Note From the Editor

Happy Saint Patrick’s Day! As you read this newsletter, I hope you take note of some useful information regarding cyberbullying, an important article that you can read and discuss with your youth. Enjoy the article that discusses how 4-H supports healthy communication. This issue also includes “The Benefits of Helping Others.” What a world this would be if we competed at helping others. Please enjoy this newsletter as we strive to “Make the Best Better.”

Debra Johnson

AmeriCorps Week

Saturday, March 10, through Sunday, March 18, was 2012 AmeriCorps Week. The theme this year was “AmeriCorps Works.” This theme communicates the value and effectiveness of AmeriCorps while providing flexibility to be used in many different contexts. It provides an overarching framework to communicate AmeriCorps’ triple bottom line return on investment for the recipients of service, the people who serve and the larger community and nation.

– national service sources.org

Little Rockers Marathon

Congratulations to all youth who participated in the Little Rockers Marathon in the River Market district, March 3, 2012! It is estimated that 1,800 youth from schools, afterschool programs and various community centers around central Arkansas participated. Some schools are starting running clubs where they are teaching their youth about stretching, warm-ups, eating healthy and the importance of drinking water.
The Benefits of Helping Others

What if we competed at helping others? What a world that would be...

In this time of globalization, humans are often in competition with each other to stay on top of the game. To get the big dollars, you have to be the best in your field or you have to have the best department. The self comes before the group, but what if we changed? What if someone else used their unique skill set to help the other person before focusing on themselves? What would happen to our world?

Helping others builds trust. Do you remember the last person who randomly came up to you and offered his or her services for free? What did that feel like? You probably were shocked, but after a while, you felt like you could trust that person. When people realize that you do not have an ulterior motive for helping them, they will be extremely grateful. Your reputation will increase, as will the trust that people put in you. If you respect that trust, relationships build naturally, and all you need to do is nurture them. Synergy is produced from these bonds, and we inspire, motivate, assist and provoke each others’ imagination to create powerful solutions that we might not have conceived alone.

Volunteering is good for the mind. It has been proven to provide a healthy boost to self-confidence, self-esteem and life satisfaction. A key risk factor for depression is social isolation. Volunteering keeps you in regular contact with others and helps you develop a solid support system, which in turn protects you against stress and depression when you are facing challenging times. It also can keep you physically active. In the 4-H world, if you are a volunteer at camp you will be hiking right along with the campers to different events and you may even be asked to join the water Olympics.

Most agencies offer free specialized training to volunteers. Those skills learned can often be applied to multiple situations and can help you advance to achieve your own dreams. The U of A Cooperative Extension Service offers specific training to help volunteers interact with youth and live healthier lifestyles, including basic technology training.

When helping people, you should remember it has to come from the heart. If you are doing it just to receive something back, it may have a detrimental effect on your happiness if you don’t get back what you perceive to be “equal value.” Helping others should always be its own reward, but it very often brings more.

People will be inclined to help you. Doors will open for you. It will seem magical as you refocus on what benefits you can bring to the lives of other people and to society. Just think, if everyone in the world was refocusing their goals to help at least one other person, what would our world look like?

– Brandon Stegall

I am only one, but I am one. I cannot do everything, but I can do something. And I will not let what I cannot do interfere with what I can do. – Edward Everett Hale
Martin Luther King, Jr. National Day of Service

On January 16, AmeriCorps* VISTA teamed up with Hendrix College, University of Central Arkansas, Boys and Girls Clubs of Faulkner County and the Arkansas Martin Luther King, Jr. Commission to host a MLK Carnival and to celebrate Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. National Day of Service. Over 30 AmeriCorps members and almost 60 youth attended. The carnival included several kid-friendly games, including U of A Diversity Jeopardy. At the closing ceremony, UCA Greek Life performed a miniature step show and the 4-H Afterschool VISTA team presented an educational Prezi about Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

In addition, the VISTA team assisted in promoting a health supply kit drive. We would like to thank all of those from the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service state office who donated items for the kits. We would also like thank Erica Harris, Pulaski County 4-H agent, and her clubs for helping collect two boxes of supply items. Local health agencies in Faulkner County will be the beneficiaries of these donations. Thank you!

