth members organize and implement the camp program with the support and guidance of adult volunteers.

Nature hikes, swimming, kayaking, high ropes course, archery, arts and crafts, team-building games, and astronomy were just a few of the many fun and educational activities for youth. Camp provides a safe environment for hands-on experiential learning as well as developing citizenship, leadership, and life skills.

## Impact

In Nevada County, 107 youth and 19 youth camp counselors, as well as 24 adult volunteers attended camp. In a post-camp program evaluation of youth:

- 97% reported that they were able to find things they were good at.
- 94% learned how to do new things.
- 88% learned how to do things they did not think they could do.
- 78% reported that they learned to value the natural world.
- 97% made new friends.
- Camp counselors showed significant gains in leadership development and decision-making.



# Placer County 4-H Embryology

***Embryology is always the most memorable kindergarten project. Students come back from the other grades to visit the kindergarten rooms at chick time. It brings out the best in all the students.***

## Issue

Science literacy among school-age children in the United States is among the lowest in the developed world and the use of traditional teaching methods is a contributing factor.

## What Was Done

A new webpage offers the ability to reserve equipment online, watch video clips, and find answers to embryology frequently asked questions. 125 incubators, equipped with automatic turners and fertile eggs available year round supply hundreds of classrooms, afterschool, and preschool programs as well as home schooled families. Locally developed “4-H Embryology...An EGGciting Adventure” curriculum provides numerous opportunities to learn through observation and hands-on activities.

## Impact

- Research shows that youth who report higher levels of these life skills lead happier, healthier, and satisfying lives.
- 561 adult leaders guided 5,447 youth participating in the embryology program this past year.
- 95% of teachers surveyed said that they would do the project again and 100% indicated that they would recommend the project to other teachers.
- Results indicate that the program increases science literacy and helps children develop a wide range of life skills such as critical thinking, managing, caring, and teamwork.



*Placer County Fair goers watching a baby chick complete the hatching process.*





# Nevada County 4-H Embryology



*Nevada County  
home schooled family hatches  
and cares for ducks.*

**15 teachers offered  
the Embryology  
program in their  
classroom, reaching  
405 youth.**

## Issue

Young people need a range of opportunities to develop and practice science skills. Science literacy among school-age children in the United States is among the lowest in the developed world.

## What Was Done

The 4-H Embryology School Enrichment Program provides teachers, educators, and home schooled families with equipment, fertilized eggs, National 4-H curriculum and other educational materials designed to be grade-level appropriate and correlated to the National Science Education Standards.

## Impact

Teachers reported on the following changes in their students:

- 100% increased knowledge of the embryonic process.
- 83% increased appreciation of the value of life.
- 95% increased interest or willingness to care for another living creature.
- 90% increased interest in hands-on science processes.
- 100% increased in science observation skills.
- Results indicate that the Nevada County 4-H Embryology Program increases science literacy and helps children develop life skills.



# *Y.E.S. in Afterschool*

***All of the afterschool programs that participated in the project expressed the desire to run the project at their sites again.***

## **Issue**

Young people need opportunities to become engaged in the process of exploration, to participate in inquiry-based learning and develop critical thinking skills, and to understand and appreciate how science literacy will improve their lives.

## **What Was Done**

A grant was funded through the H.B. Fuller Company Foundation to start the 4-H Y.E.S. (Youth Experiences in Science) in Afterschool Project which uses curriculum created by the University of California Cooperative Extension developed specifically to engage 5-to 8-year-olds attending local afterschool programs in hands-on science sessions taught by local Teen Teachers.

## **Impact**

- 14 high school youth were trained as Teen Teachers in the 4-H Y.E.S. curriculum, undergoing an extensive 10-hour training.
- 577 school-age youth participated in a 12-week hour long program where weekly lessons on the topics of Bubbles, Kitchen Science and Worms.
- Teens reported that 100% of school-aged children practiced important science process skills such as observing, communicating, comparing and organizing known to increase science literacy.
- 5 adult volunteers from three Placer County afterschool programs were trained and acted as Project Coaches for the Teen Teachers, providing 180 hours of mentoring support.



