



THE LATEST  
NEWS AND RESEARCH  
4-H CENTER FOR  
FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT  
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA  
DAVIS, CALIFORNIA  
FALL 99

# CENTER UPDATE

## 4-H Center for Youth Development



### DIRECTOR'S NOTES

“I have had my solutions for a long time. But I do not yet know how I am to arrive at them.”

*Karl Friedrich Gauss (1777-1855)*

By the time you read this the workgroup ratification process will have been completed. The opportunities for us as youth development professionals to make a difference, in areas we think differences are most needed will begin to unfold as we begin to assess possibilities plan the strategies for achieving the potential of our collegial workgroup team, and take action. Change – a key ingredient of all innovation – is in the wind. What differences, are we committed to, and what changes are we willing to make? What changes are we committed to make? How will we bring and express our individual craft-skill and artistry as youth development professionals to the workgroup goals? In writing this iteration of “Director’s Notes” I recall a book I had The Encyclopedia of Ignorance...a compendium of chapters written by experts...where each described an unanswered question that, if understood would lead to a breakthrough in their field. This column certainly has plenty of questions to be answered as we chart our path toward “making the best better.”

As youth development professionals within the University of California,

continued on page 2



## UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA FACULTY PROFILE

Marilyn Townsend, M.S., R.D.  
Cooperative Extension Nutrition Specialist - Nutrition Education

by Ramona Carlos, Research Associate, 4-H CYD

It has been a somewhat circuitous route which brought Marilyn Townsend into the world of Cooperative Extension and nutrition. Marilyn is currently a Cooperative Extension Specialist in Nutrition in Meyer Hall at UC Davis. Marilyn became very interested in studying nutrition while teaching near a military base in the upper Mojave desert. She had a degree in biology and chemistry and loved teaching. During seven years of teaching, Marilyn had the occasion to teach in an affluent district in the Bay area, and, after witnessing the extreme poverty in the desert surrounding the base and the relative wealth of the urban area, became intrigued with how way of life affected overall nutrition.

Marilyn’s interest resulted in a Master’s degree in Nutrition Science from Kings College at the University of London. Upon her return to the US after living in Europe for five years, Marilyn began working in Extension. “Extension was a great fit with my education and nutrition backgrounds.” By this time, Marilyn had life teaching credentials in California for elementary, middle and high school and community college, and also had experience teaching the learning disabled. She began her Extension career as a Staff Research Associate at UC Berkeley designing programs and giving training workshops. These

continued on page 3

# News from the Workforce Preparedness Initiative Team

by Ella Madsen, Research Associate, 4-H CYD

In mid-July the WPI Team held their first organizational meeting. After a lively discussion of the workforce preparation needs of youth and our resources for meeting those needs the team drafted a mission statement and established goals to guide their future efforts.

## Mission Statement

Our mission is to create a comprehensive program of information, resources, training, and programs that address the needs of community-based programs, schools, parents and youth leaders in their efforts to help youth prepare to succeed in the world of work. To accomplish this mission, we have identified the following goals:

1. Identify and document successful programs and strategies for collaborating with school-to-career partnerships, schools, and other community-based organizations. These programs and activities and the experience and

expertise that has been developed through them can be of benefit to everyone in the state. To accomplish this the workgroup will identify, evaluate and prepare the necessary support materials to replicate these model programs.

2. Provide resources to parents, especially those of middle school and elementary school.

3. Connect to the National Workforce Preparedness Initiative efforts and incorporate them into state efforts.

4. Develop a clearinghouse of workforce preparedness information and resources that would be available to all interested parties in the state.

5. Identify/develop programs that provide work-based learning and career exploration opportunities such as internships, apprenticeships and community service particularly in the

areas of agriculture and natural resources.

6. Develop resources and guidelines for integrating career exploration and workforce preparation into 4-H projects and after school programs.

The realization of these goals will be guided by certain core needs and values namely: supporting and encouraging low SES/at-risk youth; networking and collaborating with other CE disciplines and other youth-serving organizations and agencies; seeking funding and support from other sources; building bridges between formal and nonformal learning experiences and the world of work.

We invite and encourage anyone interested in projects related to helping youth prepare for the world of work to join the WPI team. Contact Ella Madsen at [ermadsen@ucdavis.com](mailto:ermadsen@ucdavis.com) ☞

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## Director's Notes continued from front page

we are charged with bringing together basic research and its use in practice. While these are often seen as opposing demands, Schoenfeld (1999) provides us with a model that brings synergy to the dilemma (Figure 1)



FIGURE 1. Schoenfeld's progression from research to use

Some workgroups will probably focus on innovation within the existing parameters of our youth development work (refining, fine tuning, making needed adjustments, improving...)

while others invent – perhaps inventing entirely new ways – to reach the youth development PPAC goals. Simply put, is the work of our workgroup a remodel job, or a new adventure? Both? Neither?

