

Cross-collaboration leads to **GREATER UNDERSTANDING OF SERVICE**



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Situation

Campbell County is viewed as a high-income area, but many families are living in poverty. Some youths who spend countless hours at the local Boys and Girls Club come from families struggling to provide basic needs. This facility houses hundreds of youths throughout a given year with many activities available including crafts and games. Campbell County 4-H partnered with Boys and Girls Club to offer weekly service learning activities to provide additional activities that develop lifelong skills. The Campbell County 4-H educator sought funding through the Helen Miller Foundation, along with two other 4-H educators in Converse and Niobrara counties, to develop *Helping Hands Healing Hearts*. Each county received \$500 to develop activities in which youth dive into service learning.

Those involved in community service activities as youths are more likely to continue those roles as adults. Together with the Boys and Girls Club members, an assessment was formed of groups in the community in need or under appreciated. Members then created another sheet of activities in which they could give back. The program evolved from there; weekly activities were designed to motivate youths into service learning. For 23 weeks, youths wrote thank-you cards, created seasonal gifts, and learned about various branches of the armed forces.

Multiple community members came to the Boys and Girls Club including A Brotherhood Against Totalitarian Enactments (ABATE) Toy Store, the K-9 officer, and the Honor Guard. Youths learned the importance of various organizations as well as creating an awareness of “I can make a difference in my community.”



LEARNING TO AT-RISK YOUTHS

Impacts

Boys and Girls Club members collected trash around club grounds then returned to discuss how they had made a difference. Members evaluated the year-long afterschool program using a Likert scale to measure their increased knowledge, understanding, and appreciation for all groups affected. Members rated greatly, minimal, no, and not applicable. Of the 98 youths, 74.4 percent had a greater knowledge, understanding, and appreciation for their local community

and 82.2 percent of their non-local community with activities relating to the soup kitchen, Ronald McDonald House, and the Christmas ABATE Toy Store. After writing thank-you cards, 84.2 percent of youths rated a greater knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of their own families.

Many youths at the Boys and Girls Club have had negative relationships with local law enforcement, stemming from family disturbances or even substance abuse. About 80 percent of youths developed a greater knowledge, understanding, and appreciation for law enforcement after the *Helping Hands Healing Hearts* afterschool program. A consensus was formed that, when youths were involved with service learning activities, not only do they make a positive impact in their communities, they also make a difference in their own lives.

Approximately \$300 was spent to offer 98 youths this year-long afterschool program.

With a few hundred dollars, youths developed a greater understanding they can make a difference.

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