



4-H Healthy Living Mission Mandate Fall, 2008 Update

A review of the history of 4-H clearly demonstrates that the overwhelming focus, for more than 100 years, has been on three core mission mandates. In 1902 A.B. Graham and O.J. Kern brought science to young people through projects focused on soil testing and corn test plots; in 1927, National 4-H Camp was held on the National Mall to acquaint youth with their government; and in 1956 4-H was invited to join the President's Council on Fitness. Countless historical events, speeches, priority setting exercises, and people such as those mentioned previously have helped define our mission mandates as: (1) Science, Engineering, & Technology; (2) Healthy Living; and (3) Citizenship.

The three mission mandates align with the research and programmatic efforts of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension (CSREES), and Land-Grant Colleges and Universities. The 4-H mission mandates clearly articulate program priorities, nationally, but also provide state and county administrators, faculty and staff the framework to organize and focus their program development, management, and implementation strategies. This focus ultimately leads to stronger and more effective youth programs, staff and volunteer development, evaluation, and financial and human resource support.

The following represent key activities and accomplishments of the Healthy Living task force that first met in early 2008.

Strategic Framework

A significant focus of the Healthy Living task force has been on the development of the strategic framework that will guide the mission mandate for the next five years. At the recent face-to-face meeting on October 8 & 9, members of the task force worked in teams to revise and edit the framework document that is now in its final review by the task force members. In the coming months, we look forward to sharing this with the 4-H community.

Literature Review

A component of the initial work of the Task Force was to commission a literature review related to healthy living. Dr. Laura Hill, Washington State University provided overall leadership for the development of the document that is in its final revision stages. The full document, executive summary, and fact sheets will be shared in the future; as well, the authors will be seeking other professional publications to submit manuscripts for consideration.

Curriculum Review

Work continues to identify curriculum and programs that are focused on healthy living topics in the Cooperative Extension System. An initial review of respondents has shown that additional efforts are needed to collect the information so a refined strategy was developed by the team. Once the team feels that they have exhausted their efforts to collect curriculum and programs, a review will be initiated to identify high quality, evidence-based curricula that can be used as models for growth and future funding under the Healthy Living umbrella.



External Partners

A survey was sent out to members of the National Collaboration of Youth to seek their assistance in identifying programmatic efforts related to healthy living. As well, a review of other organizations (i.e., NIH, CDC, etc.) was also conducted to identify their programmatic focus/efforts. The work of this committee will help inform potential, future programmatic and funding collaborations and partnerships based upon the strategic framework.

Future Efforts & Initiatives

The following are areas that members of the task force will be working on over the next six to twelve months in support of the Healthy Living Mission Mandate:

- Development of a logic model;
- Healthy Living State Liaison structure and responsibilities;
- Communication plans to the system;
- Identification of strong curricula with potential for impact evaluation;
- Development of a resource guide for healthy living programs;
- Identify goals in terms of youth/families engaged; and
- Develop strategies for how we identify and work with potential partners.

Our History: 4-H Healthy Living

To review the history of programming, decisions, events, and people involved with the 4-H movement and this specific mission mandate, please go to: http://www.national4-headquarters.gov/about/4h_programs.htm

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