What are some of the attributes of effective planning teams both inside and outside “the box?” What will we have to give up? What will we have to bring into being and how will we go about doing that? Individual and collective attributes such as cooperation, follow-through, participation, communication, flexibility, buy-in, maintaining team spirit, listening to others, letting our imaginations soar, and having fun come to my mind in

recalling strong teams. Some of the behaviors of effective teams include visualizing the end goal, and then designing plans and activities to reach the goal, and agreeing on an overall timeline. Certainly our stage I workgroups are charged with fructifying these initial steps.

Effective communication... What communication structures do we need to have in place in order to support the workgroup members in reaching goals? What individuals, groups or agencies will we need/want to involve?

So many questions...so many possibilities... ☞

References for Director's Notes on page 6

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# Developing Assets in Youth

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by Sally Stanley, Research Associate, 4-H CYD

The Center has an ongoing interest in developing assets in youth. Ideally, we would like to work toward the goal of seeing that all children in California have all the assets possible. But, there is also a need to acknowledge that belonging to the 4-H program is in itself an asset. Number 18 to be exact under *the constructive use of time*. According to the list of assets developed by Search Institute, a young person should be involved for three or more hours a week in some type of youth program. Often, some adults will argue that youth need “hang out” time. Although it is important that youth have some unstructured time, too much free time has been related to “risky” behaviors (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1992). Leisure time does not mean idle time. It means time that is “freely chosen” to engage

in an activity for its own sake. Aside from helping youth avoid risky behaviors, youth programs have been shown to contribute to identity development, create challenges, develop skills, provide safe places for youth to go, and put youth in contact with positive caring adults (Leffert & Scales, 1999, p.107). In other words, youth programs lead to the development of several assets. So, one way we can continue to develop assets in our California youth is to encourage their involvement in the 4-H youth program. At a workshop on asset development at the 1999 State Leadership Conference, attending adults discussed several ways they believed the 4-H program develops assets in youth. However, all agreed that the 4-H program is the “best kept secret” in town. σ

Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development (1992). *A Matter of Time. Risk and Opportunity in the Non-School Hours. Recommendations for strengthening community programs for youth*. Washington, D. C.

Scales, P. C. & Leffert, N. (1999). *Developmental Assets. A Synthesis of the Scientific Research on Adolescent Development*. Minneapolis, MN: Search Institute.



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## Faculty Profile continued from front page

were generally nutrition education programs for county staff and 4-H leaders. One of the programs Marilyn developed is “Eating Right is Basic for 6-8 year olds” and “Eating Right is Basic for 9-10 year olds”, which is used extensively California. Marilyn is currently developing a nutrition education program for middle-school youth. “Developing programs generally takes a long time. These are primarily prevention interventions. It takes a long time to test effects and revisions always have to be made following multiple field tests.”

Presently Marilyn is giving leadership to the first large-scale youth EFNEP outcome evaluation in the nation. Marilyn says that while the data will be collected from over 9,000

students in classrooms randomly assigned to treatment and control, the sample size is the number of classrooms because of clustering effects. “Clustering is a huge research design issue for evaluation of community interventions.” The evaluation data is expected to be analyzed this spring.

While developing research designs for program evaluations is one of Marilyn’s research interests, so is examining the issue of food insecurity in relation to obesity. Food insecurity is the phenomenon of feeling like there isn’t enough of the food someone wants, which leads to feeling insecure about acquiring it and therefore over-consuming when able to have it. Marilyn has been studying the prevalence of obesity among food

insecure women. With the levels of obesity rising in this country, Marilyn’s research will be a welcome source of information for those in the public health sector including EFNEP and the Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program (FSNEP). This and other obesity work has been the focus of doctoral research. Marilyn has been studying for her Ph.D. in the Nutrition Department at Penn State University during the last five years while working as a CE Specialist at UCD. “I am tired of spending every evening and weekend studying. The end is near. My fingers are crossed!!”

If you would like to reach Marilyn, she can be contacted at (530)754-9222 or mstownsend@ucdavis.edu. σ

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# Child Development Policy Advisory Committee Meeting

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by Ramona Carlos, Research Associate, 4-H CYD

The Child Development Policy Advisory Committee (CDPAC) provides public policy recommendations to the Governor, the Legislature and relevant State Departments concerning child care and child development issues. The Committee meets monthly at the State Capitol and the meetings are open to the public. For more information, contact CDPAC at (916)653-3725, or search their website at <http://www.cdpac.ca.gov>.

The Child Development Policy Advisory Committee met on September 16, 1999 and the focus was on "Overview of the Little Hoover Commission Report: Now in our Hands: Caring for California's Abused and Neglected Children."

Jim Mayer, Executive Director of the Little Hoover Commission and Peter McNamee, Project Manager of the Little Hoover Commission gave a summary of the findings of a study the Commission undertook on abuse and neglect in the foster care system. Their presentation emphasized four areas:

## NEED FOR MORE COORDINATION IN STATE

The Department of Social Services is responsible for child welfare, foster care, and adoption programs, but dozens of state and county agencies provide essential services to abused children. Similarly, programs are funded from several federal and state sources. The diffused authority and narrow funding streams leave gaps in the safety net.

