

The West Wire

West Region 4-H Newsletter

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On The Horizon

Risk Taking Dawn Scott

*Summary from CYFAR Research
on Youth Risk Taking*

Given that half of 10 to 17 year olds are at high or moderate risk of compromising a healthy future lifestyle due to activities such as substance abuse, unsafe sex, delinquency, and school failure (Dryfoos, 1990), it is important that the factors most likely to disinhibit the actualization of possible risks be identified. Werner (1989), as a result of a 32-year longitudinal study on high-risk children, determined three categories of protective factors which can be viewed as disinhibitors of risk: dispositional attributes, family bonds and support; and external support systems.

The Search Institute, in a large-

scale study of thousands of youth determined 40 developmental assets essential to healthy adolescent development, 20 assets which are internal and 20 assets which are external. Internal assets include commitment to learning; positive values; social competencies; and positive identity. External assets include support; empowerment; boundaries and expectations; and constructive use of time made possible by a community's socializing systems (Benson, 1998).

The Search Institute found that developmental assets are protective for many forms of risk taking. As assets increase, risk taking behaviors decrease. On an individual level, interventions within the context of a particular problem behavior have proven most effective (Weissberg & Elias, 1993). Yet

the majority of current research on adolescent risk taking focuses on a more ecological approach. "Successful programs address both risk and protective processes at several levels of the human ecology to create a comprehensive, multifaceted effort" (Bogenschneider, 1996, p. 132).

Dryfoos (1993) has identified common components of successful programs aimed at reducing high-risk behaviors. Simply put, successful programs have multiple components, multiple settings, and multiple goals. The underlying reason for success is a focus on the factors putting individuals at risk, as opposed to individual risk behaviors. This emphasizes the importance of context to both problem behaviors and their prevention. The consequences

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Shining Stars

Sigma Lambda Chi - Service Leadership Citizenship

Pecos County has, for the last two years, conducted Fall and Spring SLC training at Fort Stockton High School during lunch every other Wednesday. A donor supports the pizza lunch, and the school submits student's names that they feel

need a positive influence. The County Extension Agents take the names and intermingles 4-H members into the group to have a good mix of young people at different levels of leadership ability.

The sessions begin with an introduction to the "Seven Habits of Highly Effective Teen-

agers" and concludes with discussions on the student's Meyers-Briggs Personality Profile assessment. Throughout the semester students are exposed to leadership skills development tasks, discuss service to their community and current events in their community, and how they can have an impact.

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“The trouble with so many of us is that we underestimate the power of simplicity. We have a tendency it seems to overcomplicate our lives and forget what’s important and what’s not. We tend to mistake movement for achievement. We tend to focus on activities instead of results. And as the pace of life continues to race along in the outside world, we forget that we have the power to control our lives regardless of what’s going on outside”

-Robert Stuberg

Under The Blazing Sun

Recruit a Volunteer on Your Own

Are you having trouble finding a volunteer matching program or a volunteer listing service in your community? Do you prefer to use your own method to search for a volunteer? A good option is to write a volunteer job description and post it in your community.

Post your call for volunteers.

When you have written your volunteer job description, the trick is to get it out into the community to places where people with both technical skills and a social conscience will look. Below is a partial list of places to try.

Corporate Volunteer Programs.

Many corporations have bulletin boards to post volunteer opportunities. You can find tech-savvy volunteers in most companies, not just in companies that specialize in technology. The Human Relations department is the first place to contact.

Schools and Community Colleges.

Many vocational schools and community colleges will post your volunteer job description for you in a career center or a departmental bulletin board. Some professors may announce the opportunity in their classes. Try contacting departments related to technology, such as engineering and computer science.

Ask your colleagues.

Where do other nonprofits in your community go for technical volunteers?

Ask other volunteers.

Many times current volunteers will be the best source for new volunteers. They may know of someone, or they can tell you where to post a job description.

Listservs.

More and more, people are using listservs to communicate about community needs and events. Ask around about the listservs people in your community belong to, especially listservs that people with computer skills might be on. Find a person who belongs to the list to post your job description for you.

