

Impact

Sharing the difference CSU Extension makes in people's lives and their communities.

The Positive Impact of Community Service on Colorado 4-H Members

Members with more than five years of 4-H experience feel they have greater capacity to work well with others than those with less 4-H experience.

Issue

Community service is one of the core elements of the 4-H experience. All Colorado 4-H members are required to complete at least one community service activity per year.

As Colorado 4-H recognizes its 100 year anniversary, an examination of the demonstrated relevance is taking place.

Extension's Response

In the summer of 2008, data were collected at various county fairs across the state of Colorado to determine the effect that engaging in community service activities has on the lives of Colorado 4-H members.

Community service surveys were collected from 154 4-H members in six counties. There were 53 male and 101 female respondents to the survey.

The community service survey asked the members to relate their perspective of community service before and after their participation in community service activities.

The questions were:

Before my community service activity, I: 1) Almost never, 2) Not usually, 3) Usually, or 4) Almost always

1. _____ like to help others.
2. _____ feel I make a difference.
3. _____ accept new challenges.
4. _____ work well with others.
5. _____ help make my town better.
6. _____ respect people who are different from me.



The Bottom Line

Community service is an important part of the 4-H experience. Because 4-H members are involved in community service, they:

- learn to help others
- like it when they help others
- feel like they make a difference
- learn to accept new challenges
- learn to work well with others
- help make their town a better place
- respect people who are different than them

Impact

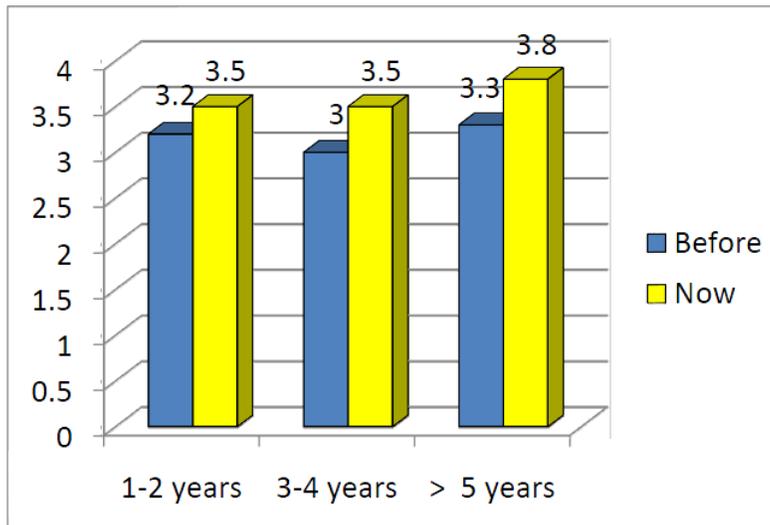
Mean scores of the six questions (on a 4 point scale) were as follows:

| Survey Item | Before | Now | Change |
|---------------------------|--------|-----|--------|
| Q1: Help Others | 3.1 | 3.4 | + .3 |
| Q2: Make a difference | 2.6 | 3.1 | + .5 |
| Q3: Accept new challenges | 3.0 | 3.4 | + .4 |
| Q4: Work with others | 3.2 | 3.6 | + .4 |
| Q5: Make my town better | 2.4 | 3.0 | + .6 |
| Q6: Respect others | 3.3 | 3.7 | + .4 |

There was a statistically significant difference between the “before” and “now” scores on all six questions. This would suggest that the 4-H members who responded to this survey were different in a positive way related to the six questions they were asked. The question with the greatest positive change on mean score was Q5: Help to make my town better.

Responses were also sorted by levels of 4-H experience. There was one question (Q4: Work with others) that demonstrated a highly significant difference between the responses based on 4-H experience. Members with more than five years of 4-H experience had the highest mean “now” responses as shown on the following graph. This would suggest that members with more experience in 4-H feel they have a greater capacity to work well with others than those with less 4-H experience.

I Work Well with Others
Sorted by 4-H Experience



4-H is a community of young people across Colorado learning leadership, citizenship, and life skills. One hundred years of research-based programs and experience bear significant results. Research shows that youth involved in 4-H are more likely to develop the “five C’s” (competence, confidence, character, caring and connection). Through participation in 4-H programs, youth are more likely to be at the highest level of contribution in their communities.

“My project and leadership experiences in 4-H prepared me to be successful in veterinary medicine, the Colorado State Senate, the U.S. House of Representatives, and the U.S. Senate”

-Wayne Allard

United States Senator, Colorado

Retired

“As secretary of my 4-H club, I learned that the lowest ranked office usually has the hardest job. As treasurer, I learned it’s a special responsibility to handle other people’s money. As vice-president, I learned team work. As president, I learned that one person can do a little, but a team can do a lot.

In so many ways, 4-H set the foundation for my career and my attitude toward public service.”

-Tony Frank

President

Colorado State University

County Partners

Data for this study were collected in the following Colorado counties:

Archuleta
Broomfield

Cheyenne
Morgan

Summit
Weld

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