

Effective Organizational Systems

Great institutions survive because their missions are timeless, ethical and imperative. Yet while the 4-H mission endures, new approaches to achieve the mission require new ways of thinking and working. We need a deeper understanding of how we can be the best.

Goal 1:

The 4-H Mission and strategic plan will be achieved through the synergy of shared leadership.

Goal 2:

Strategic collaboration and partnerships will be an integral part of achieving the 4-H Mission.

Georgia

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS INVOLVE YOUTH IN WATER ISSUES

Situation:

The southeastern United States has experienced a five-year drought. Concerns about water quantity, quality, and conservation are issues of vital importance in our region, state, and county. Strategic partnerships allowed over 600 Crisp County 4-H youth to be involved in critical water issues.

Program Description:

The Wonderful Water program was a multi-faceted collaborative that involved 4-H youth in environmental water issues. 4-H'ers in the fifth through twelfth grades in 23 4-H clubs learned about wetlands through educational programs taught by Department of Natural Resources officers. Students then worked with DNR to build wood duck nesting boxes and install them in local wetland areas to attract migratory birds.

4-H partnered with Keep Crisp Beautiful to clean the shores and wetland areas of Lake Blackshear, and teach youth the importance of water quality and litter control. 4-H youth also worked with Keep Crisp Beautiful to produce environmental brochures to educate the public.

The Cordele Housing Authority was a collaborating partner in the Environmental Day Camp held for youth living in low-income public housing. 4-H'ers taught classes and led games and activities that helped youth learn to keep our drinking water safe and conserve our water resources.

The Cordele Lions Club sponsored an environmental exhibit competition for 4-H'ers at the local fair, and the Lions Club also gave service awards to 4-H youth who were involved in outstanding projects.

The Crisp County 4-H Volunteers coordinated the Cloverleaf Conference where classes on water pollution and conservation were taught, and the Blue Hole spring was cleaned.

Stakeholder Satisfaction:

The outreach and influence of the Wonderful Water program was extensive. The success of the program can be directly attributed to the partnership between 4-H and the many agencies and organizations that were involved. 4-H youth involved in the Wonderful Water program appeared on WSST television to share their water projects, and they were featured in three articles in the Cordele Dispatch newspaper.

Accomplishments and Impact:

Of the youth involved in the Wonderful Water program, 87% indicated that they were more concerned and felt more responsible about water conservation and preservation after the program than they were before becoming involved in the program. Eleven youth completed extensive research-based water projects, and they competed in fairs and project competitions. The top Sweepstakes winner in the fair and two other category winners featured water issue topics. Seven 4-H'ers were winners at district project achievement with water projects.

Sixty-five youth were involved in the lake, wetlands, and spring clean-ups, and they collected over 300 pounds of litter and debris. A total of 212 youth attended the Cloverleaf Conference where classes on water issues were taught, and 17 attended the Housing Authority Environmental Day Camp. A total of 632 4-H youth were involved in the wetlands classes taught during monthly 4-H club meetings.

Collaborators:

The Department of Natural Resources contributed over 75 hours of instruction time to teach 4-H'ers about wetlands and help them build and install wood duck nesting boxes. Keep Crisp Beautiful met with 4-H'ers every month to educate and involve them in water issues. Keep Crisp Beautiful also donated t-shirts, litter bags, and gloves for all the litter clean-ups. The Cordele Housing Authority, Veteran's State Park, Crisp County Power Commission, and Keep Crisp Beautiful were partners with 4-H to provide the Environmental Day Camp for disadvantaged youth. The Cordele Lions Club sponsored awards for the fair, and the Crisp County School System allowed the use of school facilities for educational classes.

A total of 35 youth teen leaders and 27 adult volunteers were involved in the Wonderful Water program. Youth volunteers taught classes at the Cloverleaf Conference and at the day camp. They also shared their water project demonstration with a total of 250 youth and adults at 16 civic meetings including Garden Clubs, Boy Scouts, and Homemaker Clubs. Teen leaders served as litter clean-up group leaders and appeared on TV to talk about their activities. The adult volunteers taught classes, contributed supplies, organized events, helped secure needed funding, provided awards, and supervised activities.

Strategic partnerships made it possible to involve 4-H youth in a wide variety of educational opportunities involving Wonderful Water. The 4-H mission was enhanced through strong collaboratives.

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Other Base Program Areas This Program Applies To
Natural Resources Environmental Management
Community Resource and Economic Development
Leadership and Volunteer Development

New Jersey

Family Astronomy

Situation:

Surveys of American adults yield some disturbing statistics on their science literacy. Only 45% of American adults know that the Earth goes around the Sun and that it takes a year to do so. Science literacy is important for people to live interesting, responsible, and productive lives in a world that is very dependent on advanced technology and daily becoming more so.

Many families feel that they are overwhelmed and do not spend enough time as a family. Some do not know what to do as a family. This program addresses the need of family quality time that would be interesting for all families and family members, while being educational too.

Program Description:

Family ASTRO is a new program, funded by the National Science Foundation, and administered by the Astronomical Society of the Pacific. Only four states were chosen to pilot test this project. The goal is to train educators, astronomers, and community group leaders to help children and adults explore astronomy together. Trained leaders learn to conduct family astronomy events about the night sky and the solar system. After families participate in a workshop together, they take home an activity kit or game so they can continue exploring on their own. Family ASTRO is about making science fun for all ages. The goals of the program are to:

1. Involve families in exploring astronomy together utilizing a workshop and take home kit format.
2. Encourage families to continue to do “family things” together (even if not science related).
3. Generate a multi-generation interest in activities.
4. Families will have fun.