Life’s most persistent and urgent question is, what are you doing for others?
– Martin Luther King, Jr.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Carnival

Youth coloring with AmeriCorps volunteers

AmeriCorps members and Alpha Kappa Alpha

Carnival games

Face painting

Arkansas 4-H Afterschool
A Technological Epidemic: Cyberbullying

A poll from the national organization Fight Crime: Invest in Kids found that 1 in 3 teens and 1 in 6 preteens have been victims of cyberbullying. Let’s backtrack. What is cyberbullying? Cyberbullying is the use of technology to harass, threaten, embarrass or track another person. Sometimes cyberbullying can be easy to spot (physical evidence such as a text message, a tweet or a response to a status update of Facebook that is harsh, mean or cruel). Other acts are less obvious (impersonating a victim online or posting personal information, photos or videos designed to hurt or embarrass another person). The VISTA team conducted a cyberbullying class at Ridgeroad Middle Charter School, and the term the children used to describe an impersonator on Facebook is a “Facebook thug;” they call it “Facebook thugging.” This account could be a fake account of someone with the persona of a bully using a fake name. Their sole intention is to harass and bully their classmates without anyone knowing who they are.

Severe cyberbullying can cause victims to suffer from anxiety, depression and other stress-related disorders. In rare cases, some children have turned to suicide. The punishment for cyberbullies may vary from suspension from school and/or sports to expulsion.

Here are some signs that your child may be a victim of cyberbullying:

- Signs of emotional distress during or after using the Internet or the phone.
- Being very protective or secretive of their digital life.
- Withdrawal from friends and activities.
- Avoidance of school or group activities.
- Slipping grades and “acting out” in anger at home.
- Changes in mood, behavior, sleep or appetite.

Parents can help their child if they believe or know that their child(ren) is a victim of cyberbullying. Simply talking to their child about any childhood experiences the parent has had is one option. This could help the child feel less alone. Also, parents should inform their child that being bullied is not their fault. Communicating with teachers or school administrators about their concerns could also help. Other methods parents can take are:

- **Blocking the bully.** Most devices have settings that allow you to electronically block e-mails, IM (instant messaging) or text messages. Social media networks have options for blocking another person; this feature could be beneficial to blocking bullies.

- **Limit access to technology.** Keep the computer in a public place in your household and limit the use of cell phones and games. Some services allow you to turn off text messaging services during certain hours. Most web sites offer the option for parental controls, which provide parents with access to their child’s messages and online life.

- **Know your child’s online world.** Talk to them about the importance of privacy and why it’s a bad idea to share personal information online, even with friends. Write up cell phone and social media contracts that you are willing to enforce.

- **Research support information about cyberbullying.**

Don’t ignore the signs. If you think you child is a victim of cyberbullying, step in and intervene for your child!
Communication in the 21st Century

Communication is the way people talk and act with each other. Youth seem to have their own language. It is a language that many adults have long since forgotten. Communicating at an early age was simple. Yet, 4-H youth are learning to engage on a different level. Communication is made up of nonverbal cues as well. Nonverbal (silent) communication is made up of facial cues and vocal sounds. Messages are sent from the way people dress, wear a hairstyle or the type of music they listen to (Bracamonte and Page, 2009).

Educating youth to effectively communicate can get them ready to become future leaders. Speaking your mind builds confidence and success. Technology has become a main source for how youth interact. Communication helps youth give and take information, learn how to say no and develop how they act with others. Communication is the key to unity.

4-H offers many ways to support healthy communication in youth. Youth that are involved in 4-H/4-H Afterschool clubs will learn about speaking in public. The Wisconsin 4-H Youth Development Building Bridges Curriculum shows the link between 4-H and communication. Head - We must think before we speak and act. Hands - Reaching out to our families and communities is a great way to communicate. Heart - We must show others that we care about them. Health - Good physical and emotional health comes from communication. It is a part of every stage of life.

In 4-H, youth learn from the Experiential Learning Model. Activities are used to help youth bond with others. In 4-H Afterschool lessons, youth and leaders learn using the National 4-H Communication curriculum, how to express themselves and how to use computer skills for success.

