

Children, Youth, & Families At-Risk

# CYFEAR

## ANNUAL REPORT

2016

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Developed in collaboration with The United States Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture through a cooperative agreement with The University of Minnesota and Penn State University.

# All in a Year's Work

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The Children, Youth and Families At-Risk (CYFAR) Program is funded by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) to support the collaborative programming within the land-grant system. This positive programming ensures the positive programmatic outcome of children, youth, and families placed at-risk. The CYFAR Annual Report will feature the programmatic activities, outcomes, and impacts of the CYFAR Program for 2016.

CYFAR supports two strategic objectives: 1. To support community educational programs for at-risk, low income children, youth, and families which are based on locally identified needs, grounded in research, and which lead to the accomplishment of one (1) of four (4) CYFAR National Outcomes (early childhood, school age, teen, and parent/family); and 2. To integrate CYFAR programming into ongoing Extension programs for children, youth, and families – insuring that at-risk, low income children, youth, and families continue to be part of Extension and/or 4-H programs, and/or Family and Consumer Science Programs and have access to resources and educational opportunities.

Nationally, the CYFAR Program supports Sustainable Community Projects in states, engaging local sites and communities and U.S. territories. The CYFAR Program supports the Professional Development and Technical Assistance (PDTA) Center which provides technical assistance and professional development to the CYFAR projects. The PDTA Center provides a “national network” of support both face-to-face and virtually through CYFAR.org.

As well, the CYFAR Program supports 4-H Military Partnerships and military connected youth so they have the opportunity to participate in 4-H clubs and 4-H experiences, providing connections to others as the military youth develop essential life skills.

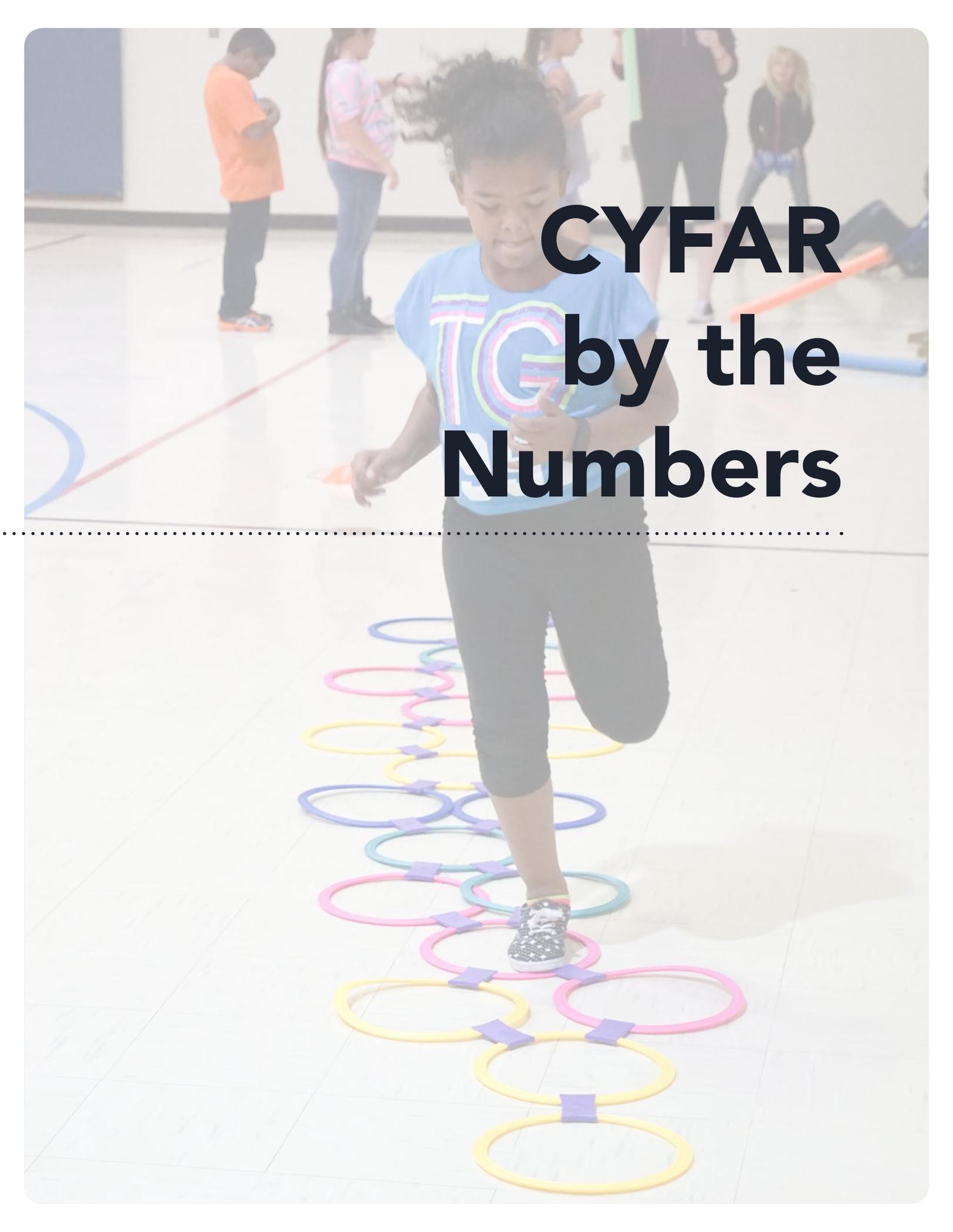
The grants funded by the CYFAR Program are aligned with the United States Department of Agriculture/Research, Education, and Economics mission areas of Education and Science Literacy and Rural-Urban Interdependence and Prosperity.

Engagement in the CYFAR Program demonstrates that youth, families, and communities are positively impacted and that change occurs when investments are made and positive collaboration occurs among land-grant partners.

Sincerely,



Bonita Williams, Ph.D.  
National Program Leader  
Vulnerable Populations  
National 4-H Headquarters  
Institute of Youth Family and Community  
National Institute of Food and Agriculture  
United States Department of Agriculture



# **CYFAR by the Numbers**

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## CYFAR by the Numbers

<b>Number of Volunteers</b>	<b>1,552</b>	<b>Volunteer engagement increased by 71% from the previous year.</b>
<b>Value of Hours Contributed</b>	<b>\$567,725</b>	<b>Value of hours contributed by volunteers is based on Independent Sector valuation.</b>
<b>Hours Contributed by Youth</b>	<b>10,040</b>	<b>43% of all volunteer hours</b>
<b>Hours Contributed by Adults</b>	<b>13,478</b>	<b>57% of all volunteer hours</b>
<b>Number of 4-H Clubs</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>Represents the number of new 4-H Clubs CYFAR engaging youth placed at risk. This represents an increase of 74%.</b>

## 2016 Budget

The total budget for the CYFAR Program equaled \$8,395,000, representing a total of 46 Sustainable Community Projects (SCP). SCP Projects represented 82% (\$6,920,000) of the budget; this is inclusive of both new and continued awards. Eligible universities include both 1862 and 1890 Institutions; both type of Land-grant Institutions can subaward to 1994 Institutions. Funds provided support to County 4-H Professionals for military youth programs in all states programs; the amount of funding for Military Programs was \$400,000.

The professional development and technical assistance for the CYFAR SCP Projects represented \$733,350 or 8% of the budget dedicated to the Professional Development and Technical Assistance Center. The remaining 4% (\$335,800) was devoted to NIFA overhead.

# 2016 Demographic Data

## Staff and Volunteers by Race/Ethnicity (n=1,867)

African American/Black	28%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	6%
Asian	1%
Hispanic/Latino	28%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	< 1%
White/Caucasian	6%
More than One Race	6%

## Population by Race/Ethnicity (n=17,782)

African American/Black	17%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	3%
Asian	< 1%
Hispanic/Latino	21%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	< 1%
White/Caucasian	72%
More than One Race	3%

## CYFAR Participants by Age (n=17,782)

Pre-K	2%
School-Age (K-8)	42%
Youth	28%
Parents	28%

### CYFAR Participants:

- 65% of the youth participants in CYFAR Projects reside in poverty
- 59% of adult participants reside in poverty

### US Statistics:

- About 15 million (21%) children in the U.S. reside in poverty (National Center for Children in Poverty)
- Almost 15% of the US population had income below poverty in 2015 (US Census Bureau)

### Poverty Rates of CYFAR

#### Participants by National Outcomes:

- Early Childhood - 66%
- School-age - 73%
- Teen - 68%
- Parent/Family - 59%

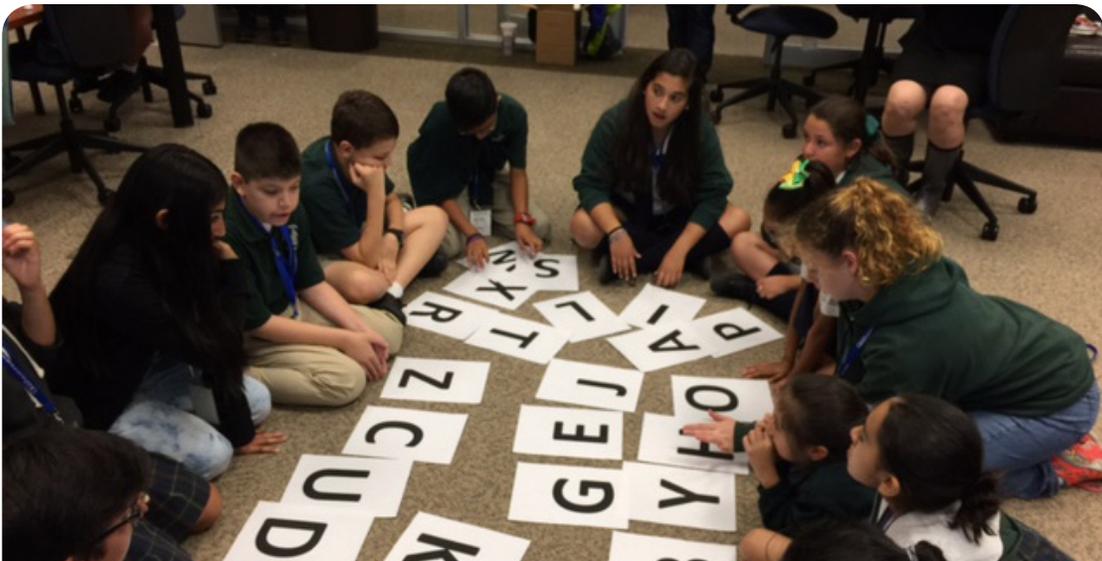
#### Poverty Rates by Geographical Locations:

- Central City - 65%
- Rural/Small Town - 62%
- Suburb - 41%
- Town/City - 79%

## 2016 Demographic Data

### States Realizing 50% Plus Poverty Ranking (2016):

- Arizona – Teens Advocating Sustainable Change (TASC) – 64%
- Connecticut – Tools for Healthy Living – 66%
- Georgia – Project GROWL – 100%
- Indiana – 4-H PALS – 74%
- Iowa – Juntos: Together for a Better Education and Success – 76%
- Kentucky – Strong Dads, Resilient Families – 59%
- Kentucky – U Connect – 82%
- Kentucky – Youth Engagement and Support (YES) – 100%
- Maine – 4-H Community Central – 85%
- Minnesota – FACES – 86%
- Minnesota/Tennessee – U Connect – 79%
- Minnesota – Urban 4-H STEM Clubs – 97%
- Minnesota – Partnering for School Success (PSS) – 100%
- Missouri – 4-H Youth Futures – 82%
- Montana – Linking Youth to Agricultural and Environmental Practices Using STEM – 100%
- New Jersey – Science Pathways -100%
- New York – Youth CAN – 100%
- North Carolina/Oklahoma – The Together (Juntos) Project – 94%
- Ohio – Urban GEMS – 95%
- Oregon – Oregon SCP – 86%
- Pennsylvania – Penn State SCP – 51%
- Rhode Island – CELS : Integrating Nutrition Education – 88%
- South Carolina – Clemson University SCP – 94%
- Tennessee – Exciting Collaborative Education Learning (ExCel) – 88%
- Texas - Texas A&M University SCP – 51%
- Vermont – Helping Vermont Youth PROSPER – 50%
- Virgin Islands – Healthy Youth Leading the Way in the VI – 100%
- Wisconsin – Nicianak 4-Health – 90%



# **CYFAR Project Spotlight**

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# In The Spotlight

## Kentucky

### ***YES (Youth Engagement and Support)***

Kentucky's Youth Engagement and Support (YES) program provides life skills programs for homeless and unstably housed youth in Jefferson County, Kentucky. The program addresses topics such as budgeting, job readiness, healthy choices, physical education, communication, conflict resolution, teamwork, decision making, stress, anger management, and safety.

As a result of the YES program, more than 66 youth have found employment, 13 have found housing, 11 have worked toward completion of their GEDs, 7 are enrolled in higher education institutions, 8 have received mental health assistance, and 3 were helped out of trafficking. Use of the Youth Development Center has increased from an average of 62 to 300 participant visits per month. Participants are finding the programs useful and are sharing information about the program with other homeless youth to get them to attend.



## Indiana

### ***4-H PALS (Purdue Athletic Life Success)***

Purdue University's 4-H PALS project inspires youth in grades Kindergarten to 8th grade to stay active and healthy all year long through engaging after-school clubs and a four-week day camp. Both community sites are located within local schools and grew significantly in 2016 with enrollment reaching 50 youth at the elementary school and more than 40 youth at the intermediate school.

The two sites adapted their programming due to the increased membership. Project staff integrated PALS curriculum and health-focused activities into the 4-H club's programming while club leaders encouraged youth input in program decisions and choices.

The 4-H club leaders have incorporated community service and field trips that demonstrate the opportunities for healthy living across the state. Animal shelters, parks, and a nursing home are just a few parts of the local community who have benefited from the 4-H PALS clubs.

# In The Spotlight

## Montana

### ***Linking Native American Youth to Agricultural and Environmental Practices Using Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM)***

Montana's Sustainable Community Project teaches Native American youth about science and technology and has two program sites. The first is the Pretty Eagle School on the Crow Indian Reservation and the second, is the Two Eagle River School on the Flathead Indian Reservation.

As part of the CYFAR funding, youth at the Pretty Eagle site learned to use GPS units, Google Earth, computer-aided design technology, and drones. One field trip included a visit to Chief Plenty Coups Park to look at weeds, create GPS polygons of weeds, and fly drones to create an aerial map.

The youth at Two Eagle River learned about videography. They specifically learned how to use iPads to create films. One field trip the Two Eagle River youth took included topics such as water quality, ornithology, and results of glacier activity.

Youth from both sites took a field trip to the Montana State University campus to visit with university staff and learn more about Native American studies and GPS/GIS. The group also visited the Museum of the Rockies and the Children's Museum.

## Vermont

### ***Helping Vermont Youth PROSPER (PROmoting School-community-university Partnerships to Enhance Resilience)***

The purpose of the University of Vermont's Sustainable Community Project is to strengthen families and reduce at-risk behaviors in youth, specifically substance use. Recently, project surveys indicate a positive relationship between pre- and post-surveys for all questions. For example:

#### ***Parent Survey:***

- Often tell my child how I feel when he or she misbehaves. (0.65)
- Let my youth know the reason for the rules we have. (0.71)
- Work together with my youth to solve problems that come up at home. (0.65)
- Talk with my child about ways to resist peer pressure. (0.79)
- Explain to my child the consequences of not following my rules concerning alcohol use. (0.79)

#### ***Youth Survey:***

- My parent(s)/caregiver(s) and I can sit down together to work on a problem without yelling or getting mad. (0.83)
- If a friend suggests that we do something that can get us both into trouble, I am able to get out of doing it. (0.67)



# In The Spotlight

## Colorado and Hawaii **GRANDcares**

GRANDcares is a joint CYFAR Sustainable Community Project that includes Colorado State University and the University of Hawai'i Manoa. This project is a systems-based intervention for vulnerable, grandparent-headed families. Participants complete a six-week program that focuses on strengthening self-care and parenting skills in grandparents while developing communication and leadership skills in grandchildren. Testimonials from grandparents indicate this program is helpful to manage grandparents' stress, strain, and grief.

