

Sioux Image

Sioux County 4-H Members Develop and Build Entrepreneurial Skills

The Situation

The Standing Rock Reservation is far removed from major cities. A lack of transportation prevents 4-H'ers and other youth from experiencing the "real" work environment. This isolation leads to a lack of opportunities for youth to build entrepreneurial skills. Youth do not have role models in the world of business since very few local businesses exist. Furthermore, low graduation rates lead to youth not having employable skills.

Extension Response

NDSU Extension Agent Sue Isbell partnered with the Solen School District to begin an onsite entrepreneurial opportunity to offer 4-H members grades 7-12 a hands-on experience of operating a viable business. The program is grant funded by the National 4-H Mentoring Program.

Sioux Image, named by the youth, began operating in Solen High School in 2010 as an embroidery, printing, and silkscreen business. Students are taught basic business skills and hands-on screen printing. Students order raw materials, sell merchandise, receive and process orders, maintain records, and deal with customer demands. Through this, students have learned to operate a business, deal with customers, and increase profitability. All profits are reinvested back into the business or utilized by the mentoring program.

The program has grown to include training youth to operate a variety of machines and technologies, including a 16-needle embroidery machine, vinyl cutter, ceramic kiln, wood lathe, plasma cutter, wire feed welder, plotter printer, laser cutter, jewelry kiln, 3D printer, 3D scanner, heat press, and sublimation vacuum press.

Impacts

To date, over 300 youth have participated in the Sioux Image business at Solen High School.

- Annual surveys conducted within the grant guidelines show that youth have increased confidence and skills related to the business model.
- School graduation rates have increased over 35%. Three youth attest to being part of Sioux Image as to why they completed high school.
- 6 students moved on to higher education, one graduated with a degree in graphic design.
- Students are now serving as peer mentors to younger students beginning the program.
- Solen Jr. High and High School has incorporated Sioux Image as a core business class for all 7th and 8th graders.

Feedback

"Without Sioux Image and the opportunity to learn valuable business skills I would not of finish high school, let alone enrolled in college."- former student.

Public Value Statement

The Sioux Image business allows youth to learn entrepreneurial and business skills that develops contributing members of society who are prepared for life and employment.



Primary Contact

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