

4-H The Power of YOUTH

4-H is a community of young people across America who are learning leadership, citizenship and life skills.

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4-H Mourns Kathleen Flom

4-H mourns the passing of the "first lady of Center" and a pillar of its international and citizenship programs. Kathleen Flom, a Minnesota 4-H member with an illustrious 4-H career, died in December 2005 at age 92.

Kathleen is well-known throughout the 4-H world for her work with the International Farm Youth Exchange, which she joined in 1954 as the region-



Kathleen Flom is inducted into the National 4-H Hall of Fame in 2002.

al program leader for Europe and the Far East. In 1959, she played a significant role in the opening of the National 4-H Center. After her retirement in 1979, Kathleen was a special projects consultant at the National 4-H Center. For 20 years, she shared stories with guests of 4-H's national home, greeting them early and staying late to make sure they were comfortable.

"Many times I would be searching for an answer and would ask her advice. She never told me what to do but instead would tell me a story, and in the story, was the answer," reflected National 4-H Council President and CEO Donald T. Floyd, Jr.

Kathleen's Corner is being restored to honor her. Positioned near the entrance of J.C. Penney Hall, the room's educational message will engage guests in the stories of 4-H and the Center's role in the 4-H movement, much as Kathleen did for so many years. Contact Carolyn Fernandez at cfernandez@fourhcouncil.edu or 301-961-2983 to honor Kathleen Flom with your gift. ■



Incarcerated fathers and their children build better relationships through the 4-H LIFE program.

Incarcerated Fathers and Their Children Find New LIFE

A Missouri 4-H program is breathing new life into the relationships of incarcerated fathers and their children.

Through the LIFE—Living Interactive Family Education—program at the Potosi Correctional Center in Mineral Point, youth build relationships with their imprisoned fathers through 4-H club work during monthly visits. Developed jointly between the fathers and local 4-H staff, the program focuses on improving the parenting skills and bettering the children's social and academic adjustment and overall well-being.

The LIFE program is one of five programs recognized with 2005 4-H Families Count: Annie E. Casey Family Strengthening Awards of \$15,000. Learn more about the other award-winning programs on Pages 2 and 3.

Nearly three-quarters of a million children have a parent in prison, according to government statistics. "Offenders join the program because they see their kids are

repeating their own destructive behaviors that led to their committing crimes, and they want to help break that pattern before it's too late," said Washington County 4-H Youth Extension Associate Robert Wilkerson.

LIFE creates an open, unstructured setting where children and their fathers can move freely and interact naturally, a sharp contrast to the more rigid visitation usually granted at the maximum-security prison.

"When you meet them for a [regular] visit, you're [only] allowed a hug. In 4-H, your kid can sit there with you, and lean on you," said one father. "It's just more interaction, and you have a bigger bonding process between father and son."

The 4-H members and their fathers work together on curricula-based 4-H club activities that encourage goal-setting, teamwork and accomplishment. One youth said his being able to work on 4-H activities with his dad "created an environment for me to be with my family like a normal family."

(continued on page 2)



4-H Family Camp participants learn team-building and communication through fun activities.



4-H Family Camp Builds Bonds

Beyond bug bites and the sweet sounds of nature, Chris Smorul didn't know what to expect from Family Camp.

After a weekend of team-building and recreational activities with his family, Smorul knew exactly why his wife, Lisa, and three kids had coaxed him to attend.

"The activities with the kids were great because they were starting to be of the age where they wanted to go off on their own," Smorul said. "Family Camp was a way to keep everyone together and bond a little more."

Family Camp, a 2005 4-H Families Count: Annie E. Casey Family Strengthening Award winning program, brings together low-income working families so they can increase trust and communication skills

and forge lasting positive relationships within their families.

The families spend a weekend away from the bustle of the city to have quality time at the Lindley G. Cook 4-H Camp in Stokes State Forest, Branchville, N.J.—a feat often difficult to orchestrate in today's busy world.

"I think that by spending time together, we got to know each other better. Especially from my point of view, I got to know Lisa's kids better," Smorul said of his blended family's experiences over the four years they have attended the camp.

