

Extension 'Cord

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Connecting People, Resources, & Knowledge

"Welcome to the Extension 'Cord, a monthly briefing paper from WSU Snohomish County Extension. Even though we have existed for over 100 years, we have realized that too many people are unaware of the diversity and impact of our programs. Each issue will highlight the purpose, activities and results of one particular program. The 'Cord will showcase the work of our 1,000 volunteers and 25 staff. Please do not hesitate to contact any of our staff for more information."

Curt Moulton, Extension Director



4-H Healthy Youth Development

Ace Program

Snohomish County 4-H, with support from the Boeing Company, is collaborating with the College of Liberal Arts at WSU. The Arts for Children's Enrichment, or ACE, program was developed to bring arts education to Washington youth; this unique collaboration enables staff and faculty of the university the opportunity to engage and educate youth across the state. 4-H youth from our county traveled to Pullman for the second year to learn background information to enable them to teach cultural arts programs to youth in our community. The 2011 hands-on workshops "Bits and Pieces: Mosaics from Around the World" and "Ink, Brush, and Scroll: Japanese Calligraphy" provide youth with a better understanding of how the relationship between art and culture and historical influence over the years. The 2010 workshops focused on mask making and cultural music.

This arts program, as well as all other 4-H programs, is designed to promote healthy living practices and contribute to positive development of youth; such outcomes are described as characteristics of effective mental health prevention programs (Weisz, Sandler, Durlak, & Anton, 2005). Upon return to the county, these 4-H youth leaders provide workshops to other youth at such activities as Super



Saturday and in collaboration with other youth agencies. Each year, the group has invited workshop participants and other youth to accompany them on a trip to the Seattle Art Museum to gain further knowledge and experience with other cultural art.

Dog Program Youth Leadership Retreat

4-H youth enrolled in the dog project were given the opportunity to participate in a weekend retreat developed to assist youth in developing leadership, empathy, and interpersonal skills. Program volunteers led sessions focused on active listening, validation of others' feelings and characteristics, and how to advocate for those youth who need assistance in difficult situations.

During the retreat, all members participated in the development of a full value contract; this process involves the creation of a set of ruling guidelines for participation that ensures appropriate interaction and concern for each other. Members have reported being able to implement the techniques taught during the retreat and volunteers have noticed the change in members during club and program activities. Experience providing, and the knowledge of the need for, support for one's peers has been found to enhance individual self-esteem

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and pro-social behavior; these factors have been positively correlated to mental wellness (Torres, 1995). A subsequent retreat will be held this fall and plans for a county-wide leadership retreat for youth in the program during the 2012-2013 program year.

Aiming for the Right Target

The Snohomish County 4-H Archery Program began with a vision of one volunteer and has grown to include over 40 youth and volunteers. Youth in this program are led in archery activities by volunteers who have received over 36 hours of training on youth development, risk management, and archery skills. Each Tuesday evening these youth attend meetings at the Evergreen State Fairgrounds to work on not only shooting skills, but are also engaged in experiential education geared towards enhancing life skills such as decision making, critical thinking, and working with others. Youth are taught how to care for their equipment, solve problems associated with hitting the target, and evaluate their performance. Problem solving and social skills development are two of the variables were found to enhance the positive effects of successful suicide prevention programs (Stice, Shaw, Bohon, Marti, & Rohde, 2009).

Beginning in the fall of 2009, the program now boasts members earning the right to participate in National 4-H Shooting Sports Competition. The Snohomish County 4-H Shooting Sports offers archery and small bore rifle disciplines. Volunteers are carefully screened and taught specific 4-H safety measures and teaching techniques.

Stice, E., Shaw, H., Bohon, C., Marti, C. N., & Rohde, P. (2009). A meta-analytic review of depression prevention programs for children and adolescents: Factors that predict magnitude of intervention effects. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 77*(3), 486-503. doi: 10.1037/a0015168

Torres, R., & Fernandez, F. (1995). Self-esteem and the value of health as determinants of adolescent health behavior. *Journal of Adolescent Health Care, 16*(1), 60-63. doi: 10.1016/1054-139(94)00045-G

Weisz, J. R., Sandler, I. N., Durlak, J. A., & Anton, B. S. (2004). Promoting and protecting youth mental health through evidence-based prevention and treatment. *American Psychologist, 60*(6), 628-648. doi: 10.1037/0003-066X.60.6.628



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