

## **Exceptional People, Innovative Practices**

*We know people are our strength. In fact, attracting, training, supporting, and rewarding our youth, volunteers, and employees is our most important investment. We want people to flourish, to have a chance to change their lives because of 4-H.*

Oklahoma

### **4-H Volunteer Core Competencies**

#### **Situation:**

A hallmark of the 4-H program has been its strong volunteer leadership base. With changing demographics, many volunteers are not willing to make a long-term commitment, and many people are not willing to volunteer at all unless they have a well-defined set of expectations. For these reasons, a consistent training program with basic core competencies was needed for leaders and educators who were responsible for volunteer development and management.

#### **Program Description:**

The Oklahoma 4-H Volunteer Certification Process is a management system for identifying, selecting, orienting, training, utilizing, recognizing, and evaluating volunteers working within the Oklahoma 4-H program. In 2000, there were 2,217 certified volunteers in the Oklahoma 4-H program. The certification process ensures a safe environment for youth involved in the OCES 4-H Youth Development program; provides documentation for volunteer activities and strengthens liability coverage for volunteers under the State of Oklahoma's Tort Claims Act; and assists in the selection, tracking and placement of volunteers.

In an effort to further strengthen the management of the Oklahoma 4-H volunteer certification system, a Volunteer Action Team comprised of volunteers and extension educators from each district assisted in identifying a set of *4-H Volunteer Core Competencies*. These core competencies are recognized as the minimal knowledge 4-H volunteers need to effectively carry out assigned roles and responsibilities in planning, conducting, and evaluating an individual, local, and/or county program. The competencies are basic knowledge and skills that provide an understanding of 4-H and assist in creating a strong foundation for 4-H programming.

There are two primary audiences for the competencies: (1) Extension educators – Training the Trainers, and (2) 4-H adult and teen volunteers. Competencies have been grouped under the following headings:

**Unit 1** “*This is 4-H.*” – Understanding who and what 4-H is, why 4-H project work is done, how local clubs operate, county organizational structure, and the roles and responsibilities of those in leadership positions.

**Unit 2** “*Getting the Most Out of the 4-H Experience.*” – How to develop 4-H projects, identify and use resources, the purpose for activities and events, the 4-H recognition mode, and the 4-H Life Skills Model.

**Unit 3** “*Being a 4-H Volunteer.*” – Ages and stages, experiential learning, teaching methods, and diversity.

One unit will be introduced annually. County educators will receive support materials, evaluation tools, and training one year prior to a statewide focus at all levels.

**Stakeholder Satisfaction:**

The extension educators are being trained and encouraged to use a *varied and diverse set of educational techniques to work competencies into county programming*. The successful measurement of an individual’s level of competency will require presenting the information on more than one occasion and by more than one means of delivery. Methods for delivering core competencies to 4-H volunteers will include one or more of the following: volunteer training (L, C, D, S), newsletters, displays, Web page, correspondence, etc.

**Accomplishments and Impacts:**

Sixty-six extension educators participated in first Unit 1 training, and a minimum of one Extension Educator per county is required to attend the training. Each participant received a printed guide and CD-ROM as a tool for delivering and reinforcing the identified competencies. The guide and CD contained teaching outlines, PowerPoint presentations, a home study series, handouts, resources, and evaluations.

When asked, “How do you plan to use this information?” responses included:

- ! “Our county is very unorganized; we need this information to present at leader meetings.”
- ! “Work into existing activities and use resources in county newsletter.”
- ! “Blend with current programs and training already planned.”
- ! “This is what new extension educators need when they begin a job. This tool will save time and help put out fires before they get started.”

**Resource Commitment:**

Participants paid \$10 for the resources.

**Collaborators:**

Volunteer action team, composed of adult 4-H volunteers and extension educators, assisted with program development.