Overall recommendation: There should be established an Office of Child Services, headed by an

Undersecretary of Child Services, responsible for preventing child abuse and caring for abused children.

## PREVENT CHILD ABUSE WITHIN FOSTER CARE SYSTEM

The State does not focus enough resources on preventing child abuse in the first place. The success of prevention, early intervention, and family preservation programs rests in part on the assessment tools used to determine when children can safely stay with or be returned to families.

Overall recommendation : The State should expand cost-effective child abuse prevention and early intervention efforts. Directives for the Governor and Legislature include requiring consistent performance evaluation, leveraging local resources and replicating proven methods.

## WORKING TO ENSURE THAT FOSTER CARE IS TEMPORARY

The foster care caseload is growing because more children are entering the system, they are staying longer in foster care, and too many children return to foster care after a failed attempt to reunify them with their families. One in four children in foster care in California spends more than 4 years in care, often due to lack of "reasonable efforts" made by county child welfare agencies to reunify the families.

Overall recommendation : The Undersecretary of Child Services should lead a partnership of social service and judicial agencies to reduce the time children are in temporary

placement. Directives for the Governor and Legislature include assessing compliance with time requirements, funding services and requiring inter-jurisdictional case management.

## LONG TERM OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE

Child abuse and foster care programs have been historically shortsighted, limiting the assistance provided to children when they are reunified with their families or adopted by new families. Quite often the reunification or adoption fails and children cycle back into the system, further scarred and even less likely to find permanent homes where they can grow into independent adults.

Overall recommendations: The adoption process is unnecessarily tedious and cumbersome, frustrating the goal of increasing the number of successful foster care adoptions, particularly for older children. The Governor and Legislature should expedite adoptions and require an analysis of reunification failures, expanded adoption outreach efforts and improved post-adoption support. The Undersecretary should develop a strategy for improving the success rate of permanent placements. Legislation should be enacted to assist youth in transition from foster care to independent living.

This is a brief summary of some of the findings and recommendations made by the Little Hoover Commission. For the full report, refer to the Commission's website at [www.lhc.ca.gov](http://www.lhc.ca.gov). ☺

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# California CYFAR Project

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The California Children, Youth and Families at Risk (CYFAR) Project consists of three collaborative programs that encourage and promote positive developmental outcomes for youth and their families, through a focus on family dynamics and child-parent interactions. Our community programs are in Glenn, San Francisco and Santa Barbara counties, and each distinctive program reflects the needs of the local communities of which they are a part.

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## COLLEGE BOUND UPDATE

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by Faye C.H. Lee, YDA,  
San Francisco County

The 1999 - 2000 school year brings strengthening of past successful efforts and building of new components of this collaborative program. E.R. Taylor Elementary School continues to emphasize raising academic standards for all students. The family support component of College Bound, led by Gina Mendicino in collaboration with the Family Connections Family Resource Center, will consist of four major activities.

- The teen support group will be expanded to two groups that

meet weekly to explore current and future career and life choices.

- The parent empowerment component will be strengthened with an 8 - 12 week course on Community Leadership for parents and community residents by Fe Moncloa, YDA, Santa Clara County. Those trained in this course will organize and plan the College Bound culminating event in the spring which in the past have focused on educational and career options.
- The teen group will also be working with Faye C.H. Lee, Youth Development Advisor, San Francisco County to conduct a research project to interview past E.R. Taylor students who have gone on to college.
- The findings from this research and other academic literature will be used to produce a booklet for parents on how to prepare children for college beginning at an early age.

A busy and exciting year awaits the third year of the College Bound Program ☺

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## NEW CYFAR PROJECT COORDINATOR & EVALUATOR

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by Robyn Caruso,  
CYFAR Coordinator and Evaluator

Warm winter greetings! As some of you may know, in late July Bernadette Sangalang left her position as CYFAR Project Coordinator and Evaluator to attend a doctoral program in North Carolina. I was hired in late October to fill Bernadette's position and I have been working furiously to complete our Annual Report. For nearly six years, I have worked as a Social Science Researcher, with the majority of this time as a University employee. In 1997 I received a Master's degree in Social Work from the California State University, Sacramento, and in 1994 I graduated from the University of California, Davis with a Bachelor's degree in Psychology. I am very excited to be on board working on such an innovative project and I look forward to meeting more of the 4-H family.

If I can be of any assistance or if you would simply like to introduce yourself, please do not hesitate to contact me at (530) 752-2766 or racaruso@ucdavis.edu. ☺





## Pathways to Potential 2000

4-H Center for Youth Development  
Annual Spring Conference  
Buehler Alumni Center  
University of California at Davis  
February 29 & March 1, 2000

Workshop strands: Research & Development, Project Planning, Collaboration

Networking: Tuesday evening - Sunset Riverboat Cruise on the Sacramento River!

Registration information mailed in December

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