

RELEVANCE

Youth Leadership Development

Youth leadership is part of the youth development process and supports the young person in developing: the ability to analyze his or her own strengths and weaknesses, set personal and vocational goals and have the self-esteem, confidence, motivation and abilities to carry them out. It also provides the ability to guide or direct others on a course of action, influence the opinions and behaviors of others and serve as a role model for others to follow.

TEXAS YOUTH STATISTICS

- **70%** of jobs in Texas will require a postsecondary credential by 2036, According to a report authored by Texas 2036 and the George W. Bush Institute.
- **12.5% of Texas Youth** - Nearly 1 out of every 8 Texas youth are disconnected from school and work.
- **37%** of high school students reported poor mental health.
- **44%** Reported feeling persistent sadness or hopelessness.

Positive Youth Development

Positive youth development helps youth become contributing adults. Youth learn economic self-sufficiency, healthy family and social relationships, and community involvement. Positive youth development focuses on building positive attitudes, skills and behaviors. This reduces risky behaviors (Outley, 2018).

RESPONSE

YOUTH LIFE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Youth participants will participate in experiential activities to assess their personal leadership skills. Through participation with others, they will identify their own style of leadership and understand the concept of situational leadership. Additionally, they will observe and understand differing styles of learning and how to adapt their leadership skills to accommodate. Youth will have the opportunity to make decisions individually and as a group, discussing how their decisions and the process impact others.

The **Lubbock County Youth and Adult Advisory Board** has identified **the Lubbock County 4-H Teen Leadership Development Program** as an educational approach to address the **issue of Positive Youth Leadership Development** in Lubbock County.

TARGET AUDIENCE

- This program was targeted towards approximately 30 senior age Lubbock County 4-H'ers.

PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATORS

- Partners in this effort included: Lubbock County 4-H Teen Council, Lubbock County 4-H Youth and Adult Advisory Board, and Lubbock County 4-H Parent Leaders and Volunteers.

VALUE STATEMENT

Mental Health Awareness

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension's 4-H Youth Development Program teaches participants leadership skills and character traits. Participating youth become mentors, role models, and leaders in their schools and communities. Youth development programs have been shown to enhance social-emotional learning (SEL) and reduce internalizing mental health symptoms. By fostering competencies such as self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making, youth are better equipped to navigate social challenges, build healthy relationships, and manage their emotions effectively (Travis Jr., Levy, & Morpew, 2024). This focus on SEL not only contributes to individual well-being but also promotes healthier community dynamics and resilience among young people.



RESPONSE

4-H Leadership Experiences:

A variety of leadership experiences were offered for Lubbock County 4-H Teen Council members. These experiences provided them with opportunities to develop their leadership skills through hands-on learning, service learning and career exploration opportunities.

Leadership Development activities included the August 4-H Club Officer Training, seven monthly Teen Council meetings, the Teen Council Fall Workshop, participation in the Tractor Supply Clover Campaign and presenting at 4-H 101.

Hands-on Involvement included operating and volunteering at the 4-H Barnyard, volunteering with the Lubbock 4-H Lamb and Goat Jackpot, attending the Teen Council Summer Leadership Retreat, and conducting the annual 4-H Clover Day Camp.

Community Service activities provided opportunities for youth to interact with others. These service learning experiences were conducted through Meals on Wheels Mardi Gras, the Red Kettle Campaign for Salvation Army, wrap-ping presents for the Lubbock State Supported Living Center, working at Lubbock County 4-H Concession Stands, volunteering for One Day 4-H, and volunteering for the Christmas Kids program at the FiberMax Center for Discovery.



Evaluation Strategy

A retrospective post was utilized to measure knowledge gained, skills developed and the adoption of new best practices. A total of 14 out of 28 (50%) Teen Council participants completed the retrospective post survey instrument. Participants were also asked to report individual benefits that they had gained as a result of participating in the program.

RESULTS

Positive Youth Development: The Lubbock County 4-H Teen Council provides opportunities for all Lubbock County 4-H'ers age 13 – 18 to participate and expand their leadership, social and interpersonal skills. Results of the evaluation indicated the following:

- 12 out of 14 (86%) indicated at the end of the program year, they perceived their current level of leadership to be experienced or very experienced.
- 12 out of 14 (86%) determined their leadership skills were improved or greatly improved.
- 13 out of 14 (93%) indicated that their ability to get along with others was improved or greatly improved.
- 13 out of 14 (93%) felt their communication skills were improved or greatly improved.
- 13 out of 14 (93%) felt their involvement and interest in helping others had improved or greatly improved.
- 13 out of 14 (93%) had improved or greatly improved their personal communication skills.
- 14 out of 14 (100%) had met a personal goal related to improving their leadership development skills.
- 6 out of 14 (42%) served as 4-H Teen Council Officers and improved their leadership skills through their officer duties and responsibilities.
- Community organizations benefitting from the Teen Council service activities were: Meals on Wheels, the Lubbock State Supported Living Center, the Salvation Army, FiberMax Center for Discovery and Grace Campus.

Summary

Twenty-eight youth ages 12 – 18 participated in the different leadership and service learning opportunities that were offered. The evaluation results also indicated that the “Teens” continued their involvement because they had fun, expanded their leadership skills and were preparing for scholarship

“As a result of my Teen Council participation, I have become more confident in myself and become more active and social with other 4-H'ers.

“I have developed the courage to try new things and take on new challenges.”

Future Programming

Positive Youth Development opportunities will continue to be offered to 4-H Teen Council members so that they can further develop their leadership skills, communication skills and social skills.

For More Information:

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