Good Morning! My name is Lynn Carlson. I am a 4-H volunteer in Morton and Burleigh Counties. Thank you for offering me and others the opportunity to speak to you about Extension impacts in our lives.

First, I want to tell you about “Tom”. “Tom” is not his real name, of course. “Tom” is only a few years younger than I am. He is unable to get a job. He’s chronically unemployed, has been for years. He’s dependant on welfare. He served time in prison for manufacturing meth. If he didn’t have a felony conviction for manufacture of meth, he probably could get a job. But employers don’t want to hire felons.

“Tom” is also an alcoholic. He lost his driver’s license for repeated DUl’s. He’s been incarcerated for that and other offenses. Life for him has been hard. Drugs and alcohol have ruined his life.

“Tom” wasn’t involved in 4-H when he was a youth. I think if he would have, it would have made a huge difference in how he felt about himself, the choices he made and the way his life turned out.

A Tuft’s University nationwide study shows participation in 4-H contributes significantly to children’s well being. 4-H youth are far less likely to engage in risky behavior or to make destructive decisions. They are less likely to drink alcohol, take drugs, or make unhealthy and poor decisions. They are less likely to cheat on tests, shoplift, damage property, smoke or use smokeless tobacco.

It’s not just about what they “don’t” do. In fact, youth in 4-H are more likely to be leaders in their schools and communities, contribute to charities and volunteer for worthy causes. They are more likely to set goals for themselves, be more responsible, help make decisions in school activities, gain confidence in public speaking, get better grades and feel life has a purpose for them.

How does 4-H accomplish this?

There are several things that come into play. By participating in 4-H, youth develop friendships with others their own age. They also interact with older youth who serve as examples and mentors to them. The younger youth are encouraged to strive and achieve what they see the older members doing. As older members, youth gain experience in helping younger children grow and learn.

Youth develop meaningful relationships with caring stable adults, such as their 4-H club and activity leaders and Extension Agents. This is very important to youth development. They get guidance, direction and encouragement from the leaders and Agents. They develop relationships with adults outside of their family, which is important to their growth and maturing.

4-H helps youth develop a sense of belonging. This is done through various activities from local to national levels. Learning and participation contributes to youths’ self-awareness and self-esteem. They are more likely to talk to their parents about important issues. They feel respected by adults and their opinions matter. They feel adults care about them and they are important to their family and community.

By doing things, children develop confidence in their abilities. They are more likely to serve on committees in school and volunteer to do things. They feel they are good role models for others. They find ways to improve things and make bad situations better. They are found to have good organizational abilities.

4-Hers are also generous with their time and resources. They help others in their community, whether in their clubs, school or their community live. They also are more likely to participate in community service projects.
I’d like to tell you about Lauryn Hinekley and her project. I got acquainted with Lauryn when I judged her project at Morton County 4-H Achievement Days. I was blown away by her enthusiasm, maturity, compassion, and ability to organize and execute a major undertaking.

She established her own non-profit organization to raise funds and gathered donations of peanut butter and jelly for students whose families couldn’t afford such luxuries. We might think peanut butter and jelly is a small thing. We take it for granted. But Lauryn assured me, many children’s families can’t afford it and go without that and more. It is a major part of snacks and sandwiches for children. Lauryn coordinated with multiple organizations and individuals to gather and deliver the food.

It was no small amount. In 2016 she gathered and delivered 7900 pounds of peanut butter and jelly. That’s almost four tons! Her inspiration came from witnessing a family in the grocery store unable to afford the groceries they needed. She felt so bad and determined to do something to help. Lauryn is just one of many 4-Hers that go above and beyond for their community.

Like Lauryn, 4-Hers learn responsibility, civic engagement and to work with others. One parent told me he really appreciates how 4-H teaches children to follow rules and to conduct themselves in public. Whether it is leading a meeting, volunteering or preparing for a competition, 4-H helps children grow and mature.

4-H works and is very effective. In fact, one report states 4-H is more effective than other youth development programs. My sources include reports from NDSU Extension, University of California, New Mexico State University, Youth.Gov and others. I will leave a copy of my remarks and some source reports for the record.

You often hear of people crediting teachers for influencing them and helping them become who they are today. For me, and many others I’m sure, it was County Extension Agents who had a tremendous impact on me. They encouraged me and helped me in so many ways. I’m forever grateful to them.