Several successes were made toward the project objective of educating service providers about grandfamilies. They include:

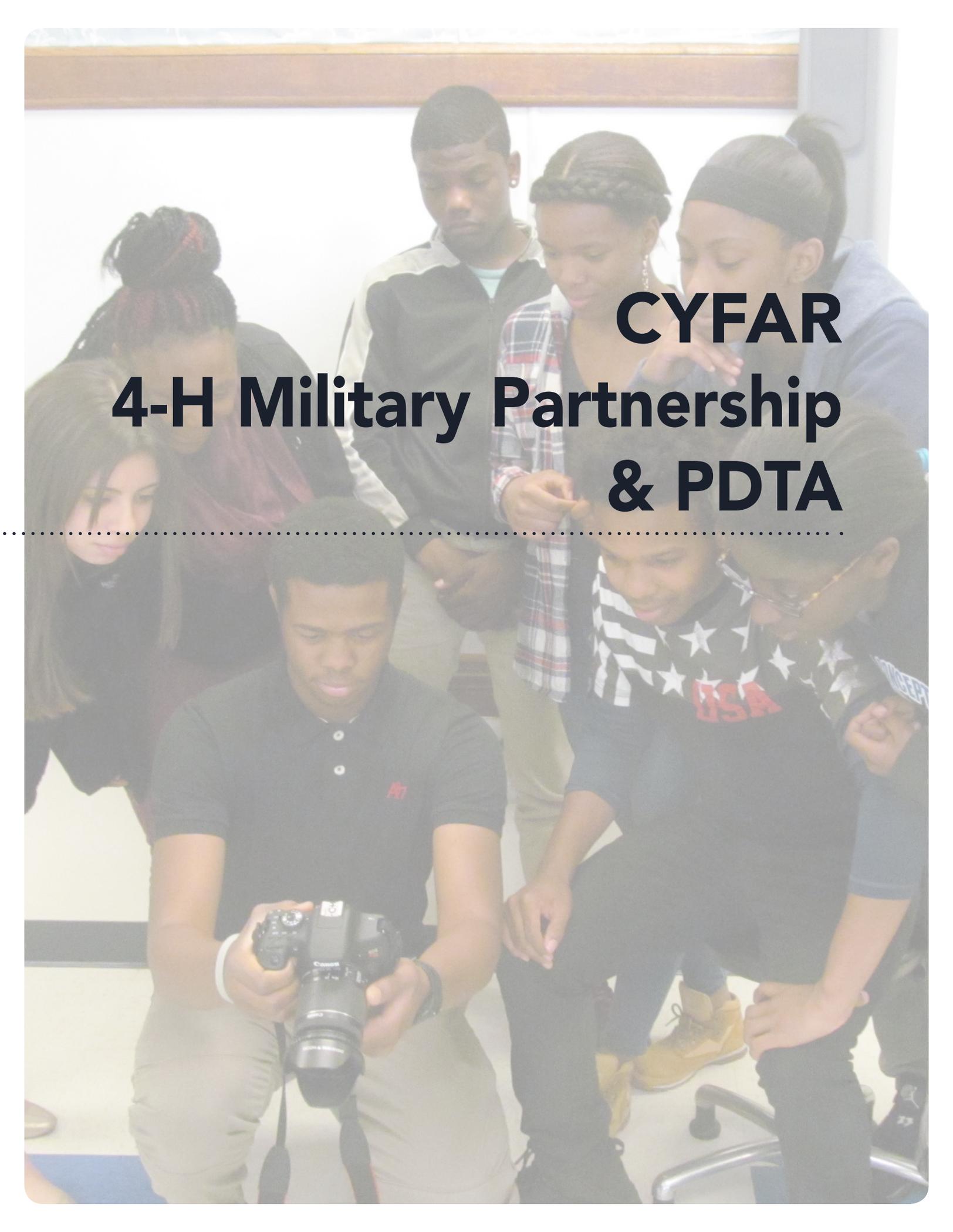
- Publication of an article titled, "Recognizing Microaggressions: A Framework for Helping Grandfamilies" in the journal *Grandfamilies: The Contemporary Journal of Research, Practice and Policy*;
- Proposed presentations at two professional conferences, Generations United and the International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics, about the GRANDcares project; and
- Support of colleagues at Montana State University Extension who received a small grant from the Brookdale Foundation's Relatives As Parents Program to implement the GRANDcares project in Montana.



## Georgia **Project GROWL (Growing Real Opportunities in Work and Life)**

Georgia's Project GROWL is an after-school program that focuses on developing work-based life skills in middle school youth. Through Project GROWL youth gain a deeper understanding of the food, fiber, agricultural, and natural resource systems affecting their urban communities. Staff hope to empower youth to see themselves as contributing members of society where they can leverage their knowledge, skills, and abilities to influence other people and organizations.

Participants are 7th and 8th grade students who meet twice a month at two locations. In 2016, 83% of the Clayton County first year participants and 61% of the Fulton County first year participants returned for year two. Year two is important because this is when participants begin to analyze the economic, environmental, and policy decisions affecting their communities.

A group of young people, including several women and one man, are gathered around a man who is kneeling on the floor. The man is holding a professional camera and looking at it. The group appears to be in a classroom or workshop setting, possibly learning about photography or videography. The text "CYFAR 4-H Military Partnership & PDTA" is overlaid on the image.

**CYFAR  
4-H Military Partnership  
& PDTA**

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# CYFAR and 4-H Military Partnership

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Through the CYFAR and 4-H Military Partnership, military connected youth have the opportunity to participate in 4-H clubs and 4-H experiences that provide connections to others, consistency in belonging, and an opportunity to develop life skills as they move throughout the world. 4-H opportunities help develop and strengthen the resiliency of geographically dispersed military youth of National Guard and Reserve service members as well as youth of active duty members who experience the stresses of military life, including deployment and reintegration. "4-H has made my daughter question a lot more and always ask the question 'Why?' and 'How does that work?' I have a more inquisitive and science aware daughter because of 4-H!" This quote supports the outcome of the 4-H Military Connected Youth Program Logic Model that youth will gain knowledge and develop and demonstrate life skills as they grow and become thriving, healthy, and successful emerging adults, and contributing and engaging citizens.

The 4-H Military Partnership represents a collaboration of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), 4-H National Headquarters and Army Child and Youth Services, Navy Child and Youth Programs, Air Force Child and Youth Programs, National Guard and Reserve, and Coast Guard. The partnership relies on Land Grant University Extension faculty as Extension 4-H Military Liaisons to serve as project directors and provide leadership in their state for 4-H military programs. The CYFAR 4-H Military Partnership project supports funding for training, evaluation, reporting, and research components of the Partnership. Additional information about the 4-H Military Partnerships can be found on the website: [www.4-hmilitarypartnerships.org](http://www.4-hmilitarypartnerships.org).

4-H Military Partnership funding enables Extension to support this collaborative effort with personnel (17.2 FTE's) to enhance staff professional development training and expand youth engagement in 4-H Clubs and other 4-H educational programs. 4-H, through its state and local staffing, has embraced this partnership with Extension staff contributing 25 FTE's in support of military programming. Volunteers have contributed 103,721 hours of time at a value of more than two million dollars. (Independent Sector's Value of Volunteer Time, [http://independentsector.org/volunteer\\_time](http://independentsector.org/volunteer_time)). Additionally, 4-H worked closely with community partners and businesses, along with University departments who provided donations, resources, or reductions in costs resulting in \$404,445 in support from more than 900 donors.

The 4-H Military Partnership Grant Program expands opportunities for military connected youth to participate in 4-H programs that include Citizenship, Healthy Living, and Science education while focusing on leadership and community service activities in a safe and fun environment. Military staff are able to participate in 4-H professional development opportunities. These programs support the overall goals of having youth become thriving, healthy, and successful emerging adults who are contributing and engaging citizens. Forty states and two territories received grants in 2016 providing more than 56,400 military connected youth with 4-H clubs and experiences.

## Examples of program impact for professional development, Citizenship, Healthy Living, and Science:

More than 3,000 military personnel and 6,000 volunteers participated in 4-H **professional development** opportunities. Utilizing the 4-H Experiential Learning Model and 4-H 101 training, Military Child and Youth program staff developed skills in using 4-H Positive Youth Development Principles to teach life skills and subject matter content.

- Youth, as future decision makers regarding renewable energy usage, need knowledge of science, engineering, and technology to support their future. Youth at McGuire Air Force Base Youth Center in **New Jersey** were unfamiliar with these concepts and staff lacked the confidence to teach in this area. At the request of the youth center staff, 4-H designed an 8-week series of STEM training activities with the objective to include youth awareness of science concepts and processes focused on renewable energy. Through this training, the staff embraced the use of experiential learning while increasing their knowledge, critical thinking skills, and sparking interest in science-related activities. Youth learned how to make energy using a variety of sources, such as water, solar, wind, and nuclear power. Military youth staff now use experiential learning and the concepts of science throughout their programs at the center. Staff members have confidence in teaching science and offered science programs at summer camp.

**Citizenship** programs empower young people to be well-informed citizens who are actively engaged in their communities.

- Teens at Fort Hamilton, **New York** participated in Choose Healthy Action to support the school age program. To share their skills, teens were trained in "Teens as Teachers," developing mentoring skills to work with younger youth. The teens developed a meaningful relationship with caring adults as they planned and implemented programs at the youth center, enhancing their skills in instruction and potential future careers. Staff see a stronger sense of belonging and community action as they perceive an increase in volunteering, service learning, and responsible citizenship now and in the future.

Health is one of the foundations of the 4-H Pledge. 4-H's goal for **Healthy Living** is to help youth learn how to lead lives that balance physical, emotional, and social health and make decisions that lead to positive well-being for the individual and the community in which they live.

- The Cooking Club at Rock Island Arsenal in **Illinois** helped youth gain skills in healthy food choices, mastery of cooking, accurate measuring, safety in the kitchen, teamwork, and effective communication. Youth gained cooking skills that they can use for the benefit of themselves and their family. They participated in a Food Challenge experience which provided an opportunity to demonstrate the skills they learned and the creativity exhibited in making entrees using a limited number of ingredients. "I learned to eat foods that I never would have touched before just because I didn't think they would be good. It makes me think it is ok to try new foods." – Youth

It is essential for today's youth to develop skills in **Science**. 4-H programs prepare youth by engaging them in a process of discovery and exploration through a project-based learning approach.

- Youth at Patrick Air Force Base in **Florida** learned about electronics, physics, maps and apps, robotics, and rocketry. Staff observed youth gaining skills in understanding scientific methods and an increased desire to participate in more science activities with the ability to set goals and determine steps to meet goals. Eighty-four percent identified an interest in science related careers.

4-H's tradition of providing positive youth development programs for youth of varying backgrounds and needs is captured with the 4-H Military Partnership project. 4-H provides stability, predictability and high quality programming for military connected youth allowing service members to concentrate on their mission.

# CYFAR PDTA

## Professional Development and Technical Assistance Center

The CYFAR Professional Development and Technical Assistance (PDTA) Center, a joint initiative between the University of Minnesota and the Pennsylvania State University, has made much progress towards achieving its goals and objectives. In 2016, the CYFAR PDTA Center focused on streamlining products and building predictability throughout the CYFAR system.

An important component to the CYFAR PDTA Center's work is technical assistance and training. To best educate and support CYFAR Sustainable Community Projects (SCP) grantees, 54 site visits have been conducted by CYFAR PDTA Center coaches since 2014. These visits serve to strengthen the coaching relationships established through consistent monthly phone interactions. Through engagement with CYFAR coaches and subject matter experts, the CYFAR PDTA Center also hosted a series of webinars throughout the year on a range of topics addressing the positive development and wellbeing of at-risk children, youth, and families. These webinars built knowledge and skills for quality program implementation, evaluation, and sustainability by CYFAR SCP grantees. The CYFAR Professional Development Event (PDE) was held in May 2016 for 225 attendees. This event included an orientation session for new CYFAR SCP grantees. The PDE evaluation showed a high degree of satisfaction and learning that will undoubtedly translate into enhanced CYFAR SCP project coordination and program delivery for vulnerable populations.

To ensure data transparency, accountability by CYFAR SCP projects, and consistent reporting to USDA-NIFA, reports providing information about each CYFAR SCP grantee's progress toward meeting Common Measures were initiated. In addition, quarterly reports summarizing coach site visits were provided to help elevate success stories, capture effective implementation practices, and identify system-wide challenges for USDA-NIFA leadership. Additional reports, such as a summary of focus group feedback, were prepared to further highlight the CYFAR PDTA Center's responsiveness to CYFAR SCP grantees' requests and needs. The CYFAR PDTA Center also continues to survey coaches and Principal Investigators annually on the effectiveness of the coaching process and have seen consistent satisfaction with coaching and growth in coaching skills.

### Several new outcome measurement products were developed over the course of 2016, including:

- CYFAR Health Assessment Tool (CHAT): an online picture-based survey tool designed for school-age youth that enables CYFAR projects to identify health promotion opportunities and enact program recommendations for both parents and youth. This tool was being implemented with 15 SCP projects.
- Bilingual Survey Builder Tool: CYFAR PDTA Center facilitated the translation of the Common Measures into Spanish and have modified the Survey Builder tool on the CYFAR website to offer surveys in both English and Spanish languages.
- Survey Import Tool: allows CYFAR SCP grantees to import survey data to the CYFAR database via Excel, OpenOffice, or other spreadsheet processing applications.

The CYFAR PDTA Center also continues to share lessons learned and evidence-based practices. The CYFAR PDTA Center successfully published two journal articles providing analysis of the CYFAR Coaching model. The articles describe how the peer-coaching model has been applied to support community-based Extension programming through the CYFAR initiative. A variety of reports and print resources were developed to highlight best practices for effective and impactful implementation and to promote a greater understanding of factors that lead to better implementation quality, the demonstration of outcomes, and sustainability. A monthly newsletter was initiated. In addition, the CYFAR PDTA Center developed a logo and has established a processes to better brand materials, so CYFAR SCP grantees and other stakeholders can more readily recognize the resources available through the Center. Webinar content, other resources, and evaluation tools have been placed on the CYFAR website where site visits are logged at more than 100,000 visits per quarter from users all over the world.

# **Sustainable Community Projects**

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## Parent Child Reading Enhancement Program (PCREP)

*Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical (A&M) University*

The Parent and Child Reading Enhancement Program (PCREP), based on Bronfenbrenner's systems theory, helps parents more effectively demonstrate and reinforce good reading behaviors in their children. Fifty-six parents in Madison County, AL were taught various reading strategies to use when teaching their children how to read or improve their reading skills. The program consisted of six weeks of instruction twice a week for one and a half hours. The classes focus on phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency. While parents were taught by trained educators on how to implement research-based strategies for building children's reading skills, their children were simultaneously taught the same skills by service-learning students from the Department of Early Childhood Education at Alabama A&M University. During the last 30 minutes of each class, parents, together with their children, practiced strategies learned that day. Parents who participated in the program reported feeling significantly more able to help their children read. Not only did their knowledge of various reading strategies increase, parents spent more time reading and implementing the strategies with their children.

The PCREP also implemented a family event focused on providing quality family time whereby children could engage in educational activities centered on literacy. The event not only allowed families to have fun together but it also allowed children to "earn while they learn." Quantitative results suggest that parent beliefs and practices changed after participating in the program, reflecting increased knowledge of the importance and use of home literacy practices to support their children's learning. Parents also reported having better access to literacy materials in their homes thus providing more opportunities for children's literacy experiences. In addition to recognizing the importance of reading and

having access to children's books, parents also reported reading to their children more frequently by the end of the program year.

