



Youth

4-H helps “suddenly military” kids in seven Idaho counties

4-H's Operation: Military Kids is now in action, supporting and encouraging children of deployed Idaho National Guard and Army Reserve personnel. While the Guard's Family Readiness Centers hold monthly support meetings for military spouses, the 4-H program can provide kid-focused activities for boys and girls. Participants might make cards and gifts for their parents in the Middle East, challenge themselves in a 4-H skill-a-thon, or spend chaperoned lock-ins sharing their hopes, concerns, and methods of coping.

Or, they might engage in family-night bowling and spaghetti feeds, attend 4-H's annual Know-Your-Government conference in Boise, or build self-awareness and self-confidence through various 4-H projects.

“This provides them with an opportunity to bring some other adults into their lives who will help them cope during this time,” says April Ward, UI Extension Educator in Bannock County. The military kids also find new friends among 4-H'ers in their communities—friends committed to being advocates for military youth. “The whole idea is to just help each other,” Ward says.

In Kootenai County, UI Extension Educator Jim Wilson's team focuses on leadership development, teamwork, and outdoor survival for military kids ages 13 to 18. “We want them to have fun, develop practical life skills, and form a positive network of support to help them cope with issues during their parent's deployment,” he says. The teens even get a taste of military life by nibbling on meals-ready-to-eat during survival outings. All Idaho's 4-H programs are administered under the University of Idaho Extension, College of Agricultural and Life Sciences.

Contact Ward at aprilw@uidaho.edu or Wilson at jwilson@uidaho.edu.

Parenting education for childcare providers, too

When UI Extension piloted its Parents as Teachers demonstration project with childcare centers in Boundary and Jefferson counties in 2004, the program that won the hearts of Idaho parents won over childcare providers as well.

In Bonners Ferry, UI parent educator Candi Kelly makes monthly visits to nine family childcare centers, sharing research-based information on children's growth and development, on reading and kindergarten readiness, and on specific behavioral issues.

“It's always good and always applicable to what we're doing,” says care provider Erin Sanburg. “This reaches a lot of kids.”

The educational material also reaches the children's parents. “They learn so much,” says care provider Michelle Bertling, “and what I have learned from Candi I could never get in a school.”

In 2005, UI's Diane Demarest hopes to offer PAT materials to childcare providers through IdahoSTARS, Idaho's main childcare resource.

Contact Diane Demarest at dianed@uidaho.edu.

DID YOU KNOW?

15% Rate of Idaho children under age 18 in 2002 who lived at or below the poverty rate

*Source: www.indicators.nwaf.org

4-H curricula align with school standards

Two national 4-H curricula, whose development was led by UI 4-H faculty, are now aligned with Idaho State Board of Education achievement standards. The curricula—“Step Up to Leadership” and “4-H Palette of Fun with Arts and Crafts”—support current goals for individual academic performance, whether they're used in, after, or outside school.

“They were a total match. They worked perfectly,” says Claudia Hasselquist, coordinator for Idaho's 21st Century Community Learning Centers.

“To the best of my knowledge, I don't think that's happened anywhere else in the United States,” says community education supporter Paul Eck.

At UI Extension, Linda Webb, Carol Benesh, and Maureen Toomey are pleased with the response to their products. Adds Toomey: “There's a lot of science and math in art.”

Contact Linda Webb at lwebb@uidaho.edu.