I was very disappointed in how the legislator and governor balanced the state’s budget this last biennium. The cuts were too drastic. Extension took a very steep cut. I felt it was irresponsible, especially considering there were Billions of dollars in the Legacy fund which could have been tapped to ease the pain. After all, it’s not just ‘things’ that were being cut. It affected people’s livelihoods, families’ means of living. Real people, real consequences.

North Dakota has many valuable resources such as coal, oil, clean water and productive soil. The most important resource is our people, particularly our youth. They not only are our leaders of the future, they are our future. Let’s make sure we don’t squander what we’ve been given. Education needs to be adequately funded. That includes Extension and 4-H. For the sake of our children and our future. Thank you.
4-H prepares youth for success and the challenges that face North Dakota. It contributes to the development of new leaders, encourages innovation and entrepreneurship, teaches good stewardship, and helps youth acquire important life skills that prepare them to be career- and work-ready.

Current priorities include helping youth develop science interests, skills and abilities in the areas of agriculture, energy, environmental stewardship and technology. Youth learn the importance of food access, where their food comes from, and how to make healthful food choices and live healthy lives. They develop leadership skills and understand the importance of giving back to their communities and society.

Youth throughout the U.S., including North Dakota, participated in research to define and measure positive youth development (Source: Lerner and Lerner 2011). Compared with their peers, youth involved in 4-H programs are:

- 2X more likely to participate in STEM activities
- 98% of youth who attended GEAR-Tech-21 camp reported they would feel comfortable teaching robotics to others
- 75% of youth participants in the Drone Discovery/National Youth Science Day Experiment reported it made them more interested in science
- 2X more likely to choose a STEM career
- 90% of youth participating in the Healthy Camp Challenge said they planned to continue to practice healthful activities
- 2X more likely to be civically active
- 76% of youth attending Civic U reported an increased effort to allow everyone to have a voice in decision making
- 4X more likely to give back to their communities
- 1,000+ youth demonstrate leadership skills through 4-H club offices, 4-H Ambassadors, or special projects
- 777 volunteer service hours contributed to the state by North Dakota 4-H Ambassadors
- 49 blankets made and donated to the Project Linus program by youth attending the Extension Youth Conference

North Dakota 4-H Camp

record 558 youth at North Dakota 4-H Camp near Washburn
86% of campers reported learning new skills
89% of campers made new friends
59% of campers demonstrated more independence
50% of campers are more willing to participate in other activities
50% of campers improved in problem solving

For more information on these and other impacts of the NDSU Extension Service, go to www.ag.ndsu.edu/extension or contact Brad Cogdill at 701.231.7259 or brad.cogdill@ndsu.edu.
Youth Development Program
The focus of the New Mexico 4-H program is youth development. In order to understand the concept of youth development, a definition is given by the Iowa State University Targeting Life Skills Model (1996) that “Youth development is a process of mental, physical, social and emotional growth during which young people prepare to live a productive and satisfying life within the customs and regulations of their society.” The New Mexico 4-H Youth Development Department strives to provide programs that will contribute to the growth and development of all youth, ages 5 – 19, in the state.

The work of the New Mexico 4-H Youth Development program is directed by the Essential Elements of Positive Youth Development seen below.

**Belonging**
- Positive Relationship with a caring adult
- An inclusive environment
- A safe environment

**Mastery**
- Engagement in Learning
- Opportunity for Mastery

**Independence**
- Opportunity to see oneself as an active participant in the future
- Opportunity for self-determination

**Generosity**
Opportunity to value and practice service for others

In the 2005 - 2006 4-H year, research was conducted by the New Mexico State 4-H Office to determine attributes of 4-H members and their involvement in risky behavior during out-of-school time. This study surveyed youth in 5th, 7th and 9th grade and youth that were involved in 4-H and other activities were compared with youth that were not involved in any activities. One analysis of the study found that youth involved in 4-H were less likely to be involved in risky behavior and found several positive attributes that follow the essential elements of youth development.
Youth that were involved in 4-H are:
- More likely to have good grades (A’s and B’s)
- Less Likely to:
  - Cheat on Tests
  - Drink
  - Shoplift
  - Use drugs
  - Damage property
  - Use smokeless tobacco
  - Be involved in sexual activities

The four basic needs of youth shown below indicate survey finding in each area.

