



extension  
**IMPACTS**

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## Volunteers gain skills to lead today's youths

### Situation:

Adult volunteers are the mainstay of the Wyoming 4-H Program. Success depends upon the knowledge and skills volunteer leaders have and can pass on to the youths and parents in clubs. These leaders can directly accomplish the program's goals for positive youth development of all participants. In 2007-2008 in Teton County, there were 84 active leaders at all stages of experience and expertise. Forty-seven percent of these leaders joined the 4-H program within the last three years. Program assessments compiled over three years revealed the need for leadership training beyond the basics of 4-H. New and experienced leaders identified the following topics as essential for success within their clubs: behavioral management of youths, teaching youths of different ages within the same club, record books, and making meetings fun.

With topics identified by the current 4-H leaders, curriculum was created to match these needs as well as incorporate the essential elements of 4-H and positive youth development theories.

Funding to implement the curriculum was provided by the Teton County 4-H Council. Expenses for this project included training notebooks and *Questions for Guiding Experiential Learning* field guides for every leader completing training.

Throughout the 2007-2008 program year, five two-hour leader training workshops were held with 40 new and experienced leaders participating. Sessions included information and practice about the basics of the 4-H program, planning and conducting a model meeting, ages and stages of youth development, the experiential learning cycle, and risk management.

Supplemental trainings were also held after Teton County 4-H Council meetings to add an educational component to this meeting time. Thirty-eight leaders and Junior Leaders attended these supplemental trainings.

Finally, an e-newsletter was created to give bimonthly educational help, activities, leader recognition, and Character Counts! information. This was sent twice to the entire volunteer staff.

### **Impacts:**

After completing the leader training workshops, 100 percent of participants said the training was beneficial in helping them in their role as a 4-H leader. Some of their testimonials included:

- “The information about conducting meetings was most helpful to me.”
- “I will use the record book as a structure to plan my year – set goals, plan community service, set a schedule.”
- “I learned a lot about the 4-H structure and what is expected of leaders as well as members.”
- “I have never thought about planning for different age groups ... the ages and stages information was most helpful.”
- “This training reinforced the notion that the 4-H members are all different, and I need to be thoughtful in various ways to teach them.”

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*— Leader training participant*

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