

Title	LA/Orange Extension: Meeting needs, improving strategies and best practices. <i>Robert Franklin, Youth Development Agent in Denver, Colorado, will travel to Los Angeles, California to visit with Keith Nathaniel, County Director and Youth Development Advisor to learn about Extension programming delivery in the most urban state in the U.S., strategies and best practices.</i>	
Exchange Information	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Host Program</u></p> City: Los Angeles, CA Program Area: 4-H, Urban Ag. Staff Name(s): Keith Nathaniel	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Visiting Staff</u></p> City: Denver, CO Program Area: 4H Staff Name(s): Robert Franklin
Duration	Travel days = 4 days (2 weekend days, 2 weekdays)	
Program Change	<p>BEFORE the Exchange</p> In addition to gleaning information about Extension programming in Los Angeles, and 4-H delivery methods, meeting key players and community members, our office is also interested in specifically answering the following: How are your 100+ city clubs managed? Organization, training, recruiting, staffing, recognition, etc. What is the Extension office culture? Set up, chain of command, best practices (reporting, meeting, communication), overall morale, etc. How is 4-H and Club programming funded – Budgets, fundraising, sponsorships? What types (if any) of cross-program and/or cross-county activities exist? What questions can I answer for your staff about Denver or Colorado Extension?	
Objectives / Goals	<p><i>Develop prior to Exchange, what you plan to accomplish (Add as needed).</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Augmenting volunteer engagement plan with strategies utilized by LA County Extension. 2. Audit staffing models for recommendations for change in Colorado. 3. Develop at least one new program offering based on LA County successes. 	
Actions / Activities	<p>AFTER the Exchange</p> Goal 1: Volunteer engagement plan <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. (March 2015) Created and implemented system of tangible volunteer appreciation: youth participants involved in recording and writing what they appreciate about 4-H Volunteer Goal 2: staffing models <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. While similarities in county demographics of LA and Denver exist, the staffing model in California would be detrimental to the programming in Colorado (specifically Denver). By the end of 2015, Denver County is moving to install a mid-level management system, where volunteers supervise, develop and train other volunteers, and a team of volunteer managers report to the Extension Office. While this action is not a direct reflection of the Exchange trip, the conversations I had with staff in California does lead me to believe that as Extension changes it's staffing and programming priorities, we need to create a culture of greater 	

	<p>program capacity sustainability.</p> <p>Goal 3: New programming</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. (July 2015) Inspired by the various neighborhoods along several major roadways (i.e. Sunset Blvd., Hollywood Blvd., Crenshaw Blvd., Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.), Denver 4-H will invite youth from multiple cities to create a documentary about Colfax Avenue, which, like the aforementioned roadways, is beset by negative stimuli, yet has rich cultural history, and people and places vital to the strength of the entire city..."Colfax Culture Quest"
<p>Outcomes</p>	<p>AFTER the Exchange</p> <p>Goal 1: Volunteer engagement plan</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Any volunteer management system needs careful and consistent communication and support of volunteers and staff. LA County Extension does not have the staffing model, structure or capacity to engage volunteers and community partners about program delivery. For example, the Growing Experience in Long Beach has a vibrant community garden, managed by a community member (Master Gardener Manuel) who has great investment in the success of the garden. His efforts cannot be understated, but the Extension Office clearly cannot prioritize sending him resources to relieve some of the hours of work he puts in. This could come in the form of volunteers, youth, or both. However, LA County Extension staff cannot make that program a priority because of their staffing model, set out by the State. <p>Goal 2: staffing models</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Stemming from the above information, the program delivery staff in the 4-H program is dedicated to the management of the Club program, and their dedication is clear. Dawn, Roy and Charlene give personal, technical and training support to the club members, families and volunteers as necessary. LA County's club program is more than five times that of Denver County. The same is true for the Orange County program. Jason Suppes is the only staff available to volunteers and club members in his county, despite the overwhelming demand for more than just 4-H clubs. As such, in Denver, we are going to focus on empowering volunteers as they may be the only resource for program development, as Extension shifts its delivery/staffing models. <p>Goal 3: New programming</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. One of the greatest programmatic takeaways was learning about the 4-H Club in Beverly Hills that is connected to the Farmer's Market in the City. The volunteer club leader there has her finger on the pulse of city partnerships, and leverages the local library, Boy and Girl Scouts and a connection at the Greystone Mansion to operate the gardening club. This leveraging is an example we hope to follow in our programming, especially the Colfax Culture Quest, but in the science and cooking programs as well. One very compelling idea in the LA County Extension Office is the Docent program, where youth master gardeners could serve as content and programming experts on certain projects around the county. This idea