His daughter, Kasey, 11, is already packing her overnight bag for the next weekend adventure in August 2006. "The activities we do are funny, and they bring the family together," she said.



Good communication among family members is the ultimate goal of Family Camp, according to Warren County 4-H Agent Alayne Torretta, who developed the Family Camp model adapted by many communities across the nation.

"They are like a whole different family, not just saying things they think you want to hear but what they're actually feeling," Torretta said. "The growth of the family is tremendous." ■

LIFE

(continued from page 1)

"You feel fantastic because you've done all these activities. You feel so much closer," one father said.

Fathers work on their parenting skills in formal meetings and often look to each other for help working out family problems or other advice. They hold fundraisers like food sales and recycling programs to fund activities and adopt needy families in the community.

Families that participate in LIFE report a wealth of positive outcomes including stronger relationships, better communication, greater family unity, life skills development and improved home and school behavior for the youth.

"It's astounding and gratifying to see the changes the kids have made," said St. Francois County 4-H Youth Development Specialist Lynna Lawson. ■

Grant Supports More 4-H Clubs



Youth and volunteers from 4-H clubs created through a new grant will learn leadership at CWF.

National 4-H Council has been awarded a \$500,000 grant from New York Life Foundation to create 40 new 4-H clubs with a youth in governance focus in underserved neighborhoods.

The clubs, which will reach 600-800 youth and 100 adult volunteers, will empower youth to serve in leadership roles, teach them new skills through hands-on discovery and provide meaningful partnerships with adults during out-of-school hours. They will focus specifically on citizenship, decision-making, life skills, money management and leadership.

Two youth and one adult volunteer from each club will receive a scholarship for Citizenship Washington Focus (CWF), a week-long summer leadership program for youth ages 14-19 held at the National 4-H Youth Conference Center near Washington, D.C.

The CWF experience will guide the 4-Hers during the second year of club implementation, so that they can mentor fellow club members in leadership skills, civics lessons and community engagement. Once club members are trained, they will partner with adult leaders to establish community dialogues that address needs and concerns within their neighborhoods. ■

Winners Strengthen Families Across America

The 2005 4-H Families Count: Annie E. Casey Family Strengthening Award winning programs improve outcomes for rural, disadvantaged families by connecting family members to the social networks, economic opportunities and support that they need to succeed.

Two of these outstanding programs were highlighted on Pages 1 and 2. Other 2005 4-H Families Count award-winning programs include:

The Strengthening Family Involvement in Millville Regional Safe Schools/Healthy Students Collaborative in Millville, N.J., targets 16 schools in five high-risk communities to increase parental involvement in schools. Through work-

shops, curriculum development and community partnerships, families increase the use of school-based resources, such as out-of-school and parental programs and group and family mental health services.

The Attitudes for Success Youth Leadership Program serves Hispanic youth in grades 6-12 and their families from 14 schools in 10 communities in rural eastern Oregon. A diverse group of adult volunteers are Youth Leadership Board members, program instructors, exhibitors, chaperones and mentors. More than 4,300 Hispanic youth have participated in the program, and 520 Hispanic students have served as committee officers, workshop facilitators and youth leadership board members.



Youth in the University of Nebraska-Lincoln for Families program enjoy a science lesson during Family Fun Night.

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln for Families program provides research-based curricula like Family Treasures: Creating Strong Marriages and Families and materials through the Internet to every county in Nebraska. Local 4-H agents work with 42 planning teams throughout the state to customize the materials to fit local needs. ■

Working Out Youth Obesity with 4-H

Weighing more than 200 pounds at age 12, Rachael Lambin, a 4-Her from Garnerville, Nev., was determined to make a change.

Rachael learned about nutrition, lost 50 pounds with diet and exercise, and created a 4-H program called HOPE, Helping Obese People Through Education. HOPE reaches out to other youth coping with obesity.

"I started HOPE to educate people about obesity and how it contributes to health problems. I felt terrible about myself. I was not respected and didn't feel how a normal kid should feel," said Rachael, now 15. "I see other kids that are how I was a few years ago, and I want to help."