The program's greatest challenge has been recruiting Hispanic parents. Although many Hispanic parents recognize the importance and need for the program, it has been difficult to get them to commit to coming. Also, formally assessing children has been a challenge. During the coming program year, however, staff will utilize software that can help with assessing each child.

**Sustainability:** Although this was the first year of implementation, the PCREP has been incorporated into the syllabus of two academic classes at Alabama A&M University. Students are allowed to select this program as an option for obtaining service learning hours.

Commissioner Harrison of District Six provided financial support for an additional session during the summer, and he also provided financial support for the family day event.

The program also received a small Rural Development Grant from Alabama Mountain, River and Valleys' Resource Conservation and Development Council to help support the continued implementation of the PCREP's Family Fun Day Bookstore for children.

Alabama A&M University's Agribition Center provided, free of charge, space and equipment for the Family Fun Day. The three community sites will continue to provide free use of their facilities for implementation of the classes.



## 4-H and the 4 F's - Food, Fitness, Farming and Fun!

### *University of California*

The California CYFAR Sustainable Communities Project provided intensive engagement of at-risk youth, teens, families, afterschool program staff, and other stakeholders. Stakeholders include resident volunteers, school administrators, local government officials, farmers, 4-H teen leaders, cooperative extension staff, and others. Sites used innovative technology applications, hands-on activities, positive youth development practices, place-based and service learning, and youth-adult partnerships to address childhood obesity issues. Curricula and activities focused on nutrition, cooking, gardening, physical activity, and agriculture literacy to enhance youth self-efficacy and increase life skills related to healthy living.

**Sustainability:** To ensure sustainability, sites focused on increasing the capacity of volunteers and teens to lead high quality health education; and the development of partnerships in the community. In strengthening partnerships, organizations and individuals were invited to invest resources and time thereby increasing their stake in the continuation of these programs.

## Positive Parenting Practices (PREP-AHEAD - Promoting Responsible and Empowered Parenting)

### *Mississippi State University*

Positive Parenting Practices is a program that educates pregnant and parenting teens and emerging adults on positive parenting practices, child development, conflict management, nutrition, and professional skills. The short-term goals following participation in the program include increased progressive parenting and child-rearing beliefs and attitudes and improved workforce preparation skills. The long-term goal is that community organizations will develop a social support system that is sustained over time for pregnant and parenting teens.

From December 2015 through November 2016, four cohorts completed over 20 hours of face-to-face parenting education in the two participating sites. Forty-six participants began the program; twenty-one completed it. Participants engaged in six group sessions focusing on the transition to parenthood, communication techniques, and co-parenting skills. Participants also attended individual sessions with subject areas matched to each individual's needs. Throughout the program, participants were connected with resources to aid in parenting. Participants completed a pre- and post-program survey that measured parenting attitudes (e.g., expectations of children, parental empathy toward children's needs, use of corporal punishment, children's power and independence, and parent-child role responsibilities). All parenting attitudes improved to some extent, indicating positive changes in progressive beliefs and the participants' parenting and child-rearing attitudes.

The most important lessons learned in 2016 were related to data collection. Four cohorts of pregnant or parenting teens and young adults participated in the program from December 2015 through November 2016. Initially, participants were asked to complete the pre-program survey during the first meeting of the whole group. Conducting the pre-survey in this way delayed participants from getting to know one another and from receiving educational content right away. This disrupted programmatic flow. With the cohort that began in January of 2017, participants completed the pre-survey at the initial, one-on-one meeting with the project coordinator between November and December of 2016. Besides preventing a disruption in the programmatic flow, this helped enhance the comfort of participants with the project coordinator and helped build rapport prior to the first group session.

**Sustainability:** Steering Committees in each community are helping develop a sustained support system for pregnant and parenting teens and emerging adults. At quarterly face-to-face meetings, coordinated through the county Extension office, program updates are shared, needs are discussed, and members network to learn about the services that each group offers. Steering Committee members refer participants to the program and connect them to community resources. Resource directories have been developed or updated to ensure services for the target audience are identified. Professional development has also been provided for Steering Committee meeting attendees to build capacity to further support the target audience. For example, one meeting focused on the importance of sleep and ways to enhance sleep quality. As evaluation data continues to be collected to demonstrate how the program is working, Steering Committee members will be equipped to share positive outcomes in the communities and engaged to provide suggestions for program modification.



## Teens Advocating Sustainable Change (TASC)

### *The University of Arizona*

The Teens Advocating Sustainable Change (TASC) project is in its fifth and final year of funding through CYFAR. Over the course of the grant, the project has grown from 50 students in two counties to close to 400 in four counties (with funding from other sources). Students at six high schools located in Tucson (Pima County) and Douglas (Cochise County), AZ have established teams of Healthy Living Ambassadors for their schools. These students receive training on leadership, nutrition, and physical activity. Throughout the school year, Healthy Living Ambassadors disseminate information on healthy lifestyles locally at their schools and in their communities. The development and implementation of the Healthy Living Ambassador program is a collaborative effort among 4-H Youth Development and Family and Consumer Health Sciences agents in four counties located in southern AZ, six school districts in those counties, and the Department of Nutritional Sciences.

The school year culminates with a hike of the Grand Canyon. Youth train for three months prior to the hike and must qualify for this event by completing at least 50 miles of hiking and successful completion of a 10 mile group hike two weeks before the Grand Canyon hike. The purpose of the hike is to provide young people with an opportunity to set a challenging goal, work towards that goal, and achieve it. There are additional benefits too, such as getting youth to be more active and enjoy the outdoors. This last year, 60 youth participated in a hike of the Grand Canyon.

Here are some of the remarks youth made as a result of participating in this event:

- "I learned that I am not a quitter."
- "I can succeed at any of my goals."
- "I could do things I thought I couldn't."
- "Nature is beautiful."
- "I would hike and be out more."
- "I would love to visit other parks."
- "I seriously thought, wow hiking is for me! I felt alive, a thrill, a rush!"

**Sustainability:** Sustainability of the TASC project is an ongoing effort. To promote the continuation of Healthy Living Ambassadors, project staff have leveraged grants from foundations including 4-H, and have partnered with the University of Arizona Nutrition Network. Because of collaborations with schools, much of what has been gained through TASC will continue beyond the life of the grant. In addition, Healthy Living Ambassadors have enrolled as 4-H members and formed a 4-H Club.

Elizabeth Sparks, a University of Arizona faculty member and 4-H Youth Development Assistant Agent was invited along with the Healthy Living Ambassadors to present on the Healthy Living Ambassadors program at the 2016 Global 4-H Summit in Ottawa, Canada.

## Colorado Family Leadership Training Institute (FLTI)

### *Colorado State University*

The Colorado Family Leadership Training Institute (FLTI) model provides civic leadership training to parents, family members, and community leaders. These individuals possess the desire to engage in community action, but are often impeded by limited skills to make change happen for youth and families. A complementary youth program, for youth ages 12-14 years, is conducted using the evidence-based DARE to be You school curriculum developed by Colorado State University Extension. The youth program employs civic leadership activities paralleling those in the adult program. Adult and youth participants are coached as they develop individual community projects that provide opportunities to apply leadership and civic skills to serve others. Additionally, the model includes the development of a network of local partners through a Civic Design Team to assist in building a support network for newly empowered community leaders. Finally, the model connects program alumni to leadership opportunities.

Participants are parents, family members, or adult mentors and their youth partners. The program increases engagement of participants in policy processes, and participants become change agents to improve health and education outcomes for families and youth. In the process, parents and family members demonstrate an understanding of their roles and responsibilities in the care and education of their youth. Youth show improved skills in relation to school success and engagement in their community.

On several occasions, participants have been asked open-ended questions about activities that left a lasting impression on them (critical incidents or "Key Learnings") as well as their favorite aspects and things they would change. The most common Key Learnings and favorite aspects related to networking, civic skills, and community involvement; the Day at the State Capitol was the activity that was most often mentioned. Other benefits that were noted multiple times included communication skills and insights about policy making. The most common recommendation for change was related to coverage of too much content in a short amount of time, which restricted opportunities for discussions and hands-on activities.

**Sustainability:** Leadership team members have regular strategic planning meetings and calls to address sustainability and to identify funding partners such as the Colorado Health Foundation and other strategic program partners. The team recently coordinated a Technology of Participation planning retreat to create sustainability program plans for the final years of the grant and for long-term capacity building.



## GRANDcares

### *Colorado State University and University of Hawai'i at Manoa*

GRANDcares is a systems-based intervention for vulnerable, grandparent-headed families. The tripartite intervention is based upon family resilience theory and focuses on strengthening self-care and parenting skills in custodial grandparents, developing communication and leadership skills in grandchildren, and increasing the ability of service providers to meet grandfamilies' needs.

The long-term goal of GRANDcares is to create an effective evidence-based intervention to improve quality of life for custodial grandparents and their grandchildren. Program objectives are to: (1) enhance grandparents' parenting skills and self-care practices, (2) promote youth participants' self-efficacy and leadership skills, and (3) strengthen service providers' abilities to support grandfamilies.

Year one of the five-year plan (2015) included planning, staff training, recruiting participants, and enhancing relationships with community partners. In year two (2016), the grandparent component, an adaptation of the existing evidenced-based Powerful Tools for Caregivers, was implemented and evaluated. In year three (2017), grandchild and service provider components were added. Grandchildren will learn self-care skills parallel to their grandparents, and practice leadership skills as they develop a grandfamily self-care day to celebrate program graduation.

Through the project, a number of lessons have been learned. For example, staff learned that utilizing an evidence-based program for a different

population (i.e., family caregivers of older adults) is challenging as they are uncertain it will work with grandparents. Staff believe the program will work and have heard from grandparents that they like it. The challenge is in changing lessons that have been validated with other populations but not necessarily with grandparents raising grandchildren. This has created some growing pains for the original developers of the program as staff make changes and suggestions to customize the program for the new audience. Similar challenges are part of identifying the youth curriculum. Staff find that there are good programs available for youth, but need to examine each carefully for application with grandchildren in families.

**Sustainability:** In 2016, as part of sustainability and increasing the number of states that implement the GRANDcares Project, staff worked with Dr. Sandy Bailey from Montana State University Extension to secure funding through the Brookdale Foundation Group's Relatives as Parents Program (RAPP). Dr. Bailey and the Colorado/Hawai'i CYFAR team are working on a newsletter article for the Brookdale Foundation Group's RAPP Reporter. The aim of the article is to increase awareness and recruit new states and sites for this work. In addition, the CYFAR team is exploring strategies such as becoming a part of statewide 4-H programming, submitting a grant proposal to the National Institutes of Health, and identifying other sources of external funding.

## Michigan State University (MSU) Extension Sustainable Community Project (SCP; Flint)

### *Michigan State University*

In January 2016, a state of emergency was declared in Flint, MI due to elevated blood lead levels in children following a change in the public water source. All children in Flint, MI who drank city water between the original switch from Detroit city water to Flint River water in April 2014 to an end-date unknown, are being assumed to have been exposed to lead. As a result, families are under extreme stress, parents are facing raising children with an unknown amount of damage from lead exposure from their own tap water. The MSU Extension SCP in Flint focuses on supporting high-context parents with children that have been exposed to lead during the water crisis. Utilizing parenting education and supports for young children (ages two to eight years) to increase parents ability to respond to their child's emotions appropriately, increase parental knowledge of child development and parenting, increase positive interactions between parent and child, increase perceived informal support and provide supports to enhance the family dynamic.

At this time, there are no impacts because the project is only in the first planning year.

**Sustainability:** This is a new project. No sustainability plans have been created.





## Tools for Healthy Living

### *University of Connecticut*

The Tools for Healthy Living project is an afterschool project for youth grades four through six conducted in the urban communities of Hartford and New Britain, CT. Site instructors received interactive and hands-on training in 4-H and healthy homes curriculum. Youth participated in an 11 week healthy homes curriculum on topics such as mold, pests, smoking, asthma, clutter, lead, food safety, and advocacy. Activities focused on exploring home environmental risks and simple strategies to minimize these risks. Family newsletters in English and Spanish related to each lesson were sent home weekly for parents and caregivers. Youth received pre- and post-tests to assess increases in knowledge and awareness of home health risks; they also received evaluation for the Common Measure (technology).

In 2015-16, 103 youth participated in the Tools for Healthy Living project at seven afterschool sites in Hartford and New Britain. Twenty-eight youth from Hartford also attended a summer program at the 4-H Education Center at Auerfarm focusing on gardening, nutrition, and food safety.

Some of the project's successes include:

- The Tools for Healthy Living Curriculum was accepted as a national 4-H curriculum.
- An article on the curriculum was accepted by the Journal of Extension.
- An educational Healthy Homes App was developed and pilot tested with youth.
- A web page was developed.
- Partnerships with afterschool sites have increased the visibility of 4-H in urban communities in Connecticut.

One of the main lessons learned through the project is that building a relationship with partner sites is crucial for youth recruitment and attendance. A second lesson learned is that the location for the project is important for actively engaging youth. The best locations are those that are well-run, organized, and have staff who have a commitment to the project up-front. Sites that are disorganized or not fully committed to the project end-up being less successful.

A third lesson learned is regarding grant team communication. In order to keep the project moving forward, all of the grant team members need to know their role and act as a productive team member. Regular communication, via meetings and emails, is crucial for keeping the project on schedule and running smoothly. The team is able to deal with difficulties, as well as enjoy successes, when everyone is working for the same goals.

**Sustainability:** The goal is to develop urban 4-H clubs at project sites in order to increase urban 4-H in these communities. Adult leaders are being identified to sustain these clubs after the project is completed. Developing community involvement in youth programs is a main priority. Program staff have worked with 16 partner sites over the five years and plan to maintain relationships with site directors to build additional supports for urban 4-H.



## 4-H Purdue Athletic Life Success (PALS)

### *Purdue University*

4-H Purdue Athletic Life Success (PALS) inspires kids to stay active and healthy all year long through engaging after-school clubs and a four-week day camp on a university campus. Over 70 students from 3rd grade to 6th grade participate in two separate after-school clubs. Weekly activities include physical activity through fun games, and the opportunity to learn about healthy food choices through snacks and meals. During the summer, youth who meet eligibility requirements participate in a four-week day camp at Purdue University where they focus on pillars of character through physical activity. The after-school clubs are a bridge to keep the day-camp participants connected throughout the year and have deeper impact on the students' physical and social well-being.

Supporting the club leader and providing training to them is very important. Using school teachers as the after-school club leaders seems like a natural fit, and has worked, but it is nearly impossible to get them away from school to do professional development and planning. Program

staff is working on a plan to continue to provide training and support to the club leaders so they can continue to innovate and improve club programming while working on the PALS character pillars.

**Sustainability:** The schools and club leaders are aware of the limited nature of CYFAR funding. The project director has emphasized from the early planning stages that the purpose of the CYFAR funding is to build sustainability so that the club program endures long after the end of funding. Both clubs are beginning to address sustainability in three areas: financial, programming, and volunteers. For example, Sunnyside is working to create a healthy food alternative to sell at the county fair that will serve as an income stream after CYFAR funding has ended. Oakland is working to incorporate more parent involvement to serve as volunteers at club meetings and on field trips. Both clubs are investigating activities that they can maintain on an annual basis to develop a club identity.

## Sustainable Community Revitalization in Appalachia Through Children's Hands (SCRATCH) - McDowell

### *West Virginia State University*

McDowell County, WV is stricken with high rates of poverty, food insecurity, and health-related disease. The SCRATCH program is designed to address the problems attendant to poverty and obesity by intervening with children. The aim is to teach the children to garden for high yield, to cook their own produce, and to sustain the garden by selling produce and value-added products to the community.

