

4-H: Passport to Adventure

Background

With the successful conclusion of the Western Regional 4-H Volunteer Recruitment Campaign, a group of state 4-H program leaders have identified a need to develop a visual marketing product that could be used to effectively communicate core 4-H messages to non-Extension audiences. Often times, 4-H representatives are called upon to present to Chambers of Commerce, Kiwanis, Rotary and other community organizations, and we currently lack a modern, up-to-date visual portrayal of 4-H that can be presented to diverse community groups.

Through our shared experience with the volunteer recruitment campaign, we encountered many (informed) people who still had the image of 4-H being agricultural, rural, restricted to land-owners, etc. Marketing surveys in Montana and California have shown that our image is positive, but confused. Parents have indicated that they expect youth development programs to build self-confidence in their kids, develop leadership skills and provide a safe environment for learning. We provide these desired experiences; however, parents are unaware of the diversity of 4-H opportunities. There is also a lingering perception that because we are a governmentally-assisted program that we do not need financial help from the public.

Goal and Objectives

Goal: To enhance the public's appreciation for and understanding of both the historical and modern 4-H program in the West and provide 4-H with a competitive edge as compared to other out-of-school youth development programs.

Objectives:

- To develop more public support for 4-H
- To garner more private contributions to 4-H
- To result in more private foundation grant support to 4-H
- To attract more members and volunteers to the program

4-H: Passport to Adventure--This 10-minute HD-DVD is designed to educate key community leaders about the modern 4-H program. The video provides both an historical and contemporary look at the 4-H program which is over 100 years young. This video highlights examples of hands-on learning programs designed with specific planned outcomes and results.

Program highlights include robotics, dog agility, livestock judging, skateboarding, long boats, ATV, GPS, adventure challenge, science and film-making, high altitude weather balloons and other projects. Interviews with youth about their 4-H experiences emphasize fun and hands-on learning. Jim Davis, cartoonist of "Garfield" and 4-H alumni, is featured in the film and provides his own unique insights into the value of 4-H programs.

Developed as a tool to build support for and change public perceptions about 4-H, the film emphasizes that 4-H provides a safe place for kids, that it is for everyone, that it includes family involvement and adult mentoring, that it prepares kids for successful adulthood, teaches through learning-by-doing, and is based on proven, research-based techniques.

The video is intended to enhance public support and appreciation for 4-H and redefine what 4-H means to America. As a marketing video, this program can be used to generate

more financial and human resources in support of 4-H programs at the local, state, regional and national level.

Key Messages

4-H has a proud past and a bright future. For more than 100 years, 4-H has continued to adapt to and change with young people's and families needs and interests—from corn clubs to computer clubs. 4-H is available everywhere and to everyone—rural, suburban and urban, very young children and teenagers. In 4-H, you can dare to do what you dare to dream!

Key points emphasized in the DVD include references to--

- belonging, mastery, independence and generosity are essential elements for positive youth development for all children
- evidence of the difference we make in young lives, families and communities
- the importance of family involvement
- 4-H works purposefully to create citizens of the future
- 4-H is an investment in the future
- 4-H has continued to adapt and change to meet the needs of our changing society
- 4-H prepares kids for successful adulthood by engaging them now as active participants in programs that develop life skills such as critical thinking, decision-making and communications
- 4-H is a safe-place for kids
- 4-H uses "learning through doing" to engage youth in learning
- 4-H is available everywhere—all across the U.S. and in over 85 countries

Summary Points

4-H offers a wide variety of projects and activities that appeal to today's kids—from cooking to robotics to woodworking to animals to textiles. 4-H is all about science and inquiry learning. Since 1902, 4-H has provided exciting, hands-on opportunities for kids to apply the latest science and technology to investigate real-life issues and problems. 4-H does this through experiential learning where youth discover, learn and apply.

Audiences

- Civic Groups—Kiwanis, Rotary, Lions, Moose, Elks, etc.
- Chambers of Commerce
- Veteran's groups
- Teacher's unions
- Newcomer Clubs
- Agricultural Associations (Grange, Feed dealers, etc.)
- Parent/Teacher Organizations
- others

Customizing Your Presentation

Be sure to bring some of your own specific promotional literature with you to the presentation. Flyers, brochures, funding appeals will all help your audience connect what they see in the DVD to your local or state program.

Getting Action After the Video

Help 4-H become the best-known youth development program in the nation! After showing the video to any group, here are some things you can suggest as action steps to members of your audience--

1. Volunteer to help in your local 4-H program.
2. Recommend 4-H to at least one other parent, friend or colleague.
3. Visit the website of the state 4-H program and find out how to get involved locally
4. Visit a local 4-H event—afterschool program, event, activity or club meeting
5. Write a letter to the local newspaper about 4-H and its contribution to the community
6. Start a fund-drive to support local 4-H groups in your vicinity
7. Send a letter to local legislators expressing support for 4-H programs in your state. Include any key ideas you learned from the video.
8. Call your county Extension office and find out what 4-H is doing in your community.
9. Visit the National 4-H website (www.4-husa.org) and find out what is going on with 4-H nationally. Become informed!
10. Make a donation to support your local 4-H program.