Concept: Belonging

Essential Element: An Inclusive Environment

An inclusive environment is one that creates a sense of belonging, and encourages and supports its members with positive and specific feedback. Healthy groups celebrate the success of all members, taking pride in the collective efforts of all participants.

What Does this Look Like in a Club?
- Youth members encourage each other during fair judging, at sports events, or through academic challenges.
- Members feel they belong to a specific club or group while knowing that they also belong to larger state and national organizations.
- Signs, banners, t-shirts and other recognitions are used to identify the youth’s clubs, organizations and symbols.
- All members feel free to invite friends, family and new members to events throughout the year.

How do we support this Element in our clubs?
- Use club shirts, hats or signs to identify your club.
- Actively seek new members to diversify your group.
- Provide multiple types of recognition, not just to those who excel in competition.
- Involve everyone. All the time! Use ice breakers and other get acquainted activities.

Inclusive Activity/Ice Breaker
1. Have all members stand in a circle.
2. Give one member a ball of string and ask them to hold onto the end of the string and throw the ball to someone they have something in common with (without letting go of the string).
3. Have the group continue one at a time, with each member holding onto the string as they throw the ball to the next member.
4. After everyone has had the ball one time, they should all remain “connected” to one another via the string “web” they have created.
5. Now challenge them to reverse the order and untangle the web by passing the ball back to the person who passed it to them one at a time. As they do this, have them state one thing that is different about them and the person they are throwing the ball to.

Character Counts! Connection

"When we exclude someone’s perspective, we lose an opportunity to gain knowledge."

Dr. Andre M. Perry

“Developing trust depends on your ability to include EVERYONE!

A Person of Character Respects and Includes everyone's view, is tolerant and accepting.

Demonstrate Responsibility by recognizing that including everyone is the right thing to do!

Make decisions based on the entire group’s input and ideas, not just those of a few!

Take time to get to know each member, their likes and dislikes and respect their differences.

Pursue the "common good" by including everybody!"