**Sustainability:** This is a newly funded program and no sustainability information is available at this time.

# Juntos: Together for a Better Education and Success for At-Risk Youth in Iowa Communities

*Iowa State University*

Juntos: Together for a Better Education and Success for At-Risk Youth in Iowa Communities continues in Muscatine and Des Moines, IA. The program engaged 63 youth and 80 parents/caregivers in educational programming (Juntos curriculum) and supporting activities (e.g., Family Fun Nights, 4-H club, academic mentoring, and college visits.) The program's aim is to further enhance youth academic performance and parent/caregiver engagement to support youth in reaching their goals and to set them on a path to continue their education beyond high school.

Impacts of the project are based on 35 Latino youth who completed a survey at all four desired time points. While there are few statistically significant findings due to the small sample size, results are trending in the desired directions.

Success Coaches provided academic mentoring to youth and met with parents/caregivers, community organizations, and Extension educators to ensure that program deliverables linked youth and parents/caregivers to a variety of resources to help youth understand and experience the paths to education beyond high school. Extension educators and volunteers facilitated Juntos family workshops, Family Fun Nights, and 4-H Youth Development programming via 4-H clubs. Youth visited community colleges and universities campuses. Latino college students assisted with family workshop activities and served as informal mentors to youth.

Local partners perceive Juntos to be a program that is aligned with their goals for supporting the well-being of Latino youth. School staff assistance is critical to recruitment. In years when schools initiated the first family contact, recruitment efforts were more successful.

**Sustainability:** Des Moines 4-H capacities will allow clubs and youth retreats to continue beyond the CYFAR project funding. Two 4-H volunteer leaders will help sustain the after-school clubs. There are 18 Juntos facilitators. The school hopes to continue to provide the Juntos family workshop series, additional family engagement opportunities, and a 4-H afterschool club in the future. Success Coaching will be difficult to sustain. Results from a Latino Youth Mentoring curriculum being piloted could fill this void.

Muscatine's Advisory Committee is building partnerships with a local community college and local League of United Latin American Citizens chapter to build sustainability. By reporting results to the Muscatine County Extension Council, program staff are building a commitment from the council to continue to allocate funding after CYFAR ends. The multifaceted partnerships between Extension 4-H and Human Science specialists, Muscatine County Extension Council, school and college administrators and staff, and community volunteers will lead to sustainability.





## Strong Dads, Resilient Families

### *University of Kentucky*

The Strong Dads, Resilient Families project provides educational programs for fathers or father figures and their families in Todd and Wolfe counties in KY. One goal of this project is to strengthen parenting skills of fathers through curricula and activities as a means to promote family resiliency. A total of 130 fathers/father figures have participated in the two county-based programs. A diverse group has been engaged in the Todd County Incarcerated Fathers Program with participants identifying themselves as Black (20), American Indian (1), White (105), Asian (1) and Other (3). A total of four were of Hispanic origin. Through the programs and activities, men have opportunities to engage in positive ways with their children and strengthen the parent/child relationship. This will have long term positive impact on the child, families, and community. After attending the program, participants became more positive toward being a parent. The program overall has reached some 8,424 participants.

Participants in 2016 revealed that they have improved their communication skills with their children and have a renewed sense of what a good father is supposed to be. All fathers who attended the "Camping with Dads" program in Todd County revealed that spending quality time, talking with their children, and getting on their children's level to do the things that are important to their children were the keys to great parenting. All participants from 2016 evaluations had fairly positive perceptions of

themselves as positive role models for their children (mean score of 4.03 on a scale of 1 to 5) after participating in one of the project's activities. Over half of the fathers had not participated in Extension programming prior to the CYFAR program, denoting success of the program to attract males and non-traditional audiences to Extension.

**Sustainability:** Partnering coalitions and organizations are receiving updates, resources and information to help them understand the project and to learn how to reach out and engage fathers in various target audiences. As this grant has moved into the 4th year of funding, these organizations have been learning how to utilize their own programming to reach a more diverse population of men. The schools have developed a strong relationship with the CYFAR staff and use the relationship as a way to connect with students and their fathers. Meetings have been held between the 4-H agent and the Todd County High School principal to develop plans for continuing the CYFAR programming at the school. CYFAR programming also will be sustained through 21st Century grants in the county. The CYFAR programming at the Todd County Detention Center has built a very positive image for the CYFAR project and avenues for sustaining this program through budget appropriations are already being researched. Wolfe County is making plans to move the CYFAR paraprofessional into a full time 4-H assistant position.

## Youth Engagement & Support (YES)

### *University of Kentucky and Kentucky State University*

The purpose of the Kentucky CYFAR Youth Engagement and Support (YES) program is to provide life-skills programs for homeless and unstably housed youth in Jefferson County, KY. When homeless youth are given the same opportunities as other youth, 100% are successful at applying life skills. The Kentucky CYFAR YES program is a contributing factor to this success. Over the course of this past program year, more than 1,200 youth participated in the program at two grant sites. Program participants represent a diverse group, with participants identifying themselves as Black (743), American Indian (2), White (491), and Other (15). A total of 24 were of Hispanic origin. A vast majority of the participants (nearly 100%) remain new to Extension programming (including 4-H). Hence, the program remains successful in reaching out and attracting a new and non-traditional audiences.

Development and implementation expanded at each site in 2016 and topics covered included budgeting, job readiness, conflict resolution, among others. As a result of these programs, more than 66 youth have gained employment, 13 have gained housing, 11 have worked toward completion of their GEDs, seven program youth are currently enrolled in higher education institutions, eight youth received mental health assistance, and three youth were helped out of sex work. Use of the Youth Development Center increased from an average of 62 participants per month to over 300, showing that the youth participants are finding the programs useful and are sharing information about the program with other homeless youth. Many community partners are involved in the grant and strong relationships with these partners have allowed the program to reach many more youth this year.

Technology remains an important component of the program. Currently, there are seven computers connected to the Internet and a printer available for use by youth at the sites. Youth have access to a résumé program to simplify résumé building, videos from the "Skills to Pay the Bills" curriculum to teach job readiness, and iPads and an LCD projector to use for presentations. Partners have expanded the use of technology as well. UPS began a computer application class for youth at one site and Kentucky State University helped develop programming for new hydroponic garden technology.

**Sustainability:** Partnering coalitions and entities have been trained to understand the YES initiative in an effort to better reach out to homeless and unstably housed youth in the community. The site coordinator was housed with the grant collaborator at the YMCA so that he could be a liaison between the YMCA, Extension, and the community at large. After the site coordinator took another position in December 2016, a subcontract was developed to pay existing YMCA employees to continue the grant to support sustainability. When the grant ends, the YMCA plans to sustain programming in collaboration with Jefferson County Extension. A key collaborator for sustainability is Louisville Metro Council. They have been informed about the program and the impacts being made throughout the community. The goal of these updates is to build relationships with the Louisville Metro Council and the Mayor's office and gain funding to help support the YMCA personnel after the grant ends.





## U Connect

### Kentucky State University

Two sites comprise the Kentucky State University (KSU) CYFAR U Connect project. The first is the Rosenwald Center for Families and Children. The Rosenwald site, located on the campus of KSU in Frankfort, KY, successfully engages a cadre of youth in required activities and a variety of enrichment activities that help to develop healthy minds, bodies, and attitudes, as well as enhance academic achievement.

The second site in the KSU U Connect project is the Imani Family Life Center. The Imani Family Life Center offers a variety of programs designed for families that includes an afterschool program, a preschool program, computer lab tutoring, sports programs, and gym time. The mission of the Imani Family Life Center is to promote the education, health, and social well-being of families in Fayette and surrounding counties.

The University of Minnesota's Check & Connect program is utilized and provides a wide range of activities that promote literacy, healthy living, physical activity, science, technology, engineering, and mathematics learning experiences, academic achievement, effective communication, basic life skills, giving to the less fortunate, leadership development, and more.

During this cycle, the KSU U Connect site at the Imani Family Life Center solicited the help of community partners, as well as Extension System

personnel from both KSU and the University of Kentucky to capitalize on utilizing existing 4-H curriculum to aid in youth development. 4-H curriculum included titles such as Health Rocks!, Step Up to Leadership, and Steps to a Healthy Teen.

During the 2016 fiscal year, the KSU U Connect site at the Imani Family Life Center started out with approximately 21 students at two locations: the Imani Family Life Center and Tates Creek Middle School in Lexington, KY. Student retention has been an issue for the KSU U Connect site at the Imani Family Life Center, as students often drop-out of the program to attend sports and other extracurricular activities. Yet, this group managed to successfully engage and retain approximately 15 students. Staff will continue to utilize conferences, webinars, and social networks to identify ways to engage and retain students and families.

**Sustainability:** Staff will continue to incorporate state and local educational resources into programming (i.e., Extension Educators, Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife, KSU, other free and low cost programs, volunteers, and grants).



## 4-H Science Afterschool Program

### Utah State University

The 4-H Science Afterschool Program serves youth in grades K-6th at three higher-need elementary schools. During each 10-week session, five Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) clubs are offered. The four main components of the project include the following: (1) an afterschool science club; (2) service projects completed twice per year; (3) a parent showcase held twice per year; and (4) other 4-H opportunities. The two desired long-term outcomes include the following: (1) youth will acquire knowledge, build character, and develop life skills in a fun learning environment that enables them to become self-directing, productive members of society; and (2) youth will develop the skills to

become the next generation of scientists and leaders in STEM.

**Sustainability:** Utah County 4-H continues to seek diversified funding in order to sustain existing programs. The 4-H Science Afterschool Program Principle Investigator has secured over 10 million dollars in grant funds and contributions from various agencies to sustain and build the 4-H program in Utah County, UT. The programs depend on maintaining existing collaborations and joint ownership, implementing strategic funding strategies, and demonstrating positive results which is reported to stakeholder, funders, elected officials, and community members.

## Healthy YOUth... Strong Communities

### Louisiana State University

The Healthy YOUth... Strong Communities project targets school-age (K – 8th grade) children ages five years through 13 years in communities where high percentages of the youth are living at or below the Federal Poverty Level. Weekly educational programs are held for both the elementary and teen audiences throughout the school year focusing on gardening, nutrition, and leadership development. Elementary audiences participate in gardening and nutrition education on a weekly basis throughout the summer, and teen audiences participate in leadership and technology education and field trips to enhance their career awareness.

The Healthy YOUth... Strong Communities project team provides programming to two different age groups at three Shreveport Parks and Recreation community centers. While other programming for the elementary audience existed before the Healthy YOUth... Strong Communities programming began, the teen audience was not served. The Healthy YOUth... Strong Communities team has been working for over two years to develop a relationship with the teen audience and community that support them, but realize that without a consistent program on non-CYFAR days and the support of site staff, reaching the teen audience is an extreme challenge.

**Sustainability:** Efforts are being made to build relationships and provide leadership development opportunities to volunteers through trainings, meetings, and professional conferences.





## Maine Community Central: Integrating 4-H Science and Life Skills with Schools, Communities, and Families (Maine 4-H Community Central)

### *University of Maine*

Maine 4-H Community Central is an initiative to build stronger families through the 4-H program at public housing sites. This project engages youth with their parents, elders, school, and community through hands-on 4-H projects in science leadership and citizenship. Youth who participate demonstrate the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors necessary for fulfilling lives.

University of Maine 4-H faculty and staff partner with public housing and local schools in Lewiston and Portland as part of Maine 4-H Community Central. Research informs us that a child's environment can have significant impacts on that child's learning outcomes. The Maine 4-H Community Central program introduces 4-H programming to mitigate risk factors, build social capital, and connect children to positive assets. University of Maine 4-H is on the cutting edge of serving an important and vulnerable population. Please visit the Maine 4-H Community Central blog at: <https://umaine.edu/4h/tag/4-h-community-central/>

In 2016, a total of 696 youth in third through eighth grade received over 600 hours of 4-H programming in their local communities. Youth experienced hands on science, engineering, technology, and math taught by teen mentors and community leaders. A total of 21 teens in grades 9th through 12th dedicated 579 hours of mentoring and leadership to young people in their communities. Teens also completed a total of 60 hours of supervision and over 100 hours of training and planning to prepare and implement lessons with younger students.

The intentional planning of this project has proven to be a strength. As staff have rolled out in two different communities, they have learned that the needs of the communities are different, but the goals of the program are

universal. A common theme between the two sites is involving teens as teachers, which has been very powerful. Teens have successfully secured employment based on the skills learned through being a teen leader with Maine 4-H Community Central.

The addition of in school programming has provided multiple opportunities for engagement from parents, teachers, administrators, and community members. Youth are seeing the connection between school, home, and community. They are starting to make deeper connections. The model of programming is working.

One area that needs improvement is fully capturing the success stories from this project. As staff are working within communities, this is something that sometimes falls through the cracks.

**Sustainability:** University of Maine 4-H has identified five specific approaches to creating a sustainable 4-H program at public housing sites. The first is to recruit, train, and enroll two adult 4-H volunteers at each site each year. The second approach is to integrate the Community Collaboration Approach with the community partner organization. Third, program staff will model affordable programming using materials and activities that any sustained youth group can duplicate. The fourth approach is to foster and sustain a tradition of trust and collaboration between organizations that work with the public housing sites so that those organizations will value the interconnected approach to problem solving and community development. Lastly, youth in the program will be involved in local 4-H club programming allowing families to continue involvement independent of any CYFAR funding or efforts and will ensure involvement of the local Extension office.

## Building Early Emotional Skills (BEES)

### *Michigan State University*

The Michigan State University (MSU) Extension's Building Early Emotional Skills (BEES) project is designed to provide parent education and critical support to Michigan's high-context parents of children ages zero to three through traditional face to face group educational sessions and online virtual classes. In these classes, participants learn key parenting skills and early childhood development information, as well as find friendships and grow critical connections to community supports. The sessions are designed to encourage discussion of real life situations and are moderated by a trained Extension Educator.

One hundred and eight parents participated in the BEES eight-week workshop series. Preliminary data results from evaluations suggest positive changes in the quality of parenting, and knowledge about early social-emotional development and parental functioning.

The process of creating an online and face-to-face workshop is ever evolving and the team has learned to continually check-in and evaluate what is being done and if it is the most effective that it could be. This has allowed the team to respond to suggestions from participants and make changes as needed to improve workshop activities and materials.

**Sustainability:** The team is working on building the capacity of staff to deliver the BEES program in other areas once the grant is completed. They are also taking into account feedback from the online class participants and community partners and will begin to develop a child care provider version of the BEES group program that can be delivered for training hours to child care providers. The team is also reviewing ways to automate the registration process for the online class to ensure sustainability once the grant ends. A dissemination plan is being developed for all three curricula: BEES Home Visiting, BEES Group, and BEES Child Care Provider Group. The BEES program is also being considered for use in the CYFAR Flint grant as a potential parenting curricula.

## Fostering Youth towards a Revolution of Responsibility (FYRR)

### *University of Alaska Fairbanks*

Fostering Youth towards a Revolution of Responsibility (FYRR) is a positive life skills development program that focuses on delivering workforce preparation through life skill development ideals in competence, confidence, connection, caring, compassion, and character. These ideals are based on the National 4-H Program Logic Model for Healthy Living – Social-Emotional Health and Well-Being. They lead to contribution, and are the essential life skills necessary to become a contributing individual to self, family, community, and the institutions of a civil society.

The long term goal of the FYRR project is to reduce the homeless rate of teens aging out of state custody by developing the skills necessary in participants to enter the workforce, especially in technology fields, and to become healthy, productive, and effective adults.

Teens that are in state custody show many social-emotional gaps. While focusing on workforce preparation, program staff found that adding lessons in social-emotional development provided greater opportunities for increased skill development. For example, a lesson on financial literacy that includes learning how to fill out state assistance forms, might also include a discussion of shame, pride, deserving, and stigma, some of the emotions that could accompany such a decision.

**Sustainability:** To aid in sustainability of the FYRR project, program site staff have been included in training. Two male staff members participated in training at the National One Circle Foundation, learning about the "Council of Young Men" curriculum. In addition, several female staff have been trained in the "Girls Circles" curriculum.