	<p>needs more support and development, but is undeniably suitable for Denver.</p>
<p>Resources Developed / Acquired</p>	<p>One of the most compelling printed documents provided during this Exchange comes from Dr. Rachel Surls, and the work she and her team do to forward the Urban Agriculture information from the University to the community at large. Dr. Surls develops the website and social media information, based on the research-based papers she has (with others) worked on to keep the clientele up to date. Another document came from Jason Suppes, who described the multi-year plan to engage millions of youth via programming among several community partners who share and leverage resources to improve the attitudes toward STEM, and the future of STEM in the lives of youth. Documents attached.</p>
<p>Reflection</p>	<p>While I did grasp a clear picture of much of the status of Extension work in California, learned about urban programming in a major metropolitan area, and met incredible people who are passionate about their work, I did not meet the all of the parts of my goals for this exchange.</p> <p>In the future, I would recommend an exchange begin with lengthy, planned, and perhaps facilitated introductions to involved staff, community partners and stakeholders, prior to the physical exchange occurs. This effort would accomplish many important facets, two considerations are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All parties can see and hear from one another before the exchange, which gives them the opportunity to discuss the plan and foci of the exchange; a schedule/itinerary can be established and planned for before landing in new location; travelling individual(s) can adjust exchange foci, based on initial conversations, rather than using predetermined questions/priorities established before proper introductions. 2. The introductions occurring before the exchange should be virtual, led by the host staff member, and be more than one opportunity to see, and speak to, any members of the host community pertinent to the exchange parameters and the travelling staff's office focus. <p>The length of the exchange should be no shorter than three (3) business days, and should most likely include a weekend, or non-business day, so that the exchange can include Extension work occurring during non-typical business hours (I arrived in California during the weekend, and was able to travel the county to explore and investigate the reach/breadth of Extension programming from the perspective of a layperson). Though three days may be sufficient, I would strongly recommend five days, so that travel to the surrounding communities is easy to plan, as it is clear effective and impactful Extension work hardly remains inside county lines.</p> <p>I also wish I would have taken more pictures, but, as this was my first exchange, and because we did not develop the itinerary together (Keith, my Director, me), I was not sure what types of documents (photos, videos, paperwork) to collect.</p> <p>The LA (and Orange) County area is an excellent match for an exchange, when trying to understand the complexities of Extension work, its stakeholders,</p>

	<p>community demographics and politics, programming and staffing priorities, and relationship with the home Campus. I would certainly recommend other urban Extension staff participate in an exchange in California, adding the above enhancements.</p> <p>Taken altogether, I believe if my exchange would have included the above enhancements, I would have gained more knowledge, and may have returned to my community with more tangible tools to impact my original exchange goals. To be clear, I learned a great deal about my role as an Extension professional in my own state; I have shared many lessons from my exchange (about California) with my Extension colleagues in Colorado; I have changed my own professional outlook on my career's future trajectory; and I have made more connections to add to my professional network as a result of this exchange.</p> <p>That said, I believe wholeheartedly in the opportunity for community serving professionals to learn from one another, and I also believe no Extension program is an island – which means even though we are in different states, we need to connect with one another regularly to keep Extension relevant and fresh in the minds of our clientele, because relevance is an issue for all of Extension in this country. I would certainly participate in more exchanges within the Western Center for Metropolitan Extension and Research in the future, as both a host and visitor.</p>

The Growing Experience Aquaponics project



Orange County orchard (experiment station)

