

4-H MENTORING PROGRAM **makes**

Situation:

Across America, 68.7 percent of American youth are living in non-traditional families, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. This may include stepfamilies, single-parent households, grandparents, and/or non-relatives. According to the National Center for Health Statistics, one out of five children has learning, emotional, or a behavioral problem due to the family system changing.

The Search Institute's framework of Developmental Assets points out, "Studies of more than 2.2 million young people in the U.S. consistently show that the more assets young people have, the less likely they are to engage in a wide range of high-risk behaviors. The average young person experiences fewer than half of the 40 assets." When reviewing the list of 40 developmental assets, more than half of them incorporate another caring adult, the community, and/or activity involvement.

In 2010, the Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) created a partnership

with National 4-H Council and 50 state 4-H programs to create prevention programs for at-risk youth ages 8 through 17 years.

With assistance of the OJJDP/ National 4-H Grant Program, a 4-H Mentoring Program was created in Uinta County. The mentoring program was modeled after the 4-H Mentoring: Youth and Families with Promise Program in Utah, a prevention program designed to enhance the developmental assets of at-risk youth. This program consists of three components:

1. One-to-one or group mentoring in which volunteer mentors work directly with youth to build academic and social skills.
2. 4-H involvement that serves to enhance social competencies through leadership opportunities, community service, and group projects.
3. Family Nights, which are group activities that bring the child and their families together in constructive activities as a means to foster family bonds by utilizing referrals

from social service agencies, school counselors, teachers, and administrators, and other youth-serving organizations. The program has grown to encompass a set of youth that have been matched to caring adults from within the community.

The short-term goals include:

- Improved academic performance
- Enhanced social competencies
- Strengthened family bonds
- The long-term goals include:
 - Increase developmental assets
 - Decrease juvenile delinquency

Impacts:

Structural development is vital to the success of the Uinta County 4-H Mentoring Program. Development of youth, parents, and mentor handbooks provide stability through program summaries, guidance on goal achievement, commitments by all participants in the program, understanding of

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lasting impact on youth

relationships, success measures, and steps to concluding the relationship. Marketing pieces have resulted in relation building with social services agencies, religious services, and schools as measures to recruit youth into the program.

Results have been tracked using evaluations of parents of the youth in the program and mentors.

Performance measures show:

- On average, mentors and mentees spend somewhere between four and 12 hours together a month.

- 100 percent of the parents expressed how positive and happy they were with the mentor / mentee matches.
- Number-one challenge faced by matches is time.
- 100 percent of the parents state their children love doing activities with their mentors.

- Family participation at family nights continues to thrive.

Using a Likert scale, parent and mentor evaluations show all youth have:

- an increase in self-confidence
- their outlook on life has improved
- More positive changes and/or positive choices since enrolled in the program.