## Fostering Achievement and Connections to Engage Students (FACES)

### University of Minnesota

Fostering Achievement and Connections to Engage Students (FACES) aims to provide youth with the skills needed to achieve academic success by cultivating positive relationships with caring adults and providing opportunities to practice problem solving skills in three life domains of academics, health, and finances. The FACES grant is a collaboration between the University of Minnesota (UMN) and two community sites. One site is Bolder Options in Minneapolis, MN and the second is a collaboration between the UMN and the Fond Du Lac Tribal and Community College. The sites engage schools, youth serving agencies, young people, families, and communities to address disparities in educational access and achievement.

One example of programming occurred in November of 2016. A family cooking night was hosted at the Bolder Options location. Twenty mentors, mentees, and family members, as well as five volunteers from the UMN attended. The team taught everyone how to make healthy pizza dough, pizza sauce, salad, salad dressing, fruity waters, and banana ice cream. The team received rave reviews from the attendees and even the mentors said that they did not know pizza dough was so easy to make! Participants received a book that included the recipes used at the event. The purpose of the event was to teach new healthy eating options and provide youth with resources to implement the nutrition lessons taught in the sessions (i.e., equipment, recipes, and training).

**Sustainability:** The FACES grant at Bolder Options is actively engaged in outside community events to demonstrate the CYFAR commitment to the community. This activity is helping to make connections for future funding opportunities.

## PROMoting School-community-university Partnerships to Enhance Resilience (PROSPER)

### Pennsylvania State University

Pennsylvania State University's Sustainable Community Project's goal is to foster the positive growth and development of middle-school youth by strengthening families, building skills, and reducing youth problem behaviors (e.g., substance use, violence, and other problems).

One aspect of this project involves bolstering parent-adolescent relationships because of the importance of this dynamic as a mechanism to improve youth's lives. Reach is one of the most critical implementation

factors to address. There is no silver bullet, rather it requires continuous effort and testing of innovative strategies. Program staff has found that recruitment and retention strategies that may work one time do not necessarily work again.

**Sustainability:** CYFAR staff are delivering awareness building presentations to community groups and speaking to businesses about adopting a family for the program.

## Urban 4-H Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) Clubs

### University of Minnesota

Urban 4-H Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) Clubs are designed to ignite youths' interest in learning about science, technology, engineering, and math. The clubs are designed for middle school aged youth living in the Minneapolis and St. Paul, MN area who experience educational barriers. During the school year, the clubs meet weekly for 26 weeks for approximately four contact hours each week. The clubs are facilitated by two adults who work in partnership with youth participants and their families. In the clubs, youth develop inquiry skills through an engineering-oriented curriculum. Along with the science, technology, engineering, and math content, youth also engage in a sequence of activities that equip them with the mindset and personal leadership skills needed to pursue higher education and careers. In addition, each summer, the youth participate in a University of Minnesota (UMN) campus immersion where they learn about student life, explore academic interests, identify steps towards college readiness, and meet faculty and students in science, technology, engineering, and math fields. Throughout the entire program, the youth develop a portfolio that captures their growth over time and present it at public showcase events. Youth and parents report that the young people feel more prepared for college and are beginning to see themselves as leaders.

Throughout the grant cycle, the team has improved its ability to practice consistent evaluative data collection. They have also revised their evaluative tools, which has improved reporting and communication.

The team has also adapted the program model to suit the rhythm of the

community sites. For instance, they have divided the program year into four quarters, marketing each quarter as a separate experience within a continuum of a program year. This gives participants the flexibility to join the club on a quarterly basis rather than asking them to commit to a yearlong program at the beginning of the program year.

**Sustainability:** The program is sustained through strong organizational partnerships with Ka Joog and Minneapolis Community Education. The project has partnership agreements with both sites.

Adult volunteers play important roles in supporting youth participation. The project includes effective staff, who mentor youth and serve as role models, which adds to the program's sustainability.

The campus immersion component of the project's model is strengthened by campus partnerships with Aerospace Engineering, the Department of Chemistry - Center for Sustainable Polymers, and many other departments at the UMN.

The project has secured a \$35,000 grant from Youthprise, \$11,000 from Minnesota AT&T Foundation, and \$10,000 from Minneapolis Foundation 612 Grant. The funds support staffing and programming.

Project staff has been working with staff in the Minnesota 4-H's Urban Youth Development Office to replicate this program model at other sites. The response has been positive and the programs are growing.





## U Connect

*University of Minnesota and Tennessee State University*

U Connect is a comprehensive program based on Check & Connect, developed at the University of Minnesota's Institute on Community Integration. Check & Connect is an evidence-based student engagement intervention that promotes young people's self-regulation, intrinsic motivation, and persistence. It supports positive youth development by promoting relationships with caring adults and peers, skill building within a safe environment, and cognitive engagement with school and learning.

U Connect engages middle school youth and their parents and caregivers. Youth meet weekly with a mentor as part of an existing after-school program to engage in active learning opportunities. Youth also receive science, technology, engineering, math, and nutrition education. Parents and caregivers of the youth participate in parent engagement sessions focused on strengthening partnerships between families and schools.

Outcomes include promotion of physical and psychological well-being; creation of opportunities for youth, families, and community center staff to develop supportive relationships; demonstration and modeling of positive social norms; and creation of a safe place of inclusion that supports empowerment and skill building. Through U Connect, youth improve their pro-social behaviors at school and within the afterschool program, including attendance, personal behavior, academic performance, and engagement. The program provides youth what they need to graduate high school with sufficient skills for postsecondary education, employment, or both.

Two key lessons were learned during project implementation -

1. First, the Tennessee partners have worked with multiple sites throughout the project. Two current Tennessee sites are thriving and well-positioned for sustainability. The team has learned the importance of having at least one staff person at each site who is fully committed to the project, willing to attend to project details, and willing to advocate for project support when needed. The team has also learned that partnerships are needed when an after-school program is within a school to access student academic information and garner the commitment necessary to support academic achievement. The Minnesota sites, not located in schools, were able to build on their existing partnerships with schools.
2. Second, a major challenge for all of the sites has been parent engagement. Staff continue to learn and try new strategies for engaging parents in creative ways. They are connecting with families in the community to identify how best to do that.

**Sustainability:** Maintaining the mentoring aspect of U Connect beyond the five years of funding will be the most challenging for this project. Staff at all sites have started to develop partnerships with other local community organizations, including religious organizations, community colleges, and nutrition, academic, arts, and sports centers in their local area. This will allow them to continue the Check & Connect mentoring model through more personal one-on-one mentoring and as a tool through which the program will engage youth and their families.

## Partnering for School Success

### University of Minnesota

This project is a partnership with University of Minnesota (UMN) Extension and Triton (Dodge Center) and Faribault Middle Schools. It focuses on two of the major factors related to academic achievement for Latino families: family and school environments. The project includes three integrated components: (1) family strengthening education; (2) family-school partnerships; and (3) school navigators (liaisons between the parents, school, and community). The following accomplishments occurred this year:

- Twenty-eight parents participated in parent education by attending a seven-week class of Education: Our Best Legacy. Each participant learned how to be engaged in their child's school, so the child will graduate and continue higher education.
- Thirty-four parents participated in how to plan financially for education beyond high school.
- Fifty-two parents and youth took a field trip to a community college and 63 parents and youth visited the UMN. During the visits, the youth learned that higher education is a dream they can achieve.
- Youth participated in after-school sessions focusing on science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) topics.
- School staff and parents worked together on action plans to develop Latino partnership groups at their school. School navigators connected parents and schools and assisted with action plans.

The family school partnership is not without some challenges. Language is an important barrier in terms of enhancing communication between parents and school staff. It is important to work with school staff, as well as parents, on partnership goals. Non-verbal communication is part of any culture, and it can contribute to building the relationship between parents and staff or make relationships more distant. Action plans were developed

with both groups together, however, during the conversation, there were disparities in terms of the importance of which initiatives should be undertaken and prioritized. More work needs to be done in order to align the interests of parents and staff. A Design Thinking approach is being implemented to address partnership goals and increase communication. CYFAR program staff are working on increasing the voices of the Latino parents by bringing school staff and parents together with the assistance of a Latino specialist from Community Vitality who has public policy experience.

**Sustainability:** School navigators will remain in the community, so effort has been made to provide staff development and training for them personally and professionally. It is important for the school navigators to have the confidence necessary to continue the work of this project once the grant is completed. They were trained in the curriculums used and they have observed classes, co-facilitated, and facilitated on their own. This will enable them to feel comfortable in implementing the program in their own communities, as well as those in the region, once the grant is completed.

The leadership workshops and Design Thinking sessions offered will assist parents and school staff to work more effectively and to provide a Latino voice to public policies related to the school system.

Training on the curriculum and the model used in the project have been presented to other school systems and educators to implement a similar program. The Latino curriculum is being piloted in English and Hmong for use in other cultures, with training provided on best practices.





## Linking Native American Youth to Agriculture and Environmental Practices using Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) Technologies

### Montana State University

This project teaches Native American youth about science using technology. In order to make the information relevant, the project focuses on community needs as identified by project coordinators, teachers, and other community members. The current project is working with two sites in Montana: Pretty Eagle School on the Crow Indian Reservation and Two Eagle River School on the Flathead Indian Reservation.

Participants at the Pretty Eagle site have learned to use Global Positioning System (GPS) units; build, program, and operate drones; and utilize flying simulations on the computer. In addition, Pretty Eagle participants learned about mapping, geocaching, aerial photography, Google Earth, and a computer-aided design technology (CAD) program.

Participants at the Two Eagle River site have learned how to create videos using iPads with the intention to produce short science films that they showcase to the public. At Two Eagle River, students made field trips locally to learn about water monitoring, birds, and glacier activity on the Flathead Reservation. During the year, meetings were scheduled with stakeholders at both sites, field trips were planned to Montana State University-Bozeman campus, and monthly site visits were scheduled for training, support, and relationship-building.

Staff has learned that building trust is extremely important and that it takes time to develop, especially at Two Eagle River School, where no history of established relationships with the school or community members existed. Staff learned to be flexible with the Two Eagle River School site because there were various staff changes this year (i.e. new science teacher and superintendent). At the Pretty Eagle site staff have built trust, but that has been because of the prior history of established relationships. Besides flexibility and trust, staff learned that they need to listen to the sites to effectively meet their needs.

**Sustainability:** Sustainability is being built into the project as staff continue to strengthen the relationships they have established at the Pretty Eagle site and form relationships within the Two Eagle River site. In particular, working with school teachers in their classrooms builds sustainability because the teachers then recognize the benefit of using the technology. The staff also connect the teachers to knowledge and resources from outside their classrooms and from subsequent grades. In addition, as they are trained to use specific technologies, teachers are equipped with knowledge, training, and technology supplies that they will use with other students in upcoming years.

At Two Eagle River, a 21st Century grant was received and CYFAR staff are working to see how CYFAR can be incorporated into the after-school program.

At Pretty Eagle, CYFAR staff are working on building more relationships, so they can find more opportunities for partnering.

## WeCook: Fun with Food and Fitness

### *University of Nebraska - Lincoln*

After-school programs provide key opportunities to reduce childhood overweight and obesity rates by encouraging healthy habits. Mounting evidence links poor eating habits to a lack of cooking at home and insufficient knowledge, a trend amplified among low-income families who lack the time and budget to commit to proper nutrition. WeCook addresses these issues through a twelve-week program targeting underserved fourth and fifth graders. Participants attend two 60-minute sessions per week dedicated to teaching food preparation skills, the importance of nutrition using USDA guidelines, and increasing physical activity through interactive games. Families also participate in three family meal nights throughout the program, where students showcase the skills they have learned.

The long-term goals of the program are that (1) students will engage in healthy eating and physical activity behaviors, and (2) families will provide an environment with access to safe, nutritious meals and regular physical activity. Pre- and post-surveys are administered to students, parents, and caregivers. Youth also complete the following pre- and post-program outcome measurement tools: (1) use food models to build a healthy plate, with an evaluator photographing each plate, and (2) wear Fitbits for one week to track physical activity. Statistical analysis is then conducted to assess changes related to program goals.

Expanding the program in its entirety poses quality assurance challenges. With the two original sites being coordinated through the University of Nebraska, WeCook is afforded resources other community partners are not. For example, supplies for the two original sites are organized and stored in a centralized location where team members are able to collaborate in-

person on an almost daily basis. Both Lincoln Parks and Recreation and Partnership for a Healthy Lincoln require a decentralization of resources, making quality control a challenge. In addition to this, recruiting staff and volunteers for the additional sites while maintaining a low youth to adult ratio for each cohort requires a great deal of work and creativity—all of which is made easier by conducting the program in a city, such as Lincoln, NE, where University students are looking for community experiences. Even with all of the challenges, the WeCook team continues to grow the program and improve its quality simultaneously.

**Sustainability:** WeCook continues to strengthen its community partnerships to ensure effective programming and sustainability planning. As a result, the team was approached by two new community partners: Lincoln Parks and Recreation and Partnership for a Healthy Lincoln. By partnering with Lincoln Parks and Recreation, multiple sites across Lincoln delivered WeCook lessons to youth enrolled in summer programs. Trainings were developed and delivered for quality assurance purposes at multiple summer sites. In addition, the WeCook team delivered CYFAR-specific programming at the summer site located within one of the communities named in the grant. WeCook was then approached by Partnership for a Healthy Lincoln to expand programming to three new Title I schools in Lincoln, NE for the 2016-2017 school year. This was made possible through the application for and receipt of an additional one-year grant. Programming was successfully expanded through these partnerships to reach an additional seven cohorts by the end of the 2016-2017 school year.





## 4-H Youth Futures College Within Reach (YF)

*University of Missouri*

The 4-H Youth Futures College Within Reach (YF) program engages underserved, high-need youth in developing skills and attitudes needed for postsecondary education and leadership in the 21st Century workplace. The grant utilizes a multi-level approach through the following actions: 1) engaging mentors to work directly with youth; and 2) providing training and support for parents, caregivers, and community partners. The YF curriculum includes sessions for parents on a variety of topics, ranging from supporting school success, financial aid, Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) preparation, and parent-child communication. Lessons and program activities for the youth focus on service learning experiences, technology applications, and building healthy relationships with family, friends, and romantic partners. The YF staff plan to replicate and scale the program throughout Missouri and to share the program model with other partners around the nation.

**Sustainability:** The YF program will be sustained by current 4-H faculty and staff members working with volunteers to help deliver the program. Funding through the Missouri 4-H Foundation and University of Missouri Extension also help sustain the program, in addition to local, state and national grants that support college readiness and access.

## Delaware State University Sustainable Community Project

*Delaware State University*

The Delaware State University Sustainable Community Project provides parenting education through food safety, physical activity, and gardening activities to target childhood obesity. The project encourages participants at multiple community sites to examine the role of their particular physical environment on their health behaviors. Gardening is utilized as a way to increase access to fresh produce and simple methods of preparation and preservation of foods are introduced to enhance family well-being and reduce childhood overweight and obesity. All-together the gardens produced over 120 green beans, 35 dozen sweet potatoes 1500 tomatoes, 640 sweet peppers, 250 winter squash, 375 cucumbers and have fed over 90 families. In addition our youth are drinking more water and drinking less sugary drinks and have adopted the hula hoop as their number one exercise.

**Sustainability:** The Delaware State University Sustainable Community Project's sustainability plan includes demonstrating program effectiveness through positive evaluation impact, strengthening existing partnerships, particularly with Cooperative Extension, and disseminating program successes to key stakeholders and potential funders and in Dover and Millsboro.





## Heart and Shield

### University of Nevada, Reno

The purpose of the Heart and Shield program is to create an environment that allows child and adult survivors of intimate partner violence to obtain resources and skills necessary to break the cycle of intimate partner violence. Adult education and age-appropriate youth curricula include topics such as communication, problem solving, healthy relationships, and conflict resolution. Family Night Out events allow families to practice new skills in a fun group setting. CYFAR Common Measures pre- and post-evaluations, end-of-session interviews, and questionnaires were completed. A qualitative assessment protocol was approved. A review of teen websites was also completed, assessing online resources for teens experiencing serious family fighting.