*Woodbridge Elementary School students making goo for the Touch in the Kitchen session of Kitchen Science.*





# Placer County Youth Commission

**One Commissioner wrote, “What I liked most was the satisfaction I derived from knowing that I had an active role in creating community change.”**



*Commissioners lead a business meeting.*

**One Ambassador wrote, “The program provides a hands-on approach in public speaking, group work, and social etiquette. It provides youth with an opportunity to grow and mature.”**

## Issue

Engaging youth in civic activities is the most effective way to promote civic identity formation and subsequent civic engagement in adulthood. Youth Commissioners provide a real world setting for youth leadership and civic development. Giving youth a voice in local policy and decision-making benefits both youth and the greater community.

## What Was Done

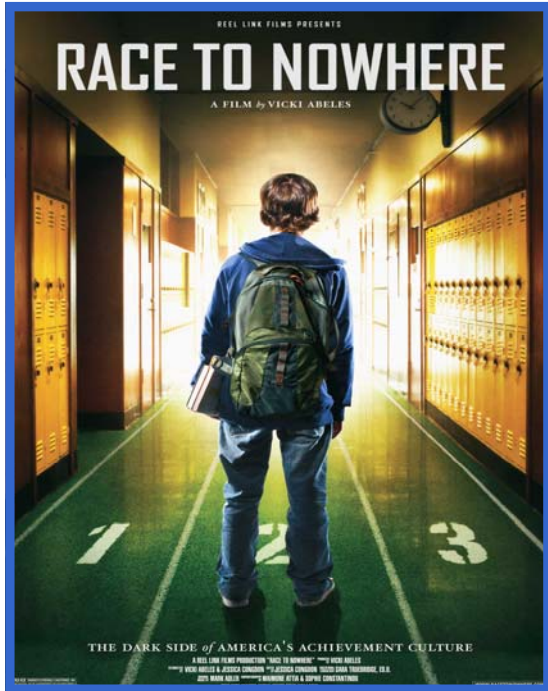
Eighteen youth who served on the Commission worked to influence youth issues and create positive change in the community. The Commission focused efforts on two priority areas—youth substance use prevention and youth emotional health and well-being.

## Impact

- Commissions and Ambassadors increased on several indicators of youth leadership and civic engagement.
- The Commission participated in a prescription drug take back and collected over 3,800 pounds of drugs – 60% of our DEA region’s haul.
- The Commission participated in a Community forum on Teen Drinking to raise awareness and educate the public on the effect of alcohol on the developing body and brain.
- The Commission hosted two screenings of the Race to Nowhere film. 195 people attended the events.



# Race to Nowhere Event



## Issue

The Placer County Youth Commission surveyed a sample of 191 students from a local high school and asked them to rank their top three stressors. Over half (55%) ranked academic stress. According to the 2009-2010 California Healthy Kids Survey, 35% of 9th graders and 38% of 11th graders in Placer County reported moderate or low connection to school and 42% have tried alcohol four or more times. Research shows that these outcomes are, in part, a result of over-tested, over-scheduled youth and the achievement culture society has created.

## What Was Done

The Commission secured \$2,100 in grant funding to host two screenings of the *Race to Nowhere*—a documentary that highlights the stressful ‘achievement culture’ that overwhelms today’s youth. Each screening ended with a facilitated discussion about the topic and ways to take action to create change.

## Impact

- 195 community members, students, parents, educators, principals, and school board members attended the screenings.
- 99% rated the event as excellent or good.
- 97% reported that the event increased their awareness of the issues impacting young people’s social and emotional health and well-being.
- 78% reported that the screening challenged them to re-conceptualize their definition of success.



*Panel members at the Auburn screening answer questions and provide personal insight concerning the current education system.*