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**Other Base Program Areas this Program Applies to:**

Leadership & Volunteer Development

## Youth Leadership Program

### **Situation:**

Preparing motivated individuals to take prominent roles in shaping the future has been a hallmark of Extension. With the major changes affecting our community today — busier family schedules, mothers working outside the home, and single parent families — it is becoming harder to find adults who have the time to volunteer. These changes in the family structure have had a significant impact on our community through high rates of juvenile delinquency, gangs, crime, youth violence, child abuse, teen pregnancy, school dropouts, and low self-esteem among young people. The 4-H & Youth Committee of the Extension Advisory Committee felt that there is great potential in teen leaders setting positive examples for other teens and having more time to volunteer. The goal of this program was to identify teens who have shown leadership potential and provide them with training that will motivate them to believe in themselves, make the most of their potential, and become self-sufficient leaders of society, both now and in the future. Teens want to be like everyone else. Instead of going along with the crowd, we would expect these participants to become positive role models among their peers and accept leadership roles in their school and community.

### **Program Description:**

The program included 25 students in grades 9-11. Five students from each of the five high schools in Jefferson County were given the opportunity to fill out applications, along with an adult who served as mentor to challenge and motivate the teens to take a leadership role in actively completing the program.

Eight 3-hour lessons were offered to provide a series of training opportunities which guided these teens from leadership development to community issue awareness and on to action in giving back to the community. Lessons included: Leadership Styles and Skills, Stress and Time Management, Confidence Building, Etiquette, Identifying and Dealing with Personality Types, Communication Skills, Teamwork and Group Dynamics, Issue Identification and Discussion, Vision and Goal Setting, Dealing with Conflict, & Business and the Economy. In addition to hands-on participation, the program included tours to learn how our city, county, and state governments operate. Tours included the State Capitol to meet their State Senators and Representatives and visit with the Lieutenant Governor, the County Courthouse, Quorum Court, Juvenile Detention Center, and City Hall. Participants spent a weekend at the Arkansas 4-H Center to take part in the ExCEL Ropes Team-Building Course. While at the center, each team developed a plan for a community service project, which they conducted in their community. Tours of agriculture, business, industry and finance taught them about the importance of these four areas of local economy. The program was finalized with an awards program recognizing the outstanding leaders as recognized by their peers. Two students who were voted to be the most outstanding were awarded trips to 4-H Citizenship Washington Focus in Washington DC.

### **Stakeholder Satisfaction:**

This program was a collaborative effort between the Arkansas Extension 4-H program and the

Junior League of Pine Bluff, with Extension taking the lead in providing programming and facilities. The Junior League provided financial support, transportation, refreshments, and meals for the participants. Seven 3-hour lessons were held, along with a weekend trip and an awards banquet. The Junior League was so impressed with the quality of the program that they agreed to finance it for another year and have committed to seek funding for continuation of the program in the future.

**Accomplishments and Impacts:**

As a result of the program, the teens gained knowledge and skills to take leadership roles in planning and conducting a community service project in their community. It was apparent by the quality of service projects that they completed on their own that they got a lot out of the program. Some of their projects included organizing a school cleanup, Easter baskets, visits in costume to a housing project for the elderly, a beauty contest, and entertainment for a nursing home. Evaluations after each session and positive comments from parents show that the students felt positive about the knowledge they gained and the time they spent. The students felt that other students should be offered this opportunity. One of the students commented that she would never have believed that a group would be able to work this well together and trust each other as much in that length of time.

**Resource Commitment:**

The Junior League of Pine Bluff awarded a \$6,275 grant to conduct the program. They have agreed to finance the program for another year and have committed to seek funding from other sources for continuation of the program.

**Collaborators:**

This program was collaboration among the Extension 4-H program, the Junior League of Pine Bluff, and local high schools. Applications were taken to each high school principal and school counselor. They were asked to identify and recommend five students with emerging leadership qualities and an adult mentor to participate in the program. The principals excused the students from school for a trip to the Capitol.