Newspapers and Newsletters.

You can list your volunteer job description free of charge in many local newspapers, P.T.A newsletters or other community publications.

Screen Potential Volunteers.

You may be tempted to welcome with open arms the first volunteer who shows up. Remember that you are going to invest time and energy managing them, and you are going to entrust them with care of your computer systems. It is crucial to screen potential volunteers by interviewing them first. You will even want to check their references as you would with a consultant. Think seriously about whether they will be a good match for your organization's needs. Some questions to consider when interviewing volunteers include:

What skills will the volunteer need to accomplish the task?

Ask about the volunteer's previous experience with the technology you want them to work on. Bear in mind that some volunteers can learn skills as they go, especially if they have other technical expertise or are taking a class. It may be worth risking if the volunteer is serious about learning.

Is the volunteer willing to work in a non-profit context?

Many volunteers may be coming from a corporate environment. Ask if the volunteer has any experience working in a nonprofit. How was it? If they have not worked in a nonprofit, explain some of your ways of working, including your budget, staff skill level and office atmosphere. Ask if they would be comfortable working in an environment with fewer resources. Are they willing to help you reach technology compromises that work, and not necessarily recommend the latest, most expensive system?

Will the volunteer communicate clearly about the work they do?

Can they explain technical issues in a way that you understand? If they use a word you don't know, will they define it clearly? Are they willing to report back regularly on their progress, and document their work?

Is the volunteer reliable?

Make sure they are willing to make a specific time commitment and finish the project before the deadline you give. Checking their references is the best way to see if they are likely to follow through.

<http://techsoup.org/>

The Sky's The Limit

With the summer fast approaching, outdoor activities and summer schedules can be used to conduct environmental studies projects. Here are resources to consider.

Nature of Learning Grants Program to Support Environmental Education

Deadline: June 15, 2005

The National Wildlife and Fisheries Foundation invites applications from organizations interested in initiating or expanding the Nature of Learning program in their communities.

Nature of Learning, the National Wildlife Refuge System's community-based environmental education initiative, seeks to use National Wildlife Refuges as outdoor classrooms to promote a greater understanding of local conservation issues; encourage an interdis-

ciplinary approach to learning that seeks to enhance student academic achievement; utilize field experiences and student-led stewardship projects to connect classroom lessons to realworld issues; and foster partnerships among local schools, community groups, natural resource professionals, and local businesses. Grants of up to \$5,000 will be awarded on a competitive basis to support startup expenses associated with new programs. In addition, grants of up to \$3,000 will be awarded on a competitive basis to provide continued support to existing Nature of Learning programs.

Schools or nonprofit organizations, including "Friends" groups, cooperative and interpretive associations, Audubon chapters, conservation organizations, and nature centers are eligible to apply for funding. Programs must involve a part-

nership among a local school(s), community group (e.g., Refuge Support Group), and a National Wildlife Refuge. See the NFWF Web site for complete program information and application materials. http://nfwf.org/programs/grant_apply.htm

Texas Cooperative Extension - Recreation, Park & Tourism Sciences is a great resource to help decide, and provide resource contacts for outdoor and environmental education. Contact them at <http://www.rpts.tamu.edu/TCE/index.htm>

Environmental Protection Agency - Environmental Education resources are available in print and online. Checkout their Environmental Kids Club site. Resources for online and ordering materials are at: <http://epa.gov/kids/>

"I kept looking for someone to solve the problem, then I realized 'I am somebody'"

Unknown

Landscapes & Cityscapes...Focus on Diversity

Building Community Inclusion

What is Building Community Inclusion? BCI is the National 4-H Council's initiative to promote 4-H involvement to youth and adults with disabilities. The Texas 4-H Center is one of five 4-H programs selected to receive funding from Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation and Easter Seals to promote inclusion through BCI. The efforts at the Center focus on the Texas 4-H statewide strategic efforts to increase diversity of membership. Diversity is not just about race or ethnicity, diversity is about having many different youth, from different walks of life, participate in the Texas 4-H Youth Development program.