Fallon Site: Program education expanded to address generational violence and new cultural activities. Eleven adults and 41 children (ages 0-16 years) attended 16 two-hour classes, Family Night Out, and community events. Staff observed an increase in family functioning and reduced family behavior issues among the families attending.

Elko Site: Workshops and promotion efforts generated new attendees and increased awareness of agency personnel who refer clientele to the program. The Principal Investigator also appeared on a 30-minute radio program describing intimate partner violence and the Heart and Shield program. Ten adults and 20 children (ages 2-18 years) participated in the 26 Heart and Shield classes and Family Night Out activities.

End-of-session interviews indicated the need to reduce the number of classes from 13 to 9. Specific examples of things to say to children and ways to handle behavior situations have been added to the curriculum. The Fallon site is adding culturally sensitive activities to the curriculum to appeal to a Native American audience.

Program recruitment fliers have been translated into Spanish. Staff hold

stakeholder meetings prior to the start of the session to increase awareness of agency personnel who can refer clientele to the program. A program demonstration is also held prior to the start of the session to introduce prospective participants to the program and staff.

Staff has learned that the program works best for participants not currently in crisis situations. As community support for the intimate partner violence prevention program grows, CYFAR personnel are asked to collaborate on new programs. One such example is working with a group to address teen suicide and mental health issues.

#### Sustainability:

- A second tribal community has requested that the Heart and Shield curriculum be delivered to their remote location. As travel time is extensive, staff are investigating the use of interactive video program delivery with a trained facilitator on-site.
- The Co-Principal Investigator served as a resource for agency personnel as they apply for additional funds to expand local services. Heart and Shield is an integral part of intimate partner violence prevention plans.
- A statewide domestic violence organization has requested that they receive training to implement program curriculum with their clientele once Heart and Shield curriculum has been evaluated and revised.
- As part of promoting Heart and Shield to community organizations and encouraging referrals to the program, the Principal Investigator met with a district court judge. The judge is working to establish a civil domestic violence court. After hearing about the program, the judge indicated plans to use Heart and Shield as the flagship program for families. Funding for the court would also include funding for Heart and Shield.

## Science Pathways

*Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey*

Science Pathways is a high context leadership development program that makes use of Makerspace as a conduit to learning. The guiding principle of this program is as follows.

If program staff give teens the opportunity to learn skills that prepare them for leadership in a digital future, expose them to the opportunities and resources in their community, and give them the support they need to plan for success, then teens will be more able to transition from high school to a successful future. With this understanding, ten teen participants enter the program as freshman in high school and remain with the program throughout high school. An incoming group comprises a cohort. In September 2015, Cohort 1 was the first group to enter the Science Pathways program. Every cohort completes the same activities in the same year of participation. Activities and focus change every year as a cohort progresses through the program. This pattern continues until year four when the cohort graduates from the program.

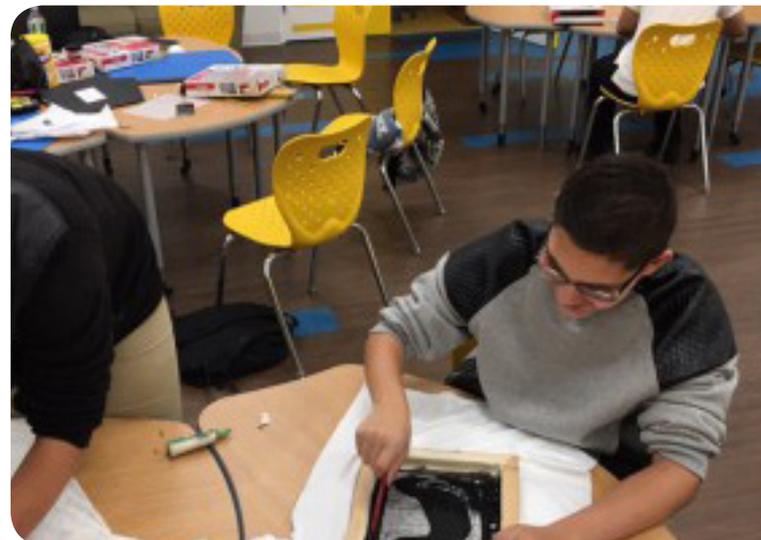
Joys of participation:

- Making lasting connections between caring adults and teens is a major tenet of the Science Pathways project. The staff are exceptional at connecting with the teens currently enrolled in the program.
- Teens in the program are excited about new technologies and engaging with professionals. They show a high level of enthusiasm about their future in science and technology and have all indicated that they plan to pursue careers that involve science/technology.

Barriers of participation:

- While cities offer the opportunity to recruit large numbers of youth to participate, safe transportation remains a program complication. City buses and, in some cases, school buses are not a safe option for the youth in the program. Parent work schedules often preclude carpooling as an option.
- Technology continues to be a hot topic in the area of youth development, yet there remains a dearth of individuals that can parlay that technology to teens.

**Sustainability:** CYFAR staff have partnered with the local Boys and Girls Clubs in Trenton and Paterson, NJ to offer the Science Pathways program. Program staff continue to strengthen this partnership. At the completion of the program, Trenton Boys and Girls Club will continue to offer the Makerspace programs into the future. The Paterson Boys and Girls club has not progressed as far as Trenton in program sustainability. CYFAR staff foresee that the 4-H program will be more integrated in program sustainability and support at this site.





## New York 4-H Youth Community Action Network (Youth CAN)

*Cornell University*

New York 4-H Youth Community Action Network (Youth CAN) uses Cornell Cooperative Extension's 4-H Signature Program, Youth Community Action, to promote civic engagement and workforce development among high need teens in Albany and Buffalo, NY. Youth CAN is implemented by Cornell Cooperative Extension in Albany and Erie Counties. By creating youth-led networks of community organizations, Youth CAN Teen Leaders become community change agents and conduct projects addressing critical USDA/NIFA research, education, and economics goals. In doing so, Youth CAN Teen Leaders gain the skills needed to graduate from high school prepared for college, careers, and citizenship.

Youth CAN uses a broad-based community collaboration approach in combination with strategic planning, public issues education, and opportunities for professional development in order to develop sustainable systems changes in terms of organizational policies, infrastructure, resources, processes, and leadership structures. Visiting professors from local colleges and universities and community organizations lead trainings for the Youth CAN Teen Leaders in selected topics aligned with

community projects developed by the Youth CAN Teen Leaders. Civic engagement with local government leaders and participation in a series of community improvement projects helps nurture the Youth CAN Teen Leaders' development as engaged, active, community change agents.

**Sustainability:** Intentional efforts to sustain Youth CAN began as the project began. Planning for sustainability is a topic at every Youth CAN team meeting. Intentional efforts have been made to integrate sustainability strategies throughout the program. The Youth CAN project staff focus on establishing mechanisms and relationships to institutionalize the program into Cornell Cooperative Extension 4-H and community sites through publications, community forums, statewide and regional teen summits, and participation in regional, state, and national conferences. Community partners receive regular, ongoing professional development and training from the project team, so community partners can continue and sustain Youth CAN and the Youth Community Action program model at the end of the grant funding.

## Food for a Long Life: A Community-based Intergenerational Project

*Ohio State University and Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University*

The Food for a Long Life project employs a community-based participatory action research approach with intergenerational strategies to increase healthy food access, consumption, and education for at-risk young children and their families living in high poverty areas in Columbus, OH and Lynchburg, VA. Community stakeholders and four early childhood centers, two in each state, will be engaged in intergenerational programming methods and a process of planning, program development, implementation, and examination of results followed by adaptation

of activities. Efforts incorporate the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) and Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) curricula and standard USDA instruments of food security and behavior change.

**Sustainability:** This is a newly funded program and no sustainability information is available at this time.

## CITIZEN U

### Cornell University

CITIZEN U stands for CITIZEN YOU and CITIZEN University. CITIZEN U uses Cornell Cooperative Extension's 4-H Signature Program, Youth Community Action, to promote civic engagement and workforce development among underrepresented youth ages 14 to 18 years in two high-need communities. CITIZEN U is a metaphor for creating a university environment in which teens are empowered to become community change agents and graduate from high school prepared for college, careers, and citizenship. The program focuses on sustaining the program model through intentional planning and partnerships with Cornell University faculty, county governments, community organizations, and local businesses.



After completing 4-H Public Adventures training, CITIZEN U Teen Leaders conduct projects focused on NIFA priorities such as preventing childhood obesity, food security, climate change, and sustainable energy. Visiting professors from local colleges, universities, and community organizations provide seminars under the six schools at CITIZEN U: the School of Business and Entrepreneurship, School of Community Development, School of Environmental Studies, School of Food and Nutrition, School of Performing Arts, and the School of Technology and Media Arts. During the summer, CITIZEN U Teen Leaders gain job skills through paid internships aligned with their CITIZEN U majors and complete carefully planned community improvement projects.

**Sustainability:** The most significant accomplishment of CITIZEN U is that it has been fully sustained in Binghamton, Broome County; Rochester, Monroe County; and Syracuse, Onondaga County. Partnering agencies and community organizations have adapted CITIZEN U's Youth Community Action program model for working with high-need, low-income youth as demonstrated by increased opportunities and supports in the targeted communities for civic engagement among these youth. Community organizations involved in CITIZEN U have demonstrated increased capacity for conducting Youth Community Action by sustaining and replicating the program model with new groups of youth.

## PROmoting School-community-university Partnerships to Enhance Resilience (PROSPER)

### West Virginia University and Iowa State University

When you support PROSPER and Strengthening Families Program, participants get to know each other better, which leads to understanding how they got to be who they are and where they are coming from, which benefits other community members by creating positive role models in the community. Participants learn to become responsible young adults, which leads to more reliable employees, which benefits other community members by reducing delinquency and contributing to a stronger workforce.

**Sustainability:** The PROSPER delivery system is designed so that small and strategic Community Teams have access to the latest research from university scientists and benefit from the expertise and consistent support of the Extension System. The four community teams (two in WV and two in IA) funded by a CYFAR grant, work closely with local schools to support the positive development of youth and their families and they make sure the programs are sustained over time and consistently delivered with quality. In addition to helping to sustain the program delivery components, the teams are proving quite effective at finding sponsors who have provided both financial resources and donated materials as well as champions who have effectively communicated the need for the PROSPER programs and their impacts. All four communities have been able to share results in a variety of media and event outlets. In WV, PROSPER team members worked with the state legislature to get a bill passed requiring that the Life Skills curriculum being taught in our two project locations be taught in all WV middle schools by 2019. Efforts are ongoing in both WV and IA to identify permanent funding sources to expand and maintain PROSPER programs well into the future.

## 4-H STEM Education & Science Literacy: Developing the Next Generation of Scientists through Formal and Nonformal Learning Systems

*North Carolina State University, Clemson University, and North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University*

Youth in North and South Carolina face overwhelming challenges: failing schools, youth leaving communities due to poor employment opportunities, excessive teacher turnover, and generational poverty. Leveraging resources and a multidisciplinary team of professionals from North Carolina State University, Clemson University, and North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, this project addresses CYFAR's Program Emphasis USDA Goal 6: Education and Science Literacy. This project engages students, ages five to twelve years, in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) literacy programs in classrooms and after-school programs in Anson, Richmond, Marlboro, and Dillon Counties in NC and SC. This project works with youth, families, teachers, administrators, after-school providers, and community-based organizations to (1) increase student knowledge, skills, and attitudes in STEM by using food, agriculture, natural resources, biological, and physical science curricula and leveraging hands-on technology; (2) utilize formal and non-formal education programs through 4-H; and (3) promote family engagement and learning. In addition, this project also strengthens rural elementary teachers' knowledge, skills and attitudes regarding science instruction, use of instructional resources, and technology applications that serve vulnerable families and communities. The long-term goal for this project is to increase youth interest in STEM-related careers so there is a more diverse pool of youth entering into related college programs and career paths. Thus far, the program has identified STEM curricula, formed relationships with community partners, secured office space for the site coordinator, and began the process of hiring the site coordinator. The site coordinator is an important part of the program team and as a member of the program site communities, the site coordinator will be instrumental in implementation, recruitment, and fostering program sustainability.

**Sustainability:** Fully committed to the sustainability of this project, program staff have worked hard to ensure that the candidates for the CYFAR STEM site coordinator position are (1) aware of the goals and objectives of this position; (2) have a strong background in both the necessary topic areas and community capacity building; (3) are willing to live and work in one of the targeted communities; and (4) understand the importance of gaining, maintaining and growing community support networks.

## Juntos Para Una Mejor Educacion (Together for a Better Education)

*North Carolina State University*

Research shows that Latino youth are at greatest risk for dropping out of school between the eighth and tenth grades. The Juntos Para Una Mejor Educacion (Juntos) program reduces this risk by bringing a cohort of eighth grade youth together during these critical years. The Juntos program engages 8th through 12th grade Latino youth in an intensive, long-term initiative with four components: (1) five-week Juntos family workshops and monthly check-ins, (2) bi-monthly after-school 4-H club meetings, (3) monthly (or as needed) one-on-one success coaching and access to college and community mentors, and (4) summer programming at 4-H camps, college-campus visits, and other educational conferences. The Juntos program has four primary goals (1) increase family engagement that leads to students' educational success, (2) increase the sense of belonging among Latino students and families in their schools and communities, (3) increase Latino student success and high school graduation rates by improving student attendance and grades, and (4) increase the percentage of Latino students attending higher education.

The CYFAR grant funds the Juntos program in two communities in North Carolina. With the funding, the program serves close to 230 Latino youth and their families. Additional programs are operating in other states.

Staff have learned that one of the biggest challenges for new programs is deciding how fast to grow and when to know they are ready to expand. Staff had some issues with the program's growth this year as they have discovered that it is challenging to evaluate the program in the same way across many states and with the involvement of Internal Review Boards and Principal Investigators at different institutions. It was not easy to navigate, but the program has grown through the process this year.

**Sustainability:** Juntos was selected this year as the program of focus by the National 4-H Council for their push to increase 4-H participation among Latino youth across the country, and they have sought additional large external donors to take the program to a national scope. Close to eight million dollars in program funding has been garnered from more than 20 different funders, and this has made possible the creation of the Juntos 4-H program curricula, trainings, technical assistance, and print and digital resources that have allowed for the program to start programs in 12 states. The program was also named a "Bright Spot in Hispanic Education" by the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics.

## Urban Gardening Entrepreneurs Motivating Sustainability (Urban GEMS)

### *Ohio State University*

Urban GEMS employs cutting-edge food production technology to grow healthy foods while promoting healthy eating in urban neighborhoods characterized as food deserts. Students gain 21st century employment skills through coursework, internships, and service learning projects. Students become enmeshed in new professional networks among local food industry professionals. As trained social justice advocates for a healthy food system, participants add a youthful voice and energy to their larger community's health transformation in the urban core of Columbus, OH.

Urban GEMS is being implemented at two community sites in Columbus, OH. At The Academy for Urban Scholars, Urban GEMS reached 64 youth in the academic year 2016-2017 and promoted educational and life success for these students who are at high risk for high school dropout and other negative outcomes associated with poverty. At Reaching Higher Heights 4 Life Community Care center, Urban GEMS is offered as an after-school academic enrichment program and summer program for youth ages 10 to 17 years who reside in an economically distressed, urban neighborhood. Youth learn to lead by serving as elected officers and participating fully on the advisory board; they participate shoulder-to-shoulder with community professionals. The Urban GEMS program is actively working to address the well documented link between food insecurity and school failure at a neighborhood level.

Below are the lessons learned this year:

- Giving young people opportunities to take on leadership roles is vital. It takes effort, but will reap rewards when done effectively.
- Having one site focused on 14 to 22 year olds and the other site focused on 8 to 16 year olds helped in giving each age group purpose.
- Youth are excited about the possibilities of new opportunities but also need time to build trust.
- Low levels of literacy among the older youth presented a challenge for implementing some aspects of the curriculum.
- As the program model continues to take shape, it is important to ensure that the implementation sites are firmly committed and have the capacity to assist with program implementation.
- Staff learned that students are often hungry. Academic lessons progress better after youth have been engaged in preparing and eating food.