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**Other Base Programs This Program Applies To:**

Leadership & Volunteer Development

## **4-H Teens Increase Leadership and Life Skills Experientially**

### **Situation:**

Young people have basic needs critical to survival and healthy development, including a sense of: (1) safety and structure, (2) belonging/membership, (3) self-worth and ability to contribute, (4) independence and control over one's life, (5) closeness and several good relationships, (6) competence and mastery of skills, and (7) self-awareness (*Pittman, K. and Fleming, W., Center for Youth Development and Policy Research, Academy for Educational Development, Washington, DC*). A Search Institute study identified 30 developmental assets that youth must have to avoid risk-taking behaviors. The more assets young people have, the less likely they are to engage in problem behaviors, and the more likely they are to engage in positive, pro-social behaviors (*Benson, 1996*).

The RI 4-H Teen Leadership Program strives to empower youth to reach their potential – their capacities – by focusing programs on these developmental needs and asset-building theories. Today's youth face many challenges in their journey to adulthood: peer pressure, family breakdown, school pressures, stereotyping, violence, substance abuse, sexuality, parental relationships, etc. Life skill education in decision making, problem solving, cooperation, teamwork, communications, responsibility, planning, organizing, critical thinking, concern for others, accepting differences, mentoring, self-motivation, work ethic, personal safety, etc., helps to prepare youth to effectively face these challenges. The RI 4-H Teen Leadership Program seeks to increase these skills, thereby increasing the safety net for youth in RI communities.

### **Program Description:**

A partnership of RI 4-H youth development paid and volunteer staff and 4-H teen members has developed a year-round experiential 4-H Teen Leadership Program, focused on the development of decision making, problem solving, and life skills supporting the basic needs of adolescents. Primary audience was 4-H teens, statewide, 12-18 years of age. The five major program components include: (1) *State 4-H Teen Conference*, a 3-day conference held in December planned by and for teens, focused on leadership development, character education, consumerism, workforce preparation, and critical and ethical thinking as it applies to current issues. Teens identified additional leadership skills they felt they needed to work with groups. These skills formed the core curriculum for the (2) *State 4-H Leadership Camp*, an intense 2-day program during February school vacation week. Special emphasis was placed on skills to work with younger 4-H club members. Topics included leading and teaching skills, team building techniques, communication skills, mentoring, conflict resolution, motivation, group management, and understanding and appreciating differences. This training helped 4-H Teens to plan, present, and evaluate the (3) *RI State 4-H Junior Conference* held in May for 4-H members, 9-12 years of age. Teens taught four major workshops in environmental science, foods and nutrition, creative arts, and fishing/aquaculture, as well as leading team-building experiences, recreation, and performing arts programs. (4) The *State 4-H Teen Council* provided year-round supportive leadership development experiences in group process, planning and organizational development, decision-making, and responsibility.

Representatives from the Teen Council serve on state 4-H Program Planning Committees, the Eastern States Exposition Committees (regional), the State 4-H Advisory Committee, the Rhode Island 4-H Club Foundation, and the (5) *New England 4-H Teen Conference* Planning Committee. This Conference provided train-the-trainer experiences and peer leadership training under the theme of “A 4-H Odyssey: Discovering the Past, Celebrating the Future.” In its 6th year, this conference brings together teens, staff, and resources from 5 of the New England Land- Grant 4-H Programs.

**Stakeholder Satisfaction:**

This program required a .5 FTE 4-H Youth Development commitment, plus a cadre of adult volunteers and middle managers. Programs were ongoing throughout the year, building skills from program to program. Most of the workshops, seminars, and program activities were planned by and for teens, in partnership with adult advisors, thus assuring participant and stakeholder satisfaction.

**Accomplishments and Impacts:**

About 125 youth, 12-19 years of age, reported improved decision making, cooperation, teamwork, communications, conflict resolution, responsibility, planning, critical thinking, mentoring, work ethic, and personal safety skills through completion of these educational experiences.