**Belonging**
Youth that are involved in 4-H are more likely to:
- Talk to parents and other caring adults about sex
- Stay away from trouble

Youth are more likely to feel that
- Adults make them feel important
- Listen to youth
- Adults care about youth
- Feel that they matter to Adults
- Feel that they are useful to family and the community

“4-H has taught me to stand up straight, hold my head up high with shoulders back and be proud of who I am.”
-- K. O.
*Dona Ana County 4-Her*

**Independence**
Youth that are involved in 4-H are more likely to:
- Be elected to leadership positions and serve in leadership roles in school
- Set goals for themselves
- Be responsible for their own actions
- Help decide what goes on at school
- Be comfortable speaking in public
- Feel that life has a purpose

**Mastery**
Youth that are involved in 4-H are more likely to:
- Serve on committees in school
- Volunteer in class
- Feel that they are good role models for others
- Find ways to make a bad situation better
- Have good organizational skills

**Generosity**
Youth that are involved in activities like 4-H are more likely to:
- Help others in school
- Participate in community service

Youth that are involved in 4-H are involved in positive youth development and are less involved in risky behavior.

4-H is the Youth Development Program of New Mexico State University.
The New Mexico 4-H Foundation is a partner in providing educational opportunities to New Mexico youth and adults.

**Contact Information**
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The 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development is a national longitudinal study directed by Tufts University. From 2003 through 2008 over 6,000 youth from 41 states participated in the study, which includes questions around a wide variety of topics, such as academic engagement, family and peer relationships, health behaviors, neighborhood indicators, participation in youth programs, personal values, goals, time use, pubertal changes, and risk behaviors. In 2008, California participated in the 4HSPYD for the first time, in the study's sixth wave.

A total of 285 youth from California ages 13-18 from 14 counties participated in the Wave 6 survey. About 70 percent of the California respondents were current 4-H members. Results from this study provide new data to illustrate 4-H's impacts. One of the components of the survey asked the youth questions about their participation in various risky behaviors. Levels of most risk behaviors were significantly lower for youth engaged in 4-H than for the other youth in the survey.

Key Findings

4-H youth tended to have higher levels of reported health safety practices than other youth. 4-H members were significantly more likely than non-4-H youth to report often or very often wearing a seatbelt (91 percent vs. 83 percent). 4-H members were also more likely to report that they "often" or "very often" wear a helmet when riding a bike, skateboarding, or roller skating, and they were also more likely to report wearing sunscreen when being outside for more than an hour on a sunny day.

Reported rates of sexual activity were lower for 4-H youth than for other young people. The survey asked whether the youth had had sexual intercourse, and about 10 percent of 4-H youth reported having had sex compared with close to 30 percent of non-4-H youth. Among those who had had sex, 4-H youth were twice as likely as other young people to report always using contraception when they had sex.

Smoking rates varied significantly between 4-H and other young people. Less than four percent of 4-H youth reported 'occasionally' or 'regularly' smoking cigarettes during the past 12 months, compared with almost 17 percent of non-4-H youth. Overall, 5.5 percent of the sample said yes to the question "Do you smoke?".
Reports of occasional or regular alcohol use were similar for 4-H and non-4-H youth. A larger number said they had drunk alcohol once or twice. Approximately 29 percent of 4-H youth said they had had more than a few sips of beer, wine, wine coolers, or liquor during the past 12 months, at least once, compared with 42 percent of non-4-H youth.

4-H youth were significantly less likely than other youth to report using marijuana or hashish. About 5 percent of 4-H youth reported occasionally or regularly smoking marijuana in the past 12 months, compared to about 14 percent of non-4-H youth. About 9 percent of 4-H youth had ever tried marijuana, while 22 percent of non-4-H youth reported having tried it.

The use of other types of drugs was rarely reported by either 4-H or non-4-H youth. About 9 percent reported ever sniffing glue, 2 percent reported using steroids without a prescription, and 3 percent reported the use of other types of drugs.

Summary Fact Sheet by Katherine Heck of the 4-H Center for Youth Development, University of California, Davis.

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Effectiveness

PYD programs engage young people in intentional, productive, and constructive ways while recognizing and enhancing their strengths. These programs promote positive outcomes by providing opportunities, fostering positive relationships, and giving the support that is needed to develop young people’s assets and prevent risky behaviors.