References

Let’s Talk: Brent
AmeriCorps* VISTA partner with the American Indian Center

Which ancient place would you like to go?
Greece.

If you could speak to one type of animal, what would it be?
Cats, they seem wise.

What is your favorite movie?
I’m not sure. Melancholia was pretty good.

What did you get your college degree in?
Philosophy.

Who would win a battle between a ninja and a pirate?
Ninja, duh.

Is there anybody famous that you admire and why?
Not really.

What is your favorite hobby?
Reading.

If money and time was not an obstacle, what would you do with your life?
Build something really big and cool.

If someone wrote a book about you, what would the title be?
Boring Book, Don’t Bother Reading.

If you were stranded on a desert island what items would you bring with you apart from, food, clothes and water?
The Brothers Karamazov, a yo-yo, a toothbrush, toothpaste and a satellite phone.
Arkansas 4-H Diamonds

4-H Afterschool and Girl Scout Diamonds partnered with two Youth Initiative Programs (YIPs) this past fall to conduct a seven-week pilot program based on Rutgers University Afterschool adventures. YIP is a model developed by New Futures for Youth under contract with the City of Little Rock and is designed to work with youth at the highest risk of being gang involved. These programs provided services in one target neighborhood (Southwest) within the City of Little Rock. We highlighted Nicola Spencer, one of the YIP program directors.

**What interested you most about working with a female Youth Initiative Program?**

**Nicola:** I have always had a passion for working with children and youth. Teenagers appeal to me because they are often misunderstood. When I build a relationship with a young person, I like to give them a chance to be themselves while gently encouraging them to want something better for their lives.

**What changes have you noticed in your youth since the Arkansas 4-H Diamonds Program?**

**Nicola:** I have noticed a willingness to try new ideas. Some of the physical activities they did with the Diamonds Program were activities they had not done before and were likely not to ever do. Now, when I suggest rock climbing, some of the girls want to go!

**What benefits do you think could come from a partnership with 4-H/4-H Afterschool?**

**Nicola:** On behalf of Better Community Developers (BCD), I would love to develop a lasting partnership with the 4-H Afterschool program. Ultimately, I would love for that partnership to provide us with additional opportunities to visit the 4-H Center. The BCD YIP program could also benefit from the expertise and specialized training 4-H could provide. However, true partnerships are mutually beneficial. I believe BCD can provide an understanding on diversity and urban life to 4-H participants as well as meeting space in the middle of Little Rock. Our YIP program would also provide a constant source of youth to participate in 4-H programs. This would be of special benefit when 4-H needed to try out pilot programs.

(Continued p. 8)
Two Pulaski County 4-H’ers learn how to use Animoto

4-H’er shows off her Valentine project craft in Perry County 4-H Afterschool

Jack Boles, ATV safety specialist, with youth during Big Buck Classic

Youth participate in a 4-H science experiment at the Big Buck Classic

A 4-H’er shows a youth the proper way to string a compound bow
Arkansas 4-H Diamonds (Cont. from p. 6)

What parts of the Arkansas 4-H Diamonds curriculum will you use for the YIP program?

Nicola: The lessons on first impressions and self-respect will be lessons we revisit over and over. Those are messages that need to be reinforced. Also, we often have new girls join the program, and they should have the benefit of those lessons even if they don’t get to experience the full program.

Do you think that this program could also be beneficial to the male YIP? If so, how?

Nicola: Yes I believe, males also need to learn to work together and how to have respect for self and others. There are some things I would do differently from the female program. I think they should keep the physical activities, especially the ones that require trust. However, some of the conversation topics may have to change.

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<td>April 12</td>
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<td>Angie Freel</td>
<td>April 20</td>
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Links

Service Learning: A teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility and strengthen communities.

http://new.4-hcurriculum.org/projects/servicelearning/stras/pick/
http://www.servicelearning.org/what_is_service-learning/history

Contact Information

Ida Collier
Program Associate - 4-H Afterschool
University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture
2301 South University Avenue
Little Rock, AR 72204
Phone: 501-671-2270
Fax: 501-671-2028
E-mail: icollier@uaex.edu
www.kidsarus.org

4-H Motto

“Making the Best Better”