About 65 4-H teens demonstrated learned leadership skills by successfully planning, presenting, and evaluating the State 4-H Teen Conference, State 4-H Junior Conference, and the New England 4-H Teen Conference. Twenty teen leaders demonstrated their group leadership, mentoring skills, and program development skills working with 55 4-H junior members at State 4-H Junior Conference. A total of 63 4-H teens were active members of the State 4-H Teen Council, serving on committees, as officers, or as representatives on State 4-H Policy and Fund Raising groups.

**Resource Commitment:**

About \$15,000 is generated in private funds to support these programs. Funds are secured through registration fees, fundraisers, scholarships, and program support from individual and business donors and through a RI legislative grant obtained by a former 4-H member who is now a state senator.

**Collaborators:**

Rhode Island 4-H Club Foundation, Southern Rhode Island 4-H All-Stars (alumni group), RI Department of Environmental Management, and the 4-H Youth Development Programs at the Universities of Maine, Vermont, Massachusetts, and Connecticut.

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**Other Base Program areas this program applies to:**

Natural Resources & Environmental Management; Leadership & Volunteer Development; Nutrition, Diet, & Health; Family Development & Resource Management

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*Kentucky*

**4-H/Youth Development Volunteer Administration Academy**

**Situation:**

During the 1980's, the Kentucky 4-H program was caught up in the numbers game. 4-H agents were evaluated based upon numbers, particularly the number of youth enrolled in 4-H projects, programs, camps, and activities. In an effort to satisfy affirmative action guidelines while simultaneously boosting 4-H membership numbers, agents were strongly encouraged to introduce 4-H clubs in schools, particularly in grades 4-6. In the overwhelming majority of counties, 4-H school clubs were led by agents. This, of course, breeds a vicious cycle. In order for an agent to receive a higher merit raise each year, the number of youth reached must have increased annually. Traditions die hard. Twenty years later, there are still numerous 4-H agents in Kentucky who serve as “leaders” for 40 or more school clubs each month. Not surprisingly, agent retention and burnout, not to mention volunteer utilization, have become important issues.

**Program Description:**

The Kentucky Volunteer Administration Academy is an intensive, year-long series of three, 3-credit-hour graduate courses that equip and empower Kentucky 4-H /Youth Development agents with the tools, resources, and knowledge necessary to assess their current 4-H programs, envision opportunities and possibilities, garner support from key stakeholder groups, and develop the volunteer resources necessary to achieve previously unrealized goals. Achieving these goals makes a significant positive impact upon youth and adults in the community by transforming the county 4-H /YD program from an agent-delivered to a volunteer-delivered program. The Academy meets monthly for two consecutive days in a retreat-like setting. Classes are held at the Kentucky Leadership Center, State Parks, Kentucky State University, or Asbury College.

**Stakeholder Satisfaction:**

Participants must be willing to make a commitment to:

1. serve as a volunteer coordinator and a volunteer program manager;
2. the spirit, vision, and intent of effective volunteer development and utilization;
3. fully participate in the meetings and activities of the Academy;
4. serve as a mentor in the professional development of other 4-H agents;
5. be willing to take educated risks;
6. gain the support of their area program director, county colleagues, and their 4-H Council.

Pre- and post-test assessment tools utilized to gauge the impact that the VAA makes on both agents and county 4-H councils include: The spectrum of agent-volunteer relationships (Stivers & Culp, 2001); 4-H /Youth Development agent’s volunteer development activities (Kohlhagen, 1999); How well do you delegate? (Smith, Hodson & Safrit, 1992). Additionally, utilizing the SWOT profile and creative problem solving process, agents collaborate with their county 4-H

councils to develop a county action plan. The identification of meaningful goals and action plan, as well as their ability to accomplish their goals and carry out their action plan, is an assessment source. Agents are engaged in a research project (agent's time study) in which participants log the amount of time they devote to all aspects of their job on a daily basis. The time study includes three cohort groups and is designed to explore the differences in the amount of time devoted to program management, program delivery, volunteer administration, and all other components of their job, as well as explore how time management changes over the course of the year. The three cohort groups include: a) agents enrolled in the VAA (volunteer administrators), b) agents not enrolled in the VAA who identified themselves as being interested in volunteer administration, c) agents not enrolled in the VAA who are not known for volunteer utilization.

