

### **The Center for 4-H and Youth Development Research (2013)**

The Center for 4-H and Youth Development develops innovative programs that emphasize experiential learning opportunities for young people and their families. Through "hands-on" interactive programming, participants develop life skills, leadership abilities, and an ethic of civic stewardship. The center offers several programs to support and engage District of Columbia youth. Specialized programs during the reporting period included the 4-H Living Interactive Family Education Program (4-H LIFE), Operation Military Kids Program (OMK), and 4-H Growing Science Program (4-H STEM). Health Rocks is a drug prevention program for youth. Our LifeSmarts Program is a consumer game show competition for high school students that involve learning about the Environment, Technology, Legal Rights and Responsibilities, and Health and Safety. The 4-H Summer camp program is offered to children ages 8-12 that are already in the 4-H program during the school year. The 4-H Summer Bridge Program is for High School students and is done in cooperation with the Water Quality Research Program at UDC. University faculty prepare programming in the areas of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math and the 4-H staff assists in implementing the program modules. We held four volunteer leaders training programs growing our volunteer reach to 73.

Other landgrant centers that have assisted with program activities for the Center for 4H and Youth Development include the Center for Nutrition, Diet, and Health (food safety and demonstrations; nutrition information for 4Hers); Center for Urban Agriculture (Urban Gardening information and demonstrations); and the Center for Urban Sustainability (environmental sustainability information and program activities).

The Center for 4-H and Youth Development were able to reach 8,465 youth and adults with direct contacts through 4-H clubs and 4-H activities. We maintained 45 active 4-H clubs in schools and community programs and had an overall reach of 7,833 youth for the program year.

Under this program, we are not reporting on outcomes related to the Financial Literacy and Home Repair programs. Neither of these programs produced significant impacts due to reduction of extension staff and the restructuring of programs under the Center for Sustainable Development. The Center's new director came on board in the last quarter of the fiscal year, July 2013. Since that time, he has been working steadfastly to build programs and services that prepare individuals and organizations for the changing, complex conditions within the social, cultural, environmental, and economic systems that shape our local communities. The focus of the Center is green jobs and green infrastructure.

In an effort to report meaningful impacts in the most efficient way, we have added additional impact statements under this program and as a result will not need to report on others.

#### LifeSmarts

Through the LifeSmarts program, we increased the number of teens receiving information about consumer issues by 25%. This year we had 17 LifeSmarts teams enter the competition, with 11 teams qualifying for the State competition. Teens learned about consumer issues related to the Environment,

Technology, Legal Rights and Responsibilities and Health and Safety. 102 participants attended a LifeSmarts training program at Google and one team of five youth will represent us at the National competition. Teams consist of five youth with one adult and one alternate. During the summer months, we worked with university faculty and staff and hosted hands-on research programs for 30 teens for a program that we refer to as the 4-H Summer Bridge program. Teens worked in teams to complete research projects, and, at summer's end, they presented their findings to a packed audience of admirers. They gained fundamental knowledge of the environmental computing, sustainability, water quality, climate change, data analysis, advanced computer application and engineering design.

### Health Rocks

Substance abuse, in terms of tobacco, alcohol and drug use, continues to be an issue among school aged individuals throughout all eight wards of the District of Columbia (DC). Substance abuse is associated with a number of problems, including health related issues among abusers, increased crime in communities, addictions, and the inability to succeed in school, secure or maintain employment. In the latest survey done by the Centers for Disease Control, 23% of the students in DC stated that they drank alcohol before age 13; 10.2% of DC students had tried marijuana by the same age; 47% of the youth (9th-12th grades) have tried cigarettes and 18% smoke cigars on a regular basis. The survey also showed small percentages of DC youth trying Report Date 05/07/2014 Page 52 of 68 2013 University of the District of Columbia Combined Research and Extension Annual Report of Accomplishments and Results other drugs like cocaine, prescription drug and other inhalants. These numbers are higher than the national average.

To help District of Columbia youth make healthy life choices and reduce substance abuse and its myriad of serious problems, the National 4-H Council and the Center for 4-H and Youth Development designed a substance abuse prevention program called Health Rocks! for youth ages 8-14 in DC . Now partnering with several youth organizations to deliver the 10 hours of required programming to approximately 500 youth that enrolled in the program, Health Rocks teaches youth how to make healthy lifestyle choices, while raising self-confidence and learning valuable life skills. Lessons and activities in Health Rocks! are ands on and interactive.

### 4-H STEM

The population in the District of Columbia identifies mostly as the underserved population, in which, this population is underrepresented in STEM professions. Employment projections of the Bureau of Labor Statistics states that a student out of high school pursuing a career in STEM is more likely to make 59.6% more than non-STEM positions. The Labor Department projects that future occupations are requiring workers to have more knowledge and experience in STEM. 4-H Youth, Engagement, Attitudes and Knowledge (YEAK) Survey found that by providing engaging out-of-school programming, 4-H Science programs have the potential to strengthen participant's interest in pursuing education and careers in the STEM fields.

With the initiatives from 4-H, the STEM Leaders Program launched STEM programming under National 4-H guidance, completing various projects to enrich the classrooms, and engaged in after school programs for urban middle school aged students. Implementation of the program is conducted by informing educators of the District of Columbia public schools and youth leaders on the importance of STEM; using resources from the UDC STEM Center; partnering with the Microsoft Store; collaborating with Operation Military Kids; and having UDC college students as mentors. The program worked

successfully with schools in Wards 8, 7, 6, and 4. The Wards identified are listed in order of having the highest poverty rates, and indeed are the most underserved population with the least amount of resources. Students had a safe place to learn and be leaders, while having the opportunity to conduct hands on experiments and make observations.