Texas 4-H Center is using funds to provide mini-grants to 7 county programs; these programs have received training in disability awareness, disability etiquette and inclusion. A team of youth and adults in each of the seven counties are conducting Inclusion Training programs in their communities with Student Councils, Key Clubs, National Honor Society, etc. to raise the level of awareness of including youth with disabilities in daily programming activities. Kerr and Travis County both have Inclusion Teams working in this effort.

Additionally, the 4-H Center will conduct Mission Possible! June 1-3, 2005 an inclusive camp for youth with and without disabilities. Enrollment is this unique

camping experience will be limited to 45. Campers will experience Texas 4-H Center camping at it's very best. The programming will be very similar to Prime Time and County Camp programs, with only minor deviations. This will be a great time for youth to interact with other youth from throughout the state. Registration information is available on the Texas 4-H Center website, <http://texas4h-ctr.tamu.edu> or through county offices.

In 2004, a young man who uses a wheelchair contacted the Center about participating in Camp. Previously he had attended Texas Lions Camp, but was not eligible any longer because of his age. We were very glad to have him join our SpecTra camp in

July, a career exploration and preparation for Teen 4-H members. It was exciting to see this young man interact with the other campers and to see them step up to the plate to make him feel welcome without smothering him. That is our vision for Mission Possible!, to have youth with and without disabilities together, and to foster personal growth between the two groups focusing on their abilities and not the disabilities.

Join us at your Texas 4-H Center for Mission Possible!, or any of the other great camping opportunities.

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“People are like stained-glass windows. They sparkle when the sun is out, but when the darkness sets in, their true beauty is revealed only if there is a light from within.”

-Elizabeth Kubler-Ross

Landscapes & Cityscapes...Continued

Continued from Pg 1

Keys to Opening Doors to Successful Community Inclusion developed by: Ann M. Forts

1. Develop and maintain a positive, or an “up” attitude at all times.
2. Make things happen. Don't wait around for someone else to make things happen for you. Become motivated!!!
3. Get to meet and know as many people as you can. Develop lots and lots of friends. We all know that this world can be a very lonely place without friends.
4. Learn how to become independent, with responsibility.
5. Always look for and keep trying new experiences. Remember to always do your very best, so you can be proud of your efforts. Don't ever give up!
6. Learn how to speak out and be willing to do so. Before you speak out, listen and learn all about what you want to talk about. Remember that you will not be able to listen and learn if you are doing all of the talking!
7. Get involved! Make things happen! Volunteer. Become active in your community.
8. Be willing to change and learn how to adjust to change.
9. Learn and understand the issues that will help to improve your life.
10. Help yourself by becoming an effective self-advocate.
11. Don't let anyone prejudge the limits of your abilities!!!
12. Dream and set goals for yourself!!!

I urge everyone to remember this list and to use the list constantly so that you will be able to encourage and help people with disabilities achieve a high degree of successful inclusion...without reservations...in their communities.

On The Horizon...Continued

Continued from Pg 1

of risk taking by adolescents puts all of society at risk through lessened potential for our collective future (Lerner, 1995).

It is time to come together with the resources available and the knowledge gained thus far toward creating a more hopeful future for all of society. A common vision and a unified effort is needed. Researchers willing to focus on the evaluation of programs to ensure that efforts are more than just well-intentioned is essential to learn what works best at different ages, with different issues, and with different target populations. In addition, early and continuous intervention is the key (Bogenschneider, 1996). Werner (1989) found that protective factors at different life stages continue to have a positive influence over time, working something like a chain reaction. If this is the case, early identification of those most "at risk" for negative outcomes in the future will come first. Prevention efforts focused on doing what is possible to reduce risk factors as well as enhancing protective factors appears warranted.

<http://ag.arizona.edu/fcs/cyfernet/nowg/ythrisktake.html>

Shining Stars...Continued

Continued from pg 1

The group is disbanded at the conclusion of each semester, and reformed at the beginning of the next, with some returning and new students identified.

To learn more about the Sigma Lambda Chi Program, contact Dana Rice, Pecos County.