### **Accomplishments & Impacts:**

*By April 1, 2001* (90 days after beginning) the following results were documented:

1. Three counties had added a total of 8 new 4-H council members (5 males, 1 African.)
2. Six new leader-led clubs had been initiated.
3. Two counties gave responsibility to volunteers for county-wide activities.
4. A local newspaper reporter wrote a 4-H feature.
5. Three agents reported a personal paradigm shift; "school club leaders can be volunteers!"
6. Three county 4-H councils encouraged agents to recruit volunteer school club leaders.
7. All 10 counties wrote an county action plan. Two common themes emerged: recruiting 4-H council members *and* developing a 4-H marketing strategy.

*By July 1, 2001* (six months after beginning) the following results were documented:

1. All 11 agents reported personal paradigm shifts: "People will volunteer" and "4-H programs can be volunteer driven."
2. A total of 9 new leader-led 4-H clubs had been introduced.
3. A total of 13 new 4-H council members (in four counties) had been recruited.
4. School clubs are led by volunteers this fall in 5 counties.
5. Agents in 6 counties reported that the creative problem solving process revitalized their 4-H councils and now focus on mobilizing to achieve goals.
6. Kenton County introduced a sewing mentor program, which utilized 9 volunteers to teach 4-H clothing members sewing skills. (Teaching was formerly provided by the agent.)

### **Resource Commitment:**

No external funds were generated. Agents are reimbursed for travel, overnight lodging, and per diem. Travel expenses and course supplies for Dr.'s Culp and Stivers are paid by the 4-H Department.

### **Collaborators:**

Wendy Stivers, Ph.D., 4-H/Youth Development Specialist, Organizational Systems

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## 4-H at the Youth Ranch

### **Situation:**

According the U.S. Census Bureau, Idaho is home to 165,360 juveniles between the ages of 10 and 17 years. Each year an estimated 10,000 of these youth have some form of involvement with the juvenile justice system. A relative few pose enough of a community risk that the courts commit them to the custody of the Department of Juvenile Corrections for placement in juvenile correctional programs. However, of these who are committed the Idaho Department of Juvenile Corrections often sends youth to the Idaho Youth Ranch, located in Minidoka County, for such offenses as auto theft, burglary and vandalism. Because staff at the Idaho Youth Ranch feel strongly about helping the youth who are sent there develop responsibility and personal values, they have chosen to partner with the local extension staff in offering the youth at the ranch the opportunity to be in 4-H.

### **Program Description:**

The audience for this particular 4-H program is youth sent to the Idaho Youth Ranch in a rural county in Idaho, Minidoka County. Many of the youth at the Youth Ranch have been victims of abuse where anti-social behavior was a way of life. Others are dealing with substance abuse and lack of trust issues. Of the 56 youth at the Youth Ranch last year 33, almost 60%, chose to be in the 4-H club, making it one of the largest 4-H clubs in the county. The staff at the Youth Ranch chose 4-H as a way of helping youth learn personal responsibility and develop skills they can use when they leave the Youth Ranch. The average stay at the Youth Ranch is ten months. Project choices available to 4-H members at the Youth Ranch include; computers, growing vegetables, community service (helping U.S. Forest Service clear trails and build fire pits for campers), and animal projects including steers, horses, pigs, rabbits and chickens. The number one goal of the program is to teach youth to take responsibility for their own behavior and take advantage of a second chance.