**Sustainability:** Staff are embedding Urban GEMS into the community by utilizing the most visible feature of the project, the Tower Garden, as a vehicle for conversation and connections. Staff have successfully assembled a large network of partners who are either already actively engaged in community transformation work or are engaged in some aspect of the food systems field. Staff are investing in equipment that is projected to have a 10 to 20 year lifespan. Staff have begun the learning process for establishing a small business co-op in which youth and adult mentors could be co-owners of an enterprise in the local community. Staff have trained close to 100 youth in aeroponic food production techniques using the Tower Garden system. With 12 towers in operation, staff produce approximately one hundred pounds of leafy greens per month. The yields for other crops are less impressive but nonetheless educational for the students. Staff have secured a grant from the Aetna Foundation to add an internship component.



## 4-H Grilling and Beyond: Cultivating Healthy Fathers, Kids, and Communities (4-H Grilling and Beyond)

*Ohio State University*

The 4-H Grilling and Beyond project brings together three common community education genres, fatherhood education, nutrition education, and youth development education. 4-H Grilling and Beyond, as a single family life education program, is delivered to fathers and their early adolescent youth (ages 11 to 13 years) in the context of grilling food. Grilling is an activity enjoyed by many men and is growing in popularity among 4-H youth. It can also be a family activity that involves conversation, learning, and teaching, as well as nutrition. In collaboration with county-based Extension offices and a local fatherhood organization, the 4-H Grilling and Beyond project helps fathers increase their parenting abilities and motivations, so they can more effectively provide guidance and nurturing to their children. The project also aims to increase participants' knowledge of nutritional health. For the youth, the 4-H Grilling and Beyond project introduces 4-H programming that provides opportunities for youth to develop life and workforce preparation skills (e.g., leadership, mastery, and self-determination).

The project's long-term outcomes include the following: (1) enhance father-adolescent relationships; (2) increase healthy eating episodes and decrease unhealthy eating episodes; and (3) increase community involvement in changing patterns of food consumption. To accomplish these outcomes, the project incorporates innovative technology, a sustainability plan, and a multi-level approach to community involvement. By bringing together fatherhood, nutrition, and youth development content into a program with male-friendly activities, the project addresses society's need for stronger families, healthier communities, and youth prepared for the future.

**Sustainability:** Efforts to implement the original project sustainability plan will continue in Year 5. CYFAR project staff will continue to focus on the seven factors of sustainable community projects: Leadership competence, effective collaboration, understanding the community, demonstrating program results, strategic funding, staff involvement and integration, and program responsiveness. In Year 5 the team will work with the local organizations and faith-based communities to begin implementation of a sustainability plan in their communities.





## JUNTOS Para Una Mejor Educacion (Together for a Better Education)

### *Oklahoma State University*

The Juntos program brings parents, youth, and communities together to help youth achieve high school graduation and pursue higher education. During the academic year 2015-2016, CYFAR staff in the Oklahoma component of this multi-state grant built collaborative efforts with school staff, such as principals, teachers, and administrators in a way that the goals of the program were supported. The CYFAR staff facilitated the areas at school needed to meet with the youth and families for events and one-to-one meetings and helped with data access and recruitment in order to meet the grant requirements for the number of participants in the program. Regular monthly family nights were offered to provide information for parents and youth about relevant topics of interest. Weekly or bi-weekly after-school activities were held with the involvement of club or community leaders who presented on topics such as leadership, academic success, teamwork, parenting, and other relevant issues. Oklahoma State University continued the one-on-one success coaching model with all of the youth in the program. The Summer JUNTOS Academy program was implemented again. Attendance and participation in the academy facilitated cohort cohesion and hands-on experience in the field for at least 120 participants.

The participants of this research project showed little knowledge about the pathway to college at the beginning of the academic year. By the end of the academic year, most parents had been informed about their options, and the youth participants were invited to participate in summer activities that involved a two-day (overnight stay) at the university campus where they experienced life in college, attended several science, technology, engineering, and math-based workshops, and stayed in the college dorms. Most of the youth participants were positively impacted by this immersion experience and expressed thoughts about attending college in the future. As a community, the project still has many challenges to overcome because the resources are limited, but the numbers indicate that success coaching is a vital part of the life of this program.

**Sustainability:** Juntos staff will continue assessing the seven factors of sustainability on a semester basis, including basic measures of leadership competence, effective collaboration, understanding community, demonstrating and disseminating program impact, strategic funding, staff involvement and integration, and program responsiveness.

## 4-H Latino Outreach Program: 4F Club - Fabulous Food, Fitness, and Fun Club

*Oregon State University*

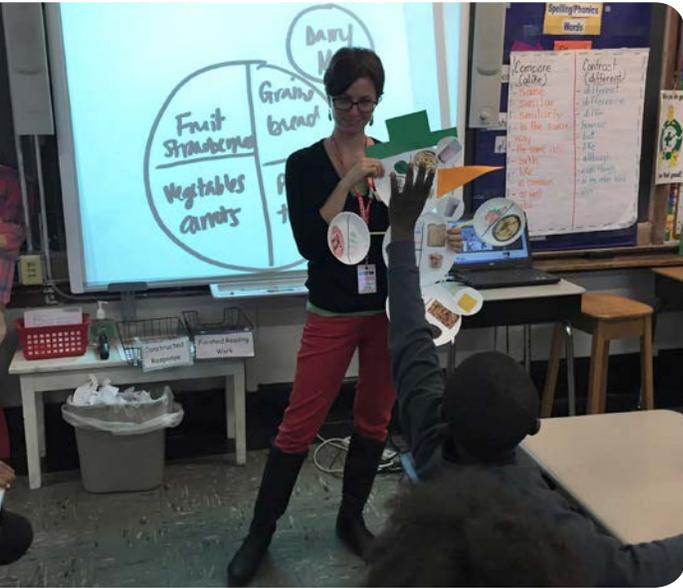
The Oregon Sustainable Community Project (SCP) delivers after-school and summer programs at community sites in Benton and Linn Counties including middle schools and community organizations known to have substantial numbers of at-risk, low income, and Latino students. While the primary target audience is Latino youth, all youth in grades 6th through 8th are welcome to participate. The programs feature a core healthy living curriculum which focuses on food, nutrition, and physical activity with teamwork as a learning strategy. Challenging experiential learning activities include digital food and fitness journals, videography, slide presentations, horticulture (youth gardens), and food science. Groups are organized as 4-H clubs that meet once a week for one to two hours in school and community organization facilities. Field trips and other outings (e.g. hiking trails, summer camps, Oregon State University's Dixon Recreation Center, Museums and Food Innovation Center) complement classroom activities. 4-H faculty coordinates programming with volunteers. These programs use the Families Involved in Education: Sociocultural Teaching and STEM (FIESTAS) model to deliver the Food, Fitness, and Fun after-school programs by engaging pre-service teachers in culturally and linguistically diverse settings. High adult to student ratios enrich the student experience while developing cultural competence of future educators. Benton and Linn Counties will also offer a Juntos parenting program.

The main lesson this year has been to draw from the youth's background and cultural heritage; youth come to the classroom or meeting place with vast knowledge and experiences from their homes and their communities. CYFAR staff have been positioned at the center of learning in a mutually beneficial relationship that enriches the program and also gives youth the opportunity to lead. Accomplishments include: having participants share recipes from home, helping participants design a healthier way to prepare their favorite foods, team research projects, and by collaborating with the entire family during the Juntos nights.

**Sustainability:** For financial sustainability, Project Co-Directors will develop and assist with proposals for additional program funding. In addition, project Co-Directors have been working on incorporating the FIESTAS model into the SCP. This model has already generated a five-year CYFAR grant to sustain a previous after-school program and will be used in this project to enable sustainability when CYFAR grant funding expires







## Integrating Nutrition Education into Providence Full Service Schools in Providence, RI

*University of Rhode Island*

This five-year project targets third grade students and their parents in the Providence, RI public school system. The goal is to encourage low-income children and their parents to adopt healthy eating behaviors and skills to reduce obesity risk, and result in better health across their lifespans. There are three arms of programming: in-school, after-school, and parent and caregiver education. All programs utilize an evidence-based curriculum and integrate a technology component through the use of iPads. The in-school program utilizes the 13-week Body Quest: Food of the Warrior curriculum (supplemented with University of Rhode Island CYFAR materials) which involves character super heroes to encourage a healthy diet; the six-week after-school program utilizes the Cooking with Kids curriculum that focuses on food preparation; and the six-week parent/caregiver program employs a condensed version of Healthy Children, Healthy Families: Parents Making a Difference! curriculum that teaches positive parenting practices.

There is a treatment and control school for each year (years two to five) to determine the program's effect on fruit, vegetable, sugar-sweetened beverage, and energy-dense snack intake. Surveys are administered at all pre- and post-interventions (with an additional data collection point before the end of the school year for the in-school program). There have been significant improvements in parental practices and student intake.

All three arms of program implementation were successful. Emphasizing the sustainability aspect of the in-school program to the teachers helped

with expectations for the following school year. As the YMCA after-school program was new to the school, there was small enrollment, but coordination with the YMCA allowed for a successful cooking program. Coordination with the school district's food service provider allowed for easier delivery of family meals during the "family night programming" (parent/caregiver program and after-school programming in tandem).

Quality improvements include:

- To increase teacher involvement, teachers were asked to designate an area in their classroom for program materials posters and signed vow sheet.
- To increase parent awareness of program, students were rewarded with educational extenders for bringing home program materials to parents.

**Sustainability:** Sustainability of the project has continued to evolve over the current grant year. The intention is for the third grade classroom teachers to observe the 13-week program for a year, and then receive necessary curriculum and materials to conduct the program in subsequent years with incoming third graders. While this transition was unsuccessful in year two of implementation, this approach has worked in year three. This may be attributed to the greater emphasis placed on sustainability with administrators and teachers when now committing to the project.

## Clemson Sustainable Community Project (SCP)

### *Clemson University*

Clemson University, through its 4-H Extension Office, the Youth Learning Institute, and their community sites, has developed a five-year Sustainable Community Project (SCP) for at-risk children in Jasper and Allendale counties, SC. The Ridgeland Boys and Girls Club (Jasper) and the Renewed Faith Learning Center (Allendale) serve as community sites for a program designed to provide a health and wellness curriculum and youth development activities that offer youth in third through eighth grades the chance to live healthier, more active lives. The goals are (1) to empower youth with the knowledge and tools to live healthy active lives; (2) to engage community partners in supporting the health and wellness of children; (3) find practical applications to integrate technology across the Sustainable Community Project; and (4) to ensure sustainability of the program. The program includes after-school experiential education activities, integrated technology, family nights, mentoring by community partners and summer camp experiences. Up to 150 youth participate in the program annually, with new cohorts joining each year. The Clemson SCP collaborates with a range of community partners who are committed to help the youth improve quality of life through health and wellness goals. Partners have committed facilities, computer labs, volunteers and educational resources. The impact of the nutritional program extends to the families who receive regular nutritional information on how to prepare healthy meals and make better food choices.

CYFAR staff learned that it takes time, patience and persistence to build a program and increase the number of students in attendance. The Allendale program began with 15 students and through the hard work of the program director and volunteer staff, the word spread around the community through community groups, parent nights, and community health fairs. Now in year four of grant implementation, the Allendale program has served 120 students! This took place in a small rural community that is notorious for difficulty in connecting with parents and getting commitments from them to bring their children to programming.

**Sustainability:** Program sustainability will be achieved through the relationships that are being forged with community partners who have now been involved in the program for three years. Once the partners recognize the value of the program and the impact it is having on children and the community, there is a renewed willingness to engage more long-term and to support the program's success. Some partners provide supplies while others provide instructional services, facilities, etc.





## ExCel

### *University of Tennessee*

Research shows quality after-school programs provide an opportunity for students to increase their grades by providing hands-on, experiential learning activities that are an extension of the regular day classroom curricula. University of Tennessee Extension currently operates two grant-funded after-school programs serving 120 children. The philosophy of the program is to provide kids hands-on, experiential activities where they “learn by doing” while focusing on reading, science, math, technology, health, homework, socialization, and leadership. Data collected during the 2015-2016 academic year shows 47% of the students were below the proficient level in math, reading, or both at the beginning of the school year. By the end of the school year, the percentage of students below the proficient level in these two subjects was reduced to 19%. State averages for other state funded after-school programs show the percentage of students below the proficient level in math and/or reading by the end of the 2015-2016 school year at 38%. After-school programs that contribute to students’ academic and social/emotional success improve children’s chances of graduating from high school.

The project team learned that providing homework assistance to a child who is struggling academically increases their grade in the subject by

one letter grade. Most often, the low grade was initially due to the fact that the student was not turning in any homework previously. Secondly, program staff have learned that creating an after-school program “run” by the students improves their responsibility, trust, character, and decision-making skills. Conducting an after-school program run by students creates a trusting relationship between staff and students and allows students to open-up and be more excited about their academic and social/emotional growth.

**Sustainability:** The two after-school programs have a 90% chance of receiving continued funding through 21st Century and/or Lottery for Education Afterschool Programs. University of Tennessee Extension has secured this type of funding since 2005. Due to the relationships program staff have created with the Tennessee Department of Education over the past decade and the success the Department has witnessed from the seven other University of Tennessee Extension after-school programs, chances are good there will be funding for the CYFAR programs for five years or more.

## Texas Sustainable Community Project

### *Texas A&M University*

The goal of this five-year effort is to improve the health of at-risk teens and their families in two low-income inner city communities, while providing experiences related to Extension careers in urban programs. This goal will be accomplished through a tailored, culturally, and linguistically relevant 4-H program with extensive family involvement and in collaboration with local partners. Staff, faculty, and students from two community-based organizations, two county Extension programs, three four-year universities, and volunteers from two supporting organizations will partner to mentor, recruit, and enroll 210 students into college studies. Teens, ages 12-19, will (1) acquire sound dietary habits by learning and teaching others about nutrition and food preparation; (2) apply science, math, and reading through planning, caring, and harvesting demonstration home gardens; (3) become college-ready through mentoring by college students; and (4) learn about the wide range of Extension careers through job shadowing and internships. Five non-traditional and innovative aspects distinguish this effort: (1) real-world lifestyles and challenges of low-income populations; (2) hands-on, experiential Extension service-learning approach; (3) strong mentoring component (first generation minority college student mentors); (4) strong mentoring and funding by Extension; and (5) many opportunities to network with university faculty and students from three important disciplines, i.e., human nutrition, horticulture, and agricultural education.

**Sustainability:** Reliable parent volunteers will be sought and trained to assist with 4-H after-school programs. The state evaluator suggested that the three sites be compared using the Extension pre and post surveys to help improve established programs. The comparison will enable the identification of programming needs in the low-income communities and improve curriculum. As the project unfolds, collaborative efforts with all stakeholders and partners will be made to continue to support this effort. University dietetic interns provide mentoring support. A dynamic project website has been established to provide visibility to enhance its potential for continuity. The state program coordinator and Texas A&M graduate student presented at Student Conference of Latino Affairs (SCOLA) at Texas A&M University, College Station, in Spring 2016: Echar Pa'lante: Efforts to Improve a Diverse Workforce for Texas A&M Agrilife Extension Service. Meetings with local schools, colleges/universities, and community leaders have taken place to collaborate on possible grant opportunities to sustain the project.







## Helping Vermont Youth PROSPER (PROmoting School-community-university Partnerships to Enhance Resilience)

### University of Vermont

The Helping Vermont Youth PROSPER project involves two Vermont communities. Teams have been developed to introduce and sustain evidence-based programs for both youth and families to build positive assets and ultimately reduce youth substance abuse and other risky behaviors. In each community, program staff strive to involve 20% of sixth grade families in a family program called the Strengthening Families Program: For Parents and Youth 10-14, which is then followed a year later with all seventh grade students targeted for participation in an in-school life-skill development program, LifeSkills Training.