Extra!

New 4-HPlus! User Manual Version 04-302G:
<http://ftstockton.tamu.edu/4h/4hplus/302g.pdf>

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We're On The Web!
<http://Uvalde.tamu.edu/xtension/4-H/westregionindex.htm>



4-H Is Best...In The West!

Around The Bend...Upcoming Events & Activities

May 2005

5 Goat Give-away - Prairie View

June 2005

1-3 West Region Junior High Leadership Lab - Big Spring

6-10 Texas Roundup - College Station

16 National 4-H Wool Contest - Sonora

19-24 Youth Range Workshop - Sonora

20-22 D-6 Leadership Lab - New Braunfels

20-22 D-10 Leadership Lab - Brownwood

26-30 West Texas Youth Veterinary Science Workshop - Sonora

26-30 D-7 Leadership Lab - New Mexico

July 2005

13-15 West Region Officer Retreat - Eldorado

15-16 State Dog Show - Hutto

22 NEATO — Uvalde

August 2005

3-5 TAE4-HA Annual Conference - Lubbock

17 State Recordbook Judging - San Angelo

West Region 4-H Summit

The District 6, 7 & 10 TAE4-HA and the West Region 4-H Program are sponsoring the 2nd annual West Region 4-H and Youth Professional Development Retreat and 4-H Association Meetings on Tuesday, May 17th and Wednesday, May 18th in Del Rio, Texas. All agents, program assistants and association members are welcome to attend this professional development opportunity. Please note, all 4-H and Youth Agents are expected to attend.

In response to agent identified professional development needs and the West Region Youth Priority Issues, five professional development workshops have been planned in the following areas: evaluation/interpretation, marketing, childhood overweight, youth water education and afterschool programming.

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West Region 4-H Summit...continued

A detailed agenda is provided below.

Registration is due to Cody Stone in the District 7 Office by May 6th. The registration form was sent to each agent but if you cannot find your packet, contact Cody Stone for a registration form.

We will be staying and meeting at the Ramada Inn in Del Rio. Details are as follows:

Ramada Inn - Del Rio
2101 Veterans Blvd. (Hwy 90)
<http://www.ramadaindelrio.com/>
830-775-1511

A block of rooms has been reserved and will be held until May 3rd. Cost per room is \$60 for single and \$70 for double occupancy. Please mention "4-H Extension" and confirmation # P46857. Please make your reservations by May 3rd!

Make plans to be a part of the great 4-H team in the West Region and attend the West Region 4-H Summit May 17-18 in Del Rio!

West Region 4-H and Youth Professional Development Retreat and 4-H Association Meetings Agenda

Tuesday, May 17th

District 6, 7, 10 TAE4-HA meetings

Times and locations to be announce by Association Directors

Ramada Inn - Del Rio - Sun Blossom A

2:30 Welcome and Overview

2:40 Professional Development Training

"Evaluating and Interpreting Youth Development Programs"

Dr. Chris Boleman, Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist

4:10 Professional Development Training

"Increasing Physical Activity in Youth: Program Success and Activities to get Mov-

ing"

5:30 Overview of Dinner and Night Activities

Evening of Culture | Dinner - Dutch Treat | Group Activities

Wednesday, May 18th

8:15 Breakfast

8:30 Professional Development Training

"Youth Water Programming and Investigating Water"

Richard Parrish - CEA-4-H Hays County

Laura Petty - CEA-4-H Guadalupe County

10:00 Break

10:10 Professional Development Training

"Marketing 4-H"

Gayle Hall, Associate Professor and Extension 4-H and Youth Specialist

11:40 Lunch on your own

1:00 Professional Development Training

"YEA! 4-H - Afterschool Curriculum"

Cheryl Newberry, Extension Program Specialist - West Region

2:30 4-H Update

3:00 Adjourn

*"Success is how
high you bounce
when you hit the
bottom"*

*-Genral George
Patton*

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*"A dream  
becomes a goal  
when action is  
taken toward its  
achievement."*

*-Bo Bennett*