### **Stakeholder Satisfaction:**

The FTE commitment has been small, primarily two county faculty in Minidoka County plus staff at the Youth Ranch and some additional support from other 4-H volunteers in the area. With almost 60% of the youth at the ranch choosing to be in 4-H, the satisfaction of the audience is high. Few youth that are sent to the Idaho Youth Ranch have any experience in working with animals. However, Youth Ranch staff feels strongly that such experience as learning to handle a horse helps build their self-esteem. Working with plants and animals is part of the broad curriculum at the Youth Ranch.

### **Accomplishments and Impacts:**

The goal of the program is to help youth develop personal responsibility and job readiness – being to work on time and putting in an honest day's work. There is significant evidence that is happening. The youth raise cattle, corn, potatoes and beans, which are all served in the cafeteria. They clear trails, build fire pits and do routine clean up at Walcott State Park, preparing it for overnight campers and day use. They show their market livestock projects at the Minidoka County Fair.

Last year the youth from the Youth Ranch sold seven steers and fifteen hogs in the Market Animal Sale where they received a share of the sale price. In spite of having little or no experience around livestock, youth from the Ranch have earned Grand Champion Showmanship honors in the beef show ring the past two years.

**Resource Commitment:**

This program does not require external funds to operate. The staff support comes primarily from Idaho Youth Ranch staff and Cooperative Extension staff in Minidoka County. Project materials are purchased from the operating budget for the Youth Ranch. Occasionally local residents donate project materials.

**Collaborators:**

This program is carried out through collaboration between the Cooperative Extension System and the Idaho Youth Ranch.

**Contact Person:**

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**Other base program areas this program applies to:**

Natural Resource Environmental Management, Community Resource and Economic Development, Leadership and Volunteer Development, Agriculture

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*Kansas*

**People Builder's Playshop - Because Teamwork Is More Than a Game**

**Program Description:**

According to H. Stephen Glenn, author of the highly acclaimed program *Developing Capable People*, "our learning must pass through the following four levels if it is to permanently change the way we see the world: (1) the experience itself, which can come in many forms, (2) what we identify as significant in the experience, (3) our analysis, based on our reason of why it is significant, and (4) our generalization, which results from our unique perceptions of what future value the experience has for us."

Research has shown that initiative activities, or cooperative learning exercises, improve group communication, team work and problem solving by taking each participant through each stop of this process. Group leaders who use initiative activities, however, often forget to "process" the group so that each step in the cycle is completed.

Jim Cain, expert in challenge initiative education, notes that the facilitator has the greatest impact on the success or failure of a program. Volunteer managers and leaders of youth programs may be aware that initiative activities exist, but few are adept at implementing and processing the activities. Members of this audience have both expressed interest in improving

team building and facilitation skills and need experience and training in this area.

The goal of the project was to develop confident and capable individuals who can create cooperative teams to address issues and develop youth into productive citizens in their respective communities. By the end of the 6-hour course, each individual will design an appropriate plan to use with a particular group, as well as have a variety of contacts for future programming efforts.

The target audience was 50 volunteer managers, youth group leaders and educators primarily in the metro county area of Sedgwick, Cowley and Butler counties.

Participants in the course gained skills in:

1. Evaluating the needs and goals of a group
2. Planning specific initiative activities to address the needs and accomplish group goals.
3. Leading the initiative activities
4. Processing and debriefing the experience with the group
5. Delivering the information and skills gained with their respective groups.

The workshop included a variety of learning methods so that participants would be exposed to different teaching methods which would enhance their teamwork building strategies.

Participants modeled the “do, reflect apply” approach. Each participant received a notebook with handouts and a “toolbox” of teaching tools to use in the implementation of the program.

#### **Stakeholder Satisfaction:**

Objectives of the program were measured by the use of post workshop feedback form

1. Participants went home with a written implementation plan that developed during the workshop.
2. Participants could name 3 local resources of initiative activities
3. Participants completed a written self-assessment of their knowledge and skills that showed increased comfort and knowledge in leading groups through initiatives
4. Participants used their new knowledge and skills in working with at least 25 people.

