

Leaders of tomorrow: Skill development for a virtual world



UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE
COOPERATIVE
EXTENSION



ISSUE



In March 2020, **Delaware 4-H transitioned to a virtual environment** due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



Program leaders worked hard to keep 4-H programming moving forward while also **planning for the unknown**.



These challenges, however, also brought **new opportunities** to help 4-H youth develop leadership skills.

RESPONSE

Despite the change to a new virtual environment, Delaware 4-H was committed to ensuring **teen leaders** still had opportunities to **build valuable leadership skills**.



Training events were held to teach presentation, communication and leadership skills needed for virtual environments.

Participants then **demonstrated their skills with their respective 4-H clubs**.

IMPACT



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4-H teens participated, each of whom demonstrated tremendous leadership growth and development.



94% agreed they had all the equipment they needed to teach virtually



88% agreed they felt prepared to teach a lesson or class virtually



83% agreed they were successful in providing leadership in a virtual environment



75% agreed that they would serve as a leader in a virtual environment in the future

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In March 2020, Delaware 4-H transitioned to a virtual environment due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Program leaders worked hard to keep 4-H programming moving forward while also planning for the unknown. These challenges, however, also brought new opportunities to help 4-H youth develop leadership skills.

A 2005 study published in the Journal of Labor Economics suggested that students who hold leadership positions in student organizations outperform their peers on scales of educational participation, career development and involvement in cultural and standard of living planning. In fact, the Social Science Computer Review found that virtual learning experiences optimize collaboration, group interaction and effective communication – all essential skills for our youth to develop as they move forward to college and the workforce.

RESPONSE

Despite the change to a new virtual environment, Delaware 4-H was committed to ensuring teen leaders still had opportunities to build valuable leadership skills. To do so, program leaders organized training events to teach presentation, communication and leadership skills needed for virtual environments. Participants then took these skills and demonstrated them to their respective 4-H clubs.

IMPACT

Forty-seven 4-H teens participated in the virtual programming events, each of whom demonstrated tremendous leadership growth and development. Post-program surveys revealed that:

- 96 percent agreed they had all the equipment they needed to teach virtually
- 24 percent strongly agreed and 64 percent agreed they felt prepared to teach a lesson or class virtually
- 52 percent strongly agreed and 31 percent agreed they were successful in providing leadership in a virtual environment
- 75 percent agreed that they would serve as a leader in a virtual environment in the future