

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

by James Grieshop, Ph.D.

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Part II: A Trek Underway The 4-H Pilot Leadership Plan

In the last Director's Notes I provided an overview of plans for implementing the revised 4-H Staffing Plan. It was noted that the Staffing Plan (now re-labeled as the 4-H Pilot Leadership Plan) would feature the direct involvement of three Advisors (one for each of the three Agriculture and Natural Resources regions), the Statewide 4-H Program and the UC Davis-based 4-H Center for Youth Development. Specifically, Jane Chin-Young from Marin County and the North Coast and Mountain Region, Marianne Bird from Sacramento County and the Central Valley Region, and Steve Dasher from San Diego County and the Central Coast and Southern Region are the experienced Advisors/Academic Coordinators who are now leading and overseeing the implementation efforts. Each cluster is unique and provides many interesting possibilities for exploring and testing the consequences of the new pilot leadership efforts.

The Pilot effort also features a close working relationship between the 4-H Center for Youth Development and the Statewide 4-H Program. While the 4-H CYD is responsible for the evaluation of this effort, we are working with Sharon Junge

and her staff at the Statewide 4-H Program, as well as with the cluster leaders, to help design, implement, and evaluate efforts to improve professional skills and volunteer skills development. Cooperation and collaboration are the working principles of this effort. For example, in the first week of this month a volunteer development training program was organized by Steve Dasher for the enhancement of skills of 4-H educators. This training was not only for educators from his cluster area but representatives from the other two cluster regions also participated.

In the UC Davis-based 4-H CYD, Dr. Aarti Subramaniam, known to many of you, was hired in the past month to be the Project Scientist who will oversee the evaluation efforts, as well as the coordination of efforts with the three cluster leaders and with the Statewide 4-H Program. We are fortunate to have Aarti on the team as she has been an invaluable resource for many of you in 4-H and youth development as she worked with the 4-H CYD for the past years. Welcome to the trek, Aarti.

The journey for us all over the next three years will be challenging and demanding but rewarding and instructive. Welcome aboard.

Project Updates and General Information

About the CYD publications:

***Research You May Have Missed* focusing on Volunteerism**

The articles selected for review in *Research You May Have Missed* have been on topics relevant to the work of youth development professionals. These have covered issues ranging from parenting, diversity, health, and social and emotional development. We have reviewed articles about volunteerism, youth-adult partnerships, working with English language learners and community collaborators. Our primary objective has been to provide useful information that informs the work of advisors, program representatives and others with an interest in youth, and the articles selected have reflected the range of topics that are relevant. We have decided to change our approach of reviewing

articles on a variety of topics in every issue, to selecting one topic for review. For this issue, the topic is volunteerism. We know this topic is relevant and are hopeful the articles selected provide useful information for your work.

The selection of volunteerism as the topic of focus is also reflected in *Fountain of Youth*, a list of statistics which is published monthly through a collaboration between the 4-H Center for Youth Development and the California Communities Program. An effort will be made to align the two publications whenever possible. If you have any questions about *Research You May Have Missed*, please contact Ramona Carlos (rmcarlos@ucdavis.edu).

Specialist Update: Lenna Ontai

Currently, I am working on several projects related to parenting. First, I have been spending much of my time focusing on the "Creating Healthy Families" brochure series developed with the Families with Young Children workgroup. We have found that the use of the materials has significant and positive effects on the nutrition and parenting attitudes of parents with young children. We are currently working on extending this series into parenting workshops and testing this as a viable practice. Second, I have been involved in a multi-state project assessing rural mothers and their children over a three year period. My work on this project has focused on family health as it relates to parenting and child outcomes. The results of the work have demonstrated that family health can be considered a potential stressor that can ultimately undermine parenting and child well-being. I am working on extending this work to a sample of rural families from Iowa that have been followed for three generations. Lastly, I have been working with several graduate students on the Davis campus to investigate early mother-child interactions and children's social development. Most recently, I have been focused on investigating maternal story-book reading to pre-verbal infants and in relation to infants' social development into toddlerhood. This work has demonstrated that mothers establish reading styles with their children before children themselves become verbal partners but that infant characteristics, such as temperament, influence mothers' reading styles. Furthermore, these reading styles are associated with infants' social behavior in toddlerhood indicating that early verbal interactions are an important socializing agent even pre-verbally.

4-H Center for Youth Development

"The 4-H Center for Youth Development fosters collaborations in research and evaluation among UC Cooperative Extension professionals and UC campus-based scientists that deepen our understanding of youth development in the contexts of family and community."