Stakeholder Satisfaction:

Although this is a new program, there has been an overwhelming response to train new leaders. 40 candidates, representing 25 different sites applies. Only 15 sites (22 leaders) were chosen to receive training this year. Of the original sites trained, 13 conducted at least two or more family events between January and June 2002. Participants rated the leader-training workshop a 4.75 out of 5.0.

145 families in NJ have participated in family astronomy workshops conducted by the trained leaders. Families have stated that they enjoyed working together, and look forward to more family activities in science.

Accomplishments and Impacts:

Surveys administered to the families that participated in workshops found:

- 64% of the adults and 87% of the youth will tell someone what they learned.
- 65% of the adults and 97% of the youth want to learn more about astronomy.
- 65% of the adults and 95% of the youth will try something new or different as a result of the workshop.
- Parents' comments indicated that the best part of the evening was spending quality time with their children, and that they learned a great deal about their children from this interaction.

Resource Commitment:

New Jersey's Family ASTRO "team" has received \$10,000 from the Astronomical Society of the Pacific, through National Science Foundation to pilot this family astronomy program, and participate as one of two case study sites.

Collaborators:

Family ASTRO is a collaborative program between the Somerset County 4-H, Raritan Valley Community College, and the Astronomical Society of the Pacific. Initial funding comes from the National Science Foundation.

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Base program areas to which this program applies:

Leadership & Volunteer Development
Family Development & Resource Management
4-H Youth Development

New York

Operation Explore

Situation:

Urban youth often lack first-hand exposure to and experience in diverse, regional ecosystems. The sense of separation between urban youth and regional ecosystems is an added challenge for teachers, who strive to engage youth in classroom-oriented environmental education.

Program Description:

Operation Explore is a dynamic program that enables students and teachers to explore ecosystems, including field experiences to the farm, forest and coastal areas, critical to their understanding of the importance of natural resources and the environment to their lives. As part of a 25-year long interagency partnership, New York City public school classroom teachers are provided training in implementing Operation Explore activities and meeting objectives. During the 2001-2002 school year, *31 New York City public school classes, consisting of 838 youth in the fourth through sixth grades and 141 teachers, parents and chaperones, participated in Operation Explore. This involved field trips to aquatic, agricultural, and forest ecosystems,

including a three-day and two-night stay at a New York State-operated Outdoor Education Center. In the classroom, the youth participated in experiential outdoor and pre- and post-field trip activities. In addition, they developed portfolios based on their Operation Explore experiences, demonstrating acquisition of knowledge, environmental awareness and their understanding of ways to protect and improve the environment.

**Due to the World Trade Center Tragedy, the numbers of classes and trips were lower than previous years. A directive by the New York City Board of Education restricted some travel out of New York City.*

Stakeholder Satisfaction:

During the 2001-2002 Operation Explore program year, participating New York City public schools teachers received training over three days to implement the educational activities with their students. Teachers benefited by being provided the tools and resources to teach hands-on activities in environmental education, as well as opportunities to visit natural resource areas with their classes, hosted and guided by environmental educators. Over one hundred chaperones were also invited to join the youth and observe the activities being conducted. Most of the chaperones are parents and guardians of the students and played an integral role in the activities. Participating youth gained knowledge and awareness through hands-on educational activities in the classroom and during field visits to sites throughout the New York City region.

Accomplishments and Impacts:

As a result of implementation of Operation Explore and based on portfolio development and evaluative assessments, participating youth demonstrated an increased literacy in environmental science, earth science, and the life sciences, as well as developed an appreciation for the interdependence of all living things, particularly seashore, farm and forest environments. In addition, youth acquired an understanding of their roles as stewards of land, air and water in their communities and other localities. Teachers successfully incorporated environmental education into a model of interdisciplinary and experiential learning.

The participating Operation Explore agencies meet on an ongoing basis to plan and coordinate activities, as well as to consider ways to enhance the program. Several strategies are being incorporated to improve program delivery, coordination and evaluation. This year, with leadership provided by Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) – NYC Programs, an electronic mailing list and an Operation Explore website were undertaken in order to improve communication between teachers and program staff. In addition, CCE-NYC will be providing leadership for enhancing the evaluation component of Operation Explore, including evaluative interviews with teachers, youth and parents/chaperones.

Resource Commitment/External Collaborators:

Each of the Operation Explore collaborators contributes staff time and in-kind resources to the project, including use of facilities, provision of resources and curricular materials, and facilitation of experiential activities during field visits to agency sites. In addition to Cornell Cooperative Extension – NYC Programs, Operation Explore collaborators include: New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation; New York City Board of Education; New York State Department of Environmental Conservation; National Park Service at Gateway National Recreation Area; and the New York City Department of Environmental Protection.

Operation Explore field visits are conducted at: Gateway National Recreation Area sites in Brooklyn, Queens, and Staten Island; Stony Kill Environmental Education in Wappinger Falls, NY; and Taconic Outdoor Education Center, Clarence Fahnestock State Park, Cold Springs, NY.

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Other Base Program Areas This Program Applies:

Natural Resources & Environmental Management
4-H Youth Program Development

Goal 3:

4-H will create bold, innovative, resource-development initiatives.

Goal 4:

The 4-H brand will be readily recognized, exciting, and appealing to all 4-H's audiences.

Goal 5:

Extension and the Land Grant System will support the expanding role of 4-H professionals as community resources in youth development research and practice.

Goal 6:

4-H will develop, implement, and broadly communicate a research agenda for 4-H youth development.