Research indicates that young people who are surrounded by a variety of opportunities for positive encounters engage in less risky behavior and ultimately show evidence of higher rates of successful transitions into adulthood. PYD programs are one venue to ensure that young people have access to adequate positive opportunities. The available evidence suggests that PYD programs can prevent a variety of risk behaviors among young people and improve social and emotional outcomes. For example:

- A comprehensive study that looked at more than 200 school-based social-emotional learning programs found that program participants showed significant improvement in social and emotional skills, attitudes, and academic performance and reductions in internalizing symptoms and risky behaviors.
- A review of PYD programs for adolescents with chronic illness found that 3 of the 14 programs included the core components of PYD: opportunities for youth leadership, skill building, and sustained connections between youth and adults. The authors suggest that these programs serve as models for the development of future PYD programs for adolescents with chronic disease.
- A review of PYD programs that promote adolescent sexual and reproductive health found that 30 programs met the inclusion criteria and 15 of those had evidence for improving at least one adolescent and reproductive health outcome. Program effects were moderate and well-sustained. Effective programs were significantly more likely than those that did not have an impact to strengthen the school context and to deliver activities in a supportive atmosphere.
- A study on the first 5 years of a longitudinal evaluation of local 4-H programs looked at how positive influences in the lives of youth help protect against problem behaviors. The study sample included approximately 4,000 youth, from nearly all 50 states, with various levels of involvement and concluded that youth consistently engaged in 4-H were found to be at much lower risk of having personal, social, and behavioral problems than other youth. Compared to their peers, the findings show that youth involved in 4-H programs excel in several areas:
  - Youth involved in 4-H are more than four times as likely to contribute to their communities as other youth and about two times as likely to be civically active.
  - Youth involved in 4-H programming are nearly two times more likely to participate in science, engineering and computer technology programs during out-of-school time in Grades 10–12. Girls involved in 4-H programming are two times more likely (Grade 10) and nearly three times more likely (Grade 12) to take part in science programs compared to girls in other out-of-school activities.
  - Youth involved in 4-H are nearly two times more likely to make healthier choices in Grade 7.
- A systematic literature review identified 15 PYD programs with evidence of promoting adolescent sexual and reproductive health outcomes, including the prevention of teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections.
  - The level and duration of the impact on reproductive health outcomes were substantial, with the impact of several programs extending into adulthood.
A meta-analysis of youth mentoring program effectiveness concluded that mentoring is a flexible and adaptive PYD strategy. Mentoring can be advantageous to both preventive and promotive program goals, while also supporting the involvement of positive adult role models, older peers, and supportive group settings.2

Although there has been limited evaluation of positive youth development programs, the evidence that is available suggests that the opportunities, skills, and atmosphere offered in a positive youth development program can lead to better health, social, and educational outcomes.

Resources

The Guide to Community Preventive Services (link is external)
This website presents the results of intensive reviews that help determine which program and policy interventions have been proven effective. The guide researchers conducted a systematic review of youth development interventions that were intended to impact adolescent sexual and reproductive health outcomes and found evidence to recommend interventions that are coordinated with community services.

Hours of Opportunity: How Cities Can Use Data to Improve Out-of-School Time Programs (link is external)
This research brief highlights out-of-school time initiatives and assesses the conditions and activities that add to the advancement of a coordinated system of services. It also discusses successful strategies for developing PYD out-of-school time opportunities.

Positive Youth Development Inventory — Full Version (2012) (link is external)
This inventory is a collection of 55 Likert scale items designed to measure changes in levels of PYD. The instrument measures the constructs from the 5 C’s model of youth development: confidence, competence, character, caring, and connection.

Toolkit for Evaluating Positive Youth Development (link is external) (PDF, 116 pages)
This toolkit, developed by the After-School Initiative, provides evaluation question sets that staff of an after-school program may find useful to assess youth outcomes. The questions were developed to measure 45 different youth outcomes within 8 outcome domains, including academic success, arts and recreation, community involvement, cultural competency, life skills, positive life choices, positive core values, and sense of self.

References

1 Alberts, et al.2006; Bandy & Moore, 2009; Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2000; Pittman, Irby, & Ferber, 2001; Pittman, 1999; Lerner, 2004; Lerner et al., 2012; Lerner & Lerner, 2013; Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczack, & Hawkins, 2004
2 Durlak, et al., 2011
3 Maslow & Chung 2013
4 Gavin, Catalano, David-Ferdon, Gloppen, & Markham, 2010
5 4-H programs provide youth outreach opportunities by connecting youth to their communities. In the U.S., 4-H is administered by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.
6 Gavin, Catalano, David-Ferdon, Gloppen, & Markham, 2009
7 Dubois, Portillo, Rhodes, Silverthorn, & Valentine, 2011

Mission Statement
youth.gov is the U.S. government website that helps you create, maintain, and strengthen effective youth programs. Included are youth facts, funding information, and tools to help you assess community assets, generate maps of local and federal resources, search for evidence-based youth programs, and keep up-to-date on the latest, youth-related news.