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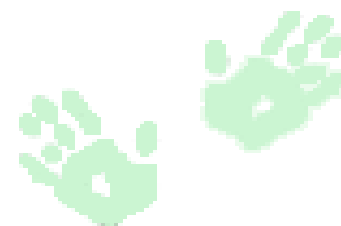
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Building a Database of Youth Development Training Opportunities

by Kelly Beaumont

During fall quarter, a database of information on professional development programs available to youth workers was developed as an online resource to provide information on professional development opportunities relevant to 4-H Youth Development staff and to other youth practitioners.

The collection of information includes both formal and non-formal programs, the institute or organization with which the program is affiliated, the educational opportunities available to the participant in each program, the requirements for entry and completion of the program, and additional relevant information. In addition the database also

contains information on which of the national 4-H PRKC domains (i.e., youth development, youth program development, volunteerism, equity, access and opportunity, partnerships and organizational systems) are addressed in the various programs. A majority of programs address theory and practice of youth development and youth program development. About a third address issues related to youth development organizations. Less than a third include content with regard to equity, access and opportunity or creating successful partnerships. Very few address the domain of volunteerism.

Containing information on a total of 25 certificate/

degree programs and six key organizations providing workshops and trainings, this collection is intended to be a fairly comprehensive preliminary list of the professional development programs available that can be further updated on an ongoing basis. Included in the database are nine Master's programs, three undergraduate programs (bachelor or associate degree), and 13 certificate/credential programs. Seven of the programs are offered either entirely or partially online.

The 4-H Center will be working with the Statewide 4-H Office to make this information available to staff online in Winter 2008.

Understanding Issues of Diversity in Volunteerism to Better Inform Volunteer Engagement in the California Context

by Aarti Subramaniam

At the Staff Development Day training in September 2007, Prof. Ken Culp from the University of Kentucky presented the VRKC framework that describes the competencies that 4-H volunteers need to be effective. This started a dialogue about the specific needs of the more diverse clientele of California 4-H. How can California 4-H staff better equip themselves to effectively engage (i.e., recruit and retain) a diverse volunteer force that represents the demographic of their urban and rural communities?

Graduate student researcher, Evan Schmidt is supporting a research team of staff from the

4-H Center, the Statewide 4-H Office and the Volunteer Development Workgroup to explore the commonalities and unique aspects with regard to successful volunteer engagement in diverse social and cultural communities, as well as identifying key resources in this area that are relevant to 4-H staff.

Preliminary findings based on the available research literature points to differing trends across a diverse spread of people and practices. Research in diversity and volunteering paints a complicated picture of how factors such as race, gender, class, religion, age, sexuality

and ability impact an individual's likelihood of volunteering and the experience that he/she has while volunteering.

The take away message so far is that we must broaden our definition of what volunteering can be and take into account the context from which people come together with the unifying desire to improve our communities and quality of life. In addition to analyzing the research base in this area, this research project also aims to showcase best practices with regard to the existing knowledge within the California 4-H YDP.

Evaluation Update of the 4-H Pilot Leadership Project

by Aarti Subramaniam

Since June 2007, the 4-H CYD has been involved with the Statewide 4-H office and the three Academic Coordinators to clarify the implementation and evaluation goals of the 4-H Pilot Leadership Plan. In brief, some of the key desired outcomes of the plan are to: create statewide consistency including improved communication; improve management and delivery of programs through effective engagement of program representatives; increase the effectiveness of 4-H YDP academics in applied research, creative activity and dissemination; and define and measure the new role of

the academic coordinator in providing support to program representatives.

The 4-H CYD's role with regard to specific evaluation functions are: providing formative guidelines for planning implementation; providing summative insights on what works, i.e., successes, barriers and how barriers were overcome; communicating the progress of the plan to the larger 4-H audience, as well as to gain insights that will inform the broader field of organizational change in the area of youth development.

The evaluation is following a case study approach, customized to the specific implementation

priorities based on geographic as well as staffing situations in each region. Comparative analysis is used mainly to contrast how "what works" in one region may or may not work in another region - to highlight the contextual factors that influence the success of the plan in each region. Qualitative data such as through systematic observation and interviews and quantitative data through surveys and secondary data sources are informing the evaluation. One key focus is to measure change over a three year period by comparing baseline information with ongoing yearly assessments.

Request for Presentation Proposals

The CYD is requesting presentation proposals involving youth development issues for the 4-H Center for Youth Development's "Youth and Culture" Seminar Series, Spring 2008. We would like to pair research and extension projects on each topic. Youth Development Advisors who would like to present on a particular subject for the seminar are asked to contact Nicki King (njking@ucdavis.edu), Ramona Carlos (rmcarlos@ucdavis.edu), or Aarti Subramaniam (asubramaniam@ucdavis.edu).



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