



Sublette County 4-H

# *Afterschool Program*

leads partnership providing for early release Fridays and more



Top, students worked with staff and volunteers learning how to cross country ski. Left, Scotia Auld works with high school intern Emmilee Eaton learning about the Science of Energy. Right, youths during a 4-H Free Friday.

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## Situation

Sublette County 4-H daily after-school programs entered their sixth year in fall 2014. Programming has relied on 4-H staff members, volunteers, and governmental agencies in Pinedale. Other educationally enriching opportunities for Pinedale youths have been special interest, short-term classes through the local Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) program. These four-to eight-week classes are taught typically once a week by instructors paid by BOCES. Recreation opportunities exist through the Pinedale Aquatic Center but only for youths 8 and over. The Sublette County Library also provides programming for youths on limited days.

In the spring of 2013, the Sublette County School District No. 1 Board of Trustees voted to revise the school district calendar beginning fall 2013 to include an early release time each Friday for more teacher in-service and collaboration (professional learning communities) time.

Anticipating this change in the school calendar would be burdensome for working families, Sublette 4-H afterschool immediately began searching for solutions. The 4-H afterschool program could not singlehandedly undertake the burden of an additional 20-plus hours a week

without significant impact to staffing and budget. Thus, the program convened a meeting of a number of community partners that offer programming to the 4-H afterschool program. These included Sublette BOCES, the Sublette County Library (Pinedale), the Pinedale Aquatic Center (PAC), and the Pinedale Fine Arts Council. This group developed a plan to share Friday programming so each group would provide activities for youths once per month with the occasional fifth Friday per month being a collaborative program. To not affect parent budgets, the groups agreed to provide free programming, thus designating the program as “Free Fridays.”

Thirty-six Free Friday sessions were held over the school year with a variety of activity options for youths including national theater performances, science, technology, engineering, math, cross

country skiing, and art programs. A total of 915 youths participated in the multiple sessions of Free Fridays. Sixty-five were new contacts for the Sublette County 4-H Afterschool Program with an investment of over 432 hours, which includes 132 hours of 4-H time.

## Impacts

The ability of five very distinct organizations to come together to solve a community crisis is the most important impact of this collaborative effort. Had this solution not been found, many of Pinedale’s families would have been forced to restructure their work lives or, worse, send children home on Friday afternoons without supervision.

Year-end surveys clearly show this collaborative program met the need of working families, and that parents were very grateful for the efforts. Additionally, organizers of Free Fridays used survey feedback to slightly restructure the program for 2014 incorporating one central online registration site for all Fridays and keeping the location of the renamed “Friday Fun Zone” at the Pinedale Aquatic Center. Survey feedback indicated the same location each Friday was preferred; each partner still provides programming on their assigned Friday but at the PAC rather than their own facility.



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<http://bit.ly/subcoafterschool>

Sublette County 4-H  
Afterschool

- Garden of Eatin’
- Goals
- Photo gallery
- Pinedale Afterschool
- You Choose Tuesday