#### **Accomplishments and Impacts:**

*What:* 50 people learned team skills and increased their capacity to develop and strengthen teams in their communities and work environments

*So What:* 50 trained leaders taught team building skills to 1,238 youth and adult audiences  
One team of youth designed and presented a class to their peers at Discovery Days

*Now What:* The People Builder’s concept was developed into a state wide program delivery system the following year. The Camp Action Team used the format, content, curriculum, and marketing pieces to offer 5 locations of training throughout the state of Kansas and reached 156 people.

**Participant Comments:**

“I wish that I would have brought more of my staff. This would have been so helpful to them.”  
“I had no idea that today would be so much fun and that I would learn so much that I could use.”  
“Thanks for providing the toolbox and all the resources. And for making us write down our plan. Now I can go home and put it to action.”

**Resource Commitment:**

Kansas 4-H Foundation Millenium Grant: \$975, The Boeing Company: \$1,000

**Collaborators:**

Kenny Allen, Director of M.O.S.E.Y. Outdoor Adventure Society  
Sedgwick County Extension Council, Cowley County Extension Council

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Photos and a computer generated slide show program are available on request.

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*Texas*

## **Master Volunteer Programs Continue to Grow!**

**Situation:**

All research concerning agencies of the future leads us to know that expanding the outreach and programming components through all volunteer efforts is essential. In the area of volunteerism, master volunteer programs are at the exemplary level of volunteer development and management. The “master” concept continues to grow in Texas.

**Program Description:**

More than a year ago, the video and handbook, “Master Volunteer Programs-An Orientation for Agents” were distributed across the state. As the result of continued development of new Master programs the video is currently scheduled to be updated. In addition to the video and handbook, county Extension agents also were provided with bimonthly lessons and fact sheets to be used in a “cafeteria style” format to enhance volunteer training. This is collectively called the *Volunteer Management Tool Box* notebook. The target audience covers all areas of the population including rural, suburban and urban audiences. Lessons and Fact Sheet Tips are appropriate for the horticulture, agriculture, family consumer sciences and 4-H & youth development areas.

**Stakeholder Satisfaction:**

Master programs continue to be a priority of Texas Cooperative Extension and volunteers like the prestige and accomplishment it provides to them.

**Accomplishments and Impacts:**

More than 100 low income families have been helped in the Master Home Buyer program to develop a plan for becoming homeowners in the future, the Texas Master Gardening program is the biggest in the country according to a recent survey from California. There are over 6000 volunteers giving more than 225,000 hours of service in 90 counties.

**Resource Commitment:**

External funds to support Texas Cooperative Programs come from private sources, grants and consumer fees.

**Collaborators:**

Collaborators include: Community Health Departments, the Chicago Board of Trade, Texas Fisheries & Wildlife, Public and Private School Educators, Apparel and Home Interior Consultants, Realtors, Chambers of Commerce, Public Housing Personnel, Texas Legislators, Environmental Protection Agency, Solid and Hazard Waste Management Agencies, Local producers, Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission, Child Care Agencies, Law Enforcement Agencies, Social Service Agencies, Various Military Bases throughout Texas, Retail Sales Personnel, Local Water Districts, Community Family Education Units and local government and elected officials, the Department of Public Safety, Children's' Protective Services, Real Estate Brokers, Mortgage companies, and Community Developers.

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*Texas*

## **4-H Livestock Master Volunteer Program**

**Situation:**

In Texas, population and potential 4-H audiences continue to grow while staffing and funding levels generally remain the same. The major livestock project areas in Texas include Market Steer, Lamb, Swine and Meat Goat. A survey in 2000 showed over 38,000 entries in local and county livestock shows involved in these livestock project areas.

