

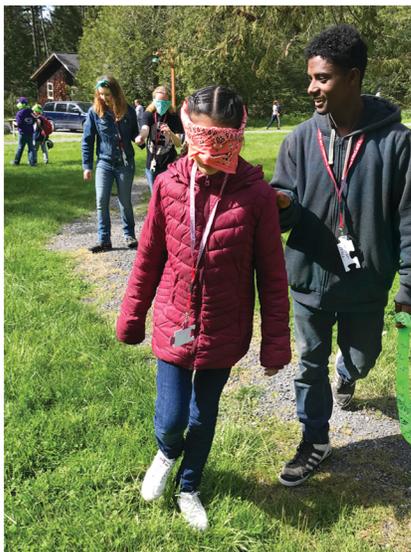


WASHINGTON STATE  
UNIVERSITY  
EXTENSION



## SAN JUAN COUNTY 4-H TEEN LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

*Fall 2019*



### ISSUE

As teens gain independence and autonomy, they seek out new opportunities to learn and grow with their peers. Traditional 4-H club opportunities may lose their salience for teens who seek out new opportunities, new challenges & new friends. The skills children have learned in 4-H before reaching adolescence can be capitalized upon if 4-H programs offer a model that is structurally coherent to their earlier experiences. Otherwise, teens will look for recreational opportunities in other places.

Access to statewide 4-H teen events for island-bound San Juan County youth is naturally limited by distance, ferry schedules, ferry fares, and the ability to find an adult able to chaperone. Teen participation from San Juan County in statewide rallies, summits, and conferences tends to be low or non-existent.

### RESPONSE

In 2018, the 4-H staff of the Northwest corner of Washington held the first Northwest Regional 4-H Teen Summit at YMCA Camp Orkila on Orcas Island. Because of its location on the waterfront of Orcas Island and its affiliation with YMCA, a partnership with Camp Orkila provided an attractive destination that is well-suited to a large group with diverse needs. Coordinators assisted with ferry reservations and transportation. Participation was made further possible by another community partnership with Pintail, a local barge. This allowed Friday Harbor youth a feasible way to participate in the event.

The 2019 Teen Summit was opened to youth not currently enrolled in 4-H. Partnerships with the San Juan Island Family Resource Center and the San Juan County Juvenile Court Services resulted in the attendance of three non-4-H youth and one non-4-H adult chaperone from San Juan County. Three additional non-4-H teens from San Juan Island were recruited by a 4-H member to attend.

Before each Teen Summit, a group of teens with representation from each of the four participating counties form the planning committee, which is responsible for designing and delivering workshops for their peers. The theme in 2018, Choose Your Own Adventure, revolved around "decision making." Under the umbrella of that broad topic, they addressed issues such as stress management, how personality affects decision making, and creating personal mottos as a guide for making tough decisions. The teen planning committee for the 2019 Northwest Teen Summit consisted of both returning and new teen leaders. Members of the teen planning committee designed and taught workshops around "problem solving," another life skill from the "Targeting Life Skills Model." Using the theme Puzzle-Mania, they created an escape room set in the camp cabins, taught workshops about solving problems with friends, and conducted 4-H Challenge activities to foster trust and teamwork.

At the conclusion of the 2019 event, youth participants selected "self-esteem" as the topic of the upcoming 2020 Teen Summit.



**QUOTES**

"I think that without the teens who put the whole thing together there wouldn't be a summit. I am so appreciative of each of them and would love to participate in the teen leadership portion next time!"

"I loved the escape room, I thought that was an extremely clever way to include the theme of puzzles and still work on team building and problem solving."

"I think that it [teen leadership at the Summit] may inspire other kids to want to be a leader as well."



**IMPACTS**

**Youth Results**

At the end of the 2019 Teen Summit, youth were asked which new skills they had learned to solve puzzles (*problems*) at the event.

Results were clustered into four main skill sets:

- Personal Skills (*e.g. mindfulness, patience, respecting differences*)
- Teamwork & Leadership Skills (*e.g. working cooperatively, help from others*)
- Analytical Skills (*e.g. using logic, following steps, organizing*)
- Communication Skills (*e.g. speaking up, sharing ideas*)

16 respondents gained personal skills, 8 gained teamwork and leadership skills, 6 gained analytical skills, and 8 gained communication skills.

Through peer engagement, and a strengths and assets-based approach, 4-H is promoting positive and healthy behaviors in youth.

**Youth Reached**

San Juan County teen participation in the event has increased from 9 in 2018, to 14 in 2019, thus becoming the most highly attended teen leadership event for San Juan County 4-H. Overall enrollment in the program has increased as well; in 2018, we welcomed 26 youth and 5 adult chaperones to the event. In 2019, these numbers jumped to 32 youth and 8 adult chaperones.

4-H helps young people develop a variety of life skills related to head, heart, hands, and health.  
*Life Skills Wheel, Hendricks 1996*