**Sustainability:** The project staff has taken a number of steps towards sustainability of this project. They have built and continue to build

community awareness and support through messaging campaigns, articles in the paper, and other communication methods that help generate excitement and show the impact of the work. As a result, the communities elevated awareness makes it easier to describe the project when requesting donations and applying for other grants to support the project. Documenting with pictures and video is key to this effort. Project staff continue to engage the state Health Department colleagues and other government officials in conversations about PROSPER, including them on community teams, to help strategic thinking about sustainability and funding strategies.



## Healthy Youth Leading the Way in the Virgin Islands

### *University of the Virgin Islands*

The University of the Virgin Islands Sustainable Community Project (SCP) is committed to fostering healthy nutrition coupled with physical exercise to prevent obesity in the territory. Youth in St. Croix and St. Thomas are targeted for participation. The project sites are located in low income housing developments where there is the greatest need. The goal is to bring the land-grant institution and community resources together to tackle this challenge. Youth, ages 5 through 14, participate in a five-day per week after-school program which includes tutoring, homework assistance and 4-H programming. Site coordinators are assisted by volunteers, who are mostly college students and parents, to deliver the established curricula as a part of the educational activities. Experientially-based opportunities also include 4-H club projects and local cultural programming using computer technology. Youth are expected to take the educational information back to their homes and neighbors and to eventually have an impact on the general community. The project was established to assist in lowering the high rates of heart disease, obesity, and diabetes in the territory with the foundational premise that youth are eager to learn and share their knowledge with the adults in their lives. All aspects of the project are delivered in a safe and secure environment with caring adults. Participant families become a part of the University family and become a part of the Cooperative Extension Service efforts throughout the territory.

Some of the challenges in implementing the project are outside the control of the project (i.e., change in management of a facility, parents moving after enrollment of their children, change in site coordinators, or volunteers who become gainfully employed leaving the project). A considerable amount of training is necessary when hiring individuals without the kind of experience the project requires. Even when training is available, considerable time is required (e.g., to coordinate schedules of faculty and/or staff who could assist). The evaluation activities are very important, yet program implementation cannot commence until evaluation is completed. Often youth register and drop-out based on the reasons referenced above; therefore, ongoing recruitment activities are necessary and impact the project start date. The project being located on two different islands is also a challenge.

**Sustainability:** It is difficult to sustain projects in the Virgin Islands due to the limited resources and the downturn in the local economy experienced in the territory in recent years. Nevertheless, the staff and advisory council are keenly aware of the need to find a solution that sustains the project and anticipate doing so. This topic is one that is discussed at advisory council meetings periodically, so the need to sustain the project is never far from the consciousness of the members and staff. A recent development is contact with a local church with a long-term history in the community.





## Behavioral Responses to Intergenerational Programming with Impaired and Non-impaired Elders



Shannon E. Jarrott<sup>1</sup>, Jill J. Naar<sup>2</sup>, Mi Sun Choi<sup>1</sup>, & Megan Kale-Cheever<sup>1</sup>

### BACKGROUND

Intergenerational (IG) shared site programs offer opportunities to support positive relationships and participant development. Yet, programs are challenged to accommodate diverse ages and abilities. Childcare providers seeking IG partnerships may wonder which elder characteristics best suit programming with young children. Research yields little guidance. Commented about possible negative experiences, some providers exclude frail elders, such as adult day services (ADS) participants, advocating that youth encounter healthy, vital older adults, like senior center participants. Our experiences using theory- and evidence-based IG practices indicate that elders with diverse abilities can be successfully included. We address two questions:

1. Do children respond differently to ADS and senior center participants during IG programs?
2. Do ADS and senior center participants respond to IG programming differently?

### PROJECT TRIP

At four sites where childcare centers were co-located with a senior center or ADS, we trained child and elder program staff to use evidence-based IG practices. Sites offered diverse IG activities 2-7 times weekly ranging from gardening to storytelling and drum circles.

### SAMPLE

Over five years, 157 adults and 157 children were observed during IG programming (see Table 1). Across sites, children averaged 3.3 years of age with approximately 50% girls. Adults were similar in age (M=77, ADS; M=71, Senior Center), but more women and more Black participants attended senior centers than ADS. Two-thirds of children and adults reported interacting with the other generation outside of the center, usually daily or weekly with relatives.

Table 1. Child and adult participants by adult program

Participant	Adults		Total
	ADS	Senior Center	
Children	85	72	157
Adults	88	69	157
Total	173	141	314



### INSTRUMENT

Trained observers used the Intergenerational Observation Scale (IOS) to document: (a) predominant child and elder behavior during IG activities; (b) predominant affect of participants and (c) staff achievement of evidence based IG practices. Observers coded behaviors and affect of participants during brief intervals. Behaviors included interacting with an IG partner, a peer, or staff member, watching passively, solitary engagement, or being unoccupied. The longest lasting behavior was coded as predominant, occurrence of positive and negative affect was coded. Observers noted achievement of 14 practices reflecting theory and evidence of the importance, during IG programming, of incorporating participant social history, providing age-appropriate roles, supporting interaction, and assessing the physical and social environments for needed modifications.

### ANALYSES

We conducted independent sample t-test analysis of observational data utilizing square root transformations as data were non-normally distributed.

### RESULTS

Children who participated in IG programming at an ADS or senior center exhibited similar levels of IG interaction, staff interaction, watching, and solitary behavior. Peer and unoccupied behavior occurred too rarely for analysis.

ADS participants achieved lower rates of IG interaction and higher levels of interaction with staff than senior center participants. Levels of watching and solitary behavior were similar between groups.

Observed positive affect was similar across settings and age groups.

Senior Centers staff achieved additional key practices than facilitators at programs involving ADS (20% vs. 4.04, p<.05).

Table 2. Participant behaviors and affect (% of time frames)

Behavior or Affect	Participant Group	ADS		Senior Center		F	p	M/N	Cohen's D
		M <sup>a</sup>	SD	M <sup>a</sup>	SD				
IG Interaction	Children	21.8	27.3	25.0	29.2	<.07	.88	1.146	.09
	Adults <sup>b</sup>	25.0	26.5	46.6	35.3	<.001	3.90	1.931	0.60
Staff	Children	11.7	14.9	12.7	18.2	<.01	.83	1.90	.42
	Adults <sup>b</sup>	7.1	15.4	3.0	8.0	2.0	.05	1.01	0.33
Watching	Children	34.0	32.6	30.9	26.3	0.1	.91	1.02	.14
	Adults	46.4	27.2	37.5	35.6	3.7	.09	1.52	.49
Solitary	Children	25.2	27.2	23.2	26.2	0.4	.89	1.85	.28
	Adults	17.0	25.3	12.4	20.7	3.4	.17	1.43	.27
Positive Affect	Children	12.4	18.7	16.1	15.6	1.2	.29	1.90	.30
	Adults	26.6	26.7	27.5	25.9	0.3	.79	1.94	.31

<sup>a</sup>Means presented here are untransformed. Square root transformations were taken for t-test analyses.

### STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS

Strengths include comparable cell sizes of youth and elders in different adult program settings. The IOS captures data on all participants - essential to interpreting the impact of IG programming. Limitations include the absence of adult functional/cognitive abilities. While senior centers support a relatively independent population, they frequently include members with moderate impairments.

### CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

- Young children demonstrated similar responses during IG programming regardless of whether they partnered with an ADS or senior center participant, suggesting that factors other than elder characteristics influence children's experiences. Frail elders can contribute to successful IG programming.
- ADS participants' lower levels of IG interaction and greater staff interaction likely reflect greater care needs. However, they may reflect staff assumptions about ADS participants, staff taking a deficit view may help elders successfully.
- Analyses from the same dataset indicate that facilitator practice predicts participant behavior. Active encouraging collaboration such as *paired seating, guided interaction and steering back from the adults* reflect a person-centered approach that empowers relationships between IG partners.
- Next steps require additional analyses incorporating staff behaviors with child and adult participant responses.
- Early childhood educators and ADS providers should pursue IG opportunities. Staff ability to use evidence-based practices should be fostered. Best practice training modules available online train staff to build their competencies exercising science-based practices when bringing together groups of disparate ages and abilities.



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## Transforming Relationships through Intergenerational Programs (TRIP)

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University and Ohio State University

Transforming Relationships through Intergenerational Programs (TRIP) involves an intergenerational model to support the development of at-risk children and elders through intergenerational programming and community building at four neighboring childcare and elder programs in central Virginia. Community risk factors in this area include rates of children in single parent homes, whose mothers lack high school degrees, where employment is irregular, increasing numbers of parents attend court ordered parenting programs, and children increasingly lack English proficiency and qualify for school meal programs. Intergenerational relationships, such as those between a child and a grandparent, increase protective factors for at-risk individuals. Theory and research detail the benefit of intergenerational relationships to children's empathy, self-regulation, and self-efficacy, and acceptance of different others. Elders benefit from enhanced engagement, positive mood, and generativity. Benefits to staff and family involved with intergenerational programs include increased sense of community and operational cost-effectiveness. TRIP focuses on staff training and intergenerational curriculum. Staff training contributes to increased knowledge about young and old participants and best practices to achieve desired results and sustainability with daily, voluntary opportunities for consistent groups of young and old to exercise skills and share their stories together. TRIP's technology plan trains staff and participants to adopt appropriate technology to implement

and document the intergenerational curriculum. Families and community stakeholders form partnerships to enhance sites' intergenerational curriculum and extend intergenerational programming so children maintain the protective factors of intergenerational relationships beyond targeted childcare setting. Evaluation data inform intergenerational training and curriculum. Longitudinal assessment focuses on indicators of child and elder socioemotional development and well-being, staff use of science-based intergenerational practices, and indicators of community collaboration.

**Sustainability:** With a "reboot in 2014" the community based participatory action research approach led sites to embrace the value that intergenerational programming offers their clients, and they have adapted their strategies for incorporating young and old in each other's lives. For example, one childcare center named a highly talented staff member as responsible for training other teachers to support intergenerational programming. At the Extension operated site, staff are exploring options for recruiting older adults for a long-standing parent play group so that children and parents, and the elder volunteers themselves, can benefit from the enriched environment.

# Sustainable Community Revitalization in Appalachia Through Children's Hands (SCRATCH)

West Virginia State University

The SCRATCH project has a vision of cultivating young urban agripreneurs. To achieve this vision, the SCRATCH project has created hands-on opportunities for at-risk youth to learn sustainable gardening that combines science, technology, engineering, mathematics with entrepreneurship. Through this program youth are exposed to garden based learning through hands-on activities as well as direct in the garden interaction.

Activities are conducted in a classroom setting allowing for an interactive atmosphere that encourages creativity. The focus is on a STEAM based learning approach, infusing facets of science, technology, engineering, agriculture and mathematics throughout the learning experience. The participants are given the opportunity to share with the larger group at the end of each activity to enhance their public speaking skills and encourage pride in one's work.



Six-year-old Warren Brown is developing quite the green thumb thanks to a youth agriculture program led by WVSU Extension Service at garden sites throughout downtown Huntington, W.Va.

"I like picking vegetables," he said as he polished the soil off a recently unearthed turnip.

Brown is one of many youth in downtown Huntington taking part in the SCRATCH Project, which stands for Sustainable Community Revitalization in Appalachia Through Children's Hands. The goal of the multi-year project is to not only teach young people about agriculture but also how to harness its power as a sustainable business enterprise.

"On the front end, these kids are learning about garden care: how to grow their own vegetables and fruits, garden maintenance, harvesting and processing," said Melissa

"Any time product is brought to the market, the story is important," said Wilda Shelly Keeney. "SCRATCH is unique to our store. We have produce that is grown by kids growing product. I'm happy to see it be going."

Sweet potatoes were the project. At Butterfield, they were used as a side dish for friendly lunch options and Brews have used them in well-known sweet potato fries. Surprisingly, a special treat is the Sweet Pot.

The SCRATCH Project has been running through a five-year grant to bring more locally grown food into Huntington, West Virginia. The project is currently being sustained in Huntington through the diversification of the production coordinator for the project into the role of an urban agriculture agent.

During the summer portion of the program the interactions are more relaxed in nature, allowing for more time in the garden space for independent learning in the outdoor environment. Youth are provided with iPad minis that allow them to research insect and disease problems on site to best determine the next step to treat for the identified problem. Youth have also worked with the Extension Agents to research and select specific varieties of crops to be grown within the production gardens with the local market demands in mind.

Participants are also exposed to separate garden based production interactions, mainly focused during the growing season running March to October. During these interactions youth are actively seeding, planting, harvesting, scouting for insects and assisting with season extension growing systems. Additional opportunities are offered for youth in the program to engage in cooking classes locally at Huntington's Kitchen, utilizing fresh produce from their gardens to create healthy meals. Youth were also exposed to an entrepreneurial training program through the Lemonade Stand Accounting curriculum.

**Sustainability:** The SCRATCH project is currently being sustained in Huntington through the diversification of the production coordinator for the project into the role of an urban agriculture agent. She conducts hands on interactions weekly out of the main SCRATCH production site developed through the grant while also providing technical assistance to the other two project sites. The school based site at Spring Hill Elementary took to the program so well that they pursued and secured external funding to continue the program efforts. They are also expanding the garden based learning program at the school with the additional of a temporary garden structure designed to offer environmental control (e.g., high tunnel).



## Nicianok 4-Health

### *University of Wisconsin*

Nicianok 4-Health utilizes a positive youth development model including 4-H clubs to improve the health and well-being of elementary school children living on the Menominee Indian Reservation. Programs provide Native American youth and families the opportunity to create and share nutritious meals, build family relationships, and increase opportunities for safe recreation and physical activity.

Goals for the second year of the project included recruiting and maintaining a cohort of youth and families at each site, increasing the amount of positive youth development program environments that support the formation of positive health behaviors, and engaging caregivers in providing a voice and leadership for programs. To meet these objectives, regular programming at each site increased to two times per month with activities that targeted knowledge, attitudes, and habits related to making healthy choices in a culturally affirming setting. In addition, CYFAR staff partnered with the Menominee Tribal Health Clinic to offer an educational workshop for caregivers, which was attended by over 90 people.

Participation and retention at each site significantly increased, with a stable attendance of 15-25 children at each meeting. Eight new volunteers led a summer garden project for youth and extended families. In an end of the program year survey, 63% of participants indicated that they ate healthier food and 100% reported that were more physically active as a family.

The integration of Menominee language and culture has been a key strategy for building engagement and has led to outcomes that are meaningful to participants, partners and community leaders. The culturally grounded approach has led to increased awareness of a need for relevant materials and evaluation methods.

Another key lesson has been the intentional engagement of staff in program development and evaluation. Many of the successful project changes and impacts have been captured through regular staff meetings and reflection exercises and otherwise may have been overlooked. For example, staff observed changes in participant choices of healthy foods when youth were more engaged in the garden. Also, when children brought food they grew to program meetings, everyone ate more fruits and vegetables compared to purchased options. In response, the 4-H garden program incorporated individual plots to grow additional food for children to bring home.

**Sustainability:** Sustainability has been a focus from the development of the program. Project leadership is comprised of state and county/nation educators, and program staff are full-time employees who have committed to integrating the grant into their core plans of work. Local staff represent a multi-disciplinary team and are members of the community. This project is a collaboration with the College of Menominee Nation, a visible and trusted community leader within the Reservation. Local educators regularly partner with service providers throughout the community and the project has also gained support from the Tribal Cultural Commission, who represent Tribal Elders in cultural research and programming. Importantly, CYFAR staff intentionally engage Menominee parents and caregivers in providing input for programs they would like to see in their communities. Programs offered reflect their ideas and interests, and they are continually supported to increase their involvement and eventual leadership.