With such a strong 4-H member project base, a large number of expert volunteers are recruited and trained, seeking additional challenges within their discipline area. The 4-H Livestock Master Volunteer program provides them with an additional training opportunity.

In District 1 (Panhandle) of Texas Cooperative Extension the inaugural Texas 4-H Livestock Master Volunteer program was held in the area of swine in 1997. Additionally, training's for Sheep (1998) and Beef (1999) were conducted. As a result of these pilots, the first state wide training for Swine was held in 2000 in conjunction with the Texas Pork Producers Association annual meeting. Also a Texas 4-H Goat Master Volunteer training was held in 2001 in

conjunction with the Howard College Goat Camp for youth.

**Program Description:**

The 4-H Livestock Master Volunteer program empowers adult volunteers and has increased the impact through a broadening of available human resources. The key to a successful master volunteer program is primarily centered around a strong volunteer project base.

The purpose of the 4-H Livestock Master Volunteer program is to (1) teach 4-H project subject matter to members and volunteers in the county, (2) provide support to 4-H members and volunteers, and (3) to give leadership to learning opportunities for members, parents, and volunteers in the county. These master volunteers help 4-H members realize the benefits of developing a sound well-rounded project.

The minimum requirements for a Texas 4-H Master Volunteer program are:

- (1) 20 hours of training coordinated by the Texas Cooperative Extension,
- (2) Approval signature of the volunteers county Extension agent and District 4-H Leadership Team,
- (3) Work closely with 4-H project members and volunteers in their county regarding project experiences, and
- (4) Complete 50 hours or more of payback time given to the 4-H program.

**Stakeholder Satisfaction:**

Master volunteer programs exist throughout many program areas in both urban and rural counties across the state. Master volunteers are only one type of volunteer used in Extension. With increased demands that require Extension agents do more to address the priority issues in their communities, volunteers are an obvious resource, but master volunteers are not necessary or appropriate for every Extension office.

The agent needs to expend time organizing the training and managing to utilize volunteers more effectively. The most effective master volunteer programs are those where the agent identifies tasks for the volunteer to do that will relieve the agent of duties to justify the time required to organize and manage the team of volunteers.

**Accomplishments and Impacts:**

A total of 46 4-H Swine Master Volunteers were trained at the first state wide training. More importantly 22 have already completed their certification form and required hours. These individuals have provided over 2,350 hours to the program and reached 9,434 people. Their payback hours included such activities as validation committees, educational programs, project supervision, project selection, record keeping, facility upkeep, artificial insemination, breeding and farrowing, Ag. boosters, showmanship clinics, assisting new families, club manager work, judging project shows, and elementary school programs.

The certified master volunteers revealed a significant increase in their subject matter knowledge of the swine industry, their ability to carry out leadership responsibilities, and in their ability to effectively plan 4-H swine project activities. The following are a few testimonials:

- (1) "I have been involved with 4-H for seven years now and have watched several of our 4-Her's

as they go through the local schools and then on to college. A high percentage of the 4-H members go to college and graduate. They are more confident and comfortable with themselves and well rounded. I feel that the 4-H program has a lot to do with turning out such good young adults.”

(2) “I held six clinics this past year and I felt the 4-Hers really enjoyed these. I worked with about 30 children and each one of them made the auction at our county show. We focused a lot on showmanship and out of six buckles given away, my kids (who attended the clinics) won five of them!”

(3) “I am very proud of my members this year. There was a total of 16 pigs from our Spring 4-H Club and 13 of them went through the sale. The 13 that went through the auction are the ones that listened to me and followed your program.”

Texas Cooperative Extension in District 9 (Southeast) is expanding the model to cluster or multi county trainings. This format will provide volunteers more flexibility in their training programs and locations.

**Resource Commitment:**

External funds were received from commodity groups and university allocations.

**Collaborators:**

Collaborators include: The Texas A&M University System, Texas Tech University, Texas Pork Producers Association, and Howard College.

**Contact Person(s):**

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