

## Together, youth and adult volunteers practice skills that benefit their communities



A member of the youth group Urban Underground performs with Rep. David Bowen at 4-H's Youth as Partners in Civic Leadership conference.

Volunteers of all ages take home valuable skills and integrate them into their daily lives. Youth volunteers mature with stronger skillsets. Youth and adult volunteers carry what they've learned into many other settings.



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Volunteerism has a ripple effect across demographics and throughout communities. As part of Wisconsin 4-H Youth Development, both adult and youth volunteers develop lifeskills that make their families, communities and other organizations stronger, presently and in the future. Adult volunteers often plan, implement and evaluate programs to help youth grow into skillsets. Youth carry these skills into their futures. Read on for examples of how Wisconsin 4-H Youth Development promotes these impactful community-building opportunities.

### Outreach

- 4-H youth participants in an Ozaukee County program called Together We Can! plan, advertise and offer monthly activities for people of any age with special needs. The youth learn how to interact with people who have special needs and to use “people-first language,” increasing their levels of compassion and gaining better understanding of the challenges that people with special needs face.

### Mentorship

- The Healthy Corner Store Initiative and MOVE Crew programs in Milwaukee County involved youth in growing fruits

and vegetables, providing those foods to convenience stores, and leading food demonstrations for shoppers. Youth participants also became peer mentors, teaching younger youth about health risk prevention.

### Youth Leaders Teaching Life Skills

- Teens Active in Government (TAG) participants in Oneida County represent young people at county board meetings. TAG members also give a presentation called “County Government and You,” developed with local 4-H educators, in social studies classrooms. Student engagement in the presentation has increased as more students are motivated to participate in the teen-led presentation program.
- In many county-based programs, youth volunteers lead activities in out-of-school formats, including 21st Century Community Learning Centers (Adams County), Summer Youth Program (Green Lake County) and Family Dinners (Jefferson County). Youth volunteers build life skills such as organizing, planning, evaluation and time management. They also learn about child development as

they're delivering lessons, leading activities, and providing support for other programs in age- and skill level-appropriate leadership roles.

- Staff at Upham Woods Outdoor Learning Center developed Digital Observation Technology Skills (DOTS) Kits and a program to train other educators to be able to use the components of the kits. Youth across the state and beyond now have access to the ability to make enhanced scientific observations about their environments through the DOTS kits. Educators have increased ability to teach with the kits in a positive youth development environment.

**Through teaching, youth volunteers learn life skills and contribute to the community. By teaching others, often younger children, they apply and practice those skills in real-life situations and build life skills in younger children.**

## Nutrition Programs

- Two teen members of Crawford County 4-H facilitated six sessions with younger children about what they drink, eating more fruits and vegetables, eating whole grains, healthier fast foods, reading nutrition labels, and eating a balanced breakfast.

## STEM Programs

- After participating in the WHY NOT Youth Inquiry Leadership Conference, four Iowa County 4-H youth developed a lesson using inquiry and presented it



A 4-H volunteer instructs a 4-H youth member on video camera angles during the 4-H Art Lab at Upham Woods Outdoor Learning Center.

to a youth audience. Likewise, after the conference, four Walworth County youth planned the “Wild About Science” workshop series to engage younger children in inquiry-based learning.

- Twenty-two Ag Innovators — youth leaders organized and trained at the state level — were selected to lead a program to teach youth to think creatively about solutions to the issue of providing food long-term for the growing world population. The program increased communication, organizational and leadership skills among the youth teachers. Awareness of food insecurity issues grew among participants.
- STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Agriculture, and Math) Discovery Days were held in Buffalo County with courses taught by teams of youth and adult volunteers trained by 4-H staff. The program reached 171 youth and resulted in new STEM knowledge among participants, as well as increased retention of

school-based learning during the summer months.

## Summer Camp Leadership Development

- Volunteer leaders redesigned the 4-H camp program in Ozaukee County, including funding, programming, staff training and recruitment. Youth and adult staff training increased, which improved the youth-adult partnership components of staff teamwork. Volunteers reported having learned leadership, public speaking, patience, responsibility, communication, teamwork, problem-solving, cooperation, flexibility and understanding.

## Wisconsin 4-H By the Numbers

- 150,000+ youth members ages 5-19
- 4,000 youth volunteers
- 13,000 adult volunteers
- 72 counties
- 6 Native American nations
- 1 million+ volunteer hours
- \$24 million value of volunteer time