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ASCEND AND THE GREEN THUMB PROGRAMS, AN OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE PRISON SYSTEM

Wade Bitner*

ABSTRACT:

Extension working with the Utah Department of Corrections to teach horticulture to inmates using 4-H and Master Gardener materials. This program also is used to assist low IQ (<80) inmates survive the system. Inmates are taught horticulture principles and practices to function as gardeners in the Green Thumb program. They then use 4-H information on gardening to teach the ASCEND inmates how to garden. ASCEND inmates are taught by other inmates how to grow plants using grow labs in a greenhouse. ASCEND inmates then practice skills learned by growing plants in their own space under two shop lights. When completed, they receive a certificate of completion and recognition. This model uses the 4-H gardening program as a base. Then, they grow plants in soil in a greenhouse to demonstrate their skills. When danger of frost has passed, outdoor gardens are planted, cared for and harvested. Some of the harvested vegetables have been donated to homeless shelters or food banks in the areas. Pumpkins are also donated to disadvantaged youth for Halloween. This program takes low IQ inmates out of the normal system, allows them some meaningful tasks and uses effectively taught inmates to become their teachers. The programs allow two officers to manage up to 60 inmates during the working day. It has proven effective and receives wide support from the rest of the prison staff.

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YOUTH-ADULT PARTNERSHIPS: PRACTICAL TOOLS FOR POSITIVE ENGAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT:

Meaningful youth-adult partnerships (YAPs) can be positive forces for change. The results include sustainable, powerful programs and communities that meet youth interests and needs, and youth possessing strong communications and leadership skills. Since 1995, the Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development, in partnership with the National 4-H Council, has been involved with the dissemination and training of Creating Youth/Adult Partnerships, designed with practitioners and tested by Extension agents in diverse communities across the U.S. Four national youth organizations have combined their resources to create a new curriculum called Youth-Adult Partnerships: A Training Manual. This will be the first opportunity for Extension agents to view this curriculum, which will be previewed at five conferences, including CYFAR and National League of Cities. This innovative, hands-on curriculum will take the idea of identifying and developing the assets that youth bring to communities a step further, with tools, resources and activities that help organizations move to sustainability and advocacy of YAPs. This curriculum will be the core piece of this interactive workshop for Extension agents who need information to address the ongoing challenges of implementing and advocating for these partnerships. Participants will (1) be exposed to the concepts and theories of YAPs in order to promote them in their own communities; (2) practice tools and activities from the curriculum that examine individual and organizational readiness for YAPs, define key terms, and help organizations use available resources to support these partnerships; (3) create practical plans to practice partnership-building activities within their organizations.

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STRENGTHENING TEEN ENGAGEMENT AS PARTNERS AND LEADERS IN COUNTY EXTENSION PROGRAMS

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ABSTRACT:

Engaging teens in meaningful leadership roles is a major focus of and vision for many contemporary community Extension educational programs. However, Extension educators often experience frustration and face unforeseen obstacles as they seek to design, implement and manage educational programs targeting and engaging teens as leaders and meaningful partners. This linked seminar will assist participants in connecting teen engagement to the larger context of positive community development. The seminar will focus upon strengthening "The Four E's" of teens as leaders and partner: Empathy (understanding teens' contemporary lives rather than our own teen pasts); Engagement (actively sharing responsibilities and leadership with teen partners through meaningful activities); Enrichment (integrating value-added opportunities into Extension programs that have meaning for today's teens); and, Empowerment (sharing and delegating both authority and power to teen partners leaders.) Participants will better understand the unique opportunities and challenges in engaging teens as partners and leaders in Extension educational programs, and will develop an individualized action plan for strengthening teen participation in their respective Extension programs.

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