

# 4-H Youth Development



## WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY STEVENS COUNTY EXTENSION

Providing hands-on learning opportunities for youths in grades K-12. Conducted by adult volunteers with opportunities to learn life skills, set goals, build self-confidence, learn responsibility, and make decisions. 4-H is Washington's largest youth development program.

4-H affects our community by the interaction of youth with adult volunteers and they "learn by doing" in a safe environment. The National Youth Summit identified five categories as necessary needs for youth to become successful adults:

- ongoing relationship with caring and competent adults
- positive activities and safe places to spend non-school hours
- a healthy start for a healthy future
- realistic connections between learning and work
- regular opportunities to serve others

**The WSU Stevens County 4-H Youth Program meets all of these needs!**

***What's the financial impact? With Stevens County investment in staff support, the impact on Stevens County youth is up to \$200k.***

Community safety research from the Department of Juvenile Justice indicates that actions encouraging the social development of children, youth, and families reduce delinquent behavior with returns as high as \$7.16 for every dollar spent (Sansfacon and Welch, 1999). Suggesting a potential annual return as high as **\$229,120 in delinquency reduction from 4-H.**

The cost of incarcerating a juvenile in Washington for one year is \$56,400 based on 2006 figures (most recent state figure available.) The county's investment in the local 4-H Program reaches 300 youth.

We do not know the number of 4-H youth who have been diverted from the juvenile system because we work in prevention to derail their risk behaviors before they get that deep into the system. However, Tuft's University Study of Positive Youth Development clearly shows that youth who participate in 4-H have significantly lower risk behaviors, have greater connections to their local communities, have stronger relationships with adults in their lives, succeed better in school, and have lower drop out rates.

### **Volunteers:**

Adult volunteers inspire, mentor and guide our youth toward better citizenship and civic engagement. We have 105 adult 4-H volunteers who have contributed an average of 115 hours per year - over 13,000 hours, the equivalent of having **six full-time adults working in service to youth.** This value of their service can be estimated to be greater than \$96,000 using minimum wage as a multiplier.

### **A youth's story:**

Do we serve youth who would most likely be successful with or without the program? *A quiet, shy teenage girl decided to be part of my teen ambassador group. The first couple of meetings she did not say much, but was always willing to work hard! She applied and was accepted as state ambassador. This was way out of her comfort zone, but by the end of her two year term this young lady that could barely speak one on one with her peers when we started was comfortably leading the state teen conference and speaking in front of hundreds.*

*She is now a woman who has traveled the world with the Navy. She still has her Stevens County roots, but 4-H gave her the wings to fly. I truly believe that because of her 4-H experiences she had the confidence to enlist and now travels the world making a successful life for herself! (as told by a 4-H leader)*