Rachael started gaining weight in elementary school. Mandatory snack periods offered only junk food. Gym class was held just twice a week, and recess didn't provide any chance for physical activity. Rachael's self-esteem dropped so much that she began home-schooling rather than face the teasing from kids at school.

Through 4-H, Rachael learned that she could take care of herself through diet, exercise and re-thinking the way she approaches food. She found out that even mild obesity increases a person's risk of having diabetes, heart disease, respiratory disorders and other medical conditions. When she saw that more than 9 million children and adolescents are obese in America today, she started HOPE.



Rachael Lambin pumps others up through her 4-H program, HOPE.

Through HOPE, Rachael gives workshops on nutrition and self-esteem and holds exercise clinics. She teaches youth healthy habits with charts, demonstrates exercises and brings in a personal trainer to measure weight and body fat. She encourages youth to teach their families what they've learned or return with their parents and siblings to learn together. HOPE is held at health clubs, school gyms and community health fairs.

4-H Families Count Will Honor More

4-H is seeking five outstanding 4-H youth development programs that focus on family strengthening to receive awards through its 2006 4-H Families Count: Annie E. Casey Family Strengthening Awards program.

Awards of \$15,000 will be presented to five programs that successfully meet the criteria outlined in the application. In order to be eligible, programs must first be recognized as a 4-H Program of Distinction.

Applications for the 2006 awards must be postmarked by June 1, 2006. Complete eligibility criteria, as well as the downloadable application, are available at www.fourhcouncil.edu/4HFamiliesProgram.aspx. Contact Audrey Adams at familyawards@fourhcouncil.edu or 301-961-2819 for information. ■

Rachael has helped hundreds of youth embrace healthier lifestyles, and has also started a program that helps kids with asthma.

"I learned that just because you have asthma or another type of illness, doesn't mean that you have to be overweight," Rachael said, "Now I am 50 pounds lighter and am continuing to lose weight and get fit. I believe in myself, and I want to show others like me that they can do it too!" ■

More Recognition for Volunteers

National 4-H Council will be able to recognize more outstanding 4-H volunteers through the new National 4-H Salute to Excellence Volunteer Recognition Awards selection process.

Two national winners will be selected from a pool of winners from four regions. Each region will select a Lifetime Volunteer Award recipient for more than 10 years of service to 4-H and a Volunteer of the Year Award recipient for less than 10 years of service.

Gene and Sharon Swackhamer established the National 4-H Salute to Excellence Volunteer Recognition Fund to emphasize the important work of 4-H volunteers across America. The awards are made possible through the National 4-H Salute to Excellence Volunteer Recognition Fund and Monsanto Company, the program's national presenting sponsor.

To nominate a 4-H volunteer for the 2006 awards, contact Audrey Adams at aadams@fourhcouncil.edu or 301-961-2819. Contact Carolyn Fernandez at cfernandez@fourhcouncil.edu or 301-961-2983 for more information about how you can support the National 4-H Salute to Excellence Volunteer Recognition Fund. ■



4-H volunteers across the country support 4-H youth everyday.

Workplace Gift Helps 4-H

Paris Sims knows all about marketing, producing and selling homemade salsa thanks to her 4-H program.

"I've learned how to be more conscious about the things that I do and decisions that I make, and I've learned that hard work builds character," said the 18 year-old member of the Green Teen Community Gardening Program in Poughkeepsie, N.Y., of her 4-H experience.

Your donation to National 4-H Council allows us to support more than seven million 4-Hers like Paris across the country. Please join the 4-H community by designating National 4-H Council in your workplace giving campaign.

If you wish to designate National 4-H Council through other types of campaigns, please contact Betsy Johnson at bjohnson@fourhcouncil.edu or 301-961-2817. You also may donate online at www.fourhcouncil.edu.

Thank you to those who already have contributed to National 4-H Council through your workplace giving campaigns. We have had great success this year and look forward to continuing to advance the 4-H movement because of your donation. ■

Feedback and article suggestions for *4-H...The Power of Youth* are welcome. Please e-mail them to powerofyouth@fourhcouncil.edu.

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leadership, citizenship and
life skills.

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