ISSUE

According to the 2018 Healthy Youth Survey, youth health risks are common in Kitsap County. 35% of 8th graders and 40% of 12th graders experience depressive feelings, and 28% of 10th graders considered attempting suicide in the past year. 60% of 8th graders felt nervous or on edge and 50% were unable to stop or control their worrying. 31% of 10th graders and 45% of 12th graders report having used marijuana at least once. Fewer than half of Kitsap's 8th graders (48%) felt like they had an adult to turn to when they were sad or hopeless. 33% of 6th graders reported being bullied at school and 23% of 10th graders reported not feeling safe at school. Slowing these trends and improving health, safety, and resilience indicators for Kitsap's youth and teens is an important goal for Kitsap county.

RESPONSE

Due to COVID-19, in 2020, Kitsap County had 21 chartered 4-H Clubs throughout the county. These Clubs provide virtual experiential education through numerous digital platforms.

The 4-H youth development program offers a holistic approach to youth development that includes elements that reduce risk factors and also promotes protective factors such as building life skills and promoting developing assets that provides a successful transition to adulthood. Positive youth development does not target the prevention of negative outcomes, but rather focuses on the positive outcomes that we desire for every youth. All youth need at least one caring, supportive relationship in their lives. Volunteer leaders and fellow youth members provide this camaraderie.

4-H clubs provide a unique opportunity for long-term positive youth development through regularly scheduled meetings and activities. The Kitsap County 4-H program provides an opportunity for community connections with short term programming. After-school programming can be found in school districts across the county as well as in-school nutritional education in collaboration with WSU's Youth Advocates for Health! (YA4-H!) program.

Summer Day Camps provide an opportunity for engagement in learning and developing life skills. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 we were unable to offer Summer Day or Resident Camps during 2020.
QUOTES

"We can't wait to be back to meeting with our 4-H family in person."

IMPACTS

- Youth in 4-H experience leadership, youth-directed activities, friendship, and connection in their clubs. They also plan community service and outreach and educational events.

- Many club-involved youth learned about animal science, archery, cooking arts and crafts, and photography.

- Youth in special programs learned about environmental science, outdoor education, robotics, and nutrition.

- Adults learned about positive youth development, and more.

- The YA4-H Choices 4-Health program engaged teen teachers to provide nutrition and healthy living education to younger children.

123 adult volunteers contributed over 2,000 hours of service worth over $54,400.

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